

## **NOTICE AND AGENDA**

Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

**SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1**

will be held at **3:00 P.M., Tuesday, July 21, 2026**

**1070 Faraday Street, Santa Ynez, CA - Conference Room**

**Notice Regarding Public Participation:** For those who may not attend the meeting but wish to provide public comment on an Agenda Item, please submit any and all comments and written materials to the District via electronic mail at [general@syrwd.org](mailto:general@syrwd.org). All submittals should indicate **"July 21, 2026 Board Meeting"** in the subject line. Materials received by the District during and prior to the meeting will become part of the post-meeting Board packet materials available to the public and posted on the District's website.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 3. REPORT BY THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD REGARDING COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR POSTING OF THE NOTICE AND AGENDA**
- 4. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS, IF ANY, TO THE AGENDA**
- 5. PUBLIC COMMENT** - Any member of the public may address the Board relating to any non-Agenda matter within the District's jurisdiction. The total time for all public participation shall not exceed fifteen (15) minutes and the time allotted for each individual shall not exceed three (3) minutes. The District is not responsible for the content or accuracy of statements made by members of the public. No action will be taken by the Board on any public comment item.
- 6. CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF JUNE 16, 2026**
- 7. CONSENT AGENDA** - All items listed on the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine and will be approved or rejected in a single motion without separate discussion. Any item placed on the Consent Agenda can be removed and placed on the Regular Agenda for discussion and possible action upon the request of any Trustee.
  - CA-1. Water Supply and Production Report
  - CA-2. Central Coast Water Authority Update
- 8. MANAGER REPORTS - STATUS, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:**
  - A. DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION**
    1. Financial Report on Administrative Matters
      - a) Presentation of Monthly Financial Statements – Revenues and Expenses
      - b) Approval of Accounts Payable
    2. Resolution No. 861: A Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 Calling a District Election and Requesting the County Board of Supervisors to Consolidate the District Election with the Statewide General Election
    3. 2026 Biennial Notice for District Conflict of Interest Code
    4. Draft Ordinance 2026-01: An Ordinance of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 Establishing Regulations and Fines Relating to Water Theft

## **B. OPERATIONS UPDATE**

### **9. REPORT, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:**

#### **A. SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT**

1. Eastern Management Area (EMA) Update

### **10. REPORTS BY THE BOARD MEMBERS OR STAFF, QUESTIONS OF STAFF, STATUS REPORTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMITTEE REPORTS, AND OTHER MATTERS AND/OR COMMUNICATIONS NOT REQUIRING BOARD ACTION**

### **11. CORRESPONDENCE: GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FILING OF VARIOUS ITEMS**

### **12. REQUESTS FOR ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING AGENDA:** Any member of the Board of Trustees may request to place an item on the Agenda for the next regular meeting. Any member of the public may submit a written request to the General Manager of the District to place an item on a future meeting Agenda, provided that the General Manager and the Board of Trustees retain sole discretion to determine which items to include on meeting Agendas.

### **13. NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:** The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for August 18, 2026

### **14. CLOSED SESSION:**

The Board may hold a closed session to discuss the following items:

#### **A. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - EXISTING LITIGATION**

[Subdivision (d)(1) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code – 1 Case]

1. Name of Case: Adjudicatory proceedings pending before the State Water Resources Control Board regarding Permit 15878 and Application 22423 of the City of Solvang, Petitions for Change, and Related Protests

#### **B. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - POTENTIAL LITIGATION**

[Subdivision (d)(4) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code – Potential Initiation of Litigation By the Agency – Two Matters]

### **15. RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION:**

[Sections 54957.1 and 54957.7 of the Government Code]

### **16. ADJOURNMENT**

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This Agenda was posted at 3622 Sagunto Street, Santa Ynez, California, and notice was delivered in accordance with Government Code Section 54950 et seq., specifically Section 54956. This Agenda contains a brief general description of each item to be considered. The Board reserves the right to change the order in which items are heard. Copies of any staff reports or other written documentation relating to each item of business on the Agenda are on file with the District and available for public inspection during normal business hours at 3622 Sagunto Street, Santa Ynez. Such written materials will also be made available on the District's website, subject to staff's ability to post the documents before the regularly scheduled meeting. Questions concerning any of the Agenda items may be directed to the District's General Manager at (805) 688-6015. If a court challenge is brought against any of the Board's decisions related to the Agenda items above, the challenge may be limited to those issues raised by the challenger or someone else during the public meeting or in written correspondence to the District prior to or during the public meeting. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any individual needing special assistance to review Agenda materials or participate in this meeting may contact the District Secretary at (805) 688-6015. Notification 72 hours prior to the meeting will best enable the District to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.



**SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT,  
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1  
JUNE 16, 2026 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1, was held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 16, 2026, in-person at 1070 Faraday Street.

Trustees Present: Michael Burchardi  
Jeff Clay  
Brad Joos  
Mark Moniot

Trustees Absent: Nick Urton

|                 |                |              |                |
|-----------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Others Present: | Paeter Garcia  | Racel Cota   | Kylie Kelleher |
|                 | Dan Drugan     | Jessica Diaz | Bill Buelow    |
|                 | Steve Anderson |              |                |

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:**  
President Clay called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m., he stated that this was a Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees. Ms. Cota conducted roll call and reported that four Trustees were present, with Trustee Urton absent.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**  
President Clay led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **REPORT BY THE SECRETARY TO THE BOARD REGARDING COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR POSTING OF THE NOTICE AND AGENDA:**  
Ms. Cota reported that the Agenda for this meeting was posted in accordance with the California Government Code commencing at Section 54953, as well as District Resolution No. 340.
4. **ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS, IF ANY, TO THE AGENDA:**  
There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.
5. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**  
President Clay welcomed any members of the public and offered time for members of the public to speak and address the Board on matters not on the Agenda. There was no public comment. Mr. Garcia reported that no written comments were submitted to the District for the meeting.
6. **CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF MAY 19, 2026**  
The Regular Meeting Minutes from May 19, 2026 were presented for consideration.

President Clay asked if there were any changes or additions to the Regular Meeting Minutes of May 19, 2026. There were no changes or additions requested.

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Burchardi, seconded by Trustee Joos, and carried by a 3-0-1 voice vote, with Trustee Moniot abstaining and Trustee Urton absent, to approve the May 19, 2026 Regular meeting minutes as presented.

7. **CONSENT AGENDA:**

The Consent Agenda Report was provided in the Board Packet.

Mr. Garcia reviewed the Consent Agenda materials for the month of May. Various topics were discussed among the Board and staff.

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Moniot, seconded by Trustee Joos, and carried by a unanimous 4-0-0 voice vote, with Trustee Urton absent, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

8. **MANAGER REPORTS - STATUS, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:**

**A. DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION**

1. Financial Report on Administrative Matters

a) Presentation of Monthly Financial Statements – Revenues and Expenses

Ms. Cota announced that the Financial Statements were provided to the Board via email earlier in the day, included in the meeting handout materials, and posted on the District's website.

Ms. Cota reviewed the Statement of Revenues and Expenses for the month of May. She highlighted various line-items related to revenue and expense transactions that occurred during the month and referred to the Fiscal-Year-to-Date Statement of Revenues and Expenses that provides a budget to actual snapshot for the eleven months ending May 30, 2026. Ms. Cota stated that expenses exceeded revenue by \$252,001.97 and the year-to-date May 2026 net income was \$3,914,844.30.

b) Approval of Accounts Payable

Ms. Cota announced that the Warrant List was provided to the Board via email earlier in the day, included in the meeting handout materials, and posted on the District's website.

The Board reviewed the Warrant List which covered warrants 27263 through 27318 in the amount of \$557,907.89.

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Burchardi, seconded by Trustee Moniot, and carried by a unanimous 4-0-0 voice vote, with Trustee Urton absent, to approve the Warrant List for May 20, 2026 through June 16, 2026.

2. Appropriation Limit for the 2026/2027 Fiscal Year – Article XIII B (Proposition 13)

a) Resolution No. 859: A Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 Establishing the Appropriation Limit for Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Pursuant to Article XIII B of the California Constitution

The Board packet included Resolution No. 859 and a copy of the Public Notice regarding the FY 2026/2027 Appropriation Limitation Calculation that was published and posted on the District's website.

Mr. Garcia explained that the FY 2026/2027 appropriation limit is \$2,785,514 based on factors and calculations published by the California Department of Finance. He stated that adoption of a Resolution is required pursuant to Government Code

Section 7910 to establish an appropriation limit and recommended approval of Resolution No. 859 Establishing the Appropriation Limit for Fiscal Year 2026/2027.

Mr. Garcia explained that although the District can set the assessment up to the maximum amount of \$2,785,514, the FY 2026/2027 Budget proposes no increase this year with the assessment to remain at \$875,000.

It was **Moved** by Trustee Moniot, seconded by Trustee Burchardi, to adopt Resolution No. 859, and the Resolution was approved by the following 4-0-0 roll call vote:

|                        |                                                         |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>AYES, Trustees:</b> | Brad Joos<br>Mark Moniot<br>Mike Burchardi<br>Jeff Clay |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|

|                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| <b>NOES, Trustees:</b>    | None       |
| <b>ABSTAIN, Trustees:</b> | None       |
| <b>ABSENT, Trustees:</b>  | Nick Urton |

3. Consider Adoption of the Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2026/2027
  - a) Final Budget Summary

The Board packet included the Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2026/2027.

Ms. Cota reviewed the Final Budget Summary for the 2026/2027 Fiscal Year with no changes from the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Preliminary Budget presented to the Board on May 19, 2026. She presented the FY 2026/2027 Final Budget Comparison to the Current Year FY 2025/2026 Adopted Budget. She explained that the Board reviewed the FY 2026/2027 Preliminary Budget at the May 19, 2026 Board meeting, which included a detailed budget narrative, revenues and expenses, debt service, other expenses, and capital improvement project expenses.

Ms. Cota indicated that the Board was asked to provide any comments and/or questions prior to preparation and presentation of the Final Budget in June. She reported that since the May Board meeting no additional comments have been received from the Board or the public.

- b) Resolution No. 860: A Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 Adopting the Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2026/2027 and Requesting an Assessment Levy Required to Collect \$875,000

Mr. Garcia summarized Resolution No. 860, adopting the Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2026/2027 and Requesting an Assessment Levy Required to Collect \$875,000 that was discussed in depth at the May 19, 2026 Board Meeting.

It was **MOVED** by Trustee Burchardi, seconded by Trustee Moniot, to adopt Resolution No. 860, and the Resolution was approved by the following 4-0-0 roll call vote:

**AYES, Trustees:**

Brad Joos  
Mark Moniot  
Mike Burchardi  
Jeff Clay

|                           |            |
|---------------------------|------------|
| <b>NOES, Trustees:</b>    | None       |
| <b>ABSTAIN, Trustees:</b> | None       |
| <b>ABSENT, Trustees:</b>  | Nick Urton |

4. Draft Ordinance 2026-01: An Ordinance of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 Establishing Regulations and Fines Relating to Water Theft

Mr. Garcia reported that at the May 19, 2026 Board meeting, the Board reviewed a Draft District Ordinance Establishing Regulations and Fines Related to Water Theft, pursuant to California Government Code Sections 53069.45 and 53069.46; California Civil Codes 1882.1, 1882.2, and 1882.3; and California Penal Code Section 498. He provided an overview regarding the purpose and key provisions of the Draft Ordinance which would impose administrative penalties and cost recovery measures for cases of water theft, which would become effective immediately upon adoption of the Ordinance. Mr. Garcia noted that District customers have been made aware of the proposed Ordinance via messaging on the District's May water bills and posting on the District's website. He noted that no public comments have been submitted at this time.

5. 2025 Consumer Confidence report – Annual Water Quality Report Required by Federal and State Regulations

Mr. Drugan provided an overview of the District's 2025 Consumer Confidence Report (2025 CCR), which provides specific details regarding the District water quality sampling and results for an array of listed contaminants, constituents of concern, and water quality programs pursuant to various state and federal regulatory requirements. He reported that the 2025 CCR results show that the District's water quality met and exceeded all applicable water quality standards.

6. Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District – 2026 Rate Study and Proposed Groundwater Production Charges for Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Mr. Garcia provided an overview of the materials in the Board packet regarding the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District's 2026 Rate Study and Proposed Groundwater Production Charges for Fiscal year 2026-2027, along with the detailed comment and objection letter submitted by ID No.1.

Public comment was provided by Mr. Bill Buelow of the Conservation District.

**9. REPORT, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE BOARD ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:**

**A. SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT ACT**

**1. Eastern Management Area (EMA) Update**

The Board packet included the Notice and Agenda for the May 28, 2026 Regular Meeting of the Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Eastern Management Area.

Mr. Garcia summarized several topics that were discussed at the recent EMA GSA meeting including a Resolution Authorizing the Groundwater Extraction Fees to be Collected on the Tax Roll for the Fiscal Year 2026-2027. He reported that the next meeting of the EMA Citizens Advisory Group is currently scheduled for Thursday, June 18, 2026.

**10. REPORTS BY THE BOARD MEMBERS OR STAFF, QUESTIONS OF STAFF, STATUS REPORTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMITTEE REPORTS, AND OTHER MATTERS AND/OR COMMUNICATIONS NOT REQUIRING BOARD ACTION**

Trustee Moniot noted that he attended the recent Los Olivos Community Services District (LOCSD) Workshop and that the LOCSD and Los Olivos community are continuing to discuss various project alternatives and related costs for wastewater treatment.

**11. CORRESPONDENCE: GENERAL MANAGER RECOMMENDS FILING OF VARIOUS ITEMS**

The Correspondence List was received by the Board.

**12. REQUESTS FOR ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING AGENDA**

There were no requests from the Board.

**13. NEXT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

President Clay stated that the next Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for July 21, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.

**14. CLOSED SESSION:**

The Board adjourned to closed session at 4:54 p.m.

**A. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - EXISTING LITIGATION**

[Subdivision (d)(1) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code – 1 Case]

1. Name of Case: Adjudicatory proceedings pending before the State Water Resources Control Board regarding Permit 15878 issued on Application 22423 to the City of Solvang, Petitions for Change, and Related Protests

**B. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL - POTENTIAL LITIGATION**

[Subdivision (d)(4) of Section 54956.9 of the Government Code – Potential Initiation of Litigation by the Agency – Two Matters]

**15. RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION:**

[Sections 54957.1 and 54957.7 of the Government Code]

The Board reconvened to open session at approximately 5:40 p.m. Mr. Garcia announced that the Board met in closed session in accordance with Agenda Items 14.A through 14.B, and that there was no reportable action for any of the closed session Agenda Items.

16. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Being no further business, it was **MOVED** by Trustee Burchardi, seconded by Trustee Moniot, and carried by a 4-0-0 voice vote with Trustee Urton absent to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:40 p.m.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,**

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Racel Cota, Secretary to the Board

**ATTEST:**

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Jeff Clay, President

**MINUTES PREPARED BY:**

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Kylie Kelleher, Executive Administrative Assistant

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT,  
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1  
July 21, 2026**

**Consent Agenda Report**

CA-1. Water Supply and Production Report. The District's total water production in **June 2026 (399 AF)** was 32 AF higher than total production in **May 2026 (367 AF)**, 17 AF higher than the most recent 3-year running average (2023-2025) for the month of **June (382 AF)**, and 49 AF lower than the most recent 10-year running average (2016-2025) for the month of **June (448 AF)**. As noted in previous Consent Reports, the District's overall demands and production totals generally have been trending below historic levels for domestic, rural residential, and agricultural water deliveries due to water conservation, changing water use patterns, and private well installations.

For the month of **June 2026**, approximately **29 AF** was produced from the Santa Ynez Upland wells and approximately **58 AF** was produced from the 4.0 and 6.0 cfs well fields in the Santa Ynez River alluvium. As reflected in the Monthly Water Deliveries Report from CCWA, the District took delivery of **312 AF** of SWP supplies for the month. According to USBR, approximately **51.5 AF** of SWP deliveries were made to Lake Cachuma for South Coast entities. Direct diversions to the County Park and USBR were **3.16 AF**.

The USBR Daily Operations Report for Cachuma Reservoir in **June** (ending June 30, 2026) recorded the end of month reservoir elevation at **748.63'** and end of month storage of **180,025 AF**. USBR recorded total precipitation at the reservoir of **0.00 inches** for the month. Reported reservoir evaporation in **June** was **1,827.4 AF**. Based on the updated maximum storage capacity of 192,978 AF (previously 193,305 AF), as of **July 13, 2026** Cachuma reservoir was reported at **92.0%** of capacity, with then-current storage of **177,565 AF** (Santa Barbara County Flood Control District, Rainfall and Reservoir Summary).

When reservoir storage exceeds 100,000 AF, the Cachuma Member Units have usually received a full allocation. Conversely, a 20% pro-rata reduction from the full allocation is scheduled to occur in Water Years beginning at less than 100,000 AF, where incremental reductions may occur at other lower storage levels. In recent years, Reclamation approved a 100% Project allocation for federal WY 2023-2024 based on extraordinary rain conditions that spilled the reservoir in early 2023. The reservoir spilled again in early 2024 and Reclamation issued another 100% Project allocation for federal WY 2024-2025. Based on prevailing reservoir conditions, the Cachuma Member Units requested a 100% Project allocation for WY 2025-2026, which USBR approved. At the beginning of December 2025, ID No.1 held approximately 4,365 AF of contractual Project supplies in the reservoir, including approximately 1,878 AF of prior year carryover supplies and 2,487 AF from the current WY 2025-2026 allocation. Due to spill conditions that occurred again this year, all Cachuma Member Agencies lost their carryover supplies, such that the District currently holds approximately 2,211 AF of contractual Project supplies in Cachuma, comprised of this year's allocation less amounts exchanged thus far with the South Coast Member Units. **By joint letter dated June 5, 2026 the Cachuma Member Units have requested a 100% Project allocation for WY 2026-2027. Reclamation granted that request by letter dated July 1, 2026, which effective October 1st will result in an additional allocation of 2,651 AF to the District.**

Water releases for the protection of fish and aquatic habitat are made from Cachuma reservoir to the lower Santa Ynez River pursuant to the 2000 Biological Opinion issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the 2019 Water Rights Order (WR 2019-0148) issued by the State Board (SWRCB). These releases are made to Hilton Creek and to the stilling basin portion of the outlet works at the base of Bradbury Dam. The water releases required under the NMFS 2000 Biological Opinion to avoid jeopardy to steelhead and adverse impacts to its critical habitat are summarized as follows:

NMFS 2000 Biological Opinion

- *When Reservoir Spills and the Spill Amount Exceeds 20,000 AF:*
  - 10 cfs at Hwy 154 Bridge during spill year(s) exceeding 20,000 AF
  - 1.5 cfs at Alisal Bridge when spill amount exceeds 20,000 AF and if steelhead are present at Alisal Reach
  - 1.5 cfs at Alisal Bridge in the year immediately following a spill that exceeded 20,000 AF and if steelhead are present at Alisal Reach
- *When Reservoir Does Not Spill or When Reservoir Spills Less Than 20,000 AF:*
  - 5 cfs at Hwy 154 when Reservoir does not spill and Reservoir storage is above 120,000 AF, or when Reservoir spill is less than 20,000 AF
  - 2.5 cfs at Hwy 154 in all years when Reservoir storage is below 120,000 AF but greater than 30,000 AF
  - 1.5 cfs at Alisal Bridge if the Reservoir spilled in the preceding year and the spill amount exceeded 20,000 AF and if steelhead are present at Alisal Reach
  - 30 AF per month to “refresh the stilling basin and long pool” when Reservoir storage is less than 30,000 AF

The water releases required under the SWRCB Water Rights Order 2019-0148 for the protection of fish and other public trust resources in the lower Santa Ynez River and to prevent the waste and unreasonable use of water are summarized as follows:

SWRCB Order WR 2019-0148

- *During Below Normal, Dry, and Critical Dry water years (October 1 – September 30), releases shall be made in accordance with the requirements of the NMFS 2000 Biological Opinion as set forth above (“Table 1 Flows”).*
- *During Above Normal and Wet water years, the following minimum flow requirements must be maintained at Hwy 154 and Alisal Bridges (“Table 2 Flows”):*
  - 48 cfs from February 15 to April 14 for spawning
  - 20 cfs from February 15 to June 1 for incubation and rearing
  - 25 cfs from June 2 to June 9 for emigration, with ramping to 10 cfs by June 30
  - 10 cfs from June 30 to October 1 for rearing and maintenance of resident fish
  - 5 cfs from October 1 to February 15 for resident fish
- *For purposes of SWRCB Order WR 2019-0148, water year classifications are as follows:*
  - Wet is when Cachuma Reservoir inflow is greater than 117,842 AF;
  - Above Normal is when Reservoir inflow is less than or equal to 117,842 AF or greater than 33,707 AF;
  - Below Normal is when Reservoir inflow is less than or equal to 33,707 AF or greater than 15,366 AF;
  - Dry is when Reservoir inflow is less than or equal to 15,366 AF or greater than 4,550 AF
  - Critical Dry is when Reservoir inflow is less than or equal to 4,550 AF

**Based on local rainfall conditions thus far in the new water year, inflows to Cachuma Reservoir have exceeded 33,707 AF and thus have triggered higher fishery release requirements from Bradbury Dam under “Table 2” of State Board Order 2019-0148 (see flow regime above).**



CA-2. State Water Project (SWP) and Central Coast Water Authority (CCWA) Updates.

