



District Board votes to freeze fees, accelerate plan review process

✓ Vote to freeze developer fees

Each year District staff conducts a fee study of what it costs to build pipelines and excavate stormwater basins that provide urban storm drainage to new construction, including homes and commercial facilities. The purpose of the study is to ensure the cost to construct the urban storm drainage system is fully paid through land development fees. The fees cover the costs of facility construction and acquisition, and do not cover annual operations or maintenance costs. Those are funded through local property taxes.

Following the latest study, the District Board of Directors voted to freeze fees for development at 2008 levels. Board Chairman Kendall Groom explained, "In economic times like this it is important that fee increases are not imposed that may impede new development projects. The District is in the difficult position of ensuring that new development fully pays the cost of storm drainage improvements while not imposing fees that obstruct growth."

According to Bob Van Wyk, General Manager of the District, "In this market the District is not experiencing construction cost increases which help to keep overall system costs in check. Additionally, the District is taking full advantage of GIS software (see story on page 7 for details) that incorporates more timely and precise data used to calculate fees."

In prior years the District has relied on regional construction cost indices to help determine fee changes.

'...by analyzing locally collected information, the Board was able to confirm a fee freeze was justified.'

This year, by analyzing locally collected information, the Board was able to confirm a fee freeze was justified. Had the District relied on regional data, the recommended fee increase may have been as high as six percent. Explains Mr. Van Wyk, "This is a situation where timely and accurate information is helping to make better decisions, and we are glad to do what we can to control costs and keep fees as low as possible."



Vote to accelerate plan review

In response to a request from the local building industry the District Board of Directors recently adopted an accelerated development plan review process. The process is essentially a developer-funded overtime policy.

The policy allows developers to request and pay for an accelerated plan review to meet specific time constraints of their projects. Accelerated plan review will be performed by staff working outside the normal business day or by a consultant, and will not cause delays in normal plan reviews or cost taxpayers any money.

Key elements of the policy:

- Services will be provided by District staff on a voluntary basis, or alternatively, by pre-approved consulting engineering firms.

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Message from the General Manager



Bob Van Wyk

In today's economic climate the Flood Control District finds itself in a unique position of providing a source of economic stimulus to the local economy. In the 2008-2009 Budget the Board of Directors took action to accelerate projects that help stimulate the local construction industry and take advantage of a favorable bidding climate to provide needed drainage service to the public.

Over the next 18 months we plan to spend nearly \$13 million in urban capital improvement projects in the Fresno-Clovis metropolitan area. This spending results in hiring design engineers, construction companies, and technical consultants who have seen significant reductions in business as a result of the current economic situation. Since the costs of materials are down as well, projects are coming in lower than expected allowing the District to construct more facilities with the same dollars as compared to the last 18 months.

Over the past three months we have been monitoring adoption and implementation of the Federal stimulus

package and will continue to do so over the next few years. While local flood control projects have not been included in stimulus grant funding packages, we may have access to low or no interest loans for future projects. More importantly, as Federal stimulus money earmarked for neighborhood revitalization, transportation projects, schools, and water resource management find its way to our community, we will work with partner agencies, the Cities of Fresno and Clovis, the County of Fresno, and the Fresno Irrigation District to coordinate and ensure local drainage and flood control aspects of projects are included in project funding and construction.

I am also pleased to report that the District is taking full advantage of technology resources to keep our development fees as low as possible, while maintaining acceptable levels of service for our community. Because we have invested time and resources into automating our fee calculation process, we can pass onto the development community fees that reflect local economic conditions.

While the economic situation in our region presents many challenges, the Flood Control District, through its Board of Directors, is doing its part to help make the best out of some very challenging times.

Changing of the guard

Thank you to Mr. Richard Welton for a great year of service as Chairman of the Board of Directors! At the February 25 meeting, his successor, Kendall Groom, presented Mr. Welton with a plaque expressing the Board's appreciation for a job well done.

