

enterprise



Sports Summerdarts program sees a record turnout

State: City can ask for more time

Water discharge rules have flexibility

By Jonathan Edwards
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

Davis could push back deadlines to clean up its water by as much as a decade and hold off tripling residents' water bills, according to a state official.

A new law allows cities to apply for further extension on requirements to clean up the water they discharge into the

environment, said Ken Landau, assistant executive officer for the Central Valley State Water Regional Control Board.

That would allow Davis to push back a 2017 deadline to clean up the water it discharges into the delta, which has far too much salt, selenium and boron to meet the upcoming benchmark. Those new limits, city officials have

been saying, are driving a \$325 million project that would pump Sacramento River water into homes and businesses in both cities.

Davis also would avoid its share of the project — \$160 million, which officials estimate would triple residents' monthly water rate from about \$35 now to \$109 in five years.

The project is a good one, City Council member Sue Greenwald told a group of some 40 residents

last week, but it hits residents' pocketbooks hard, particularly residents on fixed incomes. She advocates cutting costs at every opportunity, saying it's unwise to overbuild the project, given the "extraordinary burden on the ratepayer."

"If the financing doesn't work out, or if costs can't be controlled, we have options," she wrote in an oped piece published last week in The Enterprise.

"We are likely to have more

negotiating room with the Water Resources Control Board in the future regarding salinity.

"We could dig more deep wells, which is far less expensive; we could intensify progressive rates and other conservation efforts, and use the intermediate aquifer for landscape work."

She added that she is bothered by the "scare tactics" other politicians and officials are using to

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FRED GLADDIS/ENTERPRISE PHOTO

Water — it gives us life, and it soothes our souls. Here's a quintessential look at water in Davis, at the fountain in front of Tres Hermanas restaurant at Second and H streets near the train depot and the "Solar Intersections" public art.

Water rate informational meetings start

By Crystal Lee
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

The town is gushing with questions about the likely tripling of water rates by 2016 and, on Thursday, Davis ratepayers will have a chance to get answers at the first in a series of community meetings.

The meeting will start at 7 p.m. at the Stonegate Country Club, 919 Lake Blvd. in West Davis. Subsequent meetings, each starting at 7 p.m., are set for:

- June 30: Tandem Properties Building, 3500 Anderson Road, North Davis;
- July 14: Redwood Park Meeting Room, 1001 Anderson Road, Central Davis;
- July 21: Fire Station 33, 425 Mace Blvd., South Davis; and
- July 28: Wildhorse Golf Club Clubhouse, 2323 Rockwell Drive., East Davis.

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How California's farmers weathered the drought

By Kelly Zito
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

California's most recent drought cost consumers more than \$1.5 billion in lost hydropower and led to the cancellation of two commercial salmon fishing seasons, but its impacts on agriculture were more mixed than previously thought, according to a water policy report released Thursday.

While water shortages drove down revenues in some farming districts

nearly 20 percent, statewide, the industry posted some of the highest sales totals on record.

"A lot of districts suffered and faced drought restrictions, but in other counties they had record crop plantings," said Juliet Christian-Smith, researcher at Oakland's Pacific Institute.

The 107-page study, titled "Impacts of the 2007-2009 California Drought: What Really Happened?" examined state and federal data on crops, employment, river flows, wildlife surveys, salinity levels and

other indicators in an effort to gauge the economic fallout of three consecutive years with well-below-normal precipitation.

Researchers found that while fallowed farmland and parched irrigation canals drew much media and political attention between 2007 and 2009, many of the biggest and most productive farms with senior water rights in the San Joaquin Valley received the maximum volume of water they requested from state and federal operators of the California water

system. And even those that received a small fraction of their requests managed to find other water.

As a result, the state's nearly 82,000 farms and ranches sold just under \$35 billion in goods in 2009, the third-highest year on record.

