

California Department of Water Resources NEWS

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DWR Reports Progress on Pump Out Program

SACRAMENTO--State water officials today reported that a high priority pump out program has removed floodwater from about 60 percent of agricultural property inundated in six counties by the January floods.

David N. Kennedy, Director, Department of Water Resources, announced that the program may complete pumping in some reclamation districts by the end of next week.

"The January floods brought widespread flooding to many productive agricultural areas," said Kennedy. "This accelerated pump out program is being accomplished quickly. It will help speed the return of this land to productive farm use."

Approximately 80,000 acres were flooded in 20 reclamation districts in six counties--Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, Stanislaus, Sutter and Yuba.

Floodwater on these properties totalled about 200,000 acre-feet. The estimated pumping cost is about \$5 million, which the State hopes to recoup from the federal government.

At a February 6 meeting of the State Board of Agriculture, Governor Pete Wilson announced the pump out program and directed the Department of Water Resources to administer it.

The pump out program was initiated to protect land and property from further damage due to prolonged inundation, for public health and safety, and to return the land to productive economic use.

The program has been praised by representatives of California's agricultural and water communities.

"Pumping the floodwaters off the land alleviates environmental and economic problems that these counties simply can't afford," said Richard Golb, Executive Director, Northern California Water Association.

"Removing the floodwaters off these lands will allow us to begin our spring farming operations," said Al Montna of Montna Farms. Montna is a member of the State Board of Food and Agriculture.

The program operates through the local counties and reclamation districts, with DWR reimbursing local agencies for pumping costs, and then seeking federal reimbursement.

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The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs. The State Water Project provides water to two-thirds of California's population.

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