

April 3, 2015

Jeffrey Parks  
State Water Resources Control Board  
Division of Water Quality Certification Program  
PO Box 2000  
Sacramento, CA. 95812-2000

STATE WATER RESOURCES  
CONTROL BOARD

2015 APR -8 AM 10:41

DIV OF WATER RIGHTS  
SACRAMENTO

Subject: Pinecrest Lake level Modification Program

Dear Mr. Parks,

Last week I sent you a detailed reply to the proposed lowering of Pinecrest Lake levels.

I am enclosing two more documents that illustrate the confusion that emanates from Tuolumne Utilities District.

I very much believe that someone needs to come to Tuolumne County to see first hand Pinecrest Lake and to meet with both PG&E and Tuolumne Utilities District officials before they get any more water from Pinecrest Lake.

I do not know what damage may be done to the Pinecrest Lake ecological environment by taking more water from it. However if you are going to permit the taking of more water for Tuolumne Utilities District, then you must stipulate that the water be used for current users and not for the proposed thousands of new connections as suggested by TUD.

The new Environmental Impact Report may indicate that no more water should be taken from Pinecrest Lake, and that is fine. We may need the water for next year.

Sincerely,



Triant Varellas  
P O Box 386  
Soulsbyville, CA. 95372

## Seeking answers to water supply questions

To the Editor:

In the March 13 Union Democrat article on our water situation, Guy McCarthy quoted TUD general manager Scesa as saying, "There's a regulatory drought because we have enough water, but the state will not allow us to access it," referring to lowering Pinecrest Lake prior to Labor Day. This statement is incorrect. In two of the last three years, as reported in a followup article on March 17, the state has gone ahead and approved TUD requests for pre-Labor Day draw-downs of Pinecrest.

So what is the situation with Pinecrest Lake? To set the record straight, the state has never said that we cannot tap Pinecrest before Labor Day. All they have said is that if we need to do it because we are running low on water, we have to ask them first and show that we are conserving.

If our public and our leaders are to make wise decisions concerning the future of our water supply they need accurate information. If Mr. Scesa made the above statement, he owes it to the public to issue a correction.

