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# \$1.5M on tap for groundwater boost

The Record

Published Tuesday, November 4, 2003

An additional \$1.5 million for a Stockton-area groundwater-recharge project is included in an appropriations bill in the U.S. House of Representatives, Rep. Richard Pombo announced Monday.

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The money, if approved, would nearly double the amount of money given by Congress to date for a project to restore the severely overdrafted groundwater basin underlying the eastern part of San Joaquin County.

Officials at several water agencies are trying to percolate water back into the aquifer in order to restore groundwater levels and push back a line of intruding saltwater that threatens the aquifer, a major source of the area's drinking and irrigation water.

Pombo, R-Tracy, made the announcement at a ceremony at Stockton East Water District, where officials have built three ponds that will be flooded with water. The water will eventually percolate into the basin.

More than two dozen water officials and politicians attended the ceremony, which marked the completion of the project's first phase.

The first of the three ponds was filled with water in May. Stockton East Water District Superintendent John Yoshimura said about 6 inches of water a day may seep into the ground.

The project, dubbed the Farmington Groundwater Recharge Program, is expected to expand in the next several years. Water district officials are looking for area farmers willing to lease or sell farmland for percolation projects.



Stockton, CA  
Wednesday, Nov 5, 2003



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In all, the project is expected to cost \$33.5 million, the bulk of which will come from federal coffers. The goal is to spread 35,000 acre-feet of water annually on farmland in order to restore the region's groundwater supply.

Groundwater in San Joaquin County is routinely pumped out of the ground at a rate faster than it is replenished by rain. The total overdraft is estimated to be 2 million acre-feet of water. An acre-foot of water is roughly 326,000 gallons, or enough to meet five people's needs for a year.

The \$1.5 million request was made jointly by Pombo and Rep. Dennis Cardoza, D-Merced.



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