

PRESS RELEASE

Central Iron County Water Conservancy District

88 East Fiddlers Canyon Rd. Ste. A

Cedar City, UT 84721

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WATER DISTRICT ACCOMPLISHES MONUMENTAL STEPS IN IMPORTING WATER TO
CEDAR VALLEY

CEDAR CITY, UT (March 15, 2019)- The Central Iron County Water Conservancy District recently secured 26,275 acre-feet of groundwater water rights from Utah's West Desert.

Since 2006, the District has worked 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 (EIS)," said Paul Monroe, General Manager of District.

The District took another big step on Thursday when it received \$250,000 from the legislature thanks to the hard work of Representative Rex Shipp and Senator Evan Vickers. This money will be matched with \$500,000 over the next two years by the District to streamline and complete the EIS.

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

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

The approval of these water rights comes at a significant point in time for Cedar Valley. The Utah State Engineer is currently developing a Groundwater Management Plan of which the goal is to bring our aquifer back into equilibrium.

Currently the State estimates that Cedar Valley receives 21,000 acre-feet of water into our basin annually. We use 28,000 thus we have 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.

“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 Senator Vickers helped the District acquired a \$200,000 grant to improve center pivot irrigation and will retrofit over 20 pivots this year. There is still room for improvement. We can all do a little better, be more efficient and use what we have wisely.

This year the snow station near Webster Flat is 196% of median as of March 15 compared to last year at 60%. “We hope to offset these past few years of drought and put a lot of this runoff water back into the ground,” said Brent Hunter, Chairman of the District.

Community members and entities in Cedar Valley are beginning to understand the value of conservation and recharge. However, 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.

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