As previously reported, in 2023 DWR declared a 100 percent SWP Table A allocation for the first time since 2006 (compared to a 5 percent allocation in 2022). In 2024, despite above normal precipitation and snowpack, and above-average storage levels in Lake Oroville, DWR took a conservative approach and limited the final Table A allocation to 40 percent. In 2025, DWR again took a very conservative approach to the Table A allocation, as follows:

- December 2, 2024 – DWR issued an initial 2025 SWP Table A allocation of 5 percent (5%)
- December 23, 2024 – Allocation increased to 15 percent (15%)
- January 28, 2025 – Allocation increased to 20 percent (20%)
- February 25, 2025 – Allocation increased to 35 percent (35%)
- March 25, 2025 – Allocation increased to 40 percent (40%)
- April 29, 2025 – Final Allocation increased to 50 percent (50%)

For the 2026 Water Year, on December 1, 2025 DWR issued a Notice to the State Water Contractors establishing an initial 10 percent (10%) SWP Table A allocation. By Notice dated January 29, 2026 DWR increased the Table A allocation to thirty percent (30%). DWR's January Notice explained the updated allocation as follows:

*A series of atmospheric rivers that arrived mid-December and continued until early January provided for above average precipitation and high runoff, contributing to storage increases in California reservoirs. However, the series of storms were warm, snowpack accumulation has been below average, and continuing warm and dry weather in January has resulted in snowpack loss. ... Considering the recent dry and warm conditions and associated forecasts, we will be carefully assessing and evaluating future allocation increases as hydrologic conditions become clearer. ... To determine the available SWP water supplies, DWR considers various factors including SWP contractors' 2026 carryover supplies and demands, existing storage in SWP conservation facilities, estimates of future runoff, near-term and seasonal climate forecasts, SWP operational, contractual, and regulatory requirements set forth in the Federal Endangered Species Act and California Endangered Species Act, and water rights obligations under the State Water Resources Control Board's authority.*

**As noted in last month's Consent Report, on May 15, 2026 DWR increased the 2026 SWP Table A allocation to 45 percent, which is presumed to be the final allocation amount for 2026.** As of July 15, 2026 Lake Oroville storage levels were recorded at 84 percent of total capacity and 129 percent of its historic average for this time of year.

As reflected in the June 25 and July 23, 2026 meeting agendas for the CCWA Board of Directors, and the July 9, 2026 meeting agenda for the CCWA Operating Committee, CCWA remains focused on several important issues related to the SWP and SWP deliveries, including but not limited to: SWP operations and water supply conditions; pending and proposed water transfers; land subsidence and invasive mussel issues affecting the California Aqueduct; infrastructure maintenance and improvements; CCWA's Urban Water Management Plan Update; and CCWA strategic planning. The next regular CCWA Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for July 23, 2026.



— BUREAU OF —  
RECLAMATION

Historical Archive and Reports Database  
**Lake Cachuma Daily Operations**  
Run Date: 07/10/2026

June 2026

| DAY     | ELEV   | STORAGE ACRE-FEET |        | COMPUTED*  | CCWA       | PRECIP ON      |         | RELEASE - AF. |         |          | EVAPORATION |       | PRECIP |
|---------|--------|-------------------|--------|------------|------------|----------------|---------|---------------|---------|----------|-------------|-------|--------|
|         |        | IN LAKE           | CHANGE | INFLOW AF. | INFLOW AF. | RES. SURF. AF. | TUNNEL  | HILTON CREEK  | OUTLET  | SPILLWAY | AF.         | INCH  | INCHES |
|         | 750.42 | 185,387           |        |            |            |                |         |               |         |          |             |       |        |
| 1       | 750.37 | 185,236           | -151   | 54.7       | 5.9        | 0.0            | 43.4    | 14.1          | 86.0    | 0.0      | 68.1        | 0.330 | 0.00   |
| 2       | 750.33 | 185,116           | -120   | 75.8       | 5.9        | 0.0            | 43.8    | 14.1          | 86.0    | 0.0      | 57.8        | 0.280 | 0.00   |
| 3       | 750.27 | 184,935           | -181   | 16.0       | 5.9        | 0.0            | 55.4    | 14.1          | 86.0    | 0.0      | 47.4        | 0.230 | 0.00   |
| 4       | 750.22 | 184,784           | -151   | 59.2       | 5.9        | 0.0            | 58.3    | 14.1          | 86.0    | 0.0      | 57.7        | 0.280 | 0.00   |
| 5       | 750.17 | 184,633           | -151   | 57.2       | 5.9        | 0.0            | 54.3    | 14.1          | 86.0    | 0.0      | 59.7        | 0.290 | 0.00   |
| 6       | 750.11 | 184,453           | -180   | 35.1       | 7.1        | 0.0            | 58.3    | 14.1          | 86.0    | 0.0      | 63.8        | 0.310 | 0.00   |
| 7       | 750.05 | 184,272           | -181   | 32.3       | 7.1        | 0.0            | 55.5    | 14.1          | 87.0    | 0.0      | 63.8        | 0.310 | 0.00   |
| 8       | 750.01 | 184,151           | -121   | 70.2       | 7.1        | 0.0            | 40.6    | 14.1          | 86.0    | 0.0      | 57.6        | 0.280 | 0.00   |
| 9       | 749.95 | 183,970           | -181   | 17.7       | 0.7        | 0.0            | 45.9    | 14.1          | 86.0    | 0.0      | 53.4        | 0.260 | 0.00   |
| 10      | 749.92 | 183,880           | -90    | 117.9      | 0.0        | 0.0            | 48.2    | 14.1          | 86.0    | 0.0      | 59.6        | 0.290 | 0.00   |
| 11      | 749.78 | 183,458           | -422   | -198.5     | 0.0        | 0.0            | 51.6    | 14.1          | 86.0    | 0.0      | 71.8        | 0.350 | 0.00   |
| 12      | 749.73 | 183,307           | -151   | 85.1       | 0.0        | 0.0            | 55.1    | 14.1          | 87.0    | 0.0      | 79.9        | 0.390 | 0.00   |
| 13      | 749.65 | 183,066           | -241   | -17.9      | 0.0        | 0.0            | 52.3    | 14.1          | 85.0    | 0.0      | 71.7        | 0.350 | 0.00   |
| 14      | 749.58 | 182,856           | -210   | 22.5       | 0.0        | 0.0            | 57.7    | 14.1          | 87.0    | 0.0      | 73.7        | 0.360 | 0.00   |
| 15      | 749.52 | 182,677           | -179   | 36.9       | 0.0        | 0.0            | 54.5    | 14.1          | 86.0    | 0.0      | 61.3        | 0.300 | 0.00   |
| 16      | 749.45 | 182,469           | -208   | 0.0        | 0.0        | 0.0            | 56.7    | 14.1          | 82.0    | 0.0      | 55.2        | 0.270 | 0.00   |
| 17      | 749.40 | 182,320           | -149   | 56.4       | 0.0        | 0.0            | 53.1    | 14.1          | 81.0    | 0.0      | 57.2        | 0.280 | 0.00   |
| 18      | 749.33 | 182,111           | -209   | 6.4        | 0.0        | 0.0            | 57.1    | 14.1          | 81.0    | 0.0      | 63.2        | 0.310 | 0.00   |
| 19      | 749.27 | 181,932           | -179   | 14.6       | 0.0        | 0.0            | 55.7    | 14.0          | 77.0    | 0.0      | 46.9        | 0.230 | 0.00   |
| 20      | 749.21 | 181,754           | -178   | 26.4       | 0.0        | 0.0            | 53.3    | 14.0          | 78.0    | 0.0      | 59.1        | 0.290 | 0.00   |
| 21      | 749.15 | 181,575           | -179   | 11.1       | 0.0        | 0.0            | 39.0    | 14.1          | 78.0    | 0.0      | 59.0        | 0.290 | 0.00   |
| 22      | 749.11 | 181,455           | -120   | 62.6       | 0.0        | 0.0            | 39.7    | 14.0          | 76.0    | 0.0      | 52.9        | 0.260 | 0.00   |
| 23      | 749.05 | 181,277           | -178   | 16.3       | 0.0        | 0.0            | 37.2    | 14.0          | 74.0    | 0.0      | 69.1        | 0.340 | 0.00   |
| 24      | 748.99 | 181,098           | -179   | 21.0       | 0.0        | 0.0            | 50.0    | 14.0          | 73.0    | 0.0      | 63.0        | 0.310 | 0.00   |
| 25      | 748.93 | 180,919           | -179   | 22.7       | 0.0        | 0.0            | 55.8    | 14.0          | 69.0    | 0.0      | 62.9        | 0.310 | 0.00   |
| 26      | 748.87 | 180,740           | -179   | 18.0       | 0.0        | 0.0            | 51.1    | 14.0          | 69.0    | 0.0      | 62.9        | 0.310 | 0.00   |
| 27      | 748.81 | 180,561           | -179   | 5.8        | 0.0        | 0.0            | 51.1    | 14.0          | 67.0    | 0.0      | 52.7        | 0.260 | 0.00   |
| 28      | 748.74 | 180,353           | -208   | -15.4      | 0.0        | 0.0            | 49.7    | 14.1          | 66.0    | 0.0      | 62.8        | 0.310 | 0.00   |
| 29      | 748.69 | 180,204           | -149   | 37.9       | 0.0        | 0.0            | 52.4    | 13.9          | 66.0    | 0.0      | 54.6        | 0.270 | 0.00   |
| 30      | 748.63 | 180,025           | -179   | 2.9        | 0.0        | 0.0            | 48.3    | 14.0          | 61.0    | 0.0      | 58.6        | 0.290 | 0.00   |
| TOTALS  |        |                   | -5,362 | 750.9      | 51.5       | 0.0            | 1,525.1 | 421.9         | 2,390.0 | 0.0      | 1,827.4     | 8.940 | 0.00   |
| AVERAGE |        | 182,653           |        |            |            |                |         |               |         |          |             |       |        |

**Comments:** \*Computed inflow is the sum of change in storage, releases and evaporation minus precip on the reservoir surface and CCWA inflow.  
Indicated outlet release includes leakage from outlet valves and spillway gates.  
Data based on a 24 hour period ending 0800.



# Santa Barbara County - Flood Control District

130 East Victoria Street, Santa Barbara CA 93101 - 805.568.3440 - [www.countyofsb.org/pwd](http://www.countyofsb.org/pwd)

## Rainfall and Reservoir Summary

Updated 8am: 7/13/2026

Water Year: 2026

Storm Number: NA

**Notes:** Daily rainfall amounts are recorded as of 8am for the previous 24 hours. Rainfall units are expressed in inches. All data on this page are from automated sensors, are preliminary, and subject to verification.

\*Each Water Year (WY) runs from Sept 1 through Aug 31 and is designated by the calendar year in which it ends  
County Real-Time Rainfall and Reservoir Website link ➤ <https://rain.cosbpw.net>

| Rainfall                       | ID  | 24 hrs | Storm<br>0day(s) | Month | Year* | % to Date | % of Year* | AI   |
|--------------------------------|-----|--------|------------------|-------|-------|-----------|------------|------|
| Buellton (Fire Stn)            | 233 | 0.00   | 0.00             | 0.00  | 23.86 | 144%      | 144%       |      |
| Cachuma Dam (USBR)             | 332 | 0.00   | 0.00             | 0.00  | 33.17 | 167%      | 167%       |      |
| Carpinteria (Fire Stn)         | 208 | 0.00   | 0.00             | 0.00  | 21.24 | 124%      | 123%       |      |
| Cuyama (Fire Stn)              | 436 | 0.00   | 0.00             | 0.00  | 10.21 | 135%      | 133%       |      |
| Figueroa Mtn (USFS Stn)        | 421 | 0.00   | 0.00             | 0.00  | 28.88 | 135%      | 135%       | 10.9 |
| Gibraltar Dam (City Facility)  | 230 | 0.00   | 0.00             | 0.00  | 37.90 | 144%      | 144%       | 11.5 |
| Goleta (Fire Stn-Los Carneros) | 440 | 0.00   | 0.00             | 0.00  | 23.94 | 131%      | 130%       |      |
| Lompoc (City Hall)             | 439 | 0.01   | 0.00             | 0.01  | 20.23 | 137%      | 137%       | 11.3 |
| Los Alamos (Fire Stn)          | 204 | 0.00   | 0.00             | 0.00  | 19.98 | 131%      | 131%       |      |
| San Marcos Pass (USFS Stn)     | 212 | 0.00   | 0.00             | 0.00  | 51.18 | 148%      | 148%       |      |
| Santa Barbara (County Bldg)    | 234 | 0.00   | 0.00             | 0.00  | 26.10 | 142%      | 142%       |      |
| Santa Maria (City Pub.Works)   | 380 | 0.00   | 0.00             | 0.01  | 15.80 | 119%      | 119%       |      |
| Santa Ynez (Fire Stn /Airport) | 218 | 0.00   | 0.00             | 0.00  | 21.85 | 139%      | 139%       |      |
| Sisquoc (Fire Stn)             | 256 | 0.00   | 0.00             | 0.00  | 16.30 | 109%      | 109%       |      |

Countywide percentage of "Normal-to-Date" rainfall :

136%

Countywide percentage of "Normal Water-Year" rainfall :

136%

Countywide percentage of "Normal Water-Year" rainfall calculated assuming no more rain through Aug. 31, 2026 (End of WY2026).

**AI (Antecedent Index / Soil Wetness)**

6.0 and below = Wet (min. = 2.5)

6.1 - 9.0 = Moderate

9.1 and above = Dry (max. = 12.5)

### Reservoirs

Reservoir Elevations referenced to NGVD-29.

\*\*Cachuma is full and subject to spilling at elevation 750 ft.

However, the lake is surcharged to 753 ft. for fish release water.

(Cachuma water storage based on Dec 2021 capacity revision)

| Click on Site for<br>Real-Time Readings | Spillway<br>Elev.<br>(ft)                                                         | Current<br>Elev.<br>(ft) | Max.<br>Storage<br>(ac-ft) | Current<br>Storage<br>(ac-ft) | Current<br>Capacity<br>(%) | Storage<br>Change<br>Mo.(ac-ft) | Storage<br>Change<br>Year*(ac-ft) |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <u>Gibraltar Reservoir</u>              | 1,400.00                                                                          | 1,394.14                 | 4,490                      | 3,209                         | 71.5%                      | -300                            | 1,929                             |
| <u>Cachuma Reservoir</u>                | 753.**                                                                            | 747.93                   | 192,978                    | 177,565                       | 92.0%                      | -1,900                          | 24,398                            |
| <u>Jameson Reservoir</u>                | 2,224.00                                                                          | 2,222.76                 | 4,587                      | 4,446                         | 96.9%                      | -36                             | 226                               |
| <u>Twitchell Reservoir</u>              | Twitchell Reservoir level has dropped below the sensor, data no longer available. |                          |                            |                               |                            |                                 |                                   |

[Previous Rainfall and Reservoir Summaries](#)



## CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Dessi Mladenova, Controller  
**FROM:** Lacey Adam, Senior Accountant  
**SUBJECT:** Monthly Water Deliveries

July 7, 2026

According to the CCWA revenue meters at each turnout, the following deliveries were made during the month of June 2026:

| <u>Project Participant</u>  | <u>Delivery Amount (acre-feet)</u> |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Chorro .....                | 132                                |
| Lopez.....                  | 161                                |
| Shandon.....                | 0                                  |
| Guadalupe.....              | 24                                 |
| Santa Maria.....            | 585                                |
| Golden State Water Co. .... | 0                                  |
| Vandenberg.....             | 344                                |
| Buellton .....              | 30                                 |
| Solvang .....               | 69                                 |
| Santa Ynez ID#1 .....       | 312                                |
| Bradbury.....               | 48                                 |
| <b>TOTAL .....</b>          | <b>1,705</b>                       |

In order to reconcile these deliveries with the DWR revenue meter, which read 1,715 acre-feet, the following delivery amounts should be used for billing purposes:

| <u>Project Participant</u>  | <u>Delivery Amount (acre-feet)</u> |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Chorro .....                | 133                                |
| Lopez .....                 | 162                                |
| Shandon.....                | 0                                  |
| Guadalupe.....              | 24                                 |
| Santa Maria .....           | 537*                               |
| Golden State Water Co ..... | 52*                                |
| Vandenberg .....            | 346                                |
| Buellton .....              | 30                                 |
| Solvang .....               | 69                                 |
| Santa Ynez ID#1 .....       | 314                                |
| Bradbury .....              | 48                                 |
| <b>TOTAL .....</b>          | <b>1,715</b>                       |

\*Golden State Water Company delivered 52 acre-feet into its system through the Santa Maria turnout. This delivery is recorded by providing a credit of 52 acre-feet to the City of Santa Maria and a charge in the same amount to the Golden State Water Company.

Notes: Santa Ynez ID#1 water usage is divided into 0 acre-feet of Table A water and 314 acre-feet of exchange water.

The exchange water is allocated as follows

| <u>Project Participant</u> | <u>Exchange Amount (acre-feet)</u> |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Goleta                     | 113                                |
| Santa Barbara              | 75                                 |
| Montecito                  | 75                                 |
| Carpinteria                | <u>51</u>                          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>314</b>                         |

Bradbury Deliveries into Lake Cachuma are allocated as follows:

| <u>Project Participant</u> | <u>Delivery Amount (acre-feet)</u> |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Carpinteria                | 0                                  |
| Goleta                     | 0                                  |
| La Cumbre                  | 48                                 |
| Montecito                  | 0                                  |
| Morehart                   | 0                                  |
| Santa Barbara              | 0                                  |
| Raytheon                   | <u>0</u>                           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>48</b>                          |

cc: Daniel Brooks, Goleta WD  
Mike Babb, Golden State WC  
Joshua Haggmark, City of Santa Barbara  
Janet Gingras, COMB  
Jeromy Caldera, San Luis Obispo County  
Paeter Garcia, Santa Ynez RWCD ID#1  
Shad Springer, City of Santa Maria  
David Trujillo, City of Guadalupe  
Kelley Dyer, Carpinteria Valley WD  
Mike Alvarado, La Cumbre Mutual WC  
Pernell Rush, Vandenberg SFB  
Nick Turner, Montecito WD  
Jose Acosta, City of Solvang  
Rose Hess, City of Buellton

## Paeter Garcia

---

**From:** Hyatt, David E <dhyatt@usbr.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 1, 2026 4:25 PM  
**To:** Matthew Young  
**Cc:** Janet Gingras; Nicholas Turner; kelley@cwwd.net; Haggmark, Joshua N.; 'Dave Matson, Goleta Water District'; Paeter Garcia; Prieto, Moses J  
**Subject:** Cachuma Project Allocation Determination Water Year 2026-27  
**Attachments:** Cachuma\_Water Year 2026-27 Allocation Determination\_Signed 7.1.2026.pdf

Good Afternoon All,

Please find attached the subject letter for your records.

Should you have any questions or need further clarification, please feel free to reach out to either Moses Prieto or myself.

Best Regards,

D

**David E. Hyatt**  
**Resource Management Division Chief**  
**Bureau of Reclamation**  
**1243 N Street**  
**Fresno CA 93727**  
**Desk (559) 262-0334**  
**Cell (559) 905-0279**



**WARNING:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION  
California Great-Basin  
South-Central California Area Office  
1243 N Street  
Fresno, CA 93721



SCC-400  
2.2.4.22

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Mr. Matthew Young  
Water Agency Manager  
Santa Barbara County Water Agency  
130 East Victoria Street, Suite 200  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Subject: Cachuma Project Allocation Request for Water Year 2026-27 (October 1, 2026 through September 30, 2027) – Contract No. I75r-1802RB (Contract) – Cachuma Project, California

Dear Mr. Young:

This is in response to your letter dated June 11, 2026, regarding the Santa Barbara County Water Agency's (Water Agency) "Cachuma Project Water Year 2026-27 Allocation Request," which also enclosed the Cachuma Project Member Units (Member Units) letter dated June 5, 2026.

The Member Units letter requests a full allocation of 25,714 acre-feet given the amount of unallocated water in storage.

Pursuant to Article 3(b) of the Contract, this letter serves as notice of the Water Year 2026-27 allocation for the Cachuma Project. Based on current reservoir levels and forecast data, the Project Water being made available to the Member Units out of the Available Supply in Cachuma Reservoir is 100% of the contract total, which equals 25,714 acre-feet.