Mr. Welton stated, "During my two-year term as Chairman, the District completed a number of significant flood improvements and successfully added a disability benefit program for District employees, as well as made a mid-year adjustment to Engineering salaries to stay competitive with other local agencies. However, a major staff proposal to change the District's employee retirement program from a defined contribution to a defined benefit program is still under study and has not been concluded.

"The most recently approved agency budget accelerates the District's available funds and reflects the Board's commitment to provide flood control benefits as soon as funds are available and to do our small part to provide economic stimulus for the local economy." He also expressed his appreciation for the support and public service of his fellow

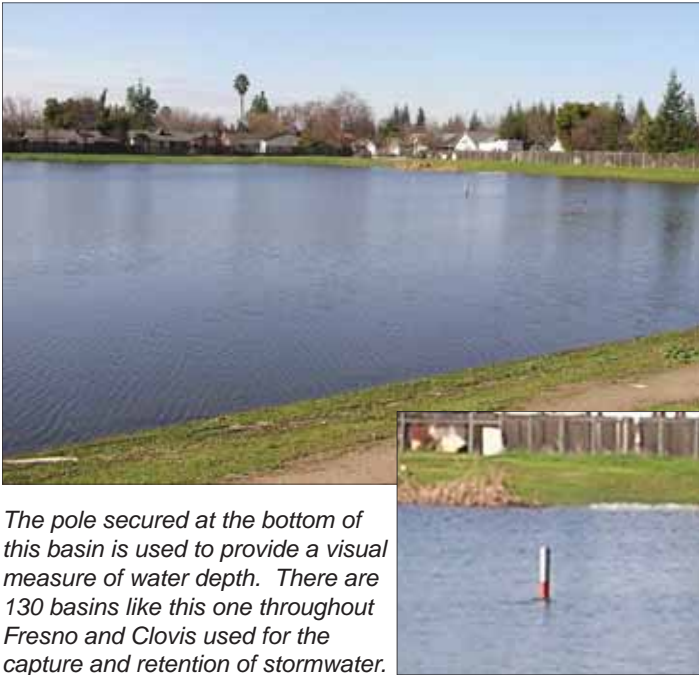
Outgoing Chairman Richard Welton (l) is presented with a plaque of appreciation by new Chairman Kendall Groom.



Board members Kendall Groom, Frank Franco, George Marcus, Roy Spina, Jennette Williams, and Mike Rastegar and confirmed his continued support for the new Chairman Kendall Groom.

Mr. Welton represents the County of Fresno, and was appointed to the District Board in 1997. Mr. Groom has been a Board member since 1996, and represents the City of Fresno.

Every drop counts - measuring stormwater



The pole secured at the bottom of this basin is used to provide a visual measure of water depth. There are 130 basins like this one throughout Fresno and Clovis used for the capture and retention of stormwater.

Water supply is a hot topic in our area, and all over California. For residential and commercial uses, groundwater is the largest source of our community's potable water and makes up about 85% of water used. The other 15% is treated surface water. Because of the large and growing demand on groundwater supplies, recharge of this resource is essential to preserving and efficiently using the limited water resources in our community.

Conservation by citizens and businesses is key, but so is increasing the amount of stormwater and snowmelt recharged in our community stormwater basins. A critical part of increasing stormwater recharge is knowing how to accurately measure the amount of water put back into the aquifer.

A new data model has been developed by the District to help determine how much stormwater recharge occurs at each basin. Of the 152 basins throughout the community, approximately 130 actively capture stormwater. Now we will be able to measure more precisely how much stormwater is recharged annually.

“Use of a model for stormwater recharge measurement gives us a better idea of the impact stormwater basins have on the groundwater aquifer. The ultimate goal is to show how much total recharge we did in a given year”, says Brent Sunamoto, FMFCD's Senior Engineer in its Operations Department. “The new stormwater model uses real data and some assumptions to estimate how much stormwater

recharges every winter. Basically, we're assuming an average water level in each basin each month and applying a percolation rate and calculating the percolation for that month. It's a more consistent way to do it, and it gives us a year-to-year picture of how basins perform.”

