



## **New weather station unveiled in upper Merced River watershed in Yosemite National Park**

*The data will provide a host of benefits to MID and others*

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Merced Irrigation District joined with Yosemite National Park officials today in announcing the installation of a new snow and weather station in the high reaches of the Merced River watershed in the central Sierra Nevada.

The data it provides will greatly enhance forecasting by Yosemite National Park, as well as MID, the National Weather Service and the California Department of Water Resources.

“This station will provide crucial data about snowpack and runoff not only to MID but also to several other entities who will benefit in their forecasting,” said MID General Manager John Sweigard. “We appreciate the work and cooperation of all the partners who brought this project to completion, especially considering the remote and sensitive nature of the area in which the station is installed.”

Merced Irrigation District will use the information to support its operations and management of Lake McClure and New Exchequer Dam, located in the foothills several miles west of Yosemite National Park. MID provides irrigation deliveries from Lake McClure to approximately 2,200 growers – the vast majority of which are farming on fewer than 50 acres of small family farms in eastern Merced County.

In recent year, MID has taken significant steps to modernize its facilities and is continuing to pursue the most advanced technology possible to help manage limited water supplies in the region. The weather station is a key component of that effort.

The data will provide immediate benefits to MID such as:

- Informing future environmental restoration efforts and projects on the lower Merced River
- Improving water quality in Eastern Merced County
- Enhancing operations of Lake McClure to ensure the best decisions are being made for water storage and flood control

The weather station sensors are able collect data about precipitation as well as air temperature, pressure, humidity, solar radiation, soil moisture, wind speed and wind direction. Equally important, the station will be able to measure snow surface temperature, depth and density. Collectively the data provides enhanced information about the quantity of water within the snowpack. The station is one of 11 such facilities in the park.

The station was installed over the course of two weeks in July with support from MID staff. It is located within the foot print of the Vogelsang High Sierra Camp at just over 10,000 feet above sea level. Currently, this is the highest elevation snow station within the Yosemite National Park boundary. The station is solar powered, fully functional and reporting data to California Data Exchange Center with the designation of FLV. Merced Irrigation District is the station operator.

The new station was funded by California Department of Water Resources Forecast Coordinated Operations (DWR-FCO) Grant, and Bureau of Reclamation WaterSmart grant.

Yosemite National Park officials said the new station will provide the park and others with multiple benefits.

“The Vogelsang weather station is a significant addition to Yosemite's ability to understand weather and climate at the park's highest elevations,” said Cicely Muldoon, Yosemite National Park Superintendent. “We are grateful to our partners on this important project that will benefit everybody.”

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