If you should have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Mr. David E. Hyatt at (559) 262-0334, by email at [dhyatt@usbr.gov](mailto:dhyatt@usbr.gov) or if you have a hearing, or speech impairment, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

Sincerely,

RAIN  
EMERSON

Digitally signed by RAIN  
EMERSON  
Date: 2026.07.01  
15:51:11 -07'00'

Rain Emerson  
Acting Area Manager

---

INTERIOR REGION 10 • CALIFORNIA-GREAT BASIN

CALIFORNIA\*, NEVADA\*, OREGON\*

\* PARTIAL

Enclosure-

Santa Barbara County Water Agency Correspondence – Cachuma Project Water Year 2026-27  
Allocation Request Dated June 11, 2026

cc: Ms. Janet Gingras  
Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board  
3301 Laurel Canyon Road  
Santa Barbara, CA 93105  
jgingras@cachuma-board.org

Mr. Nicholas Turner  
Montecito Water District  
583 Ysidro Road  
Montecito, CA 93150  
nturner@montecitowater.com

Ms. Kelley Dyer  
Carpinteria Valley Water District  
1301 Santa Ynez Avenue  
Carpinteria, CA 93013  
kelley@cvwd.net

Mr. Joshua Haggmark  
City of Santa Barbara  
630 Garden Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93102  
jhaggmark@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

Mr. David Matson  
Goleta Water District  
4699 Hollister Avenue  
Goleta, CA 93110  
dmatson@goletawater.com

Mr. Paeter Garcia  
Santa Ynez River Water Conversation  
District Improvement District No. 1  
P.O. Box 157  
Santa Ynez, CA 93460  
pgarcia@syrwd.org

(all w/enclosure)



COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

123 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-3000  
[www.countyofsb.org](http://www.countyofsb.org)



CHRIS SNEDDON  
Director

June 11, 2026

Rain Emerson, Deputy Area Manager  
South-Central California Area Office  
United States Bureau of Reclamation  
1243 "N" Street  
Fresno, CA 93721-1813

**RE: Cachuma Project Water Year 2026-27 Allocation Request**

Dear Ms. Emerson,

Pursuant to Article 3 of the Cachuma Water Service Contract I75r-1802R, as amended by Amendatory Contract No. I75r-1802RB, the Santa Barbara County Water Agency is to submit a yearly allocation request on behalf of the Cachuma Member Units. Enclosed please find a letter from the Member Units dated June 5, 2026 requesting an allocation of 25,714 acre-feet for Water Year 2026-27.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact me at 805-568-3546.

Sincerely,

Matthew C. Young  
Water Agency Manager

Enclosure: Notice on Behalf of All Cachuma Member Units Specifying Total Quantity of Available Supply Requested for Water Year 2026-27.

CC: Mr. Paeter Garcia, SYRWCD ID#1  
Mr. Dave Matson, Goleta Water District  
Mr. Joshua Haggmark, City of Santa Barbara  
Mr. Nicholas Turner, Montecito Water District  
Ms. Kelley Dyer, Carpinteria Valley Water District  
Ms. Janet Gingras, Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board  
Mr. David Hyatt, US Bureau of Reclamation

AA/EEO Employer

Mostafa Estaji, Transportation

Heather Fletcher, Finance and Administration

Matt Griffin, Flood Control and Water Resources Division

Kevin Thompson, Laguna County Sanitation District

Jeanette Gonzales-Knight, Resource Recovery and Waste Management

Aleksandar Jevremovic, County Surveyor



**The Cachuma Project Member Units**

Goleta Water District  
City of Santa Barbara  
Montecito Water District  
Carpinteria Valley Water District  
Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No. 1

June 5, 2026

Matthew Young  
Santa Barbara County Water Agency, Manager  
130 E. Victoria St., Suite 200  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**RE: Notice on Behalf of All Cachuma Member Units Specifying Total Quantity of Available Supply Requested for Water Year 2026-27**

Dear Mr. Young:

Pursuant to Section 3(a) of the April 14, 1996 Contract Between the United States and Santa Barbara County Water Agency (SBCWA) Providing for Water Service from the Project, Contract No. 175r-1802R (as amended by Amendatory Contract No. 175r-1802RB ("Master Contract"), the Cachuma Project Member Units acting jointly hereby provide Notice to the Santa Barbara County Water Agency requesting allocation of all Available Supply from the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) during Water Year 2026-27, commencing October 1, 2026.

Pursuant to section 1(a):

*'Available Supply' shall mean the maximum quantity of Project Water the Contracting Officer is authorized by Federal law, State law, and the Project Water Rights to make available to the Cachuma Member Units during each Water Year pursuant to this contract. The Available Supply in each Water Year does not include the quantity of water the Contracting Officer is required by Federal law, State law, Project Water Rights, and any agreements to which the Contracting Officer and all of the Cachuma Member Units are parties to release from Cachuma Reservoir other than to make Project Water available to the Cachuma Member Units pursuant to this contract.*

The winter of 2025-26 was wet, with County-wide rainfall currently 136% of "normal water year rainfall." Gibraltar Dam upstream of the Cachuma Project saw 37.9 inches of rainfall in Water year

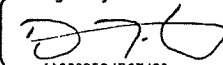
2026-26. After this significant rainfall, the Cachuma Project currently is 95.8% of capacity, with 184,877 acre-feet (AF) of water in storage. This water stored is comprised of the 12,000 AF "minimum pool," water reserved to meet fish release requirements, ANA/BNA stored water for downstream releases, and the Cachuma Member Units' current year's allocation. Given the large amount of unallocated water in storage at the Cachuma Project, the Cachuma Member Units respectfully request that USBR make a full 100% allocation of 25,714 AF of water available in Water Year 2026-27, consistent with the terms of the Master Contract.

This request includes the attached delivery schedules for each respective agency over Water Year 2026-27 and estimate of projected water deliveries (Attachment 1) required by section 3(a) the Master Contract. All such water can and will be put to reasonable and beneficial irrigation, municipal, domestic, and industrial uses within the Member Units' respective service areas.

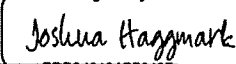
Sincerely,

[Signatures to follow on next page]

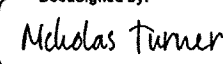
David Matson  
General Manager  
Goleta Water District

Signed by:  
By:   
4A30025C4D97429...

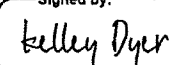
Joshua Haggmark  
Water Resources Manager  
City of Santa Barbara

Signed by:  
By:   
EDFC4813A7F6437...

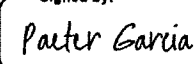
Nicholas Turner  
General Manager  
Montecito Water District

Signed by:  
By:   
7169EC677618477...

Kelley Dyer  
General Manager  
Carpinteria Valley Water District

Signed by:  
By:   
21BAA74F964341F...

Paeter Garcia  
General Manager  
Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No. 1

Signed by:  
By:   
E0C0041A0C11409...

Cc: Rain Emerson, USBR Deputy Area Manager, South-Central California Area Office for the California-Great Basin Region

Enclosures:

Attachment 1— Cachuma Member Unit M&I and Agricultural Water Delivery

## Attachment 1— Cachuma Member Unit M&I and Agricultural Water Delivery for WY 26-27

**ENTITLEMENT REQUEST BREAKDOWN - AG / M & I**  
**2026-27 WATER YEAR: 1ST PERIOD REQUEST (10/01/26-3/31/27)**  
**CACHUMA PROJECT, CONTRACT I75r-1802R**

| <b>MEMBER UNIT</b>                | <b>Classification</b> | <b>TOTAL<br/>AF Ordered</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Goleta Water District             | M & I                 | 2,594                       |
|                                   | Irrigation            | 608                         |
|                                   | Total                 | <u>3,202</u>                |
| City of Santa Barbara             | M & I                 | 3,273                       |
|                                   | Total                 | <u>3,273</u>                |
| Montecito Water District          | M & I                 | 602                         |
|                                   | Irrigation            | 108                         |
|                                   | Total                 | <u>710</u>                  |
| Carpinteria Valley Water District | M & I                 | 704                         |
|                                   | Irrigation            | 704                         |
|                                   | Total                 | <u>1,407</u>                |
| SYRWCD-ID#1                       | M & I                 | 273                         |
|                                   | Irrigation            | 243                         |
|                                   | Total                 | <u>516</u>                  |
| <b>U.S.B.R. TOTALS</b>            |                       | <u><u>9,108</u></u>         |

Breakdown is based on the percentages defined in the Renewal Master Contract, dated April 14, 1996, as amended.  
Pursuant to Bureau of Reclamation letter to Santa Barbara County Water Agency dated August 10, 1981, it is required to use whole acre-feet, commencing Water Year 1982-83.

**ENTITLEMENT REQUEST BREAKDOWN - AG / M & I**  
**2026-27 WATER YEAR: 2nd PERIOD REQUEST (4/01/27-9/30/27)**  
**CACHUMA PROJECT, CONTRACT I75r-1802R**

| <b>MEMBER UNIT</b>                | <b>Classification</b> | <b>TOTAL<br/>AF Ordered</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Goleta Water District             | M & I                 | 4,050                       |
|                                   | Irrigation            | 2,070                       |
|                                   | <b>Total</b>          | <b>6,120</b>                |
| City of Santa Barbara             | M & I                 | 5,004                       |
|                                   | <b>Total</b>          | <b>5,004</b>                |
| Montecito Water District          | M & I                 | 1,642                       |
|                                   | Irrigation            | 299                         |
|                                   | <b>Total</b>          | <b>1,941</b>                |
| Carpinteria Valley Water District | M & I                 | 703                         |
|                                   | Irrigation            | 703                         |
|                                   | <b>Total</b>          | <b>1,406</b>                |
| SYRWCD-ID#1                       | M & I                 | 662                         |
|                                   | Irrigation            | 1,473                       |
|                                   | <b>Total</b>          | <b>2,135</b>                |
| <b>U.S.B.R. TOTALS</b>            |                       | <b>16,606</b>               |

Breakdown is based on the percentages defined in the Renewal Master Contract, dated April 14, 1996, as amended.  
Pursuant to Bureau of Reclamation letter to Santa Barbara County Water Agency dated August 10, 1981, it is required to use whole acre-feet, commencing Water Year 1982-83.

**2026-27 WATER YEAR CACHUMA ENTITLEMENT OBLIGATION - WATER DELIVERY SCHEDULE**  
(All figures are in Acre Feet)

| Month               | Carpinteria<br>VWD | Goleta<br>WD | Montecito<br>WD | City of<br>Santa Barbara | SYRWCD<br>ID#1 | TOTALS       |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| October, 2026       | 235                | 895          | 312             | 619                      | 300            | 2361         |
| November            | 234                | 678          | 164             | 754                      | 60             | 1890         |
| December            | 234                | 408          | 56              | 506                      | 56             | 1260         |
| January, 2027       | 235                | 354          | 0               | 398                      | 0              | 987          |
| February            | 234                | 422          | 83              | 420                      | 0              | 1159         |
| March               | 235                | 445          | 95              | 576                      | 100            | 1451         |
| SUB-TOTAL           | 1407               | 3202         | 710             | 3273                     | 516            | 9108         |
| April               | 234                | 425          | 197             | 650                      | 165            | 1671         |
| May                 | 235                | 675          | 297             | 768                      | 200            | 2175         |
| June                | 234                | 950          | 311             | 755                      | 375            | 2625         |
| July                | 235                | 1290         | 403             | 932                      | 450            | 3310         |
| August              | 234                | 1392         | 383             | 988                      | 495            | 3492         |
| September           | 234                | 1388         | 350             | 911                      | 450            | 3333         |
| SUB-TOTAL           | 1406               | 6120         | 1941            | 5004                     | 2135           | 16606        |
| TOTAL Entitlement   | 2813               | 9322         | 2651            | 8277                     | 2651           | 25714        |
| Entitlement Request | <u>2813</u>        | <u>9322</u>  | <u>2651</u>     | <u>8277</u>              | <u>2651</u>    | <u>25714</u> |
| Entitlement %       |                    |              |                 |                          |                | 100.00       |
| TOTAL               | 2813               | 9322         | 2651            | 8277                     | 2651           | 25714        |



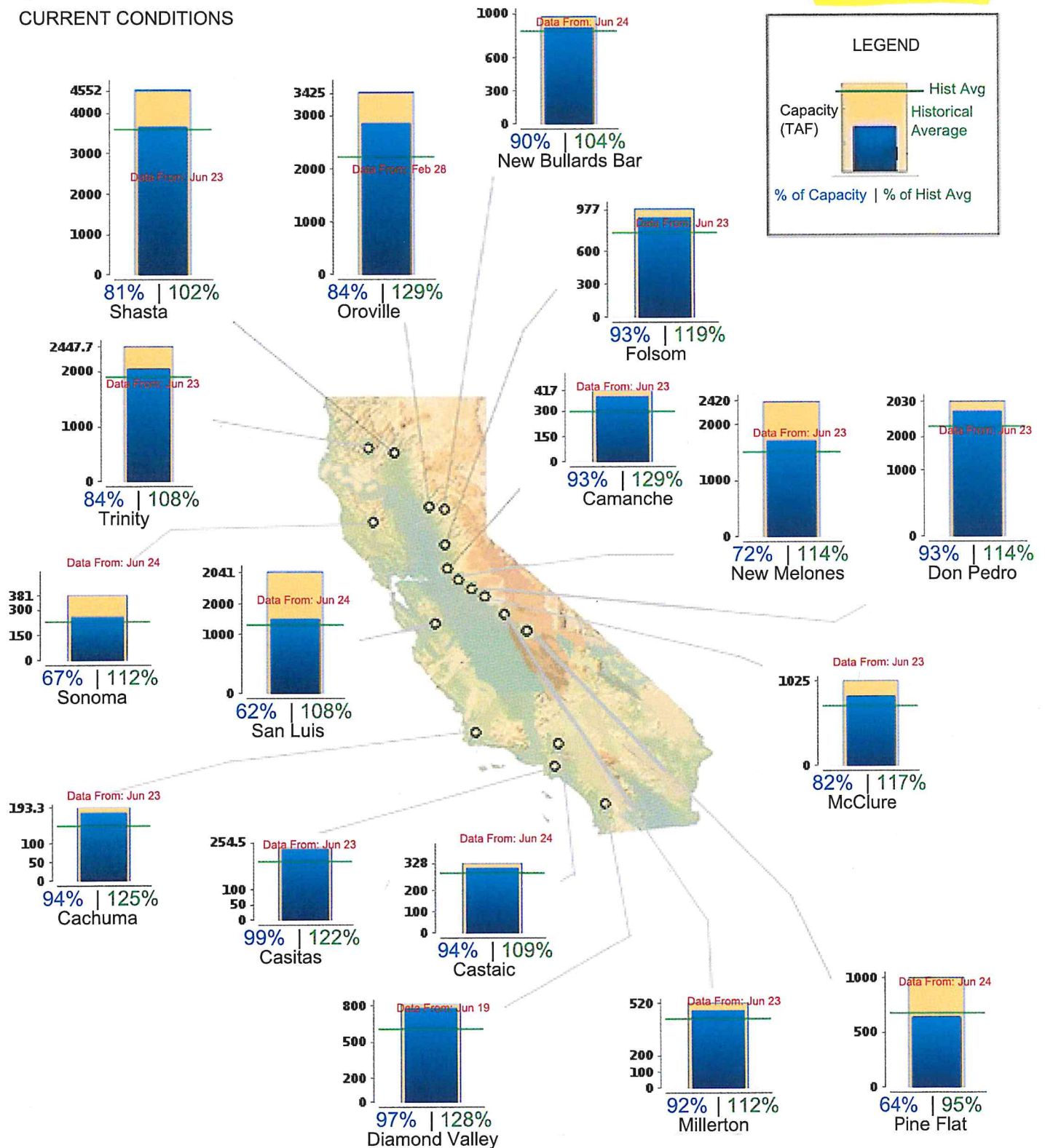


# CURRENT RESERVOIR CONDITIONS

## CALIFORNIA MAJOR WATER SUPPLY RESERVOIRS

### CURRENT CONDITIONS

Midnight - July 15, 2026



Updated 07/16/2026 12:48 PM



**CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
AGENDA**

**Chairman – Eric Friedman  
Vice Chairman – Jeff Clay**

Thursday, July 23, 2026

9:00 AM

at 255 Industrial Way, Buellton, California 93427

Members of the public may participate by video call or telephone via  
**Microsoft Teams** Meeting ID: 262 126 264 953 144 Passcode: cb6Xw3QP  
or by dialing +1 323-484-5095 and entering access Code/Meeting ID: 189 844 651#

Please note: public participation by video call or telephone is for convenience only and is not required by law. If technical interruptions to the video call/telephone occur, the chair has the discretion to continue the meeting and participants are invited to take advantage of the other participation options above.

Public Comment on agenda items may occur via video call or telephonically, or by submission to the Board Secretary via email at [lfw@ccwa.com](mailto:lfw@ccwa.com) no later than 8:00 a.m. on the day of the meeting. In your email, please specify (1) the meeting date and agenda item (number and title) on which you are providing a comment and (2) that you would like your comment read into the record during the meeting. If you would like your comment read into the record during the meeting (as either general public comment or on a specific agenda item), please limit your comments to no more than 250 words.

Every effort will be made to read comments into the record, but some comments may not be read due to time limitations. Please also note that if you submit a written comment and do not specify that you would like this comment read into the record during the meeting, your comment will be forwarded to Board members for their consideration.

Pursuant to Government Code section 54957.5, non-exempt public records that relate to open session agenda items and are distributed to a majority of the Board less than seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting will be available on the CCWA internet web site, accessible at <https://www.ccwa.com>.

★ indicates written report

- I. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
- II. **Public Comment – (Any member of the public may address the Board relating to any matter within the Board’s jurisdiction. Individual Speakers may be limited to five minutes; all speakers to a total of fifteen minutes.)**
- III. **Closed Session**
  - A. **CLOSED SESSION: CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION**  
Government Code section 54956.9(d)(4)  
Initiation of litigation: 1 case
- IV. **Return to Open Session**
  - A. **Report on Closed Session Actions (if any)**
- V. **Election of Officers and Committee Appointments**  
*Staff Recommendation:* Take nominations from the Board.  
Motion: Elect Chairperson  
Motion: Elect Vice Chairperson  
Motion: Elect Treasurer  
Motion: Elect Secretary

**VI. Consent Calendar**

- A. Minutes of the April 23, 2026 Special Meeting ★
  - B. Minutes of the April 23, 2026 Regular Meeting ★
  - C. Minutes of the June 25, 2026 Regular Meeting ★
  - D. Bills ★
  - E. Controller's Report ★
  - F. Operations Report ★
- Staff Recommendation:* Approve the Consent Calendar

**VII. Executive Directors Report**

- A. Water Supply Situation Report  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.
- B. Water Transfers Update ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.
- C. Report on the Emergency Repair to the Polonio Pass Water Treatment Plant Treated Water Pipeline ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.
- D. Appointments to Serve as CCWA's Primary and Alternate Representatives on the ACWA/JPIA Board of Directors ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Appoint Peter Thompson to serve as CCWA's representative to the ACWA/JPIA Board of Directors, with David Beard to serve as alternate.
- E. Calendar Year 2027 DWR Statement of Charges ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.
- F. FY 2025/26 Fourth Quarter Investment Report ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Accept Report.
- G. Operating Committee Report  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.
- H. State Water Contractors Report  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.
- I. Legislative Report ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.

**VIII. Reports from Board Members for Information Only**

**IX. Items for Next Regular Meeting Agenda**

**X. Date of Next Regular Meeting: August 27, 2026**

**XI. Adjournment**



**A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OPERATING COMMITTEE  
of the  
CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY**

**AGENDA**

**Chairman – Paeter Garcia  
Vice Chairman – Shad Springer**

Thursday, July 9, 2026  
9:00 AM  
at 255 Industrial Way, Buellton, California 93427

Members of the public may participate by video call or telephone via Microsoft Teams meeting  
Meeting ID: 254 293 322 968 331 Passcode: bt98bR6k

or by dialing +1 323-484-5095, and entering access Code/Meeting ID: 951 431 335#

Please note: public participation by video call or telephone is for convenience only and is not required by law. If technical interruptions to the video call/telephone occur, the chair has the discretion to continue the meeting and participants are invited to take advantage of the other participation options above.

Public Comment on agenda items may occur via video call or telephonically, or by submission to the Board Secretary via email at [lfw@ccwa.com](mailto:lfw@ccwa.com) no later than 8:00 a.m. on the day of the meeting. In your email, please specify (1) the meeting date and agenda item (number and title) on which you are providing a comment and (2) that you would like your comment read into the record during the meeting. If you would like your comment read into the record during the meeting (as either general public comment or on a specific agenda item), please limit your comments to no more than 250 words.

Every effort will be made to read comments into the record, but some comments may not be read due to time limitations. Please also note that if you submit a written comment and do not specify that you would like this comment read into the record during the meeting, your comment will be forwarded to Committee members for their consideration.

Pursuant to Government Code section 54957.5, non-exempt public records that relate to open session agenda items and are distributed to a majority of the Committee less than seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting will be available on the CCWA internet web site, accessible at <https://www.ccwa.com>.

