

## Bob Whalen: Temperance Flat dam offers many benefits

By Bob  
Whalen

The city of Clovis has not dug a new well in over a decade. Instead, Clovis has chosen a holistic approach to water management.

Recharge basins are abundant and have been strategically placed throughout the community allowing water to slowly percolate below to the Valley's aquifer. Clovis citizens enjoy refreshing rain and snow melt from our surface water treatment plant which has been incorporated into the community's water delivery system. In addition, our waste water treatment facility has turned sewer water into tertiary treated water which can be utilized for irrigation purposes for urban and agricultural users. Furthermore, the layout of our new growth areas has encouraged and continues to encourage reduced water use for our urban landscape.

Clovis Mayor Pro-Tem Bob Whalen Andrew Shinn Special to The Bee

As a result of those efforts, we have slowly stabilized the Clovis aquifer. We know this because our depth to groundwater has remained constant even during the worst drought in recent memory and despite a significant increase in population. To maintain this holistic approach, we need the state to join us in our efforts by providing more water storage for California. That brings us to the San Joaquin River and the proposed dam at Temperance Flat.

I am convinced there is no harder working river anywhere than the San Joaquin. If you look northeast on a clear day from the taller buildings in downtown Fresno you can see alpenglow from Mammoth Mountain which is only 67 miles away as the crow flies. Those of us who have hiked the Sierra, specifically the John Muir Trail, have walked by the San Joaquin's headwaters in the Mammoth Mountain region. In that short distance of 67 miles the San Joaquin River and its feeder rivers provide gorgeous scenery, a vibrant ecosystem, hydroelectric power at multiple points for users throughout California, opportunities for recreation, water for hatcheries, potable water for a thirsty population, food that is served on tables all over the world and now the river is being asked to restore a salmon run. At the same time we are asking so much from the San Joaquin, we also demand that it not flood our Valley and assist us in reclaiming valuable land that can be utilized for productive purposes; whether they be agricultural, urban or environmental.

It is a lot to ask of one river over a short distance, but the San Joaquin has always served us as long as we steward it well. Unfortunately, as increased demands are placed on the San Joaquin, good stewardship has become increasingly difficult. On Oct. 13, the California Water Commission (the group which will determine how the 2014 water bond money will be spent) met in Clovis and heard a great deal about the need for more storage, specifically at Temperance Flat. We can only hope that through the emotion of our pleas, they listened to the reasons that justify our request.

Fortunately, thanks to Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Tulare, the Draft Feasibility Study and the Environmental Impact Report for Temperance Flat have been completed and have shown the viability of additional water storage at that location. A new water storage facility at Temperance Flat will allow us to continue to improve our stewardship of the San Joaquin and provide additional surface water which has become an important component of our holistic approach to providing water for our cities in the Valley. In addition, sustainable water flow on the San Joaquin will provide the best chance for a viable salmon run and improve opportunities to maintain the fragile San Joaquin-Sacramento River Delta



ecosystem.

The San Joaquin River has been a vital source for sustaining life for us since our beginnings. We have long argued for access to more surface water to improve water quality, deliver water to those who don't have access to potable water, and to avoid subsidence. We can only hope the California Water Commission heard, and understood, that in order to continue to support a holistic approach to water management which the cities of Clovis and Fresno have implemented, they must allocate the funds necessary to build Temperance Flat. Finally, and most importantly, by providing these funds, they will join us in a healthy approach to water management which will allow us and other communities to be good stewards of our water and provide that most valuable resource to our citizens.

Bob Whalen is mayor pro-tem for the city of Clovis, a chief deputy district attorney for Fresno County and a professor of criminal law.