

Iron County water district accomplishes monumental steps in importing water to Cedar Valley

Written by [or for St. George News](#)

March 21, 2019



CEDAR CITY — The Central Iron County Water Conservancy District recently secured 26,275 acre-feet of groundwater water rights from Utah’s West Desert.

According to a press release from the CICWCD, the district has worked since 2006 to acquire rights that will eventually lead to importing water to Cedar Valley from Wah Wah and Pine valleys, which are 50 miles northwest of Cedar City.

“The next step to bring this water here will be the approval of an Environmental Impact Statement,” Paul Monroe, general manager of the district, said in the release.

The district took another big step on March 14 when it received \$250,000 from the Utah Legislature thanks to Southern Utah Rep. Rex Shipp and Sen. Evan Vickers. This money will be matched with \$500,000 over the next two years by the district to streamline and complete the environmental impact statement.

The money will be well spent to help secure the future of Cedar Valley

“State officials understand and believe this is a good project,” Shipp said. “The money will be well spent to help secure the future of Cedar Valley.”

On Feb. 27, after nearly 13 years since the original filing and five years of litigation and mediation, 5th District Judge Keith Barnes approved the settlement of water rights between the CICWCD, Beaver County, the Division of Water Rights and State Institutional Trust Lands Association.

The approval of these water rights comes at a significant point in time for Cedar Valley, the press release states. The Utah State Engineer is currently developing a groundwater management plan of which the goal is to bring the aquifer back into equilibrium.

Currently the state estimates that Cedar Valley receives 21,000 acre-feet of water into our basin annually. With 28,000 acre-feet usage, there is an annual deficit of 7,000 acre-feet, which has caused aquifer water levels to drop at an increasing rate over the past couple of decades.

When it comes to conservation, we are leading the State in agricultural efficient products

“We have done a good job the last couple of years working on the low hanging fruit,” said Monroe. “We have built several diversions and are utilizing gravel pits to recharge our water which at times was going to waste. When it comes to conservation, we are leading the State in agricultural efficient products that promote smart watering techniques in our ag community.”

Last year Vickers helped the district acquired a \$200,000 grant to improve center pivot irrigation and will retrofit over 20 pivots this year.

Read more: Lawmakers approve funding to convert agricultural sprinklers as part of Iron County conservation efforts

However, district officials say there is still room for improvement and that residents can all do a little better, be more efficient and use water resources wisely.

This year the snow station near Webster Flat is 196 percent of median as of March 15 compared to last year at 60 percent.

“We hope to offset these past few years of drought and put a lot of this runoff water back into the ground,” Brent Hunter, chairman of the district, said in the press release.

District officials said that community members and entities in Cedar Valley are beginning to understand the value of conservation and recharge, but added that recharge and conservation alone will not meet the increasing water needs of the valley; water must be imported as well.

For more information or questions, contact CICWCD at [435-865-9901](tel:435-865-9901).