★ indicates written report

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call**
- II. Public Comment – (Any member of the public may address the Committee relating to any matter within the Committee's jurisdiction. Individual Speakers may be limited to five minutes; all speakers to a total of fifteen minutes.)**
- III. Election of Officers**  
*Staff Recommendation:* Take nominations from Committee.
- IV. Consent Calendar**
  - A. Minutes of the March 12, 2026 Operating Committee Meeting ★  
*Staff recommendation:* Approve consent calendar.
- V. Executive Director's Report**
  - A. Operations Update  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.
  - B. Water Supply Situation Report  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.
  - C. Water Transfers Update ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.

- D. Potential Water Management Programs Update  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.
- E. Willow Springs Water Bank Memorandum of Interest ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Recommend the CCWA Board of Directors authorize the execution of the Willow Springs Water Bank Memorandum of Interest with Antelope Valley Water Storage, LLC.
- F. Ad-Hoc Committee for the Purpose of Examining CCWA Water Management Procedures and Developing and Recommending Changes to Those Procedures ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Recommend to CCWA Board of Directors the formation of an ad hoc committee whose members are members of the Operations Committee for the purpose of examining CCWA Water Management Procedures and developing and recommending changes to those procedures.
- G. Annual Coastal Branch Maintenance Outage and Pipeline Water Quality Update  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.
- H. Calendar Year 2027 DWR Statement of Charges ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.
- I. State Water Contractors Update  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.

**VI. Reports from Committee Members for Information Only**

**VII. Items for Next Regular Meeting Agenda**

**VIII. Date of Next Regular Meeting: October 8, 2026**

**IX. Adjournment**



**CENTRAL COAST WATER AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
AGENDA**

**Chairman – Eric Friedman  
Vice Chairman – Jeff Clay**

Thursday, June 25, 2026  
9:00 AM

at 255 Industrial Way, Buellton, California 93427

Members of the public may participate by video call or telephone via  
Microsoft Teams Meeting ID: 272 987 509 025 904  
or by dialing +1 323-484-5095 and entering access Code/Meeting ID: 806 642 811#

Please note: public participation by video call or telephone is for convenience only and is not required by law. If technical interruptions to the video call/telephone occur, the chair has the discretion to continue the meeting and participants are invited to take advantage of the other participation options above.

Public Comment on agenda items may occur via video call or telephonically, or by submission to the Board Secretary via email at [lfw@ccwa.com](mailto:lfw@ccwa.com) no later than 8:00 a.m. on the day of the meeting. In your email, please specify (1) the meeting date and agenda item (number and title) on which you are providing a comment and (2) that you would like your comment read into the record during the meeting. If you would like your comment read into the record during the meeting (as either general public comment or on a specific agenda item), please limit your comments to no more than 250 words.

Every effort will be made to read comments into the record, but some comments may not be read due to time limitations. Please also note that if you submit a written comment and do not specify that you would like this comment read into the record during the meeting, your comment will be forwarded to Board members for their consideration.

Pursuant to Government Code section 54957.5, non-exempt public records that relate to open session agenda items and are distributed to a majority of the Board less than seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting will be available on the CCWA internet web site, accessible at <https://www.ccwa.com>.

★ indicates written report

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call**
- II. Public Comment – (Any member of the public may address the Board relating to any matter within the Board’s jurisdiction. Individual Speakers may be limited to five minutes; all speakers to a total of fifteen minutes.)**
- III. Closed Session**
  - A. **CLOSED SESSION: CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION**  
Government Code section 54956.9(d)(4)  
Initiation of litigation: 1 case
- IV. Return to Open Session**
  - A. Report on Closed Session Actions (if any)
- V. Election of Officers and Committee Appointments**  
*Staff Recommendation:* Take nominations from the Board.  
Motion: Elect Chairperson  
Motion: Elect Vice Chairperson  
Motion: Elect Treasurer  
Motion: Elect Secretary

**VI. Consent Calendar**

- A. Minutes of the April 23, 2026 Special Meeting ★
  - B. Minutes of the April 23, 2026 Regular Meeting ★
  - C. Bills ★
  - D. Controller's Report ★
  - E. Operations Report ★
- Staff Recommendation:* Approve the Consent Calendar

**VII. Executive Directors Report**

- A. CCWA Urban Water Management Plan and Water Shortage Contingency Plan ★
  - 1. Open Public Hearing
  - 2. Consider and Adopt Resolution No. 26-08 Adopting the 2025 Urban Water Management Plan and Water Shortage Contingency Plan For the Central Coast Water Authority

*Staff Recommendation:* Approve and adopt Resolution No. 26-08 Adopting the 2025 Urban Water Management Plan and Water Shortage Contingency Plan For the Central Coast Water Authority
- B. Water Supply Situation Report  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.
- C. Water Transfers Update ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.
- D. Transfer of Surplus Water to Westside Districts ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Approve and adopt Resolution No. 26-09 Approving the Short-Term Transfer of SWP Water to Westside Districts
- E. Report on the Emergency Repair to the Polonio Pass Water Treatment Plant Treated Water Pipeline ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.
- F. Selection of a Facilitator for Development of a Strategic Plan for CCWA ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Approve the selection of Ken Kirby with Evotoco to facilitate the development of the CCWA Strategic Plan and authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract for those services for a fixed fee of \$63,300
- G. Appointments to Serve as CCWA's Primary and Alternate Representatives on the ACWA/JPIA Board of Directors ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Appoint Peter Thompson to serve as CCWA's representative to the ACWA/JPIA Board of Directors, with David Beard to serve as alternate.
- H. Montecito Water District Withdrawal of Funds from CCWA Rate Coverage Reserve Fund ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Authorize withdrawal of MWD funds from CCWA's Rate Coverage Reserve Fund in less than the 180 days required by CCWA's Rate Coverage Reserve Fund policy.
- I. State Water Contractors Report  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.
- J. Legislative Report ★  
*Staff Recommendation:* Informational item only.

**VIII. Reports from Board Members for Information Only**

**IX. Items for Next Regular Meeting Agenda**

**X. Date of Next Regular Meeting: July 23, 2026**

**XI. Adjournment**

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**RESOLUTION NO. 861**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1 CALLING A DISTRICT ELECTION AND  
REQUESTING THE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO CONSOLIDATE THE  
DISTRICT ELECTION WITH THE STATEWIDE GENERAL ELECTION**

**WHEREAS**, the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 ("District") is organized and operates as a special district pursuant to the Water Conservation District Law, California Water Code section 74000 et seq. ("Act"), which provides in part that District elections are subject to the Act and applicable provisions of the Uniform District Election Law; and

**WHEREAS**, the District is calling for an election to be held on November 3, 2026 to elect three (3) members of the District's Board of Trustees, each for a full term of four (4) years; and

**WHEREAS**, the District desires to consolidate its election for three members of the District's Board of Trustees with the statewide general election to be held on the same date of November 3, 2026 wherein such consolidated election shall be called and conducted and the results canvassed, returned, and declared pursuant to the provisions of the Uniform District Election Law and other applicable provisions of the California Elections Code, and wherein the precincts, polling places, and election officers shall be the same and the election shall be held in all respects as a consolidated election; and

**WHEREAS**, on or about June 25, 2026 the District submitted to the Santa Barbara County Elections Division the District's 2026 Election Packet and District Request for Election Services, including copies of (1) the District's Request for Consolidated Election Services Form; (2) the District's Elected Officials Information Sheet; (3) the District's Notice of Elective Offices to be Filled; (4) the District's Qualifications to Run and Hold Office Form; (5) the District's Resolution No. 607 Regarding Candidate Statements of Qualification; and (6) the District's Boundary Map by Division, as adjusted by District Resolution No. 817 dated March 15, 2022; wherein the District has requested the County of Santa Barbara Elections Division to undertake consolidated election services in connection with the November 3, 2026 statewide general election, and wherein the District has agreed to reimburse the County of Santa Barbara their share of costs allocated in accordance with the County billing policy for consolidated elections.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED**, by the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1, as follows:

1. The foregoing Recitals are true and correct and incorporated herein; and
2. In accordance with applicable provisions of the California Elections Code, including but not limited to Section 10402.5, Section 10403, and Section 10509, the District hereby submits its request to the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and Elections Division to take any and all necessary steps to consolidate the District's election set for November 3, 2026 with the statewide general election set for the same date, and to hold and conduct a consolidated election for said purpose, wherein

- a. The three (3) elective offices to be filled for the District's election include the At-Large Board of Trustee office currently held by Brad Joos, the Division 3 Board of Trustee office currently held by Jeff Clay, and the Division 2 Board of Trustee office currently held by Nick Urton, all of which offices to be filled are for a full four-year term; and
  - b. Candidates for said offices who choose to submit a statement of qualifications shall pay for the publication of a statement of qualifications in accordance with Elections Code section 13307 and District Resolution No. 607; and
  - c. The District acknowledges that the consolidated election will be held and conducted in the manner prescribed in Elections Code section 10418; and
3. The District's General Manager and Secretary to the Board of Trustees are hereby directed to file a copy of this Resolution with the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and Santa Barbara County Elections Division.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, being the duly qualified and acting President and Secretary, respectively, of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly adopted and passed by the Board of Trustees of said District at a Regular Meeting held on the 21st day of July 2026, by the following roll call vote:

AYES, and in favor thereof, Trustees:

NOES, Trustees:

ABSTAIN, Trustees:

ABSENT, Trustees:

---

Jeff Clay, President

ATTEST:

---

Racel Cota, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

## FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION

## 2026 Conflict of Interest Code

### Biennial Notice Instructions for Local Agencies

---

The Political Reform Act requires every local government agency to review its conflict of interest code biennially. A conflict of interest code tells public officials, governmental employees, and consultants what financial interests they must disclose on their Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700).

**By July 1, 2026:** The code reviewing body must notify agencies and special districts within its jurisdiction to review their conflict of interest codes.

**By October 1, 2026:** The biennial notice must be filed with the agency's code reviewing body.

The FPPC has prepared a 2026 Local Agency Biennial Notice form for local agencies to complete or send to agencies within its jurisdiction to complete before submitting to the code reviewing body. The City Council is the code reviewing body for city agencies. The County Board of Supervisors is the code reviewing body for county agencies and any other local government agency whose jurisdiction is determined to be solely within the county (e.g., school districts, including certain charter schools). The FPPC is the code reviewing body for any agency with jurisdiction in **more than one county** and will contact them.

#### The Local Agency Biennial Notice is not forwarded to the FPPC.

If amendments to an agency's conflict of interest code are necessary, the amended code must be forwarded to the code reviewing body for approval within 90 days. An agency's amended code is not effective until it has been approved by the code reviewing body.

**If you answer yes, to any of the questions below, your agency's code probably needs to be amended.**

- Is the current code more than five years old?
- Have there been any substantial changes to the agency's organizational structure since the last code was approved?
- Have any positions been eliminated or re-named since the last code was approved?
- Have any new positions been added since the last code was approved?
- Have there been any substantial changes in duties or responsibilities for any positions since the last code was approved?

If you have any questions or are still not sure if you should amend your agency's conflict of interest code, please contact the FPPC. Additional information including an online webinar regarding how to amend a conflict of interest code is available on [FPPC's website](https://www.fppc.ca.gov).

## 2026 Local Agency Biennial Notice

Name of Agency: Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 157, Santa Ynez, CA 93460

Department Head or Director

Name: Paeter Garcia

Phone No: (805) 688-6015

Email: pgarcia@syrwd.org

Contact Person

Name: Racel Cota

Phone No: (805) 688-6015

Email: rcota@syrwd.org

**Accurate disclosure is essential to monitor whether officials have conflicts of interest and to help ensure public trust in government. The biennial review examines current programs to ensure that the agency's code includes disclosure by those agency officials who make or participate in making governmental decisions.**

This agency has reviewed its Conflict of Interest Code and has determined that (*Check one box*):

☒ **No amendment is required.**

☐ **The following amendments are required:**

(*Check all that apply.*)

- ☐ Add new positions (including consultants) that must be designated.
- ☐ Delete titles of positions that have been abolished and/or positions that no longer make or participate in making governmental decisions.
- ☐ Revise based on updates to disclosure categories
- ☐ Revise the titles of existing positions.
- ☐ Other (*describe*) \_\_\_\_\_

By signing below, you are attesting to the following:

*To the best of my knowledge, the agency's code accurately designates all positions that make or participate in the making of the governmental decisions. The disclosure assigned to those positions accurately requires that all investments, business positions, interests in real property, and sources of income that may foreseeably be affected materially by the decisions made by those holding the designated positions are reported. The code includes all other provisions required by Government Code Section 87302.*

*I have reviewed the Conflict of Interest Code requirements against the positions within my department and as indicated above, I have either determined the revised Conflict of Interest Code attached meets the filing requirements and I authorize the changes or that no amendment is required.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Department Head or Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

☐ **The code is currently under review by the code reviewing body.**

All agencies must complete and return this notice regardless of how recently your code was approved or amended. Please return this notice no later than **October 1, 2026** to Santa Barbara County Clerk of the Board Attn: Chelsea Lenzi at [clenzi@countyofsb.org](mailto:clenzi@countyofsb.org).

If a change is necessitated, the agency must also submit the following:

- (1) An amended Conflict of Interest Code in accordance with subdivision (a) of Section 87302 and Section 87303;
- (2) Agency minutes or Resolution authorizing the amendment to the Code; and
- (3) A strikethrough/underscore version of the Code outlining all changes.

**PLEASE DO NOT RETURN THIS FORM TO THE FPPC.**

**RESOLUTION NO. 846**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO. 1  
APPROVING AN UPDATE TO ITS CONFLICT OF INTEREST CODE**

WHEREAS, the California Political Reform Act (Act), Government Code Section 81000 et seq., requires each state and local government agency to adopt and promulgate a Conflict of Interest Code; and

WHEREAS, the Fair Political Practices Commission has adopted a regulation, found at Section 18730 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, which, in addition to certain provisions of the Act, contains the terms of a standard Conflict of Interest Code, which can be incorporated by reference in an agency's Conflict of Interest Code; and

WHEREAS, in 1977, the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 (District) enacted Resolution No. 162 adopting a Conflict of Interest Code, which has been amended from time to time by resolution and in accordance with applicable requirements, including Appendix "A" describing designated positions and Appendix "B" including categories of disclosure; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the District desires to make certain amendments to its Conflict of Interest Code, last updated by District Resolution No. 801 on September 15, 2020.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 as follows:

1. The Board of Trustees hereby adopts an amended Conflict of Interest Code, incorporating by reference the terms of Section 18730 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, and including Appendices A and B, a copy of which Conflict of Interest Code with Appendices is attached hereto, which shall be on file with the Board Secretary of the District and available to the public for inspection during regular business hours.
2. The provisions of the Conflict of Interest Code and amendments thereto previously adopted by the Board are superseded and repealed.
3. The Board Secretary is hereby authorized to forward a copy of this Resolution and the District's amended Conflict of Interest Code, along with other related information, to the Santa Barbara County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect immediately.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, being the duly qualified President and Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No. 1, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly adopted and passed by the Board of Trustees of said District at a Regular meeting held on June 18, 2024 by the following roll call vote:

AYES, and in favor thereof, Trustees:

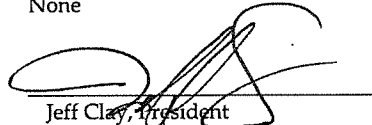
Michael Burchardi  
Jeff Clay  
Brad Joos  
Mark Moniot  
Nick Urton

NOES, Trustees:

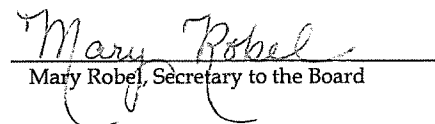
None

ABSENT, Trustees:

None

  
Jeff Clay, President

ATTEST:

  
Mary Robel, Secretary to the Board

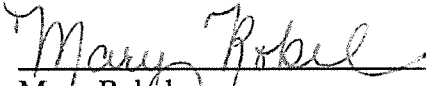
**CONFLICT OF INTEREST CODE FOR THE SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION  
DISTRICT, IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1**

This Conflict of Interest Code, including Appendix A (designated officials and employees) and Appendix B (disclosure categories) attached hereto, is for the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 (District). The California Political Reform Act (Act), Government Code Section 81000 et seq., requires state and local government agencies to adopt and promulgate conflict of interest codes. The agency may amend its conflict of interest code pursuant to provisions of the Act, including but not limited to Government Code Sections 87303 and 87306. The Fair Political Practices Commission has adopted a regulation, found at Section 18730 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, which, in addition to provisions of the Act, contains the terms of a standard Conflict of Interest Code, which can be incorporated by reference into or as an agency's Conflict of Interest Code. Section 18730 may be amended by the Fair Political Practices Commission to conform to amendments in the Political Reform Act after public notice and hearings. The terms of Section 18730 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations and any amendments thereto duly adopted by the Fair Political Practices Commission are hereby incorporated by reference and substituted for the terms of the District's Conflict of Interest Code in effect prior to this Code.

Designated employees may file their statements online using eDisclosure, which will submit the Form 700 to the County Clerk, Recorder and Assessor. Statements will be made available for public inspection and reproduction in accordance with Government Code Section 81008. The District's filing official can provide access to this process.

Designated employees who file using a paper Form 700 shall file with the Code Agency (Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1). Upon receipt of the Statement filed by the designated employee, a copy shall be retained with the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 and the original shall be forwarded to the County Clerk, Recorder and Assessor.

Adopted this 18th day of June 2024.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Robel  
Secretary to the Board of Trustees

**SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1  
CONFLICT OF INTEREST CODE**

**APPENDIX A**

**DESIGNATED EMPLOYEES / POSITIONS**

Persons occupying the following designated positions must disclose financial interests in those categories described in Appendix B which are listed opposite the respective designated positions.<sup>1</sup>

| Designated<br>Positions              | Disclosure<br>Categories |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Trustee                              | 1-5                      |
| Treasurer                            | 1-5                      |
| General Manager                      | 1-5                      |
| Administrative and Financial Manager | 1-5                      |
| General Counsel                      | 1-5                      |
| Consultants <sup>2</sup>             | 1-5                      |

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<sup>1</sup> Officials Who Manage Public Investments: The following positions manage public investments and shall file a Statement of Economic Interests pursuant to Government Code Section 87200: (1) Trustees; (2) Treasurer; (3) General Manager; and (4) Administrative and Financial Manager.

<sup>2</sup> Consultants are considered to be "designated employees." However, the General Manager may determine in writing that a particular consultant, although in a "designated position," performs a limited range of duties and should not be required to fully comply with the disclosure requirements described herein. Such written determination shall include a description of the consultant's duties and based upon that description, a statement of the extent of the disclosure requirements. The General Manager's determination is a public record and shall be retained for public inspection in the same manner and location as this Conflict of Interest Code.

**SANTA YNEZ RIVER WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1**  
**CONFLICT OF INTEREST CODE**

**APPENDIX B**

**CATEGORIES OF DISCLOSURE**

**CATEGORY 1**

Interests in real property which are located within the jurisdiction of the District,<sup>1</sup> including any leasehold, beneficial or ownership interest or option to acquire such interest in real property.

**CATEGORY 2**

Business positions or investments in or income from persons or business entities engaged in the appraisal, acquisition, or disposal of, real property within the jurisdiction of the District.

**CATEGORY 3**

Business positions or investments in business entities, or income from any sources, if the business entities or sources of income are of the type which might provide services, supplies, materials, machinery, or equipment to or for the use of the District.

**CATEGORY 4**

Business positions or investments in business entities and income from any sources, if the business entities or sources of income are of the type which might contract with or sell to the District.

**CATEGORY 5**

Business positions or investments in business entities or income from any sources, if:

- a) The business entities or sources of income have filed a claim, or have a claim pending against the District; and
- b) The designated employee's duties involve the handling or processing of such claim.

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<sup>1</sup> Real property is located within the jurisdiction of the District if any part of the property is located within or not more than two miles outside the boundaries of the District or within two miles of any land owned or used by the District.



**ORDINANCE NO. 2026-01**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SANTA YNEZ RIVER  
WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO.1  
ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS AND FINES RELATING TO WATER THEFT**

**WHEREAS**, the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, ID No.1 (“District”) is responsible for providing safe, sufficient, reliable, and affordable water service to its customers and for managing and protecting the District’s public water system infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, water is one of California’s most important resources, especially as the state continues to face the challenges of recurring drought conditions

**WHEREAS**, unfortunately, the unauthorized use and diversion of District water supplies, and the unauthorized use of and tampering with District meters, fire hydrants, and other forms of water theft is a growing problem which jeopardizes the fairness, affordability, and financial integrity of the District’s water system, undermines water conservation, causes revenue losses to the District, damages District facilities, and endangers public health and safety; and

**WHEREAS**, water theft from fire hydrants can present particularized public health and safety hazards, including reduced water pressure for firefighting, potential contamination of potable water supplies, and physical damage to hydrants, pipelines, and other critical water supply infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, newly adopted State law, including but not limited to California Government Code Sections 53069.45 and 53069.46 (SB 394), authorize local agencies that provide water service to adopt ordinances prohibiting water theft and unauthorized use of water agency facilities, and imposing administrative fines or penalties for violations of such ordinances; and

**WHEREAS**, California Penal Code Section 498 authorizes criminal prosecution for the unauthorized use of, diversion from, connection to, or tampering with District water supplies or water supply facilities, in addition to other unauthorized acts; and

**WHEREAS**, the District’s Board of Directors finds that adoption of this Ordinance is necessary to deter and penalize unauthorized use of the District public water supplies and water supply facilities, protect District assets, and help protect an equitable distribution of costs among those lawful and authorized users of District water supplies and services.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the Board of Directors of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1 does hereby ordain as follows:

## **SECTION 1. Title and Purpose**

This Ordinance shall be known as the “Water Theft Ordinance of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, Improvement District No.1.”

