

GENERAL MANAGER
Exeter, Ivanhoe & Stone Corral Irrigation Districts



Photos by Doug Phillips

GENERAL MANAGER

**EXETER, IVANHOE &
STONE CORRAL IRRIGATION DISTRICTS**
(North-Central Tulare County, CA)

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THE DISTRICTS

Exeter and Ivanhoe Irrigation Districts have shared a General Manager for many years. With the upcoming retirement of the General Manager from Stone Corral Irrigation District, the three districts have decided to enter into an agreement to have shared management, with each district maintaining its autonomy. This creates a unique opportunity for the successful candidate to manage three progressive districts within the heart of one of the most productive agricultural areas in the world.

Exeter Irrigation District (EID), Ivanhoe Irrigation District (IID), and Stone Corral Irrigation District (SCID) are members of the South Valley Water Association, a consortium of seven irrigation districts that collaborate on issues facing the Central Valley Project and water users throughout the 250,000 acres represented by the Association. All three are under contract for a water supply with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation as part of the Friant Division of the Central Valley Project (CVP).

The three Boards share similar values and have a history of working cooperatively. They also share the same legal counsel through Peltzer & Richardson, LC. In total, their current budget is \$5.9 million with 15 staff, providing irrigation to about 30,000 acres of farmland in northern Tulare County. Each District has similar closed pipeline water distribution systems that deliver water from the Friant-Kern Canal exclusively to agricultural users. The primary crop in all three districts is citrus. In addition, all of the Districts have very capable staff.

Exeter Irrigation District

The mission of EID is to provide a reliable supply of irrigation water for the maximum benefit of its landowners in a fiscally responsible manner. The District is in the Kaweah River Basin and

supplies irrigation water to nearly 13,000 acres of farmland. It has been serving Tulare County since 1937.

EID has a five-member Board of Directors with a current budget of \$2.2 million. Sources of revenue include water sales, property assessments and meter charges. In addition to the General Manager, there are five staff – an office manager, office assistant, superintendent, and two operations/maintenance workers.

Ivanhoe Irrigation District

IID was formed in 1948, is located in the Kaweah River Basin, and supplies irrigation water to nearly 11,000 acres of farmland in Tulare County. Their mission is the same as that of EID. In addition to water from Friant, IID also gets water from the Kaweah River.

IID has a seven-member Board of Directors with a current budget of \$2 million. Sources of revenue include water sales and property assessments. There are six staff – an office manager, water specialist, foreman, and three operations/maintenance workers (one is part-time).

Stone Corral Irrigation District

SCID was also formed in 1948. Its mission is to ensure that farmers have a reliable source of water for irrigation and frost control when needed and available. Total current acreage is 6,600, of which 5,900 is planted and irrigated.

SCID has a five-member Board of Directors with a current budget of \$1.7 million. Sources of revenue include water sales, property assessments, and conveyance and standby charges. The District is currently looking at a new proposition 218 election to increase assessments. There are three staff – a treasurer and two operations/maintenance workers.

GENERAL MANAGER

Exeter, Ivanhoe & Stone Corral Irrigation Districts

KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Key challenges and opportunities facing the Districts include:

- * Identifying and acquiring additional sources of water.
- * Implementing the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA).
- * Strengthening relationships with growers, vendors, consultants, and other public agencies and jurisdictions, such as the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies.
- * Strategic planning in anticipation of future challenges and providing the leadership to meet those challenges.
- * Identifying needs and locating funding opportunities, such as grants.
- * Assisting the Districts in updating office technology and functionality.

THE AREA

The three Irrigation Districts are located in Tulare County in the central part of the San Joaquin Valley, with Fresno to the north and Bakersfield to the south.

Visalia, with a population of 141,000, is the closest large city in the area of the three Districts and is the fifth-largest city in the San Joaquin Valley. Visalia hosts a number of cultural, recreational, and educational opportunities, including a Community College, and is the home of a minor league baseball team. Visalia is the seat of Tulare County.

Local communities within the three-district area include Exeter, Ivanhoe, and Woodlake. The area is bordered on the east by the Sierra Nevada foothills. Yosemite, Sequoia, and Kings Canyon National Parks are located in the nearby Sierra Nevada mountains, the highest mountain range within the contiguous United States.

The area has mild winters and hot, dry summers with an average of about eleven inches of precipitation annually. However, years of average rainfall are rare; the usual pattern is bimodal, with a short string of dry years followed by one or two wet years.

