

## **SHASTA VALLEY RCD POLICIES FOR THE APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS UNDER THE DISTRICT TAILWATER REDUCTION PROGRAM.**

It is the intention of the Shasta Valley RCD that funds used for projects that include a focus on tailwater reduction be used in a manner that most effectively achieves the stated goals found in the *Shasta River Tailwater Reduction Plan*. In furtherance of this intention, the Board of Directors of the Shasta Valley RCD (the “Board”) hereby adopts the following Board Policies to guide the approval and implementation of such projects.

1. The Board recognizes that the water available in the Shasta River during the irrigation season is fully appropriated<sup>1</sup> and that any increase in water consumed by one user will likely have a negative impact on other water users. As a general rule therefore, projects that increase the amount of agricultural land in irrigated production or which increase net delivered water or that extend the effective length of the irrigation season will not be considered to be consistent with the goals of the *Shasta River Tailwater Reduction Plan*.

In the case of all projects the Board may require agreements or other safeguards to prevent the improvements paid for from being used to bring new land into irrigated production or otherwise increase net consumptive use unless such increases are explicitly approved by the Board as described below.

2. To the greatest extent possible, the Board will use a defined method of prioritization when selecting projects to be implemented for tailwater reduction. This prioritization shall be consistent with, and based on, the criteria set forth in the *Shasta River Tailwater Reduction Plan*. The *Shasta River Tailwater Reduction Plan* and the scoring of projects approved under it shall be periodically updated and revised, and the current version of each shall be made available upon request.

3. Adequate project planning must be systematically completed for every water-use project under consideration utilizing the most current version of the *RCD Project Questionnaire*<sup>2</sup>. In addition, the Board will require that project participants develop an irrigation water management plan as part of any such project. At a minimum, this water management plan will: (1) describe the current irrigation system and methodologies being used in the project area; (2) identify the primary concerns with the existing system with respect to tailwater quality and quantity; (3) identify sequential planned measures to address and ameliorate these tailwater concerns. RCD staff will be available to provide assistance as needed in the plan preparation. This water management plan must be developed and adopted by each project participant before RCD resources are further dedicated toward development of a project.

4. The Board will not engage in water related projects involving adjudicated, appropriative or riparian water rights unless the project participants have provided documentation supporting their claimed water rights. In the case of projects involving pre-1914 water rights that have not been adjudicated, the Board will determine what supporting documentation (if any) is needed on a case-by-case basis.

5. When a particular source of tailwater is created by more than one landowner, a “neighborhood” planning approach to water management should be engaged in during project planning consistent with the goals set forth in the *Shasta River Tailwater Reduction Plan*.

7. Because of the uncertain legal status of long dormant water rights, the Board will not approve funding for projects if such projects involve reviving or improving irrigation systems or major components of irrigation systems that have been out of service for an uninterrupted period of 5 or more years.

8. Prior to any RCD investment in a tailwater capture/reuse system, project participants will enter into a diversion reduction agreement, in a form determined by the Board, addressing the project

---

<sup>1</sup> See California Department of Water Resources web page of a listing of all streams categorized by them as “fully appropriated”:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water\\_issues/programs/fully\\_appropriated\\_streams/](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/fully_appropriated_streams/)

<sup>2</sup> Current version dated 3/19/09

participants' obligations to both maintain and operate the capture/reuse system and manage the amount of diverted water so that it will be reduced to account for the volume of water made available through the capture/re-use system. The term of the diversion reduction agreement shall not extend beyond the useful life of the improvements implemented under the Tailwater Reduction Project. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the terms of a diversion reduction agreement shall not prevent the project participants from periodically diverting the full legal amount of their water right if necessary to maintain the protect participant's full extent of legal water rights.

9. Adaptive Management. All project participants must be willing to work with SVRCD following project completion on water management strategies to maximize reductions in tailwater creation. The project operator will be expected to formally indicate a willingness to adjust methods of operation and/or modify management of irrigation practices if monitoring and field observations indicates such changes: (1) are needed to reduce the quantity or improve the quality of tailwater, (2) are feasible to implement, and (3) will not negatively affect crop or forage production. In such a case, an appropriate adaptive management plan will be expected to be developed for inclusion in the water management plan described in 4 above. RCD staff will be available to help the project operator develop such a plan.

10. Participation in future project funding will in part be contingent on project operator's past ability to meet the intent of the above requirements.

11. Where a project is otherwise inconsistent with the above guidelines, but can be shown to further the overall goals of the RCD without significantly harming other users, the Board may approve the project after thoroughly weighing the pros and cons of such project and issuing a formal finding based on and describing an overriding community benefit.

***Approved by the SVRCD Board on January 11, 2012***