The purpose of this Ordinance is to further enable the District to preserve and protect District water supplies and water supply infrastructure from theft, unauthorized use, tampering, potential contamination, damage, and unnecessary costs, and to establish administrative procedures for the imposition, enforcement, collection, and administrative review of fines established by this Ordinance in accordance with applicable provisions of California law.

Rates and charges for authorized and unauthorized uses of water are set forth in the District’s Rules and Regulations.

## **SECTION 2. Authority**

This Ordinance is adopted pursuant to California Government Code Sections 53069.45 and 53069.46; California Civil Code Sections 1882.1, 1882.2, and 1882.3; California Penal Code Section 498; and the District’s Rules and Regulations and enabling act.

## **SECTION 3. Prohibited Acts Constituting Water Theft**

It shall be unlawful and shall constitute water theft for any person to do any of the following:

- (a) Divert, or cause to be diverted, water from any component of the District’s water system without specific prior authorization from the District and without paying all applicable charges for District water and services.
- (b) Make, or cause to be made, any connection or reconnection to any component of the District’s water system, including but not limited to any District water meter, pipeline, fire hydrant, or other appurtenance without specific authorization from the District and without paying all applicable charges for District water and services.
- (c) Prevent any District water meter or other device used in determining the amount of water provided by the District from accurately performing its measuring function by tampering, interference, damage, bypass, alteration or other means.
- (d) Connect to, divert water from, cause water to be diverted from, tamper or interfere with, damage, bypass, or alter any District fire hydrant, hydrant meter, or fire detector check without specific prior authorization from the District and without paying all applicable charges for District water and services. Any such activity shall constitute an unauthorized connection to a District fire hydrant.
  - a. Notwithstanding the generality of Section 3(d) above, in accordance with California Civil Code section 1882.1(f), a public agency having firefighting or emergency response responsibilities during a fire, with approval from incident command or the authority having jurisdiction over the active fire incident, shall be considered to have authorization from the District to use District fire

hydrants during an active fire incident; provided, therefore, in the absence of an active fire incident, a public agency having firefighting or emergency response responsibilities or any other person, entity, or agency shall not be considered to have authorization from the District to use any District fire hydrant without specific prior authorization from the District.

- (e) Commit, authorize, solicit, aid, abet, assist, permit, cause, or attempt any of the above acts to occur.

#### **SECTION 4. Administrative Penalties**

Pursuant to Government Code Sections 53069.45 and 53069.46, the following administrative fines may be imposed by the District for violations of this Ordinance:

| <b>Violation Type</b>                                    | <b>First Violation</b> | <b>Second Violation</b> | <b>Third or Subsequent Violation</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Water Theft By Meter Tampering                           | Up to \$130            | Up to \$700             | Up to \$1,300                        |
| Water Theft By Other Means – Not Including Fire Hydrants | Up to \$1,000          | Up to \$2,000           | Up to \$3,000                        |
| Water Theft By Unauthorized Connection To A Fire Hydrant | Up to \$2,500          | Up to \$5,000           | Up to \$10,000                       |

Each day that a violation occurs or continues shall constitute a separate violation subject to a separate administrative fine. The District's General Manager shall determine applicable fines imposed under this Ordinance in accordance with the terms set forth herein.

#### **SECTION 5. Additional Recovery by the District**

In addition to administrative fines established by this Ordinance, the District may impose additional costs, fines, penalties, and charges in connection with water theft violations, including but not limited to those set forth in the District's Rules and Regulations, as follows:

- (a) Charges for water taken or diverted in violation of this Ordinance; and
- (b) All District costs to repair or replace damaged meters, valves, fire hydrants, or other water system facilities, including but not limited to all applicable labor, materials, administrative, consulting, expert, and legal costs; and
- (c) All investigation, enforcement, administrative, consulting, expert, and legal costs incurred by the District to implement and enforce terms of this Ordinance.

## **SECTION 6. Service Termination and Restoration**

The District may in its sole and absolute discretion immediately discontinue water service to any person, entity, agency, premises, or property involved in a violation of this Ordinance, where water service shall not be restored unless and until, as determined by the District's General Manager, the following conditions are satisfied:

- (a) All violations are corrected; and
- (b) All costs, fines, penalties, and charges are paid in full or in accordance with terms and conditions accepted by the District; and
- (c) Adequate safeguards are in place to protect public health and safety, the District's water supplies, and its water supply system, and to prevent further violation(s) of this Ordinance.

## **SECTION 7. Hardship Waiver Requests**

Any person, entity, or agency upon whom a fine described in Government Code Section 53069.45 is imposed under this Ordinance may, within fifteen (15) calendar days a written notice of violation and imposition of fine by the District, submit a written request to the District for a hardship waiver, which request may include supporting documentation and must demonstrate that payment of the full amount of the fine would impose an undue financial burden on the responsible party. Written requests for a hardship waiver shall not apply to and are not available for fines described in Government Code Section 53069.45 and Section 3(d) and Section 4 of this Ordinance relating to water theft from an unauthorized connection to a District fire hydrant. Timely requests for a hardship waiver will be reviewed and determined by the District's General Manager, who will provide written notification of the determination to the requesting party.

## **SECTION 8. Appeal Procedure**

A written appeal of any determination, fine, or decision issued by the District's General Manager pursuant to this Ordinance may be submitted to the District's Board of Trustees within fifteen (15) calendar days of the issuance of such determination, fine, or decision being appealed. For purposes of this Section 8, the determination, fine, or decision being appealed shall be deemed received by the appealing party five (5) calendar days after being issued by the District, and an appealing party's written appeal shall be deemed submitted by said party on the postmarked date if delivered by mail, and on the date of transmittal if delivered by electronic mail or personal service to the District's office during normal business hours. Upon receiving a written appeal, the District will schedule the matter to be heard by the Board of Trustees at an upcoming Board meeting. Written notice of the date, time, and place of the appeal to be heard by the Board will be provided to the appealing party. The decision of the Board shall be final and conclusive, subject to judicial review under Code of Civil Procedure Section 1094.5.

## **SECTION 9. Additional Remedies**

This Ordinance supplements, and does not limit, any civil or criminal remedies available to the District under applicable law. Violations may be referred to local authorities for prosecution under Penal Code Section 498 or pursued for civil enforcement to recover damages and penalties. In accordance with Civil Code Section 1882.2, in any civil action brought by the District to recover damages in connection with any violation of this Ordinance, the District may recover as damages three times the amount of actual damages plus the cost of suit and reasonable attorney's fees.

## **SECTION 10. Public Reporting**

Members of the public are encouraged to report suspected water theft to the District by contacting the District office in person, by calling the District office/hotline day or night at (805) 688-6015, or via electronic mail at [general@syrwd.org](mailto:general@syrwd.org). All reports shall be treated as confidential to the extent permitted by law.

## **SECTION 11. Severability**

If any provision of this Ordinance or its application is held invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

## **SECTION 12. Effective Date**

This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon adoption by the District's Board of Trustees.

**AYES**, and in favor thereof, Trustees:

**NOES**, Trustees:

**ABSENT**, Trustees:

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Jeff Clay, President

**ATTEST:**

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Racel Cota, Secretary to the Board of Trustees

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(<https://www.ema-santaynezwater.org/>)



**Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin  
Eastern Management Area  
Groundwater Sustainability Agency**

[Contact EMA \(/contact-us\)](/contact-us)

[Santa Ynez Basin  
\(http://santaynezwater.org\)](http://santaynezwater.org)

|                                        |                                       |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="text" value="Search..."/> | <input type="button" value="Search"/> |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|

**THIS ITEM APPEARS ON**

[EMA GSA JPA BOARD MEETINGS \(/EMA-GSA-JPA-BOARD-MEETINGS\)](/EMA-GSA-JPA-BOARD-MEETINGS)

**JUL  
23**  
2026

## **EMA GSA JPA Board Regular Meeting, 4:00 PM**

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P.O. BOX 7098, LOS OSOS CA 93412

[PRIVACY POLICY \(/PRIVACY-POLICY\)](/PRIVACY-POLICY)

[DISTRICT TRANSPARENCY \(TRANSPARENCY.HTML\)](TRANSPARENCY.HTML)

[WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT \(ACCESSIBILITY.HTML\)](ACCESSIBILITY.HTML)

POWERED BY STREAMLINE ([HTTP://WWW.GETSTREAMLINE.COM/](http://www.getstreamline.com/)) | [SIGN IN \(HTTPS://WWW.EMA-SANTAYNEZWATER.ORG/USERS/SIGN\\_IN?DESTINATION=%2F2026-07-23-EMA-GSA-JPA-BOARD-REGULAR-MEETING-4-00-PM-8B2F17D1-C0A2-4717-B20E-59DCB411A905\)](https://www.ema-santaynezwater.org/users/sign_in?destination=%2F2026-07-23-EMA-GSA-JPA-BOARD-REGULAR-MEETING-4-00-PM-8B2F17D1-C0A2-4717-B20E-59DCB411A905)

Join our mailing list

## MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA

### CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP (CAG) FOR THE EASTERN MANAGEMENT AREA IN THE SANTA YNEZ RIVER VALLEY GROUNDWATER BASIN

MEETING WILL BE HELD **VIRTUALLY VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**  
AT 3:00 P.M., THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2026

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#### **Remote public participation is available via Telephone or TEAMS**

To access the meeting via telephone, please dial: [+1 469-998-7311, 418942414#](tel:+14699987311) or via the Web at: [Join the meeting now](#)

“Join a Meeting” - Meeting ID: **263 990 233 166 67** Meeting Passcode: **Pq7Kj6Bj**

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#### **MEETING AGENDA**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Public Comment (Any member of the public may address the CAG relating to any non-agenda matter within the CAG’s jurisdiction. The time for public comment allotted for each individual shall not exceed three minutes.)
3. Citizen Advisory Group (CAG) Membership Review
4. Well Registration and Metering Program
  - a. Facilitation Support Services Update from Stantec
5. 5-Year Groundwater Sustainability Plan Evaluation (Chapters 1 – 3)
6. Overview of Groundwater Management Responsibilities, Reporting Requirements, and Fees Within the Eastern Management Area
7. EMA GSA Initiatives Update
  - a. Potential for Consolidation/Streamlining of Annual Reports
  - b. Groundwater Extraction Fee
  - c. Other Proposition 68 Grant Initiatives
8. Grant/Financing Opportunities
  - a. IRWM Quarterly Grant Opportunities Newsletter
9. Future CAG Meeting Date/Time
  - a. Thursday, August 20, 2026 3:00 PM
10. CAG Reports and Requests for Future Agenda Items
11. Future EMA GSA Board meetings
  - a. Thursday, July 23, 2026 4:00 PM
  - b. CAG Report-Out



## 12. Adjournment

[This agenda was posted prior to the meeting at [ema-SantaYnezWater.org](http://ema-SantaYnezWater.org). In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to review agenda materials or participate in this meeting, please contact the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin Eastern Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency at (805) 457-5065. Advanced notification as far as practicable prior to the meeting will enable the GSA to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.]

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## Paeter Garcia

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**From:** Charlotte Arnao <carnao@confluencees.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 7, 2026 2:55 PM  
**To:** Paeter Garcia; Daniel Drugan; athompson@syrwcd.com; Bill Buelow; Kadie McShirley; Matthew Young; Jose Acosta; Randy Murphy  
**Cc:** Vikesh Dheeriya; Nate Page; Daniel Heibel  
**Subject:** Well Registration Graphic for Social Media - EMA GSA Member Agencies  
**Attachments:** EMA Well Registration Post\_v2.pdf

Hello EMA GSA Agency Representatives,

As well registration is now open, we are asking that each of your agencies share the attached graphic on your social media platforms to help spread the word to well owners in the Eastern Management Area. The graphic directs community members to register their wells through the Watermark platform between July 1 – August 31, 2026, and shares key resources including the well registration webpage and the public workshop scheduled for July 30.

Thank you for your support in getting the word out. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

**Charlotte Arnao** | Associate Water Resource Engineer

Confluence Engineering Solutions

(610) 256-1488

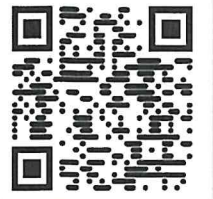
[carnao@confluencees.com](mailto:carnao@confluencees.com) | [confluencees.com](http://confluencees.com)



**WARNING:** This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.



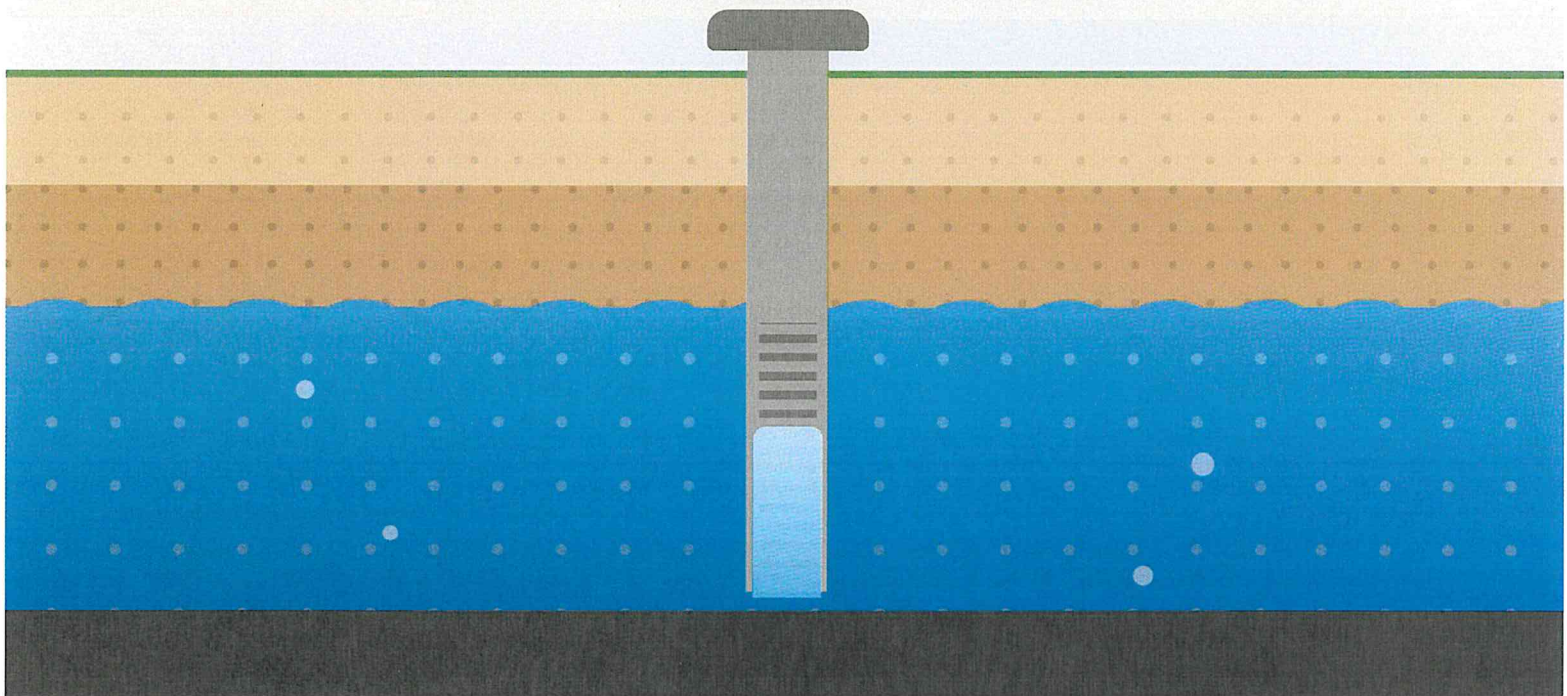
Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin  
Eastern Management Area  
Groundwater Sustainability Agency



SCAN TO REGISTER

# Help protect our groundwater. Register your well.

As required by Ordinance 2025-01, all well owners in the Eastern Management Area must register their wells. Improved data helps inform decisions that ensure a safe, plentiful water supply for years to come.



Well registration is open **July 1 – August 31, 2026.**



1

## Grab your mailer

Find the verification code on the letter mailed to your address through USPS



2

## Register online

Claim your parcel and wells in just a few minutes on the Watermark portal.



3

## Need help?

Come to the registration workshop July 30, 4:00–7:00 PM, 1070 Faraday St.

**Register at [ema-santaynezwater.org](https://ema-santaynezwater.org)**

[wellreg-ema@santaynezwater.org](mailto:wellreg-ema@santaynezwater.org) · (805) 457-5065



## Paeter Garcia

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**From:** Well Reg <wellreg-ema@santaynezwater.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 1, 2026 5:28 PM  
**Subject:** EMA GSA Well Registration Period \*\*NOW OPEN\*\*  
**Attachments:** EMA GSA Mailer #1 Template.pdf; EMA GSA Workshop Flyer 1.pdf

Dear EMA Property Owner,

We are pleased to announce the start of the well registration period for the Santa Ynez River Valley Eastern Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency (EMA GSA). The well registration period will be open from July 1 to August 31, 2026.

Property owners will receive a mailer (delivered by the U.S. Postal Service) with details about well registration, along with a unique verification code needed to begin the process. A standard version of the mailer is attached for reference; however, please check your mailbox for your personalized mailer, which includes your name, address, and unique verification code. If you do not receive a mailer by July 8, 2026, please contact the EMA GSA at the information below.

To get started in the meantime, **visit the updated [EMA GSA's Well Registration, Metering, and Reporting webpage](#)**. You will find resources to support you throughout the online well registration process. The online well registration form is housed within the Watermark portal. Access the Well Registration User Guide, Frequently Asked Questions and a Well Registration Checklist on this webpage. Once you receive a verification code in the mail, you will be able to set up a Watermark account to begin the well registration process.

For additional support and information, you are invited to attend our first Public Workshop on July 30, 2026, from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the Santa Ynez Community Services District Meeting Room (1070 Faraday St, Santa Ynez, CA 93460). The event will feature well registration overview presentations at 4:00 PM and 5:30 PM, followed by open house stations where staff will be available to provide one-on-one assistance. Please see the attached flyer for additional details.

You may RSVP for the workshop [in this form](#) as well as submit questions and comments. The RSVP is not a requirement to attend the workshop, it simply gives EMA an idea of how many people will attend to ensure adequate space and staffing. If after reviewing the available resources online, you need further assistance, you may email questions or comments to [wellreg-ema@santaynezwater.org](mailto:wellreg-ema@santaynezwater.org), or call (805) 457-5065.

Best Regards,

EMA GSA Executive Director Team  
[WellReg-EMA@SantaYnezWater.org](mailto:WellReg-EMA@SantaYnezWater.org)

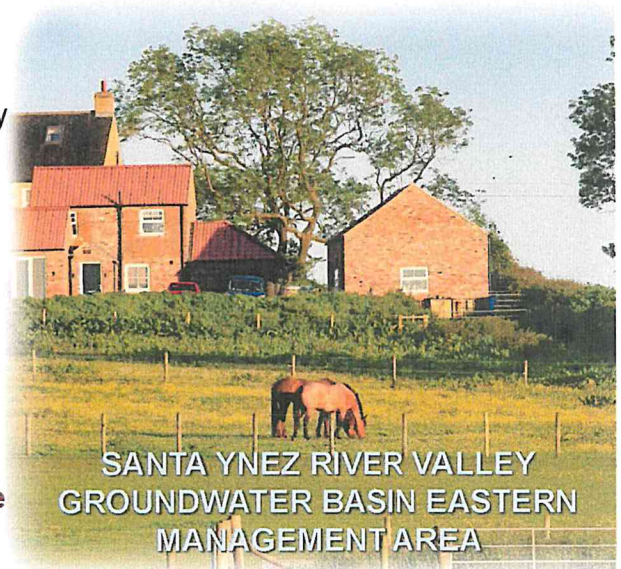


Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin  
Eastern Management Area  
Groundwater Sustainability Agency

# IMPORTANCE OF REGISTERING OUR WELLS

Groundwater stewardship is essential for ensuring a long-term, reliable water supply in the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin Eastern Management Area (EMA). A key management action outlined in the 2022 EMA Groundwater Sustainability Agency's (GSA) Groundwater Sustainability Plan, was the adoption of Ordinance No. 2025-01, which includes well registration requirements for the EMA.

