



**Nevada  
Irrigation  
District**

## Raw Water – Making Water Available 24/7/365

NID taps snowmelt high up in the Sierra and uses gravity via 500 miles of canal to bring water to Nevada and Placer counties to irrigate roughly 30,000 acres of agricultural land and pastures. Along the way, the water fills 27 storage reservoirs with more than 350,000 acre-feet (1.14 billion gallons!). That water can be used to help fight fires from the ground and air.

“Our canals meander through four counties – Nevada, Placer, Yuba and some of Sierra - and are a huge benefit to the whole area,” said NID Operations Manager Chip Close. “During an event, we attempt to increase canal flows in affected areas. Also, we bring in extra crews to patrol and keep water flowing during a fire event.”

CalFire’s helicopters also can dip into reservoirs to scoop up water to be dumped on flames.

For example, in 2017 when two wildfires began to spread in the wee hours of Oct. 9 in both Rough and Ready and off McCourtney Road by the Nevada County Fairgrounds, firefighters scrambled to evacuate neighborhoods and battle rapidly spreading flames in darkness. By morning daylight the fires were consuming hundreds of acres. Firefighters on the ground had pumps in NID canals as a water source, while helicopters scooped water from ponds and Lake Wildwood to beat back the flames.



NID serves about 5,400 raw water customers. Most purchase their water for a six-month irrigation season that normally runs from on or about Apr. 15 through Oct. 14. Some irrigation customers purchase water for year-around service.

Irrigation water for 30,000 acres creates a lot of green space in the region: “That greening up acreage is also a fire-protection measure,” said Close.



**During the 2017 Lobo Fire that burned 812 acres near Rough and Ready, an NID water distribution operator working to keep a canal clear became part of the action when a tanker dropped its load of pinkish retardant.**