These recharge totals can be compared to the District's summer recharge numbers as well as to recharge done by the Cities of Clovis and Fresno, and the Fresno Irrigation District (FID), to provide a total picture of community-wide, multi-agency recharge efforts.

The District works with FID, and the Cities of Clovis and Fresno to accomplish groundwater recharge in the summer months. City water entitlements (snowmelt from the Sierra Nevada mountains) from the Kings and San Joaquin Rivers are transported through FID's canal system. Some of that water is diverted into ponding basins for groundwater recharge during the summer months. Though they were designed primarily for stormwater retention, more than 85 stormwater basins are used for recharge. In a year with average rainfall, this effort results in 40,000-45,000 acre feet of groundwater recharged.

Water conservation is key

Groundwater recharge is one way to help preserve the water resources in our community, but conservation is still key. Finite supplies coupled with a growing population make conservation essential to maintaining our standard of living. All across California, including Clovis and Fresno, water conservation measures are being put in place. Both cities have implemented their water conservation plans, with the goal of a 20% reduction in water use. To find out more about the water conservation plans, and for tips on how to use less water, visit:

- ◆ City of Clovis - www.ci.clovis.ca.us/SERVICESANDDEPARTMENTS/PUBLICUTILITIES/WATER/Pages/WaterConservation.aspx
- ◆ City of Fresno - www.fresno.gov/Government/DepartmentDirectory/PublicUtilities/Watermanagement/Default.htm

In an effort to reduce use of groundwater in the District's basin parks, turf irrigation will be reduced during the summer months. The turf may be visually impacted while we work through the drought condition.

Please note that the level of water in ponding basins IS NOT an indicator of local water supply.

New crop of Master Gardeners

Forty-five brand new Master Gardeners are blooming! These volunteers have just completed a 16-week, college level course in horticulture offered by the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE). Course topics included soils, plant propagation, integrated pest management (IPM), and identifying and dealing with problems such as weeds and insect pests.

“The whole Master Gardener mission is to educate people. They are trained to deliver an IPM message and steer people toward safe methods of controlling weeds and pests”, explains Amanda Crump, Environmental Horticulture Farm Advisor for UCCE Fresno County.

IPM is a favored means of pollution prevention because it encourages the use of non- and less-toxic products to get rid of weeds, yard pests and

household pests.

Learning and working for a healthier community

Once the Master Gardeners have completed their 16-week course they must pass a test on the course content. Then over the next year they are required to do 50 hours of community-based volunteer work in order to become certified Master Gardeners. Volunteer work includes manning the phones of the pest/gardening hotline (456-7563, Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-noon), giving presentations (call Amanda Crump at 456-7554 to request a speaker), running free plant clinics at OSH stores in Fresno and Clovis, and working at the demonstration garden, Garden of the Sun at the Discovery Center (shown below - open Mon., Weds. & Fri., 9 a.m.-1 p.m., and most Saturdays).

After the first year, Master Gardeners give 25 hours of volunteer work and take 12 hours of additional education to keep their certification. This annual requirement guarantees that the Master Gardeners' learning never stops. Continuing education keeps them up to date on the newest information from the University of California.



Amanda recommends that people go to the Garden of the Sun to see what is growing now, what it looks like, and to ask the Master Gardeners there whether plants they want to select for their yards are hard to care for. Why? Because she says, “The Master Gardeners are there to give out good, sound gardening advice based on University of California principles.”

Common messages

The District and the Master Gardeners work together in their IPM public education efforts. “I really appreciate the partnership with FMFCD and other entities because we learn a lot together and accomplish a lot. Teaching people how to protect



Drought Tolerant Plants: UC Davis is working on evaluating drought tolerant and native plants. These plants are called the “All-Stars” and are planted throughout California and evaluated for performance in the different regions. The Master Gardeners have some of these plants in their yards. They take measurements, evaluate the plants and send the information to UC Davis. Homeowners will start to see “All-Stars” (complete winners) this year.

