



4888 EAST JENSEN AVENUE
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93725
TELEPHONE (559) 266-0767

July 30, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For More Information, Please Contact:

STEVE HAUGEN, *Kings River Watermaster*, (559) 266-0767

Copy by: **RANDY McFARLAND**, (559) 896-4715

Kings Water Deliveries Winding Down

DROUGHT CONDITIONS have cut sharply into this year's Kings River water supplies are bringing an early end to water deliveries for most of the river's public districts and canal companies. Users in three Kings River Water Association member units received no water at all this summer.

"Nearly all of our member units' water delivery seasons have ended or are ending considerably earlier than usual," said Kings River Watermaster Steve Haugen. "Our agencies' entitlements are determined by each day's natural river flow and flows this year were too low for any unit to meet all of its surface supply needs." This year's peak-season runoff during the April-through-July period was expected to end up at less than 38% of average.

Haugen reported that the upper Kings River service area water run (for units that divert upstream from Highway 99) will largely come to an end over the next few days. The Fresno Irrigation District plans to end Kings River diversions and deliveries, except for limited amounts of hardship water and urban deliveries, July 31. The Alta Irrigation District's delivery season to the areas around Reedley, Dinuba, Cutler-Orosi and Traver will wind up August 6. Consolidated Irrigation District, which serves an area from Sanger through Caruthers, did not operate because of insufficient water supplies. The Kings River Water District in the Centerville Bottoms plans to deliver water into the fall.

M O R E

Many lower Kings River units have either ended brief water runs or plan to reduce or conclude their 2007 operations in August. The Laguna Irrigation District and Last Chance Water Ditch Company seasons are over and the Murphy Slough agencies are expected to shut down soon. South Fork units plan to operate until late August while People's Ditch Company and the Lemoore Canal and Irrigation Company project ending their seasons around August 31. A coordinated lower river water run, in which channel seepage losses are shared, is scheduled to end August 10. Two lower river agencies, the Crescent and Stinson canal companies, were unable to make deliveries because of the short supplies.

River releases from Pine Flat Dam will drop steadily as water agencies exhaust their supplies and conclude their seasons, probably reaching fishery flow minimums by early September.

Groundwater pumping has cushioned impacts of surface water supply reductions throughout much of the one million acre Kings River service area in portions of Fresno, Kings and Tulare counties although about 20% of the region does not have groundwater or only in very poor quality. Haugen said water table readings in all areas are expected to drop significantly because of the need for heavy pumping.

That stands in marked contrast to 2006 when heavy rain and snow forced the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to make flood releases in excess of 810,000 acre-feet, or 81% of Pine Flat's capacity and much more than this year's maximum storage in the one million acre-foot reservoir in the foothills east of Fresno.

Pine Flat Reservoir storage has continued a fairly rapid seasonal decline. As of July 29, the reservoir had dropped to 274,000 acre-feet, or 27% of capacity. KRWA expects the lake's storage to bottom out at the end of August at about 160,000 acre-feet, or 16% of capacity, said Haugen. That low-point level is comfortably above a 100,000 acre-foot temperature control pool established in Pine Flat Reservoir in 1999 by KRWA member units for the Kings River Fishery Management Program. The pool helps provide cooler water in storage for trout in the reservoir and in the first several miles of river below Pine Flat Dam.