Well owners in the EMA must register their wells with the EMA GSA to improve our understanding of groundwater extractions in the basin and to support improved groundwater management decisions at the local level. Well owners in the EMA are required to **register all wells online between July 1, 2026 and August 31, 2026.**



**YOUR ACTION IS  
REQUIRED**

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
SANTA BARBARA, CA  
PERMIT NO. 456

EMA GSA Contact Info:

[wellreg-ema@santaynezwater.org](mailto:wellreg-ema@santaynezwater.org)

(805) 457-5065



## ANNOUNCEMENT: GROUNDWATER WELL REGISTRATION OPENS JULY 1, 2026

### LOCAL EFFORTS FOR SUSTAINABLE GROUNDWATER

The EMA GSA is a local public agency established in April 2017 in response to the California Legislature's passage of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) in 2014. SGMA requires establishment of GSAs in medium and high-priority basins and for GSAs to prepare and implement Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) to actively manage groundwater supplies for all beneficial users. Key actions for the implementation of the EMA's GSA's 2022 GSP include the adoption of Ordinances No. 2025-01 and No. 2025-03.

Ordinance No. 2025-01 outlines the requirements for well registration and Ordinance No. 2025-03 outlines well metering and groundwater extraction reporting requirements for the EMA GSA. Following registration, all owners and operators of existing wells or groundwater extraction facilities within the EMA's boundaries must install water meters by June 30, 2027 and beginning October 31, 2027, must submit bi-annual water use reports to the EMA GSA. For additional information regarding these ordinances visit: [www.ema-santaynezwater.org](http://www.ema-santaynezwater.org)

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR VERIFICATION CODE



# HOW TO REGISTER

Groundwater well registration and water use information is housed on Watermark, an online data management platform set-up for the EMA GSA. Using this unique verification code specific to your property, you can:

- Create a Watermark Account
- Manage all parcels you own/operate in the EMA
- Register your wells

For a checklist of materials needed to register your wells, along with a step-by-step instructional video, please scan the QR code:

Watermark Verification Code:

Once you log into the Watermark portal, you can "claim" your property/ies using this Verification code.



## NEED HELP? REGISTRATION SUPPORT WORKSHOP

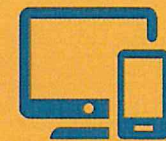
The EMA GSA will host an in-person public workshop in July 2026, followed by a virtual workshop in August to assist owners and operators with registering their wells and to answer questions. Bring the checklist information and any smart phone or device to get help registering your well in Watermark.

### Public Workshop

**Date:** July 30, 2026

**Time:** 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM

**Location:** Santa Ynez Community Services  
District, 1070 Faraday St, Santa Ynez, CA 93460

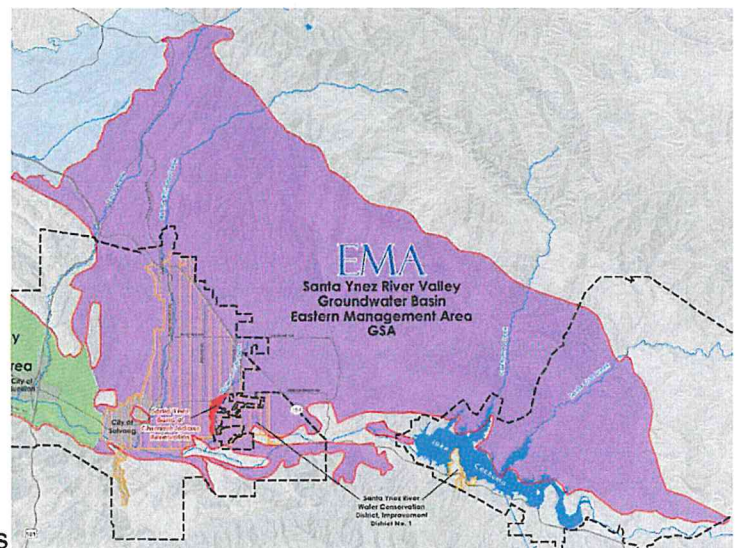


Please bring  
your Laptop,  
Tablet or  
Mobile  
phone

## IS YOUR WELL IN THE EMA AND MUST COMPLY?

EMA is part of the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin. Other GSAs in the groundwater basin include the Western Management Area and the Central Management Area. EMA's region includes the City of Solvang, unincorporated townships of Santa Ynez, Los Olivos, and Ballard, and other unincorporated areas throughout the EMA. Well registration applies to the following:

- Active, Inactive, or Abandoned wells
- Agricultural wells
- Domestic wells, including de minimis extractors ( $\leq 2$  acre-feet/year)
- Public municipal and industrial water system wells
- Private municipal water system wells





## Well Registration **PUBLIC WORKSHOP**

Well owners in the Eastern Management Area (EMA) of the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin are **required to register all wells between July 1 and August 31, 2026**. To support landowners with the well registration process, join the EMA Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) at a **PUBLIC WORKSHOP** on Thursday, July 30. Hear from the EMA GSA Executive Director, learn about the importance of well registration, explore helpful resources, and receive one-on-one assistance from staff.

### **Public Workshop and Open House**

**Date: July 30, 2026**

**Time: 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM**

**Location: Santa Ynez Community Services District Meeting Room,  
1070 Faraday St, Santa Ynez, CA 93460**

**Format:** Participants are welcome to drop by at any time between 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM. The EMA GSA Executive Director will provide a brief overview at 4:00 PM and again at 5:30 PM. The remaining workshop time will be open house style of multiple stations with EMA GSA staff.

#### **Agenda:**

- 4:00 PM – Presentation “Well Registration Overview”
- 4:15 PM – Well Registration Open House
- 5:30 PM – Presentation “Well Registration Overview”
- 5:45 PM – Well Registration Open House

**Open House Stations:** Participants can sign up at any Open House Station to receive assistance with well registration\*. Please see the following descriptions for each station:

- **Station #1 - Eligibility Requirements:** Clarify eligibility and well registration requirements for your specific property.
- **Station #2 - Watermark Training Tutorial:** View a brief video tutorial to learn how to register your well in the Watermark portal.
- **Station #3 - Well Registration Help Desk:** Receive individualized assistance creating your Watermark account and registering your wells.
- **Station #4 - Watermark Portal Help Desk:** Get individualized support troubleshooting issues with Watermark.
- **Station #5 - Ask the EMA GSA Executive Director:** Discuss your questions or concerns directly with the Executive Director.
- **Station #6 - County Meter Rebate Incentive:** Learn more about the County’s meter rebate program.

**\*Please bring your Verification Code and Checklist of well registration information** (information about your well and property, etc.)

**If you misplaced your Verification Code, please bring a form of ID and a utility bill or some other document that demonstrates affiliation with the property.**

For more information, please contact EMA GSA at [wellreg-ema@santaynezwater.org](mailto:wellreg-ema@santaynezwater.org)  
or call (805) 457-5065



# Friant Water pushes for no-pump zone in southern Tulare County

By John Lindt Published June 30, 2026 • 6:00 pm



(Rigo Moran)

**Friant-Kern Canal's new stretch in the Tule River subbasin to restore capacity flows is already sinking, limiting the effectiveness of the repair**



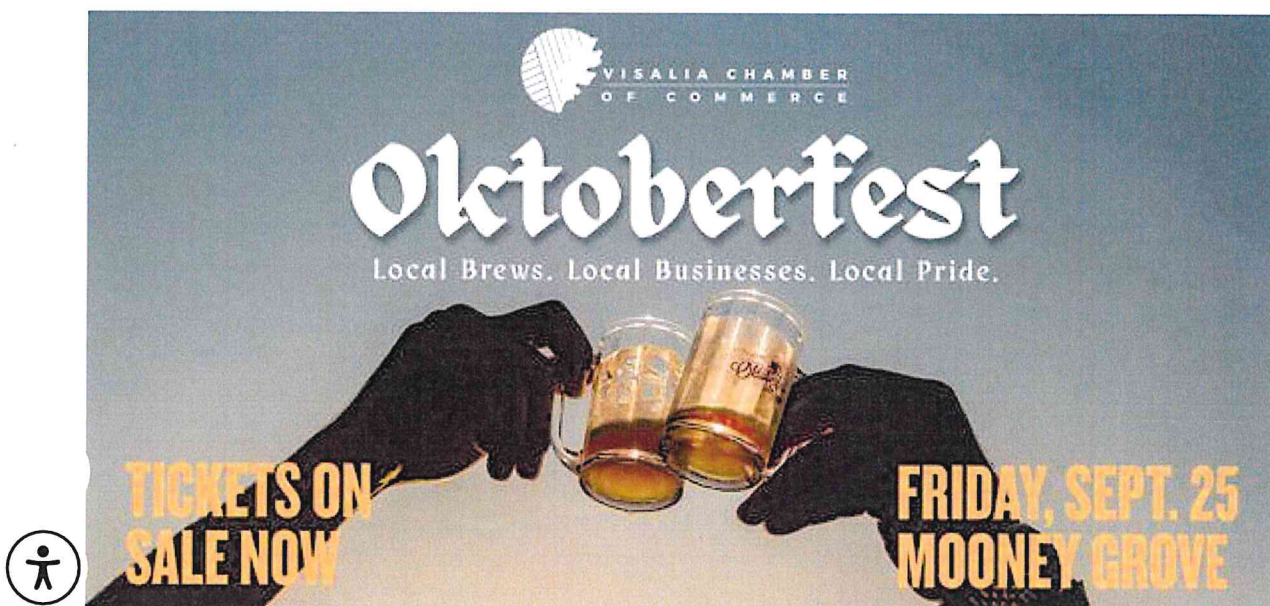
**TULARE COUNTY** – Southern Tulare County water users may be asked to turn off their pumps if they are within 3 miles of the Friant-Kern Canal to prevent it from sinking.

Newly appointed Chief Operating Officer Eric Lemas said Friant Water Authority, which operates the canal, is working with water users in the Eastern Tule River watershed to agree on a 3-mile, no-pump zone on both sides of the canal.

“We need to protect the entire Tule subbasin,” Lemas said, referring to the southern Tulare County area along the Friant Kern Canal. The eastern Tule River watershed has seen the worst subsidence, sinking up to one foot per year by one estimate. This is reducing the canal’s capacity to carry surface water south into Kern County.

The canal is a key water supply for 15,000 farms on the Valley’s eastside. Lemas said he does not think the continued sinking is that severe, but agrees it has been more than Friant had expected. Even as he offers the moratorium idea, he cautioned that they are not yet in agreement with the players.

“We’re not there yet,” he cautioned.





A 33-mile section of the canal from about Pixley south to Kern County has sunk so much from excessive groundwater pumping that carrying capacity has been reduced by 60%, Friant has reported. The reduced capacity to move water by gravity flow has been hard on water districts south of Tulare County where farmers may not get all the supply they had planned for. That includes the Arvin-Edison water district, the contractor furthest south along the 152-mile canal.

Friant Water Authority completed construction of a \$323 million parallel canal in 2024. But even as the new stretch of canal was put into service, it is already facing subsidence issues. At the June 2024 groundbreaking ceremony, it was reported that the ground below the new canal had already sunk by a foot. The parallel canal should have improved flow by 1,000 cubic feet per second (cfs), but instead is running water at 75% capacity.

“An additional 250 cfs should have been flowing through it Friday, said Karl Stock, Reclamation’s California-Great Basin regional director,” nonprofit newsroom SJV Water reported.

Earlier, Friant said the big canal’s diminished capacity had resulted in up to 300,000 acre-feet of reduced water deliveries in certain water years affecting the middle reach of the canal (milepost 88 to milepost 121). That launched the Middle Reach Capacity Correction Project to restore conveyance capacity from the current estimated 1,600 cubic-feet-per-second to the original 4,000 cubic-feet-per-second in the most critical area near the Deer Creek check structure (milepost 103).



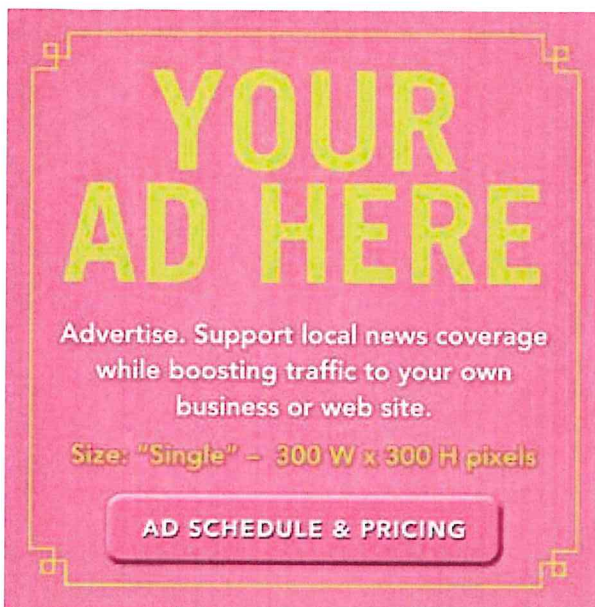
The shocking conclusion was that even as public funding was being solicited for more repair phases, the problem was getting worse. If the current rate of subsidence, a projected one foot per year, continues, it will “reduce long-term deliveries by nearly 100,000 acre-feet per year” to Arvin-Edison, according to a lawsuit.

That 2024 lawsuit filed by Friant and Arvin-Edison against the Eastern Tule Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) demanded that they help pay an earlier agreed upon \$200 million as their share of anticipated repairs to the canal and also rein in excessive pumping that has helped sink the land along the canal. The suit claimed that over a two-year period the “Middle Reach” section of the canal dropped another 2 feet.

Under state law, GSAs like Eastern Tule are responsible for managing groundwater within their jurisdiction. As the operator of the canal, Friant can't force farmers to limit pumping, but GSAs can.

The lawsuit was settled in March, but the GSA was dissolved, leading to questions of how to move forward. The agreement does say that Eastern Tule will not issue groundwater credits in the 2026 water year. Under the settlement, Eastern Tule agreed to terminate a 2021 funding agreement in exchange for a new deal enforcing pumping penalties to help pay for subsidence-related damage.



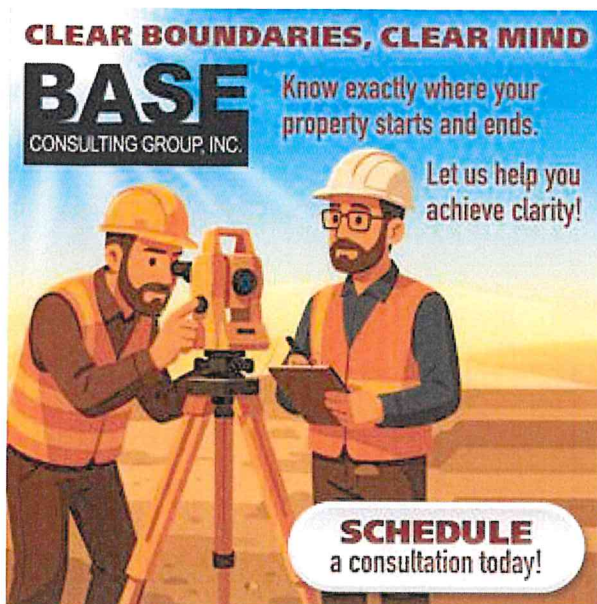


This new settlement with the Eastern Tule group included Porterville Irrigation District, Saucelito Irrigation District, Tea Pot Dome Water District, Terra Bella Irrigation District, Vandalia Water District, the city of Porterville and Tulare County.

Probably not by coincidence, the timeline coincides with Eric Lemas coming over after having served long terms with water districts in the Tule area. He most recently managed some of the water districts involved with the Eastern Tulare GSA, or ETGSA. No doubt that experience and those relationships will be put to good use, considering he knows and has worked with all the players before. He spent over 23 years with these southern Tulare County districts. Now he has to convince his colleagues to get with the program.

"We need the stars to align," Lemas said.





## Overdraft pumping accelerating?

Friant's lawsuit argued that "overdraft pumping was continuing, or even accelerating." The 2024 lawsuit says "while ETGSA's Land Subsidence Management Plan requires owners of properties that have experienced over 1.5 feet of land subsidence since 2020 to meter and report pumping data from any well pumping water below 600 feet, ETGSA has failed to require timely compliance despite its own recent acknowledge that at upwards of 42% of the land subsidence in ETGSA may be caused by groundwater extraction from such deep wells."

Now comes the transition to a new groundwater sustainability agency, but the new, hopefully more cooperative, relationship among fellow farmers has seen a rocky start. Friant officials are hearing reports that the lack of a groundwater governing body is allowing some growers to pump water even more vigorously this season despite the settlement.

SJV Water reported last month that "Some farmers in southern Tulare County – where excessive groundwater pumping has already caused hundreds of millions in damage to the Friant-Kern Canal – are back to pumping like crazy while there's a gap in oversight."





It hasn't gone unnoticed.

"They have got to be serious about stopping the pumping," said Jeevan Muhar, general manager of Arvin-Edison Water Storage District Groundwater Sustainability Agency.

So, Friant CEO Johnny Amaral and COO Lemas have their work cut out for them, laboring to solicit more money to do more repairs even as the newly constructed canal continues to sink. Friant is moving forward on Phase 2 of the 33-mile correction plan that includes a promise of \$200 million in new federal money from President Trump's "Big Beautiful Bill."

Also, Congressman Jim Costa announced late last month that more funding for Phase 2 repairs beyond the 10 miles completed was coming. That funding includes another \$65.8 million for the Friant-Kern Canal.

Overall, Phase 2 would cover repairs for the remaining 23 miles in the project with a price tag of more than \$1 billion.

Lemas said to expect some work to start on the two last phases along the 23-mile remaining section, with a groundbreaking on the 2A portion of the canal hopefully coming in August.



The 444-mile California Aqueduct on the west side of the Valley delivers water to 27 million people throughout the state, supplying water for agriculture and municipal uses. The aqueduct was built by California's Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. After construction, the operation and maintenance of the facilities were managed by the Department of Water Resources.

The idea of a pumping moratorium along a local canal is not a new one.

GSA's already restrict applications for new or replacement wells that require scientific hydrological modeling to prove that the well's pumping will not cause further canal damage or subsidence. In the Kern County portion of the California Aqueduct, there is a pumping moratorium in place. The Westside Water Authority GSA implemented a 5-mile wide ban on pumping along the canal in late 2024. The Westside Water Authority also approved a 10-mile long buffer zone along the canal but they claim it is more likely that subsidence is not from farm pumping but oil drilling. Still, the DWR says additional study and data collection will likely be necessary to reach conclusions and hails the local district's cooperation.

Recognizing severe subsidence up and down the aqueduct, this year DWR is launching interim repairs in Kings and Fresno counties, including along the San Luis Canal that connects to the Delta Mendota area. According to the Metropolitan Water District, which receives water from the State Water project through the aqueduct, "The most subsidence has occurred in ... the West Side subbasin, which is managed by the Westlands Water District GSA."





This section has dropped as much as 9 feet since the canal was built in 1967.

A June 2026 report in California Water News edited by media outlet Maven's Notebook states, "Subsidence in the Central Valley has been documented since at least the 1920s, driven largely by long-term groundwater pumping in one of the world's most intensively farmed regions. By the time construction of the State Water Project was completed around 1970, parts of the San Joaquin Valley had sunk by more than 8.5 meters, or nearly 30 feet."

An addendum to the DWR 2023 Delivery Capability Report, released in 2025, framed the issue as increasingly urgent. The forecast said, "if we take into account the combined effects of climate change and take no physical action, we could be looking at anywhere from an 18% delivery reduction by 2043 all the way up to an 87% delivery reduction by 2043," said a DWR official.

Initial estimates put the cost of restoring the California Aqueduct to its original design specifications at about \$4 billion.

DWR calls a pumping moratorium "a direct and potentially effective measure" cautioning that "the choice to adopt and implement such measures rests with each local GSA."





## Lesson in geography

Back on the eastside, Lemas is excited about the recent funding announcement to replace older pumps at Tea Pot Dome WD near Porterville, where he was manager, allowing farmers there to get water from the Friant Kern Canal instead of pumping it out of the ground. Construction of this project is moving forward now that Friant says they will get \$200 million from the “Big Beautiful Bill.”

Lemas’ theory of why subsidence is worse in the South Valley is because the canal starts out east of Fresno on rocky soils next to the Sierra, but then travels south through Tulare County snaking further to the west, with soils more likely to sink in the face of deep groundwater pumping. Once the sinking occurs, it is permanent.

The Tule River watershed in southern Tulare County, where subsidence is worse, is also naturally drier with less natural runoff than the Kings River in Fresno and Kaweah River in northern Tulare County areas along the canal. There are more “white areas” in the Tule region where farmers historically have had limited surface water but lots of groundwater pumping.





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# Kings County groundwater agency approves budget based on hypothetical revenue

BY MONSERRAT SOLIS • **NEWS** • JUNE 30, 2026



A Kings County groundwater agency recently approved a \$2.1 million budget – the minimum it will need to adhere to state regulations – based on a future assessment election that even its own manager doesn't think will pass.

The South Fork Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) approved the plan on June 18. It hinges on the county continuing an agreement to loan the GSA money as an advance on existing land assessment fees that are set to expire in 2028.