In contrast, anemic river flows during the drought cut the state's hydropower production in half, forcing utilities to turn to more expensive and less eco-friendly

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Judge grants 7-year West Sac gang injunction

ENTERPRISE STAFF

A Yolo Superior Court judge on Monday issued a final judgment granting a seven-year anti-gang injunction to the city of West Sacramento.

Judge Kathleen White ruled that the Broderick Boys are a criminal street gang that creates a public nuisance and that has done irreparable harm to residents who live inside a "safety zone," a three-square-mile area encompassing portions of West Sacramento's Broderick and Bryte communities.

White wrote that the seven-year span should give police the time they need to reduce gang activity.

The injunction prohibits alleged members of the Broderick Boys gang from associating in public, intimidating others, possessing weapons or graffiti tools, trespassing or possessing drugs and alcohol within the "safety zone." It also establishes a curfew stretching from 10 p.m. to sunrise.

She presided over a 54-day trial with 286 witnesses and 800 exhibits ending last December. She issued a proposed ruling in March.

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Language program targets young minds at the right time

By Anne Ternus-Bellamy
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

In the airy and colorful Mojoflow studio overlooking Second Street in downtown Davis, serious fun is being had.

Ten kids ranging in age from 2 to 8 are playing with Hula Hoops, bean bags and rubber balls. There's an obstacle course to navigate; a big, multi-colored parachute to play with; and a rousing game of red-light, green-light under way. Or should we say a game of luz roja, luz verde?

Because along with all the fun is a more serious goal: learning Spanish.

It's all part of Lango, a

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FRED GLADDIS/ENTERPRISE PHOTO

Helen Hadani uses Hula Hoops to lead youngsters — including Ashlyn Swanson, 6, and Ryan Wright, 8 — in a fun activity during a recent Lango lesson in Davis. Lango teaches foreign languages to kids from 18 months to 11 years old in a fun and engaging way.

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WEATHER

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LANGUAGE: Program complements other Davis options, uses games, music

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foreign language immersion program brought to Davis two years ago by local resident Helen Hadani. Lango offers lessons in both Mandarin and Spanish, with an emphasis on games and music, to children as young as 18 months all the way up to age 11.

The program has grown steadily more popular in the past two years, not only here in Davis but around the country, with new Lango programs popping up everywhere.

"More and more parents are realizing just how important it is for their children to know another language," Hadani explained.

A recent article in The New York Times, "The Bilingual Advantage," may spell out why.

According to cognitive neuroscientist Ellen Bialystok, a researcher at York University in Toronto who has spent 40 years studying bilingualism, the benefits of regularly using two or more languages start young and continue well into old age.

Bialystok said her research shows bilingual children as young as 5 or 6 years old showed more sophisticated cognitive abilities than their monolingual counterparts.

"We asked all the children if a certain illogical sentence was grammatically correct: 'Apples grow on noses.' The monolingual children couldn't answer. They'd say, 'That's silly' and they'd stall. But bilingual children would say, in their own words, 'It's silly, but it's grammatically correct.'

"The bilinguals, we found, manifested a cognitive system with the ability to attend to important information and ignore the less important," Bialystok told The Times.

What it comes down to, she said, is the effect of bilingualism on the brain's executive control system. That system, she told The Times, "is what makes it possible for you to hold two different things in your mind at one time and switch between them."

"If you have two languages and you use them regularly, the way the brain's networks work is that every time you speak, both languages pop up and the executive control system has to sort through everything and attend to what's relevant in the moment.

"(Bilinguals) use that system more, and it's that regular use that makes that system more efficient."

It's a lasting advantage, her research found, with normally aging bilinguals continuing to show better cognitive functioning than normally aging monolinguals.

Additionally, she found the regular use of two languages appears to delay the onset of Alzheimer's symptoms. Examinations of the medical records of 400 Alzheimer's patients found that on average, bilinguals showed Alzheimer's symptoms five or six years later than those who spoke only one language, The Times reported.

None of which is news to Hadani.

