TID Builds on Early Flood Control Actions to Prepare for Incoming Storm

TURLOCK – The Tuolumne River Watershed and the TID service area are expected to see additional precipitation over the next few weeks, and the District has taken the steps necessary to be equipped to receive it.

While the storm is projected to be a warm storm, TID is not anticipating any issues regarding flooding on the Tuolumne River or in our service territory during the coming weather event.

TID began making flood control releases over two months ago when the reservoir was at elevation 746 feet, nearly 60 feet below the flood control line of 801.9 feet. (Top of the spillway is 830 feet.) These releases were made well in advance of many other reservoirs. Based on data resulting from TID’s investment in technology over the past few decades, the District determined it was in its best interest to start releases early and still be able to fill Don Pedro Reservoir. TID also used these releases to capitalize on hydro-generation during a time when natural gas prices were astronomically high.

TID is constantly monitoring forecasts and revising operations of Don Pedro and the river to ensure public safety and flood control, and to maximize water supply and hydro-generation. The District, and the area we serve, are prepared to receive the coming storms and will continue to adjust operations as the situation progresses.

Per TID’s utility analyst-hydrologist, Olivia Cramer’s report to the TID Board of Directors at the March 7 meeting, the Tuolumne River’s watershed is projected to receive between 18-20 inches of rain in the next 16 days. The snowpack in the watershed is currently 174% of average to date. Due to the density and the temperature of the existing snowpack, it is not anticipated that it will cause an unmanageable amount of runoff from the snowpack into the river. For more on the behavior of the existing snowpack, you can find Ms. Cramer’s entire detailed hydrology report here.

Local rainfall is expected to impact Dry Creek, which flows unimpaired into the Tuolumne River in downtown Modesto. Because of the anticipated rise in Dry Creek, TID will adjust releases from Don Pedro as necessary to keep the river at a safe elevation at the Modesto convergence.

Despite the upcoming rain, we are starting the irrigation season in order to help move the additional water out of Don Pedro and encourage groundwater recharge. TID has worked
hard to make the best possible use of the consistent storm water. In addition to maximizing hydro-generation, the District coordinated with the Department of Water Resources and Sustainable Conservation to implement FloodMar practices of applying storm water to participating fields for the purpose of groundwater recharge.

The Tuolumne River will be running higher and faster than normal through the summer to pass the record-level snowpack as it gradually runs-off. While this is a welcome change from what the area has experienced for the last three years, we encourage the community to be safe around all rivers which are likely to be cold and fast-moving.

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About the Turlock Irrigation District (TID)
Established in 1887, the Turlock Irrigation District (TID) was the first irrigation district in the state of California. Today it is one of only four in the state that also provides electric retail energy directly to homes, farms, and businesses. TID delivers irrigation water through over 250 miles of a gravity-fed canal system to approximately 150,000 acres of farmland. TID owns and operates an integrated and diverse electric generation, transmission and distribution system that provides power to a population of 240,000 within a 662 square-mile area. With a drive towards innovation, TID has been a leader in new initiatives and data-driven practices to bring greater efficiencies and effectiveness to its operations and greater value to its customers. For more information about TID visit www.TID.org, follow @TurlockID on social media platforms and subscribe to the TID Water & Power Podcast wherever you get your podcasts.