A Proposition 218 election to set new land assessment fees, which has yet to be scheduled, is expected to fail, according to South Fork General Manager Johnny Gailey. Meanwhile, growers may be asked to voluntarily pay a pumping fee as part of an "innovative revenue stream" being considered.

All of which makes the recently approved budget hypothetical at best.

Gailey said he believes landowners will reject any proposal to increase fees because they don't feel represented on the board. He referred to a long-running, as yet unsuccessful, effort to [add two seats](#) to the five-director board to represent northern parts of the GSA.



"I believe that if we do a Prop. 218 before we have two more board seats up here, we're going to be throwing that money away," Gailey told the board at the June 18 meeting, referring to the cost of holding a Proposition 218 election.

At the request of growers, South Fork began the process of adding two seats to the board last year. South Fork is made up of five different agencies, each of which must approve the amendment.

But one agency, the Empire Westside Irrigation District, [keeps tabling the issue](#), according to Gailey.

Being able to fund programs is crucial as the Tulare Lake subbasin, which covers most of Kings County, is [finally uniting in an attempt to write a new cohesive groundwater plan](#) that will lift the region out of probation. The Water Resources Control Board placed the subbasin on probation in 2024 for lacking an adequate plan that would protect domestic wells and stop subsidence, among other things.

Under probation, farmers are required to meter their wells, register them at \$300 each, report extractions and pay \$20 per acre foot pumped. Reporting extractions [began](#) May 1, but fees have been held off pending an ongoing [legal action](#).

As part of the new subbasin plan, South Fork will be expected to hire its own consultants to assess its water situation and implement programs such as repairing domestic wells harmed by excessive agricultural pumping.

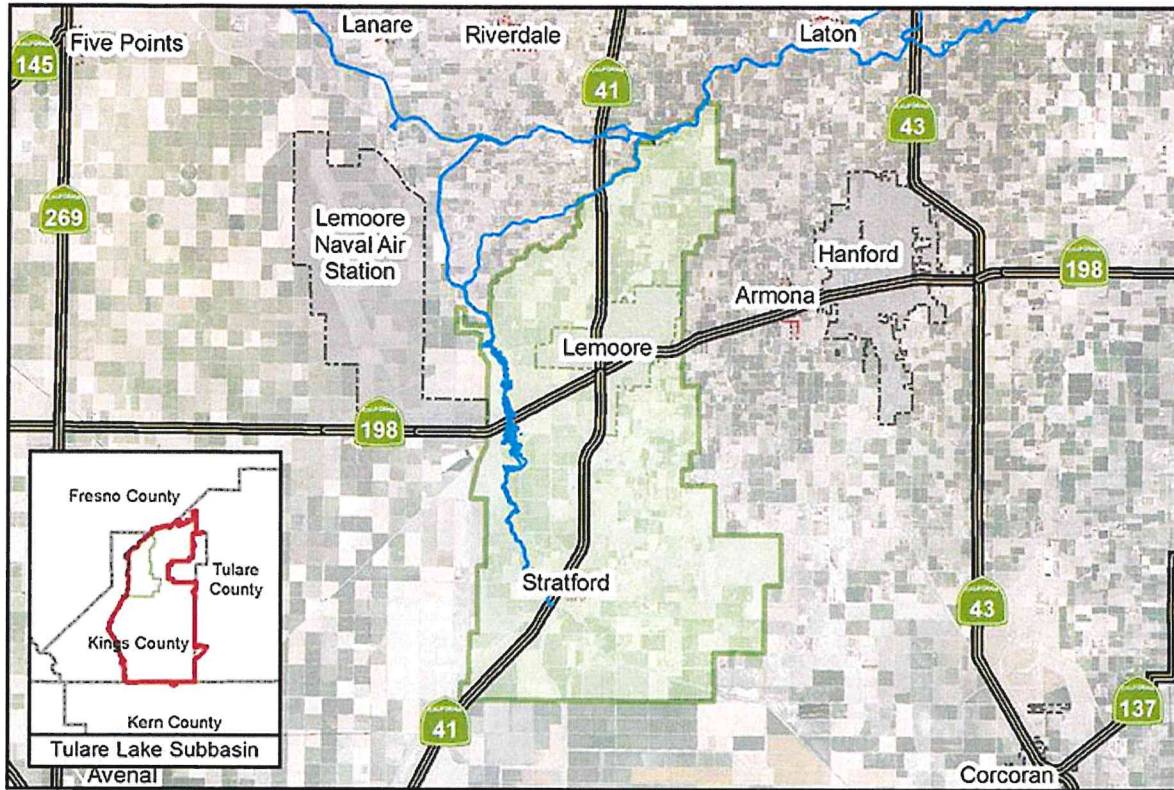
Assuming funding comes through, South Fork's budget includes:

- \$883,800 to implement its groundwater plan, including funding its dry well program that will repair eight domestic wells in the area
- \$777,636 for consulting services such as \$249,389 to help write a new subbasin-wide groundwater plan and a contractor to act as liaison with the Water Board

"If we don't get some sort of loan for well mitigation, I'm going to cut well mitigation, we're just not going to do it," Gailey told the board.

In order to have enough cash for those costs, Gailey said it would take an "innovative revenue stream" to even out the budget. The GSA could ask its pumpers to pay a voluntary \$16 per-acre-foot fee for using "sustainable yield," he said.

South Fork's sustainable yield, or the amount that can be extracted without causing negative impacts, was set at .86 acre feet per acre of land.



Board member Ceil Howe Jr. said that the

additional bill would be a burden on growers.

"That's still a lot of money; \$1.7 million dollars coming out of the grower's pockets but nothing on the other side coming back other than a partial water supply compared to what they had before," Howe said.

Doug Freitas, who sits on the grower advisory committee, asked the board if charging farmers for pumping water was legal and questioned what water rights growers had if the GSA was charging for groundwater usage.

South Fork's legal counsel Ken Richardson explained that the GSA has authority under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) to charge a pumping fee.

"You have an usufructuary right," Richardson explained. "You don't own that water, the state owns the water of the state. You got a right to use it. They got a right to charge you for that use."

Freitas was not happy with that response.

"I don't even think we'll get off probation to tell you the truth," he said. "It seems like an awful lot of money to be burdened on just the growers."



## Author

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**MONSERRAT SOLIS**

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# State readies for next phase in Tulare County pumping crackdown

BY LISA MCEWEN • [NEWS](#) • JULY 1, 2026



The next phase in the state's crackdown on over pumping in Tulare County will be revealed July 16 in Visalia.

The meeting, which is not open to the public, will give water managers their first glimpse at the state's plan for correcting severe overdraft in the Tule subbasin.

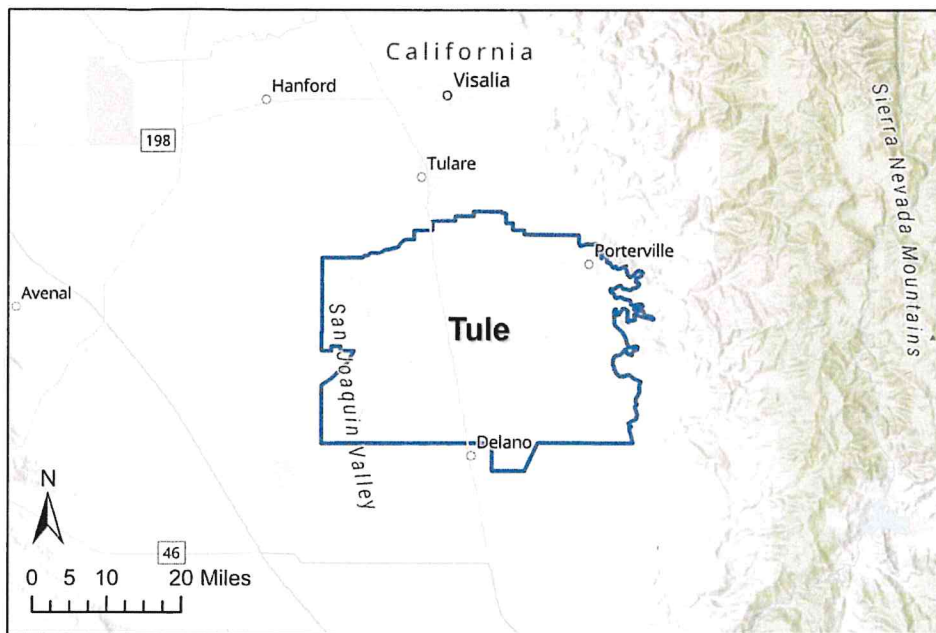
It's known as an "interim plan" and will definitely include pumping limits and a fee increase from \$20 to \$35 per acre foot pumped. The draft interim plan won't be released until summer 2027 and would have to be approved by the Water Resources Control Board later that year before going into effect.

But the clock is ticking and the July 16 meeting is the first step to lay out the process and timeline.

Water managers got a heads up about the July 16 meeting last week.

"One question I did ask is, is this a foregone conclusion, or are you going to leave us with some hope at the end of this meeting that we can still avoid an interim plan? Because that's going to make a big difference on how we all approach this thing," Mike George said during the July 1 Tule East Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) meeting.





**Tule subbasin**

George is president of Tule East, a hotbed of subsidence, or land sinking, from excessive groundwater pumping in the Tule subbasin. Subsidence has been so significant, it sunk a 33-mile portion of the Friant-Kern Canal. A 10-mile section has since had to be rebuilt at a cost of \$350 million.

"I'm sure an interim plan would include dictating what we can

pump and what we can't pump along the canal. That's probably my biggest concern," George said.

Stemming subsidence is a main focus of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which gives water managers until 2040 to bring aquifers into balance.

To do that, the Water Board has authority to place subbasins on probation for a year, then impose an interim plan if improvements aren't made during the probationary period.

The Tule and neighboring Tulare Lake subbasins were both placed on probation in 2024.

If adopted, the Tule interim plan would be the first ever attempt by the state to actually impose pumping limits on landowners.

"The goal of the state water board is to move all of the basin toward sustainability as quickly as legally and technically possible and the staff will continue to refine the schedule as new information and approaches are evaluated," according to a Water Board spokesperson.

No attorneys or technical staff will be allowed to attend the July 16 meeting, scheduled for three hours. Any records from the meeting will be available upon

request.

"I think for transparency purposes, it would be better to have an open room dialogue," said Michael Knight, manager of Porterville Irrigation District GSA. "...it would be great if the grower would be able to hear the state actually making these statements and providing these directions at the same time."

Though Knight also wondered about the interim plan's format and logistics, one thing was abundantly clear: Growers should "be prepared for pumping reductions," according to a statement by Water Board staff.

Tule East general manager Rogelio Caudillo said he hopes managers will have time to talk about the progress they've made.

"We want to pass along how difficult this has been, how expensive it's been, and what we've each had to go through," he said. "We need (a plan) that is both adequate and something that people can work with."



## Author

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LISA MCEWEN

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# Tulare water managers brace for state action on excessive groundwater pumping

BY LISA MCEWEN • [NEWS](#) • JULY 15, 2026



While water managers in southern Tulare County aren't rolling out the welcome mat for Thursday's [meeting](#) with state regulators, they are curious about how the state may propose to ratchet down overpumping.

The meeting is invitation-only between water managers, Water Resources Control Board member Nichole Morgan and high-level state staff. It is not open to the public. Even groundwater agency consultants and attorneys aren't allowed.

An [agenda obtained by SJV Water](#) shows state staff will lay out components, timelines and procedural steps for the next phase in the state's crackdown on excessive groundwater pumping.

Staff will also propose actions the 12 Tule groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) could take to prevent state-mandated pumping limits, which will also come with a charge of \$35 per acre foot.

Possible state-mandated pumping limits are the next consequence of locals not being able to draft a cohesive groundwater plan that protects water quality and stems rampant subsidence.

Managers had nearly two years to come up with such a plan after the region was placed on probation in 2024. But a new plan has, so far, not materialized.



Reactions to the state's agenda for Thursday's meeting ranged from disdainful to hopeful among farmers and water managers.

"Is this just going to be a kick in the ass?" Pixley farmer Mike Faria asked at a Tule subbasin stakeholder meeting Wednesday.



***Lower Tule and Pixley Groundwater Sustainability Agencies Attorney Jennifer Spaletta admonishes Water Resources Control Board staff during an April 21, 2026 hearing for not meeting with Tulare County groundwater managers. Lisa McEwen / SJV Water***

Others noted some positives on the state agenda, including that Natalie Stork, director of the Office of Sustainable Groundwater Management, will review expectations for consulting with Water Board staff.

"And that's great, because there hasn't been a ton of communication with state board staff," said Tule subbasin manager Don Tucker. "We're going to learn a lot even though we have no expectation of how it's going to go."

A lack of communication with the state has been a common complaint, with managers saying Water Board staff are operating "in a silo" and not answering questions.

Garbled or nonexistent communication may be what led to rumors that Water Board staff allegedly felt Thursday's meeting could be unsafe.

The rumors apparently stemmed from a question about the anticipated "tone" of the meeting asked by meeting facilitator Kearns & West, which spoke with each GSA manager and a board member in advance of the meeting.

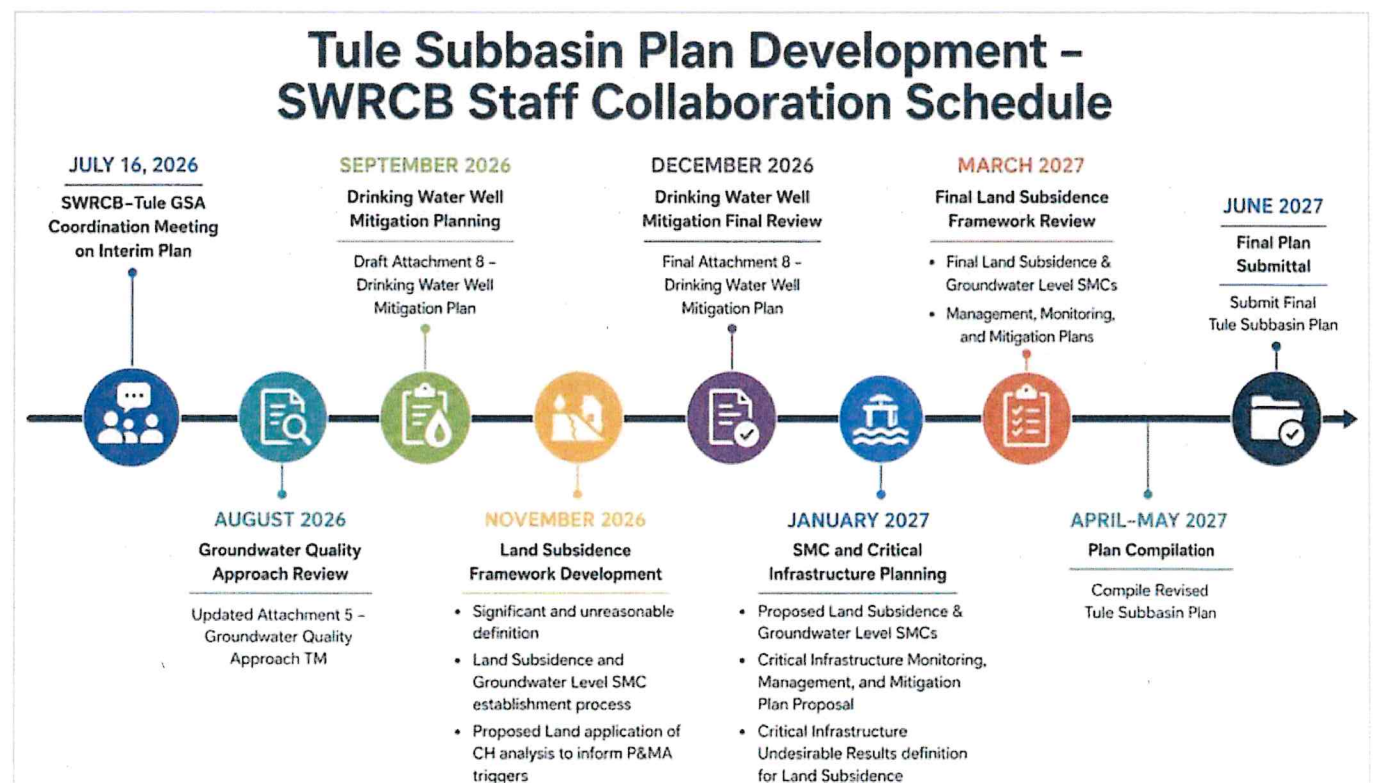
That got filtered down to Tule stakeholders as concerns the meeting would become hostile.

"What do they think, that we come to meetings with guns and knives?" said Matt Leider, president of Tea Pot Dome Water District GSA, at the GSA's July 8 board meeting.

A Water Board spokesman wrote in an email that there were no concerns about security.

Strife, whether internal or external, is not the message the region needs to send, said Alex Peltzer, Tea Pot Dome's manager and the General Manager of Pixley and Lower Tule River GSAs.

"But it's important for us to let the state board know that whatever the differences we have amongst each other, we are working them out."





***Water managers in the Tule subbasin plan to show Water Resources Control Board staff a timeline for when they expect a new groundwater plan for the region. SCREENSHOT from presentation at Tule stakeholders meeting July 15, 2026***

A presentation to be shared on Thursday by Tucker aims to do just that.

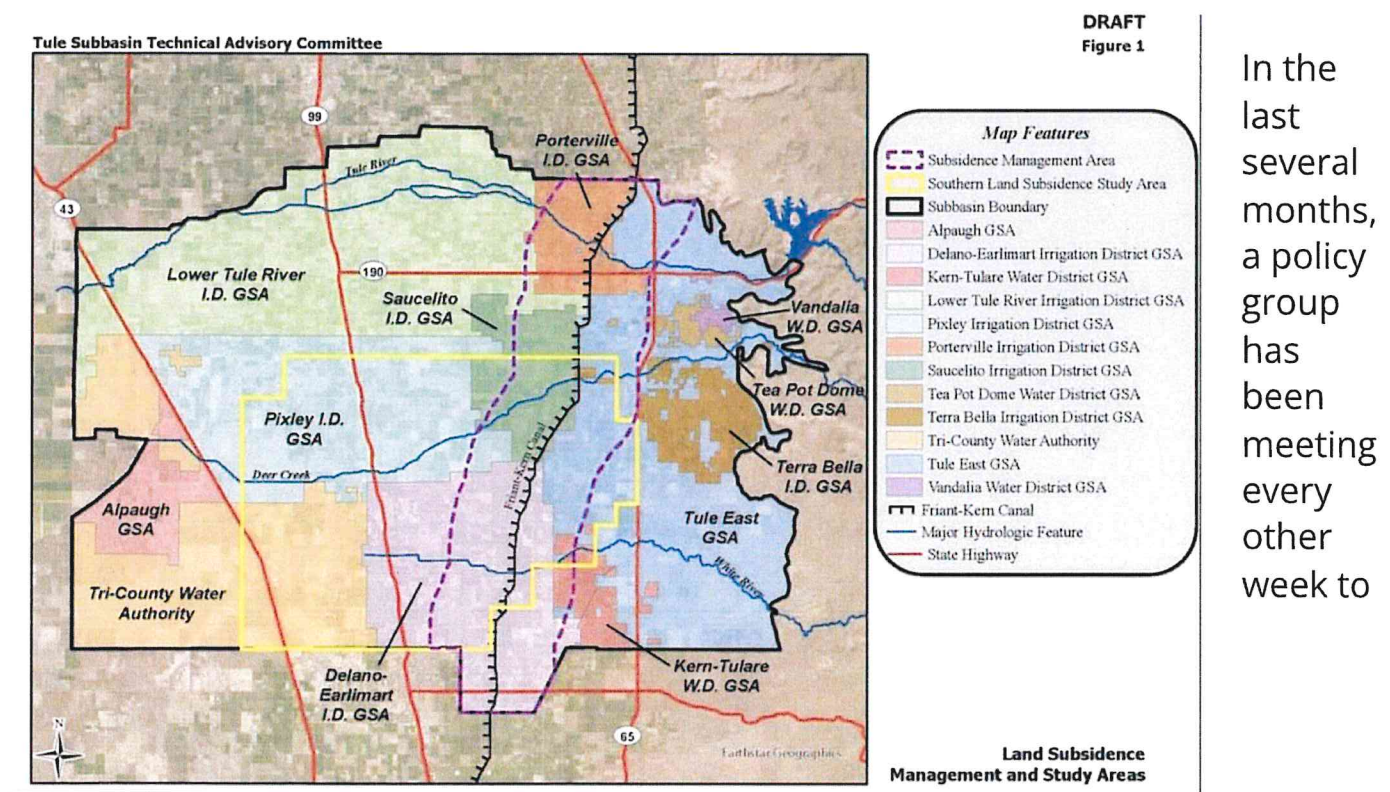
It outlines three common priorities: subsidence, groundwater quality and domestic well protection and gives timelines for achieving each.

Negotiations with Friant Water Authority over how to protect the critical Friant-Kern Canal are ongoing, Tucker said. That may include zero pumping along a two or three-mile zone on either side of the canal through the subbasin.

The subbasin plans to submit a rewritten groundwater sustainability plan by June 2027.