The economy of Tulare County is driven by \$7.1 billion in gross production from agriculture, highlighted by dairy, fruit and nut commodities, nursery products and vegetable crops. In terms of total value, citrus ranks number two in the County.

THE POSITION

Under policy direction from the three Boards of Directors, the General Manager plans, organizes, directs and reviews the overall activities and operations of the Districts; advises and assists the Boards; represents the Districts' interests at local, regional, state and federal levels; and coordinates activities with outside agencies and the communities.

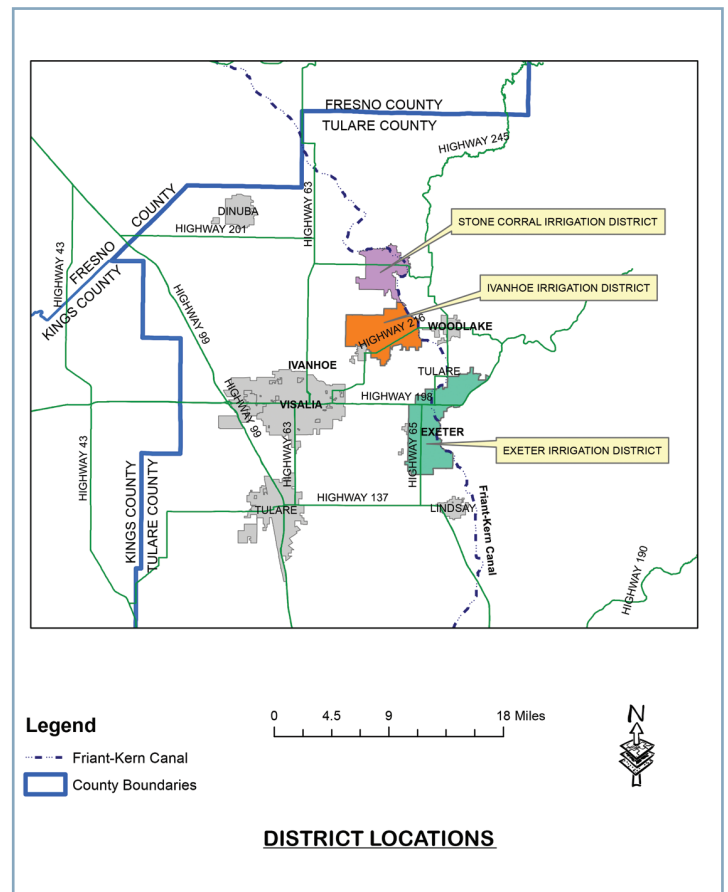
The General Manager's duties are administrative/managerial and highly complex in nature. The selected candidate will be responsible for representing the Boards' policies and programs with employees; community organizations; local, regional, state and federal agencies; and the general public. This is an at-will position that will be under contract.

Responsibilities include management authority over the Districts' support positions and retained consultants, and will oversee the full range of administrative, operations, maintenance and construction activities.

It will be important for the new General Manager to become familiar with all aspects of the Districts, including agreements that are in place and any current or pending litigation. **This person will also need to address implementation of SGMA, which will be a major challenge and emphasis of the position.**

Examples of essential duties include the following for each District:

- * Develops, plans and implements District goals and objectives; develops and administers policies and procedures.
- * Coordinates District activities between employees and consultants and with outside agencies and organizations; makes appropriate management decisions; develops recommendations for the Board of Directors' consideration and adoption; provides assistance and advice to the Board; prepares and presents staff reports and other necessary correspondence.



GENERAL MANAGER

Exeter, Ivanhoe & Stone Corral Irrigation Districts

- * Directs, oversees and participates in the development of District-wide work plans; assigns work activities, projects and programs; monitors work flow; reviews and evaluates work products, methods and procedures.
- * Primarily responsible for the development and administration of the District's budget; prepares forecasts of additional funds needed for staffing, equipment, materials and supplies; monitors and approves expenditures; implements real-time adjustments.
- * Prepares, oversees and participates in the monthly submittal to the Board of reports of financial, administrative and operational activities; keeps the Board advised of financial conditions, program progress, regulatory issues, and the present and future needs of the District.
- * Selects, trains, motivates and evaluates personnel; provides or coordinates staff training; implements discipline procedures; maintains discipline and high standards necessary for the efficient and professional operation of the District.
- * Monitors and provides direction, as needed, for media and public relations; ensures the District's interests are represented with customers, stakeholders, governmental agencies, the financial community and the public.
- * Coordinates with General Counsel and outside counsel on legal issues affecting the District.
- * Represents the District to outside groups and organizations; participates in outside community and professional groups and committees; provides technical assistance, as necessary.