Where to learn about “All-Stars”:

- ccuh.ucdavis.edu/projects/creating-a-distribution-program-for-heat-and-drought-resistant-plants
- ccuh.ucdavis.edu/projects/commercial-introduction-of-2018-arboretum-all-stars-2019-for-california
- calag.ucop.edu/0803JAS/pdfs/ca6203p97.pdf

Multi-agency ad. campaign

soil and water - that's ultimately our goal", says Amanda.

IPM informational signs (example shown left), funded in part by the District, are placed throughout the Garden of the Sun. They identify pests and weeds and explain how to control them with non- and less-toxic products. Another partnership with OSH involves placement of shelf tags marking such gardening products in the four Clovis and Fresno stores.

Mark your calendar!

The Master Gardeners are co-sponsoring a plant exchange event on May 16 at Fresno State (see below). Visit www.fresnowater.org for details.



Visit groups.ucanr.org/mgfresno to learn more about the programs mentioned and to see what amazing resources the Master Gardeners of Fresno County and UCCE have to offer.

Arboretum All-Stars", and they are being at the Garden of the Sun. Master Garden- with a tag that identifies them) at nurseries

plants, fornia-gardens, and

The Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District teamed up with local municipalities last year to form "Partners for a Clean Community". The goal of the partnership is to keep our community clean by combining resources to expand public outreach campaigns. This year the group created a new series of public service announcements (PSAs) that had its first run on television and radio in January and February, and again in Spring 2009. The campaign uses sock puppets to humorously explain where stormwater goes and how pollutants are carried into the storm drain system and ponding basins. The Spring campaign includes movie theater slides.

Using sock puppets to tell the story increases recognition of the ad. among adults and children and increases the likelihood that the pollution prevention messages will be remembered. Combining agency resources into one PSA saves money by decreasing production costs while increasing the number of times the ads are played on Spanish and English television and radio stations.

This is the third campaign for the partnership. The following agencies compose Partners for a Clean Community:

- Caltrans
- City of Clovis
- City of Fresno
- County of Fresno
- Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District

Pollution prevention

Educating the public on the importance of keeping pollutants out of the gutter is essential in the Partners' public education efforts. This approach is consistent with all the Partners' messages, from resource conservation to plastic, paper and used motor oil

recycling. By conserving resources and properly disposing of our wastes, the wastes do not end up in our water, the ground or trash.

Partners for a Clean Community also works together to serve the community by working together hosting pollution prevention exhibits at community events and developing multi-agency outreach material that crosses over municipalities and service boundaries.



Board honors Bill Loudermilk of Fish & Game



Chairman Kendall Groom presents Bill Loudermilk with a resolution of appreciation at the January 28 Board meeting.

In February Bill Loudermilk retired from the California Department of Fish and Game after 34 years of service. Since 1999 he has been Regional Manager of DFG's Region 4, which encompasses 12 counties from the Central Coast to the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Mr. Loudermilk has been a great partner and friend to

the District, helping the District acquire DFG grants for community education focused on the connection between stormwater basins and wildlife. At its January 28 meeting the District Board of Directors presented Mr. Loudermilk with a resolution of appreciation for his outstanding service to the community.

He is recognized for his leadership in protection of endangered species, land use policies, public education, and more. He was recently featured in a Fresno Bee story on the legacy of his leadership and the transition to the new generation of DFG leaders.

Mr. Loudermilk co-founded the popular "Salmonids in the Classroom" program which allows students to raise trout or salmon from eggs to small fish, and then release them into a local river. The program is used in more than 100 schools all over the San Joaquin Valley.



"We at the District have appreciated working with Bill and have been inspired by his commitment and leadership style. We wish him the very best in this well-deserved retirement", expressed Bob Van Wyk, the District's General Manager.

