

Placer County district selling water to Central Valley

By Seth Nidever, Hanford Sentinel

HANFORD – The struggle to find additional irrigation water for Kings County's parched Westside was on full display Monday as the comment period closed on a proposed 35,000 acre-foot water transfer from Placer County Water Agency to thirsty Westlands Water District, 80,000 acres of which are in Kings County.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which operates the Central Valley Project that is contracted to supply Sacramento River water to Westlands, is brokering the deal.

The Bureau has given Westlands a 0 percent allocation this year due to drought and regulatory demands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River delta.

That means that Westlands, like other districts with permanent crops that face an imminent threat from drought, is out on the open market trying to find more of the precious wet stuff.

The water will make its way down the American River into Folsom Lake, then through the delta and a series of canals to Westlands. It could be used immediately on crops, or it might be stored in San Luis Reservoir.

Westlands is paying Placer County \$325 an acre-foot for the transfer, according to Einar Maisch, director of strategic affairs for Placer County Water Agency. That comes out to \$11.4 million.

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