

# Mandatory Use of SSJMUD Surface Water

## Plan to Conserve Groundwater

Adopted by the SSJMUD Board of Directors on October 8, 2014

The purpose of this policy is to establish rules to force compliance for all users of District supplied surface water made available to the District by the Bureau of Reclamation on any given year.

Groundwater is in short supply and all farmers must do everything possible and reasonable to conserve it. Neither the Bureau of Reclamation nor the District view saving surface water as insurance in case a well breaks as a “reasonable and beneficial” use of federal surface water. This is not the contracted purpose for surface water provided by Reclamation.

Groundwater is recharged naturally in SSJMUD. The District is listed as an “in lieu” groundwater entity. That is, in lieu of a farmer running his well, he or she takes delivery of surface water provided by the District and the groundwater is allowed to accumulate for use on a dry year. The idea of the District recharging groundwater has been studied several times by the State of California and the Bureau of Reclamation as far back as the 1930’s. The most recent study was done in 2000 by Provost & Pritchard Engineering which produced the same result. Simply put, the type of soil and clay layers below the surface will not let water percolate down to the aquifer. The groundwater we have starts as snow and rainfall in the Sierras and it passes through this area underground. The groundwater generally travels in a north-west direction.

The District will continue to send out applications for water which are due back to the District by February 15 each year. Each eligible acre in the District will be given an equal allocation of the District’s total supply. Allocations may vary by year depending on the declaration of available surface water from Reclamation and may change during the water year. Whatever the amount of allocated water, each water user who requests water is obligated to use 100% of that year’s water supply. Water users have until July 1<sup>st</sup> each year to either return water they determine to be excess to their needs or transfer it to another water user in the District. Any water left on a water user’s account will be billed to the water user at rate to be determined by the Board of Directors and is subject to the following penalty:

- First Offense: The following year’s allocation shall be reduced by the percentage of unused water the previous year.
- Second Offense: The next five (5) year’s allocations shall be reduced by the percentage of unused water based on the previous five (5) years average of unused water plus a \$10,000 fine.

- Third Offense: No District water will be allocated for one (1) year plus a \$15,000 fine.
- Forth Offense: No District water will be allocated for five (5) years plus a \$25,000 fine.

If you run mostly well water and do not take water from the District but then decide to start taking water, you will receive the average of the amount of water you received from the district for the last 5 years. If you took 0, you will receive 0. If you used 50 acre feet, you will receive only 50 acre feet.