

18 March 2016

To the Members of the State Water Resources Control Board:

As a landowner, farmer and business woman in the Sacramento Valley in Northern California, I am writing today to beseech the State Water Resources Control Board and other involved agencies to quickly work together to maximize the water supplies available for all CVP authorized purposes, including fish & wildlife, as well as waterfowl, agricultural, municipal and industrial and power generation purposes.

The Sacramento River Settlement Contractors (SRSC) are the most senior water rights holders on the Sacramento River. The suggestion that Shasta Reservoir, the largest storage facility in the CVP, be operated in such a manner as to significantly delay SRSC water diversions by more than a month or longer than they are entitled to divert under their Settlement Contracts and senior water rights will have grave consequences for many of us down stream.

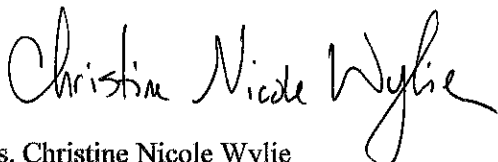
As we have done before, landowners and farmers like myself are ready to voluntarily take actions to help conserve storage in Shasta, but holding off diversions until late May to early June would decimate agriculture and related economies in the Sacramento Valley. It would prevent me from planting a crop this year and in future years, and cause significant hardship to my operation, my family, and the regional economy. A farmer does not work alone but with a large network of industries that would loose jobs and business if agriculture was to not get water during planting season. It would also affect other beneficial environmental activities and severely affect other species. Our plants would not understand that we need them to start late and still be done maturing at the same time. The wildlife that depends on our open space to have water available will not use their GPS to locate other resources. Without water, we loose the ability to farm, and with that goes future generations ability to create safe places for migrating birds.

Today, Shasta Reservoir has more than 3,000,000 acre-feet in storage; with the March storms, Shasta storage will likely approach the 4,000,000 acre-feet mark by early April. We all agree that the winter-run Chinook salmon must be protected. However, I beg you to take any and all necessary steps to work with the Bureau of Reclamation and others to immediately develop a CVP operations plans for all of the diverse needs that depend on water from the CVP, instead waiting until April or May.

My family have been farming in Colusa and Glenn counties for six generations now. We feel a great fulfillment to know that our rice, wheat, plums and other crops have fed so many people, both stateside and overseas. In times of prosperity and economic depressions, our local farmers have been working on how to produce the best food while maintaining the balance of local resources. Growing up, we never felt entitled or ungrateful for the opportunity to farm. I find it a great blessing and honor that I not only get to grow some of the highest quality crops in the world, but I also get to be a steward to the land. And that is really what farming and being a land owner is all about: stewardship. We need water to properly take care of the soil and keep the farms going so future farmers, ranchers and conservationists will still have some land to take care of. We know how precious water is and treat it with the greatest respect. I removed my lawn at my house 10 years ago in favor of drought resistant plants because my heart knew the water was better allocated for a beneficial purpose like agriculture. I cant think of a greater benefit and nothing more necessary than food.

This land has been in production for numerous generations in my family and your actions could potentially change the future landscape of my farm and the Sacramento Valley. I plead of you to evaluate this impact as you make your decisions.

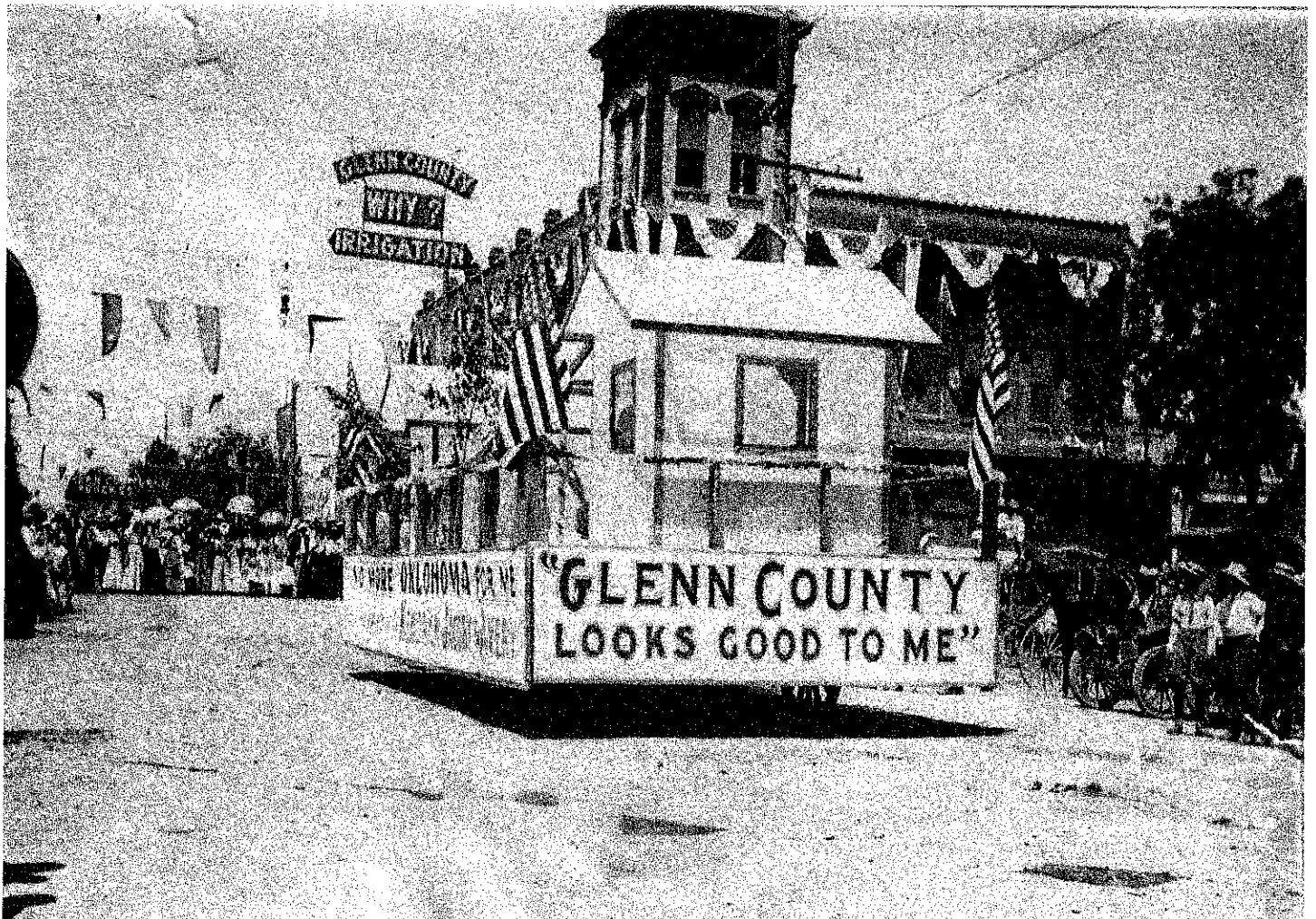
With great appreciation,



Miss. Christine Nicole Wylie



1914:
The Fourth of July parade in Willows reminds us that water stewardship has always been important to Californians and farmers.



And though the dust bowl had not hit yet, this 1920's parade reminds us how many came from the east looking to farm in the west. Water management and the ability to grow a wide assortment of crops helped California shine, bringing with it industry and commerce. A loss of agriculture is a loss of vibrancy to any community, both economically and deprives the whole population of fresh, locally grown produce, grains, eggs, meat and so much more. Please find a way to get everyone together so we can keep this amazing resource alive for future generations

Photos from www.cityofwillows.org