

California Department of Water Resources



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State Strikes Water in Drought Devastated Klamath Basin

Within a few weeks of a Governor's declaration of an emergency - prompted by an operations plan for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Klamath Project that left the growers in the Tulelake area out of water - a well drilling operation overseen by the California Department of Water Resources and funded by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services struck abundant quantities of water at the very first of 14 production wells to be drilled within the Tulelake Irrigation District near the California-Oregon border.

The first well to be drilled and identified as TID Well # 1 was completed on June 8, 2001 and is a 24 inch diameter, 740 feet deep well. The well was drilled in 14 days by Lang Exploratory Drilling working 24-hours a day. Blank casing is installed in the upper 245 feet to prevent taking groundwater from within this region. Casing to this depth will minimize impacts on domestic wells that might be in the zone of influence of the new production well. Installed below the blank casing is 440 feet of 24 inch diameter louvered well screens. Approximately 33 cubic yards of gravel is between the louvered well screens and the borehole. The initial well pumping test indicates that at least 9,500 gallons per minute or about 21 cubic feet per second can be expected from this well. Pumping continually until October 31, 2001 this well could produce about 5, 700 acre-feet.

TID Well #1 near Hill and Kandra Roads in Tulelake, gushed 9,300 gallons per minute (GPM) on June 15. That's enough water to irrigate 850 acres of ground cover, 1,000 acres of hay, or 400 acres of potatoes. The Tulelake Irrigation District (TID) will decide which of the 5,000 acres served by Well #1 will receive water.

This well cost approximately \$350,000 in Natural Disaster Assistance funds administered by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. The original project goal for the combined output from the 14 wells is 30,000 gpm. If production continues Well #1 will reach 30% of this project goal.

For details on each week's progress on well drilling see the Web page of the Northern District of DWR at <http://www.dpla.water.ca.gov/nd/KlamathDrought/index.html>.

Background

With Governor Gray Davis declaring "extreme economic peril," estimated at \$73 million, within three weeks groundwater specialists at the Department of Water Resources began coordinating the drilling of wells amidst the worst drought in the Tulelake basin since 1907.

In addition to the historic drought, enforcement of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to protect Coho salmon and two species of sucker fish in the federal Klamath Reclamation Project, eliminated all water to 90 percent of 210,000 acres and cut total water deliveries 85 percent from 500,000 to 70,000 acre-feet.

The water shortage also reduces flows to 12,000 acres of seasonal marshes in the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge serves three out of every four birds on the Pacific Flyway - about 10 million birds. It has a large winter population of threatened Bald Eagles. The remaining water will serve only 6 percent of the 1.8 million waterfowl with habitat in the Refuge.

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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.

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