- * Researches and prepares technical and administrative reports and studies; prepares written correspondence, as necessary.
- * Builds and maintains positive working relationships with the Board of Directors; District employees; consultants; local, regional, state and federal agencies; and the public.
- * Performs related duties, as assigned.

The General Manager is not expected to keep a set schedule of time spent with each District. Rather, the Boards would prefer to see the General Manager's time spent where and when it is needed for the three organizations to operate most effectively.

THE CANDIDATE

Education, Experience and Licenses

- * Any combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the duties of the position is qualifying. A typical way to obtain this would be: 1) the equivalent of a bachelor's degree, from an accredited college or university, with major course work in business or public administration, engineering, science or a related field; and 2) substantial administrative and management experience, including personnel management, that has involved planning, organizing, implementing and supervising varied programs, preferably within a public agency.
- * It is important to have an understanding of, or the ability to become familiar with, San Joaquin Valley regional water issues, including the Friant Division of the federal Central Valley Project



GENERAL MANAGER

Exeter, Ivanhoe & Stone Corral Irrigation Districts



as well as the CVP as a whole, the State Water Project, and local water projects within the Kaweah River watershed. Also important is experience working for or with California public agencies, including familiarity with regulations (e.g., the Brown Act), elections, and working with an elected Board. Must also have knowledge of public sector budgeting and water charges.

- * Strong interpersonal and management skills are critical to this position.
- * Candidates who have the skills highlighted in this brochure who are not yet a General Manager are encouraged to apply, as are those who are from outside the area.
- * Registration as a professional civil engineer in California would be a plus, as would experience with agricultural water, but neither are required.
- * Involvement with relevant professional associations is encouraged, as long as it is kept in balance with the performance of the position.
- * Should have possession of, or the ability to obtain, a valid California driver's license at the time of appointment. Individuals who do not meet this requirement due to physical disability will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

The selected candidate should have knowledge of: principles and practices of modern and highly complex public utility

administration, departments, organization and services; effective public relations and interrelationships with community groups, local, regional state and federal agencies, and the public; leadership, motivation, team building and conflict resolution; organization, administration and personnel management; and budget preparation and administration. Knowledge of organizational and management practices as applied to the analysis and evaluation of programs, and policy, regulatory and compliance issues affecting the water industry, is also desired.

Excellent interpersonal skills are critical to the success of this position. In addition, the General Manager should be able to: gain cooperation through discussion and persuasion; analyze problems, identify alternative solutions, project consequences of proposed actions and implement recommendations in support of goals; communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing; and establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Management Style and Personal Traits

The three Boards are seeking a forward-thinking, visionary and innovative General Manager who is willing to take calculated risks and think "outside of the box." This person should have a desire to learn and like taking on a challenge, be a quick learner, and have impeccable honesty and integrity. Possessing the ability to follow through on District needs, completing projects on time, and taking responsibility and admitting when a mistake has been made are necessary traits. Maintaining good relations with staff is very important, as is developing a good rapport with those outside the organization, such as other Friant districts and the Bureau of Reclamation.

The General Manager is expected to provide professional recommendations yet, once a decision has been made, will promptly implement a Board's decision. It is important to communicate with the Boards in a timely and complete manner, and be a strong leader and a good manager of people. The ideal candidate will be responsive to the needs of growers and maintain good communication with them. Finally, this person should have a professional demeanor and be able to "wear different hats," including being able to converse about system facilities, hydrology, water supply, water rights, SGMA, etc.



GENERAL MANAGER

Exeter, Ivanhoe & Stone Corral Irrigation Districts

COMPENSATION

The salary for this position will be competitive and open, with hiring dependent upon the qualifications and experience of the selected candidate. In addition, the benefits package includes: medical, dental and vision coverage; retirement plan; an optional 457 deferred compensation program; flexible annual leave; sick leave; holidays; credit card for business related expenses; and vehicle allowance.

HOW TO APPLY

Send resumes (email preferred) by **January 10, 2022** to:

ROBERTS CONSULTING GROUP INC

PO Box 1127
Rancho Mirage, CA 92270
Telephone: 424.522.2251
Email: robertsrcg@msn.com
Web: www.robertsrcg.com

Equal Opportunity/ADA Employers

Additional information about the three Districts can be found on their websites at www.exeterid.org, www.ivanhoeid.org, and www.stonecorralid.org.