The mother of two young girls has a Ph.D. in developmental psychology from Stanford, with an emphasis on language development. Prior to starting Lango here, she was a lecturer in human development at UC Davis and taught classes on early childhood development. She also carries with her a long history of multilingualism.

"I grew up hearing and speaking several



Grace Hadani, 4, races through an obstacle course during a recent Lango lesson with her mom Helen.

FRED GLADDIS/ENTERPRISE PHOTO

languages," she said. "Between them, my parents spoke five languages."

Hadani's mother hailed from Argentina and spoke Spanish and Cantonese. Her father is from Burma and speaks Burmese and a Chinese dialect, Fujian. English was their only common language, so that's what was spoken in their home.

However, Hadani said, "If my parents had known how important it was to become bilingual, my mom would have spoken more Spanish to (my brothers and me)."

Now that she's a parent herself, to 7-year-old Ruby and 4-year-old Grace, Hadani feels strongly about both of her kids "growing up knowing at least two languages, if not more."

So when she learned about the Lango program during a visit to Berkeley a few years ago, it was a natural fit.

While there already were several foreign language programs in Davis, ranging from Chinese schools to the Teach Another Language to Kids (TALK) program to the school district's full Spanish Immersion program, all were geared toward school-age children, Hadani noted.

Lango, on the other hand, focuses on a younger age group, and for good reason, she said.

"There has been tons of research on toddlers and even infants showing that when we are born, we're able to distinguish any sounds in any language, as young as six months old," she explained. "But even 12 or 18 months later, if (children) are not exposed to the language, they lose that ability."

"It doesn't mean that later in life you wouldn't be able to learn that language; it's that the natural ability goes away."

Lango divides students into three age groups: 18 months to 3 years; 3 to 5 years; and 5 to 11 years. Within the age groups are beginning, intermediate and advanced groupings. Some of the students have parents who speak more than one language and may know a bit more than others, but many are completely new to the language.

For the very youngest students, parents participate in the weekly 45-minute class, which revolves mostly around games and music. The preschool-aged group do much of the same, but also have a fun sticker-based workbook and flashcards. Particularly popular for that age group, Hadani said, is the music.

"Singing is a great way to get the accent down," she said. "Even if they don't understand the words, they are still getting that."

Even the older students love the music — students like 8-year-old Ryan Wright.

"He listens to the CD (of music) all the time," said mom Lisa Baskin Wright. "He loves the music, the singing, the dancing. ... It's fabulous. It's just so fun."

For his part, Ryan says, "I like to learn a new language."

Currently, Hadani offers Lango classes in both Davis and Sacramento. There are three sessions during the school year and a summer session that gets under way July 11. Most students take a weekly 45-minute class, though some double up and some even take both Mandarin and Spanish.

During the school year, Lango classes take place at several preschools in town, as well as after school at some elementary schools and at the Mojoflow studio downtown. In addition to Mandarin and Spanish, Hadani plans to begin offering French soon as well.

For more information on the Davis Lango program, contact Hadani at helen@langodavis.com or (530) 220-0453. To learn more about Lango itself, visit <http://www.lango-kids.com>.

Lango students, Hadani said, "are not going to become fluent after a session or two, but they will pick it up, and research shows the earlier you expose them, the easier it will be later to learn a language."

The goal, she added, "is to build a strong foundation for learning a second or even a third language as soon as possible."

— Reach Anne Ternus-Bellamy at aternus@davisenterprise.net or (530) 747-8051.

TIME: Impact on farmers downstream is the key

From Page A1

make it seem as if there are no other options.

Salty water causes problems for farmers downstream. Salty water limits what they can grow, forcing them to plant less profitable crops, which means fewer jobs, Landau said.

"Farmers can simply grow fewer crops," Landau said. "Sometimes they can't grow a crop."

The state will nail Davis with stiff fines if the city doesn't meet the upcoming requirements or apply for and secure an extension, he added. The state hasn't set the benchmarks just yet, but salt levels in both Davis and Woodland water are "far above anything we would come up with."