This might look like a Christmas story, but it's not

Stuffed animals comfort local children

These stuffed animals, sitting under a Christmas tree in the District lobby, were delivered during Christmas to the Craycroft Youth Center in Fresno where they brought comfort to children displaced over the holidays.

The Craycroft Youth Center is part of the Fresno Rescue Mission and is where Fresno County Child Protective Service (CPS) takes children who have been removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect. Children who are brought in are given a stuffed animal to keep as a comfort. They are scared and disoriented, and often they come in with nothing.

District employees, along with a handful of generous consultants and vendors, donate more than 200 stuffed animals every year.

Terri Shaffer, a 15-year employee, organizes this annual drive and has secured a discount on stuffed animals with the Walgreens and Walmart stores on Kings Canyon Road in southeast Fresno.



If you would like to donate to the Craycroft Youth Center, call Vanessa at 268-1123 - at any time of year. Learn more about the Craycroft Youth Center and the rest of the Fresno Rescue Mission's programs at www.fresnorescuemission.org.

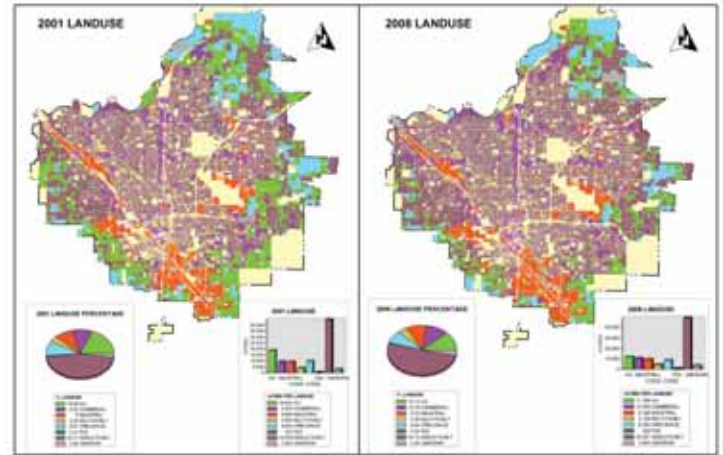
GIS increases speed and efficiency

The District uses Geographic Information System (GIS) software which functions as a hub for maps and databases, and makes them all accessible in one place. GIS integrates maps with databases such as property owner and parcel information, recorded maps, zoning, land use, existing and proposed master planned drainage facilities, flood zones, and much more. All of this information can be seen on the GIS 'smart map' as the user chooses - sort of one-stop shopping for information.

'Smart maps' help District staff access, analyze, manage and share District and non-District data faster and more efficiently than at any time in the past. Most of the map-based departmental and interagency data that used to take time to research is now conveniently at our fingertips. Research and analysis used to involve pulling files and maps by hand and searching each piece of paper individually.

The new speed and accuracy of GIS helps promote timely review and analysis of development projects. In just a few seconds all existing and proposed storm drain pipeline and other drainage facilities can be identified, and their associated plans can be viewed immediately. Using the GIS for the annual Flood Control assessment tax has reduced errors and increased efficiency tenfold. Studies that used to take weeks to perform are now completed in a fraction of the time.

All District departments, such as Executive Management, Master Planning, Operations, Development Review, Accounting, and Environmental Resources are now connected via GIS and communicating in a way that is improving District business for everyone. According to Kyle Singh, the District's GIS Analyst, "Changes to the [Storm Drainage and Flood Control] Master Plan are now immediately shared by all departments without delay. This timely sharing of data fosters a shared responsibility between departments and a



This GIS map was used to show changes in land use in the Fresno/Clovis area between 2001 and 2008. This kind of information is essential in planning additions to the rural flood control and urban drainage systems.

team approach to data integrity.

"Whether there is the need to track flooding patterns, compute complex hydraulic analysis, examine development patterns, research demographic data, or create colorful maps, GIS can do it all."