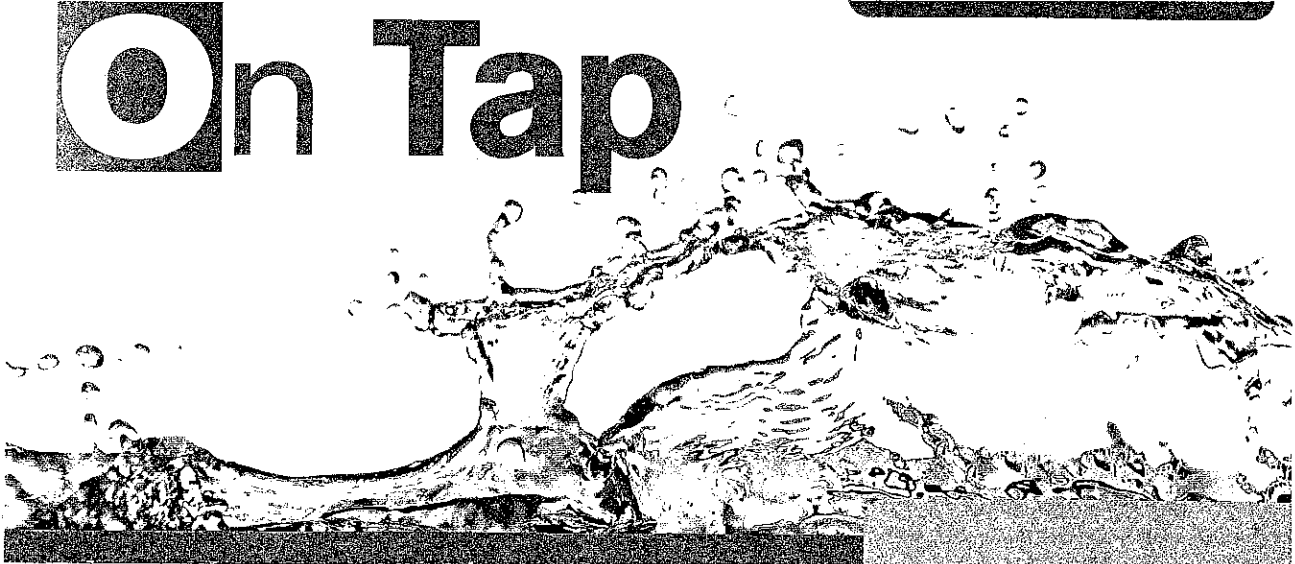
**Ralph Retherford, M.D.**

*Former member Tuolumne Utilities*

*District Board of Directors*

*Sonora*

# On Tap



## Weather Outlook Predicted to Improve

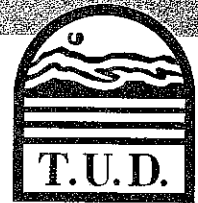
Although our area has not seen a great deal of precipitation and snow as of yet, conditions are currently better compared to last year. What does the extended weather outlook look like for Tuolumne County? This is difficult to predict. Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD) stays in contact with many weather related agencies and we try to find the best information for our planning purposes with updates from Meteorologist, Michelle Mead, from the Sacramento National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In a recent update about the weather outlook, Ms. Mead had this information to share with us, December looks favorable for seeing precipitation, but exact amounts are not certain. Temperatures are expected to remain above average for December as well which could mean less snow pack.

Ms. Mead also stated that in a recent update from the Climate Prediction Center (CPC), when you look at the December-January-February outlook, it predicts that California will revert back to a typical El Niño signal of above average precipitation probabilities across southern California, and Equal chances (33.3% of Above Normal, 33.3% of Normal, and 33.3% of Below Normal) across the north. Here in Tuolumne County, we are on the edge of equal or 33% above average rainfall.

With the probability for above normal precipitation in December, there is now a change for the seasonal drought outlook for November-February. California is now listed as "Drought remains but improves". According to NOAA, they would like to continue to **emphasize the Drought Remains statement**. In a recent excerpt from the CPC, they conclude; it is *expected that most of the state will still be in drought to some degree at the end of the winter, with significant areas still in severe drought or worse despite improvements.*

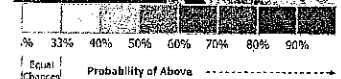
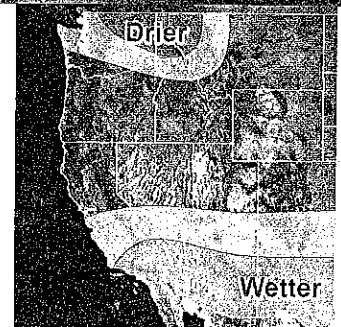
## In This Issue

- Is Your Home Ready for the Cold?
- Master Gardener of Tuolumne County
- Welcome New Board Member
- General Manager's Corner
- Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD)



## Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Dec-Jan-Feb 2014-2015



email: [info@tudwater.com](mailto:info@tudwater.com) Phone: 209-532-5536 Fax: 209-536-6485 web: [www.tudwater.com](http://www.tudwater.com)

## Is Your Home Ready for the Cold?

In the Sierra foothills, the weather is unpredictable especially in the winter months. Last year in December, this area experienced an incredibly cold storm which resulted in many broken pipes or customers without water. The coldest temperatures typically occur in January and February.

If you have not taken steps to prepare for freezing temperatures we would like to remind you again to take precautionary steps to protect your home and property for cold winter conditions which could cause pipes to burst or freeze.

Outside pipes and faucets, and pipes in unheated garages and crawl spaces are most vulnerable to freezing weather. To prevent pipes from freezing, wrap them with insulating material. Cover them with plastic and secure with tape, string, or wire. Also, remember to disconnect garden hoses.

**Don't wait for an emergency.** Find your main water shut-off valve now! If a pipe breaks, you can stop excessive water loss and flooding by turning off your main water shut-off valve. It is commonly located next to the meter, in the garage, or outdoors by the foundation. Test the valves by turning the handle to be sure it is working properly and identify it with a tag. If a main shut-off valve does not exist, it is worth having one installed now by your plumber.

**If you suspect a water main is broken, immediately contact TUD's 24-hour Customer Service at (209) 532-5536 so it can be repaired as soon as possible.** Visit the TUD website at [www.tudwater.com](http://www.tudwater.com) for more tips on how to protect your home in the winter.



### Marlys Bell a UCCE Master Gardener of Tuolumne County

Office of Agricultural Extension

Clean debris from gutters and direct rain into gardens or to rainwater storage tanks with overflow lines near the top (a hose or irrigation line) to take excess water into desired locations.

Assess possibility of erosion or standing water resulting from heavy rains. Devise ways to slow it down, spread it out and sink it into the soil. Possibilities include changing the grade (especially if is going toward the house), French drains, terracing, swales and a series of basins with one emptying into another if there is a downhill grade.

Cover bare soil with mulch to help retain moisture, protect soil structure and keep the soil warmer. It will also discourage the weeds that flourish with rain.

