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Wildlife Improvement District

The Importance of Wetlands

At one time, Kern River tributary Jerry Slough and the bed of Goose Lake provided a wetlands environment that supported varied and diverse wildlife. These waterways, together with the original Kern River floodway and Poso Creek, pass through Semitropic's service, making it vastly important for the district to take measures to sustain these precious wetlands environments.

Due to this unique environment, there were once more than 50 privately owned duck clubs within the district, 21 of which are still active. In addition, section 16 of the Federal Kern National Wildlife Refuge is located mostly within Semitropic's service area. There is also an area of about 34,000 acres of undeveloped land in the northwest part of the district that is considered prime uplands habitat.

Preserving Habitats

In order to consolidate various activities, such as securing water supplies for duck clubs, the Semitropic Board in 2004 approved the formation of the Semitropic Wildlife Improvement District, which is intended to exclusively serve the needs of wildlife interests. This will provide a focal point and a means to accomplish common wildlife improvement objectives. It also provides the benefits of using a public agency in securing funds, construction of facilities and project management that individual or private entities, such as duck clubs, find hard to do individually.

In addition, Semitropic has acquired approximately 4,000 acres of prime habitat land in the northwest part of the district for preservation and groundwater storage purposes. The district has proposed and submitted its own **Habitat Conservation Plan**, which proposes to dedicate most of this land to permanent habitat. Mitigation credits will be sold to accomplish this goal.

In 1992, the Semitropic Board of Directors included a proposed multi-purpose environmental program in its project election process. Landowners overwhelmingly approved a multitude of programs, including the **Goose Lake Wetland Improvement Project**.

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