With no limits in place, it's hard to say how much the state would ding Davis. It's safe to say it would total in the tens if not hundreds of thousands of dollars.

"Bottom line: It will add up to a whole lot of money over time," Landau said.

Tracy, a San Joaquin Valley city of about 82,000, bought itself some time last month by suing the state and winning a reprieve from "stringent" wastewater requirements, said Dan Sodergren, the city's attorney. Without it, Tracy was looking at spending \$120 million to build a reverse osmosis system, which would have cleaned up already-used water before chucking it into the delta.

That would have meant

"There are people all over the state who are suffering from the same problem."

Melissa Throme water lawyer who represented city of Tracy in lawsuit against state

"a significant increase" to water bills and put the hurt on ratepayers, Sodergren added.

The judge in the case ordered the state to go back and analyze the economic impact Tracy's water requirements would have, Landau said, but it's not about the burden on a particular town; it's about the big picture.

"There are economic costs and benefits on all sides," he said. "It's not just a matter of 'is it going to cost the city of Tracy a lot of money?'"

The law requires the water control board to factor in economic impact on a more regional basis, which would include the cost to ratepayers. However, the water board also would factor in the economic boon to farmers downstream who can plant a greater diversity of crops with better water, the money residents save by not installing water softeners as well as the money saved by buying water heaters less often.

"That doesn't mean because it costs a lot you don't have to make people

do it," Landau said. "It means you need to consider the cost as part of the whole benefit and detriment to the regulation."

Tracy's win is not relevant to Davis, Landau said, because the limits are different — Davis is north of the delta and anything it pumps out is going to hit everyone downstream.

Therefore, Davis and Woodland face higher standards, said Melissa Throme, the Sacramento-based water lawyer who represented Tracy. Throme lives in North Davis Meadows and represented the city of Woodland in a separate but related water matter.

It's not an apples-to-apples comparison, so it's hard to say if Davis or Woodland would get a similar reprieve, she said.

"There are people all over the state who are suffering from the same problem," Throme said.

She represents clients who are charging their residents \$120 per month to provide sewer service, which doesn't include fresh water.

So \$100 a month, even though it's triple Davis' going rate, is "not beyond the pale."

The cities could kick the water discharge can down the road, but they'll have to deal with it eventually, she said. The limits aren't going away.

— Reach Jonathan Edwards at jedwards@davisenterprise.net or (530) 747-8052. Comment on this story at www.davisenterprise.com

WATER: Ratepayers may submit written protests until Sept. 6

From Page A1

The city is proposing annual rate hikes over the next five years to fund a surface water project that would pump water from the Sacramento River and eliminate Davis' reliance on groundwater. Davis has partnered with Woodland on the project. UC Davis also has a small stake.

Davis would pitch in about \$160 million on the estimated \$325 million project.

That means the average single-family home in Davis that now pays \$34.75 a month for water may see their bill rise to \$44.89 in 2012, according to city estimates. The monthly amount may rise to \$57.50 in 2013, \$68.46 in 2014, \$81.16 in 2015 and, finally, \$96.38 in 2016.

Rates are expected to stabilize after 2017, when the project is slated for completion.

Commercial property owners would pay the same percentage increases as residential ratepayers. Actual rate increases depend on water usage.

The new rates are effective Dec. 1 unless a majority of ratepayers — at least 8,202 of Davis' 16,402 ratepayers — submit a formal protest to the city by Sept. 6.

Before the city can adopt the new fees, Proposition 218 requires noticing, which gives ratepayers an opportunity to voice their opinion on the higher rates. If the city receives a majority protest, it cannot impose the new fees.

Details on how to protest are included in the Proposition 218 notices, which should be landing in mailboxes within the next couple of weeks.

Project leaders, which include City Council members from Davis and Woodland, say the cities' groundwater resource is unsustainable in terms of quality, supply and compliance with state and federal regulations. Others argue that the city should fight the requirements or postpone the project, given the high cost of water projects and the bad economic times.

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