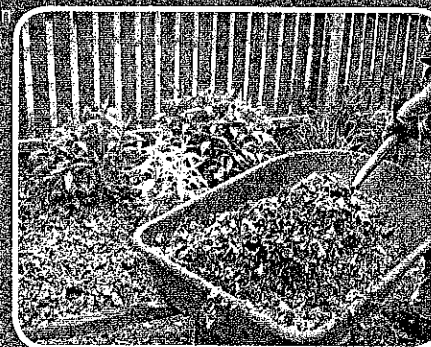
Clean up and remove dead vegetation with pests and disease likely to survive over the winter. First priorities are vegetable gardens, debris under fruit trees, and anything else showing of evidence of damage. Leaves can often be left in place as mulch in the ornamental gardens. Rake them off lawns, shred and bag them with the lawn mower and reuse where mulch is needed.

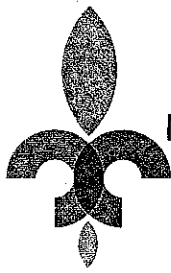
In flower gardens, consider leaving plant materials (seeds, berries, pollen) for wildlife over the winter. Dried vegetation

also provides protection for plants. If the garden is completely cleaned exposing new growth, it ought to be mulched after the first freeze.

Assess the lawn to see if it would benefit by overseeding, (it may need to wait until spring) aerating or a thin layer of compost. Keep the turf longer during the cold weather.

All plants should be well hydrated in cold weather and especially before hard freezes making appropriate winterizing of irrigation system challenging. For starters, substantially reduce the number of days and minutes on the irrigation clock. Better yet, turn it off and on again when plants or circumstances (e.g. new plants not yet established) indicate it is clearly needed. Wrap all exposed pipes, turn off faucets, remove hoses and drain or blow out irrigation systems. Put end caps back on but leave loose enough so any excess water can escape. If during the winter it becomes necessary to use the system, tighten the end caps while in use but then flush and drain if cold weather is expected. If rainwater storage is available, that may be a simpler source to get needed water to plants needing it.





## WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

## Welcome Our New TUD Board of Directors!

The District has three newly elected Board of Directors that will start their terms in December. We would like you to get to know our new Board of Directors who will be joining Board members John Maciel and Kent Johnson.

**Ron Kopf** – Elected to serve two years

Ron is a graduate of Ohio State University with a BS degree in Land Planning and Landscape Architecture. He has more than thirty years' experience working with local stakeholders, governmental agencies, consultants, community leaders and the business community to identify and resolve planning, entitlement and development issues with viable workable solutions.

As the Executive Director of Tuolumne County Business Council since March 2011, Ron works with local businesses and our elected officials to facilitate a positive business climate and family wage jobs to enable more of our young families to stay in the County.

Ron has lived in Sonora for over 13 years and has served on several committees and non-profit boards and currently serves on the County Planning Committee, the Sonora BIA Board and the Visitors Bureau Board. He and his wife Elizabeth have two daughters, Jordan and Lexi who are starting medical school in 2016 and are graduates of Sonora High School and UC Irvine. Ron enjoys fitness, golf, mountain biking and snowboarding with his daughters.

**Ron W. Ringen** – Elected to serve four years  
Ron has been involved with Tuolumne County his entire life starting with his parent's family vacations here until he became a full-time resident in 1978. Ron has worked in the construction and repair business, home inspection, structural pest inspection and thermography business as a professional for over 51 years. At the beginning of 2012, Ron was first appointed to the TUD Board of Directors where he served for 11 months. His previous knowledge of the TUD system and long-time interest in water resources enable him to understand the complexity of our County's water issues.

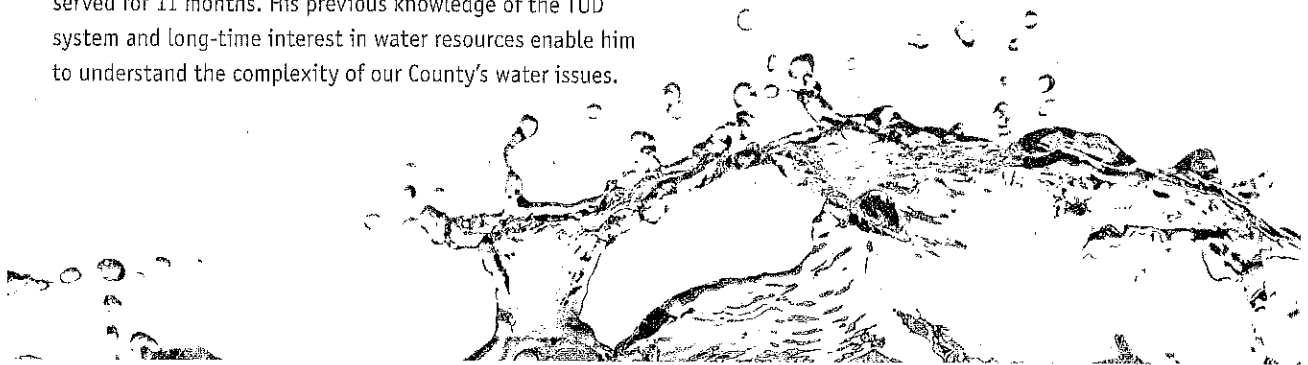
Ron has attended all the TUD Board meetings and all the numerous committee meetings for years and continues to do so.

