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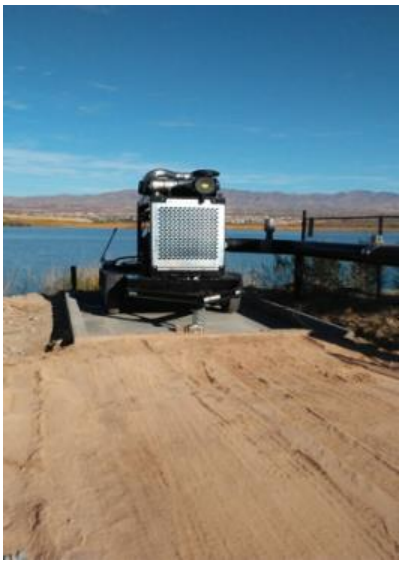
Long Game Pays Off

IAC Pacific Region

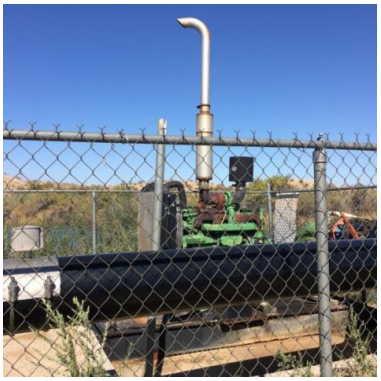
In late 2015, IAC Pacific Region met with the Farm Manager at Chemehuevi Tribal Farms to discuss issues pertaining to an aging irrigation engine (among other production related concerns) that were impacting the capacity of the entire farming operation. The Chemehuevi Tribe's mixed vegetable operation has been expanding incrementally towards 80 acres, with a focus on bringing healthier options to the community. The Farm Manager envisioned increasing the capacity of the farm, but the aging pumping infrastructure hindered the ability to scale up.



New Irrigation Pump at Chemehuevi Tribal Farms

IAC Pacific Region offered some general guidance and was later asked to meet with the Tribal Council in 2016, to discuss resources available and strategies to consider regarding the expansion of their agriculture operations. Among the resources shared, was information on the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). NRCS has national and state level air quality programs that farmers and ranchers can take advantage of to replace aging equipment with more efficient newer and often more powerful models. NRCS had assisted the Tribe in the past, but not with irrigation related needs.

The Tribe decided to apply for a contract and was awarded assistance under EQIP's California Air Quality Initiative. In order to receive the incentive payment for replacing the outdated engine, the program requires that the old equipment be destroyed and the new equipment installed to agency specifications. In order to do this, the Tribe had to front the cost (either in its entirety or partially if 50% upfront cost assistance was requested). Locating the resources to take care of the upfront costs involved coordination with the BIA, the supplier, various Tribal departments, and NRCS-CA. IAC Pacific Region worked between all entities to contribute to a successful resolution. Meetings occurred in 2017 and coordination continued into 2018 to unpack program deliverables and leverage resources to complete this project. In early 2019, the pump was replaced and water delivery capacity has increased from 1700 gpm at 2300 rpms, to 2500 gpm at 1200 rpms (at 45% power). Although the process involved a good deal of wait time and logistics, the Tribe's goals were met though a team of partners who saw it through.



Old Pump that was replaced through the NRCS California EQIP Air Quality Initiative