Key GIS features:

- Map-based information system,
- Organizes key information and knowledge in a central location,
- Dramatically increases efficiency by integrating different systems,
- Streamlines workflows,
- Eliminates duplication of work between departments,
- Improves communication between District departments, other agencies, and with the general public, and
- Helps to make better informed decisions.

Board Votes, continued from cover

- Review time will be accelerated by cutting turn-around time in half.
- Service by staff will be performed outside the normal business day.
- Developers shall pay for the overtime review cost.

Some projects need accelerated review and staff adjusts work assignments as necessary, and within reason, to meet the needs of developers without overtime. However, during heightened development activity it is unreasonable to make adjustments and some projects take longer than developers

would prefer.

The new policy was reviewed by the Building Industry Association (BIA). Staff is currently meeting all plan check time lines for developer projects. Although the policy is currently in place, the real benefit will be realized when development activity increases to higher levels.

This policy allows the developer to pay for an accelerated review, and removes the burden of the added review cost to the tax payer. The use of consultants will provide the additional resources needed to ensure the policy can handle the demand.

Close Up: Dan Gilbert



Dan Gilbert, 15-year District employee, and his wife Diane and children, Mallory and Jared.

Dan was born in South Dakota and began his career in public works there, in Rapid City. He has worked in both private enterprise and government, and since 1980 he has been in California. His education and training are in engineering, design and drafting, and his experience has been built over a 29-year career in public works.

Dan joined the District's staff in 1994 and is presently its Senior Engineering Tech in the Rural Streams Section. He explains his responsibilities

at the District, "For the Rural Streams Section, I review development proposals outside of the urbanized portion of the cities where we have four detention basins, three reservoirs, and more than 40 stream courses. I am also involved in restoration and improvement projects aimed at minimizing flooding impacts to property owners. Additionally, we provide assistance and advice to property owners to help resolve stream issues they face."

Kurt Hupp, Rural Program Manager and Dan's supervisor, talks about Dan's contribution to his team and to the District this way, "Dan's job knowledge goes well

beyond meeting just the needs of his position. With his well rounded background he is capable of performing any task or function required of him. He is not satisfied with accepting the status quo and is always looking for ways to do things better." Kurt also said of Dan, "He takes great pride in his son and daughter. They both have excelled in their athletic abilities and have been able to augment their college tuitions with athletic scholarships, no doubt due to Dan's guidance and leadership."

When asked what he likes best about working at the District, Dan said, "The most enjoyable part of working at a public agency is feeling as though you are making a difference in the community. That is often out of the view of most people, but when we are anticipating needs, and addressing them before they are a problem, we are doing our jobs best."

Dan and his wife Diane have been married for 26 years and have two children, Mallory, 23; and Jared, 20 years old. The whole family is very involved in their church, The Well Community Church in Fresno, as well as lots and lots of sports. Jared swims competitively for Fresno Pacific University, and his team recently won the National Championship in the 4x100 yard freestyle relay and set a new national record with a time of 3 minutes, 0.65 seconds. Throughout her high school and college years Mallory was dedicated to cheerleading and later to track and field, and earned a track scholarship to the University of Hawaii. Dan's other interest include hot air ballooning, travel, home improvement and model railroading.



Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District

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www.fresnofloodcontrol.org

Board of Directors

- Kendall Groom, Chairman • Roy Spina, Vice-Chairman
- Frank Franco • George Marcus • Richard Welton
- Jennette Williams • Mike Rastegar

Oso de Oro Park Pavilions - Reservations

Planning a birthday party or other outdoor special occasion? Reserve, at no charge, a spot at the beautiful Sloan Johnson Oso de Oro Lake Park, located on Forkner south of Bullard Ave. Reservations can be made up to six months in advance. Call 456-3292 for details

Need a speaker?

If your agency, organization or community group is in the Fresno/Clovis area and you'd like a presentation on the flood control and urban storm drain system, water resource management or pollution prevention - contact Brandy Swisher at brandys@fresnofloodcontrol.org or (559) 456-3292.