He is extremely immersed in the County having served on the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors Planning Committee, participating in the County Natural Resources Committee and the County Water Agency Policy Advisory Committee and for the past year and a half as Vice Chairman of the County Planning Commission. Although Ron has a wide range of interests, he is now focused almost entirely on alternative energy and water issues, especially as it relates to Tuolumne County, local agriculture, the environment and the local economy. With the little time left, Ron is building his zero energy home.

**Jim Grinnell** – Elected to serve four years

Jim is an easy-going guy with a degree in Engineering, plus advanced degrees in Industrial Administration and Health Administration. He formerly was a management consultant and has experience in land use, production control, inventory control, cost reduction, transportation, and profit improvement.

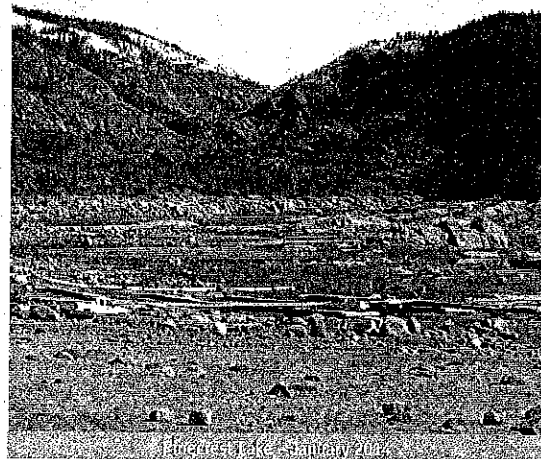
He serves on the Veteran and Family Advisory Council for the Veterans Administration Palo Alto Health Care System. As a member of the Tuolumne County Commission on Aging, Jim co-founded the Senior Fair, now called Senior Expo. He is on the Area 12 Agency on Aging's Advisory Council. At TUD, he hopes to be the Board liaison with local agencies, such as the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors, the Sonora City Council, and other state and mountain county organizations.



## General Manager's Corner

By Tom Scesa, [tscesa@tudwater.com](mailto:tscesa@tudwater.com)

A look back to 2014, makes me reflect on how vulnerable we are in respect to our water supply. Tuolumne County's main source of water is the snow pack. This past year we saw unprecedented lack of snow and precipitation for the area. With this lack of snow to feed our reservoirs, we were all asked to make changes. For TUD it was operational and looking for alternative water sources. Our goal is always to provide all of our customers with quality drinking water, sanitation and water to fight any fires that may appear in our area. We are grateful that we live in a community where we all pulled together and conservation helped us make it through this challenging time. Again we want to thank all of our customers for their conservation efforts.



Looking forward, TUD management and staff are preparing for 2015. Although we are all hoping for a better snow pack this winter and more precipitation, we have begun preparations for continued drought conditions for our region. We have continued close communication with Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), who own and operate the two reservoirs, Pinecrest Lake and Lyons Reservoir that we receive water from. Both of our agencies are viewing statistical and historical data to forecast the needed water

supply for this coming year. As you may already be aware, it is a balancing act between what snow pack we receive, predicted temperatures and customer demand. We will keep you posted on these activities and invite you to become more involved by attending our regular Board meetings held twice a month at our Board room. For more information regarding the Board meetings, I encourage you to visit our website, [www.tudwater.com](http://www.tudwater.com) and click on the Board page.

### Board of Directors

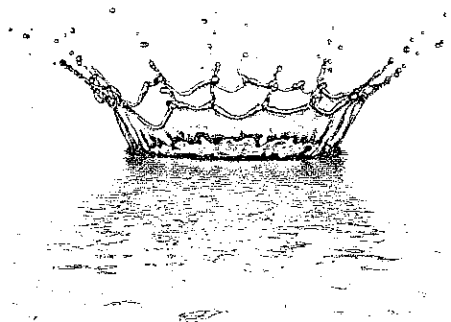
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On Tap is published to keep Tuolumne Utilities District customers informed about issues and upcoming events. If you have any story ideas or suggestions, please mail them to Lisa Westbrook, at 18885 Nugget Blvd., Sonora, CA 95370 or email at [lisaw@tuolumneutilities.com](mailto:lisaw@tuolumneutilities.com).