Since the 2024 probationary ruling, the subbasin's six GSAs split into twelve. Lawsuits over damage to the Friant-Kern Canal from overpumping erupted between multiple GSAs and Friant Water Authority.

And excessive, "wild west" overpumping continues in the former Eastern Tule GSA, where a lapse in oversight means there are no rules in play.





***Area outlined in yellow is the subsidence study area Tule subbasin stakeholders will examine. SCREENSHOT of presentation at Tule subbasin stakeholders July 15, 2026 meeting.***

hammer out contentious subsidence management details, 11 of 12 GSAs have signed on to a unified groundwater plan effort and all 12 GSAs have signed on to a subsidence study that will lay out exactly where and why subsidence is occurring.

Tucker said 52 technical and policy meetings have been held since April.

“The point is there is a lot of work that is happening right now,” Tucker said. “We’re trying to get to the point where state board staff can see the effort that is going into it, and we can let them know we’re serious about this.”



## Author

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LISA MCEWEN

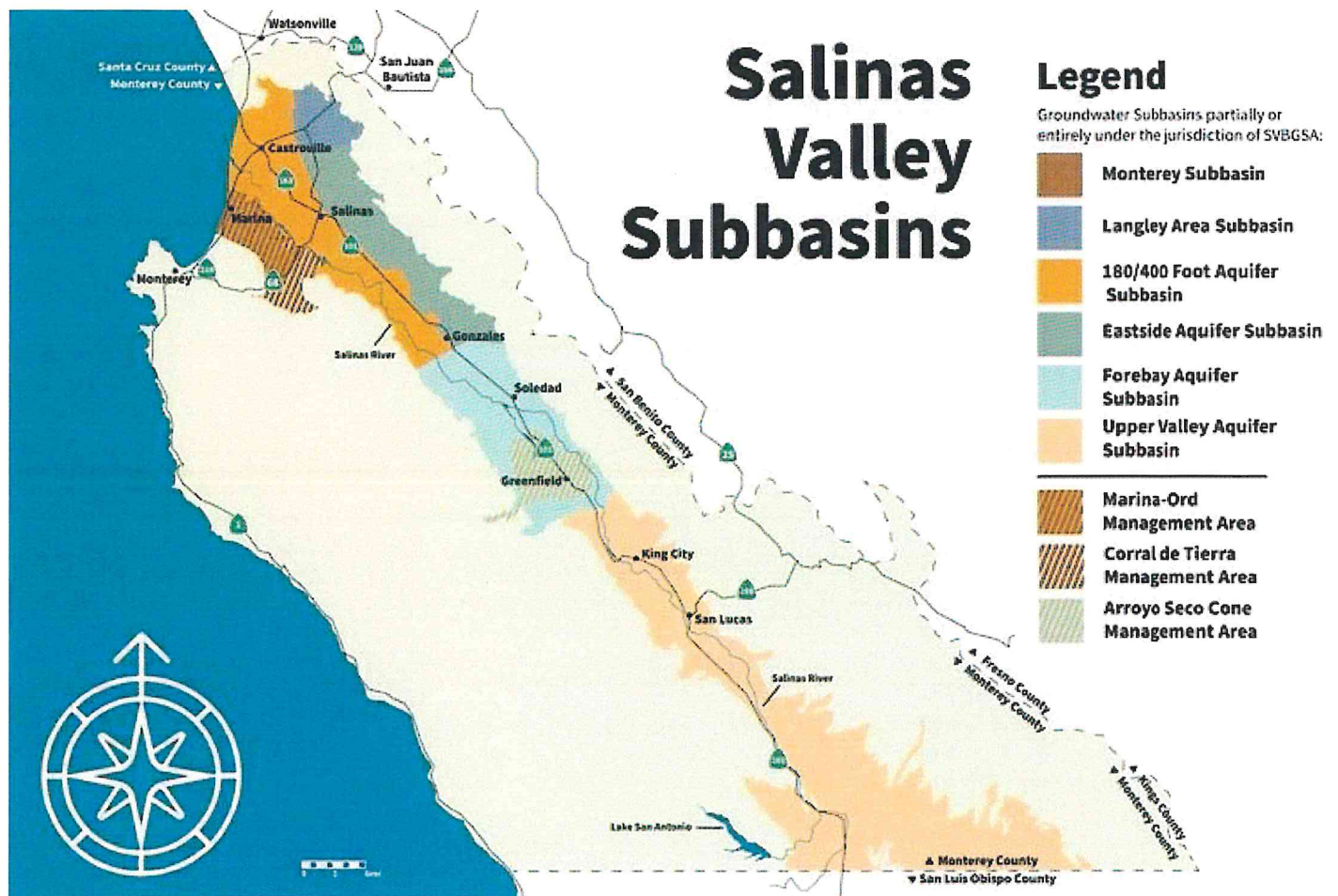
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## Salinas Valley officials weigh three groundwater sustainability project portfolios.

Katie Rodriguez  
Jul 15, 2026



To meet mandates from the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, three portfolios of projects have emerged offering a range of solutions to tackle groundwater sustainability by 2040 in the 180/400 Subbasin and 2042 for the remaining subbasins.

C/O, THE SALINAS VALLEY BASIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

To meet mandates of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, three options have emerged to achieve groundwater sustainability. In August, the board of the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency will select one of these portfolios to recommend to the state's Department of Water Resources for review. A hurdle is the cost.

"We've had some real struggles," Advisory Committee Chair Curtis Weeks told the board on July 9. "They see a number and they can't talk about the merits of the project."

The project portfolios all incorporate some amount of demand management (reduction in pumping), optimization of the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project, and use of a Monterey County Water Resources Agency permit to divert water from the Salinas River.

Both Portfolios 1 and 3A utilize a brackish groundwater restoration project (BGRP), each at different scales, affecting both cost and outcome.

Portfolio 1, the most expensive option, projects \$1.3 billion in capital costs and \$117 million in annual operating costs. It includes a large-scale BGRP, Salinas River recharge in Castroville and the East Side subbasins, CSIP improvements and 10-percent demand management.

Portfolio 3A would be \$1 billion with annual operating costs of \$74 million. It would scale back BGRP and add infrastructure to deliver treated water to Salinas, Marina and Castroville to reduce urban pumping.

Portfolio 4 is considered the low-cost option with an estimated \$600 million in capital costs and \$8 million in annual operating costs. It has the highest demand management, at 20 percent.

Portfolio 1 would meet seawater intrusion targets by 2040 and 2042, while Portfolio 3A reaches them over a longer period, according to technical consultant Derrik Williams. Portfolio 4 would not meet state requirements.

"It's a hard puzzle," says Piret Harmon, SVBGSA's manager. "We could just pick a project that works for seawater intrusion in 180/400 Subbasin and not worry about the others, but the holistic approach in the end will [be] the most cost-effective."

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Katie Rodriguez



CENTERPIECE

## It's a critical year to pick a solution to save Monterey County's aquifers. The questions are how, and who pays?

Katie Rodriguez

Jun 25, 2025

**IF NOTHING IS DONE**, a portion of northern Monterey County could lose access to aquifers that underlie a significant chunk – call it 25 percent – of the county's agricultural production, and supply drinking water to hundreds of thousands of residents, 50,000 of whom are disadvantaged.

The sea wants to move inland, a fact that's been known in the region for over 80 years as agricultural production increased.

But over time, groundwater was pumped faster than could be replenished, exacerbating the inland march of salty water beneath Castroville toward Salinas. Eventually, the state said that something needed to be done about it.

How to stop the ocean from spreading and further contaminating these freshwater aquifers – specifically, what's known as the 180/400 Subbasin – has become one of the region's defining environmental and political questions. Thanks to California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, passed just over a decade ago, local water agencies need to decide on a plan to protect future water supply. In 2015, that countdown began.

Monterey County, along with other regions in California with critically overdrafted groundwater basins, began a decades-long effort to bring groundwater use into balance by 2040. Now, 2026 marks a pivotal year. All of the groundwater modeling, the public meetings, the basin boundary decisions and feasibility studies of the last 10 years culminate in this moment, where local agencies must push plans across the line into implementation.

As projects have begun to emerge, their costs, impacts and feasibility have been heavily scrutinized and debated as a fast-approaching deadline approaches: By August, plans must be provided to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) for review.

If a solution isn't proposed and approved by DWR, the state could assume control of local water sources, imposing pumping restrictions and fees – although whether or not these pumping cuts would be valley-wide is up for debate. While the exact impact to the county's largest industry, agriculture, remains unclear, officials underscore the cost and ripple effects will be huge.

Estimates from water experts project annual economic losses of anywhere from \$1.3 to \$1.9 billion if pumping restrictions are imposed.

But while the cost of doing nothing is high, so is the cost of doing something.

"The greatest fear that we have among the grower community right now is how much this is all going to cost," says Norm Groot, executive director of the Monterey County Farm Bureau. "The projects that we're facing are astronomically expensive, over \$1 billion in proposed projects, probably closer to \$2 billion. That's just an astronomical number that the community is worried about."

Though mitigating seawater intrusion remains the top priority, other subbasins face their own urgent challenges and deadlines, and must meet sustainability requirements by 2042.

But in a world where water knows no boundaries, yet is regulated within a fragmented governance structure, the question persists: Who benefits, and who pays?





Wells used to monitor groundwater levels are scattered across the Salinas Valley. Above, Guillermo Diaz-Moreno, a hydrologist with the Monterey County Water Resources Agency, collects data from these wells monthly.

DANIEL DREIFUSS

**THE YELLOW POSTS** that dot the Salinas Valley easily go unnoticed. Each one marks a monitoring well, protected by a yellow metal casing, scattered across roadsides and agricultural fields. Hydrologists with the Monterey County Water Resources Agency visit 130 of these each month to get a picture of how groundwater levels in the Valley's aquifers are changing.

"[Some areas] tend to see faster recharge since they're next to the river," says Guillermo Diaz-Moreno, a hydrologist with MCWRA who collects data from wells from Castroville all the way to San Ardo. "But overall, there's been a decline since we started measuring."

Underneath our feet is a vast and largely unseen world of water, its movement monitored and increasingly, though not completely, understood.

Since the 1940s, MCWRA has been measuring groundwater levels, historically relying heavily on privately owned wells for data.

As people drilled additional and deeper wells over time, the agency has accumulated decades of historical records. Combined with data from its own monitoring wells, and data collected from the U.S. Geological Survey, hydrologists gained an understanding of the valley's water table and underground sediments, forming the basis for groundwater models now used under SGMA.

"We have a really large effort that we usually do in November-December, when pumping has slowed down but before we tend to get winter rain to help us understand how much the natural system is recovering as we decrease pumping," says Amy Woodrow, senior hydrologist at MCWRA. More intensive groundwater monitoring hinges on water usage by agriculture, she explains.

All of this knowledge gave the County an advantage when it came to understanding our groundwater systems, how it can be stored and how people depend on it – influencing nearly every decision about water management – and eventually shaping projects for SGMA.

"Water always flows downhill," SVBGSA Advisory Committee Chair Curtis Weeks says, "or towards money."

**YEARS BEFORE SGMA**, the subbasins that make up the Salinas Valley were mapped to reflect how groundwater moves underground as it travels from the southern parts of the county and northward alongside the Salinas River, before emptying out into the Pacific Ocean.

Groundwater in California during this time went largely unregulated. Scientists and water managers had ways to observe what was happening underground, but few effective tools to manage it strategically.

Legal pressures mounted, then came years of drought. Beginning in 2012, groundwater basins in agricultural areas experienced drastic declines. Land subsided, some wells ran dry. In the coastal area of Castroville and Moss Landing, abnormally dry conditions furthered the spread of seawater into the shallow aquifers.

Following a declaration of a drought state of emergency, the California Legislature passed SGMA, signed by former Gov. Jerry Brown.



“Groundwater management in California is best accomplished locally,” said Brown in signing SGMA. The legislative package required local agencies to form groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs), then develop groundwater sustainability plans (GSPs) for basins that were designated by SGMA as high or medium priority.

The hydrological boundaries of the Salinas Valley were then transformed into legal management units. The six primary subbasins today that make up the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin include: 180/400-foot Aquifer Subbasin, Eastside Aquifer Subbasin, Forebay Aquifer Subbasin, Langley Area Subbasin, Monterey Subbasin and the Upper Valley Aquifer Subbasin.

Through this process the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SVBGSA) was formed, governed by a board of 11 directors, each member representing different interests across the Salinas Valley. This group, which will recommend a suite of projects to the state in about a month, consists of a number of people representing agricultural interests, South County cities, disadvantaged communities, environmental interests and the City of Salinas. Each subbasin has its own committee, and another advisory committee made up of roughly 13 members and chaired by Weeks makes recommendations to the board.

“There’s all these different entities,” says County Supervisor Glenn Church, who also serves on the SVBGSA board. “Everybody goes to their corner and argues for themselves, and those days are over. We’re going to have to come up with some common solutions.”

A veteran in the world of water, Derrik Williams has been studying where it goes and how it flows for over three decades. As a technical consultant for a firm called Montgomery & Associates, he’s been working with the SVBGSA as a project manager, explaining how seawater intrusion works and how the sediments underground distinguish our subbasins.

Aquifers are often classified as confined or unconfined. Unconfined aquifers are “like your sink,” Williams says. “Think of it as a bowl of gravel and sand.” Underground, there might be layers of clay, sand, silt and rock, forming ribbons and pretzel-like patterns that shape how water moves; generally, towards the sea.

The 180/400 Subbasin is a confined aquifer, meaning layers of sediment separate groundwater at different depths. The “180” and “400” aquifers, named for their approximate depth in feet below the ground, sit above a deeper aquifer at around 800 feet. Beneath those lie even deeper aquifers, about which relatively little is known.

“Some people push back and say, but our subbasins are different, and they are different,” says Williams. “This is going to be the balancing act, how you bring the entire valley into sustainability. Because it will probably take the entire valley, knowing that you are hydrologically benefiting some parts of the valley more than others. Economically you might be benefiting the entire valley equally, but that’s different than hydrologically benefiting one area.”



The Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency and Monterey County Water Resources Agency held a joint workshop on May 18 in Salinas.

DANIEL DREIFUSS

**THE THYME ROOM** at the County of Monterey’s Schilling Place campus in Salinas smells of garlic, maybe onions. Windows are open, but the air is thick with heat and unanswered, high-stakes questions. Meetings happen here often, but this one matters: for the first time, the board of directors of the SVBGSA – 11 representatives reflecting different interests across Monterey County – are getting an overview of projects that will shape the region’s water future.



In August, this group will recommend a portfolio of projects to the state.

“We only have so many flavors of water to work with,” Weeks told the board May 14. “To get to sustainability by 2040, it takes a huge project.”

The equation is simple in theory. New water can only be created in a few ways: rain, desalination and recycling. And seawater intrusion can only be staved off in a few ways: by reducing groundwater pumping or injecting water back into the aquifer. Most proposed projects rely on some combination of both.

That framework forms the basis of nearly every proposal under consideration: finding water that is available, reliable and ideally, cost-effective. “Demand management,” or reducing groundwater use, is viewed as part of the end-solution, but not sufficient on its own.

Several systems already divert water from the Salinas River and deliver irrigation water to agricultural areas impacted by seawater intrusion.

The SVBGSA has built upon those existing systems to develop what Piret Harmon, the agency’s general manager, calls a “menu” of projects. Each is evaluated based on how effectively it meets “minimum threshold” goals for stopping seawater intrusion and raising groundwater levels.

One existing example is the Castroville Seawater Intrusion Project (CSIP), which already delivers recycled water to farmers, supplying water to roughly 12,000 acres of farmland in northern Monterey County. Castroville has long been viewed as ground zero for seawater intrusion. A 2026 civil grand jury report noted that the number of active wells dropped from 22 to nine over time as saltwater contamination forced users to abandon their wells.

In the late 1990s, CSIP was launched to reduce freshwater pumping in one of the county’s most productive agricultural regions. The project supplies treated wastewater by Monterey One Water, a regional treatment plant located in Marina, to growers for irrigation.

Now, a proposed expansion – the New Seawater Intrusion Project (NSIP) – could push that model further inland. The concept would build a new distribution system, supplying recycled water to agricultural land between the existing CSIP service area and the City of Salinas, along with some urban users.

But that comes with a price tag. Capital costs could reach beyond \$700 million for a project that doesn’t solve seawater intrusion.



“Understand that all models are compromises,” Weeks said, “at least with some relative tool that allows us to evaluate them. They’re not perfect.”

Another proposal focuses on capturing excess water in wet years and storing it underground for later use, a process known as aquifer storage and recovery. Estimated capital costs range from \$278 million-\$383 million, without solving seawater intrusion, and is also dependent on rain.

The Castroville and Eastside Canals would similarly use Salinas River water to recharge groundwater basins by injecting water back underground. The goal is to raise groundwater levels in the 180/400 and Eastside Subbasins, slowing seawater intrusion while supporting groundwater recovery in the deep aquifers.

Hurdles abound with this concept as well. Capital costs range from \$195 million to \$1.3 billion, the project does not meet the minimum threshold for seawater intrusion, and is dependent on rainfall. It also requires significant changes to a water permit that restricts water storage.

“The permit says you can divert 135,000 acre-feet, which is a crazy amount of water, way more than anyone needs,” says Chris Bunn, a grower and president of the Salinas Basin Water Alliance, a group formed in 2020 for growers to engage with public policy involving groundwater supply. Bunn also sits on the SVBGSA advisory committee and is on the board of directors for the Monterey County Farm Bureau. “But you can’t store it. You have to [use] it within 30 days, so it’s useless because nobody’s irrigating. We need the water during the growing season.”

Only one project alone solves the issue of seawater intrusion in the 180/400-foot aquifers, the biggest, most ambitious and controversial project known as the brackish groundwater restoration project. The concept involves a hybrid approach: constructing extraction wells along the coast to intercept seawater intrusion, treating that water with reverse osmosis, then reinjecting it back into the aquifer to add enough pressure to stop seawater intrusion.

It is the only project projected to both stop and reverse seawater intrusion while protecting multiple subbasins. Because it does not rely on rainfall, it is also considered drought resilient. It would improve groundwater quality and protect additional subbasins, including the Eastside, from future seawater intrusion.

Yet the cost is the highest: roughly \$951 million in capital costs and another \$113 million annually in operating costs.

“They’re all expensive,” Harmon said at the meeting. “There is no really easy, low-hanging, non-expensive solution. All of them are portfolios. But they are distinctly different in terms of who’s receiving benefits from each project.”

And that is not necessarily a question of hydrology, but one of culture, geography and politics.



About 95 percent of groundwater used in Monterey County supports agriculture, with over 200,000 acres of land in cultivation in the Salinas Valley.

DANIEL DREIFUSS

**DRIVING FROM CASTROVILLE**, through Salinas to Gonzales, Greenfield and King City, the road is flanked by acres upon acres of leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables and strawberries, crops that help make Monterey County the fourth-highest agricultural-producing county in California. In 2024, the county generated \$5 billion in gross agricultural value. Strawberries alone surpassed \$1 billion in value that year, the first crop to reach that threshold in the county’s history.



Despite those numbers, many farmers face mounting and in some cases, crippling, financial pressure. Consolidation in the specialty crop market regionally has pushed out smaller growers unable to keep up with climbing regulatory prices and agricultural input costs.

“The incremental add-on of regulatory burden over the years is one of the main reasons why farming has changed so much in the valley over the last 30 years,” says Bunn, whose family used to farm thousands of acres in the area before scaling back in the 1990s following record-breaking floods, and later, after the first E. coli outbreak. “That started to greatly change the economics of farming, so we sort of saw the writing on the wall at that point, because we’re not that big.”

An estimated 95 percent of water used in Monterey County is pumped from groundwater aquifers to support over 200,000 acres of land in cultivation in the Salinas Valley.

Those aquifers, in effect, also help feed much of the country. Monterey County produces 28 percent of U.S. strawberries – nearly one out of every four eaten nationwide. The numbers climb even higher for other crops: 48 percent of the nation’s broccoli, 57 percent of its celery and 61 percent of its leaf lettuce.

“Unfortunately, because agriculture is responsible for 90 percent of the extractions every year, I think the overall presiding presumption is that we will pay 90 percent of the project,” Groot says.



Supervisor Glenn Church is also a board member for the SVBGSA, and will be among those recommending a portfolio of projects to the state in August. Much of his district is in the area most vulnerable to groundwater impacts, as the 180/400-foot subbasin underlies Castroville and the northern Salinas Valley.

DANIEL DREIFUSS

**THE STAKES FOR CASTROVILLE AND SALINAS**, as well as the indirect costs to the rest of the County, are high. Households on domestic wells would continue to lose access to drinking water, and pumping restrictions would lead to fallowing, with large portions of farmland taken out of production, risking disruption of the broader agricultural economy.

“If you have a lower capital cost project portfolio, yes, that saves some money, but we need to look at how that weighs against costs that are being imposed on folks. That’s the trade-off,” said Duncan MacEwan, an economist with ERA Economics working with the SVBGSA, during an advisory committee meeting on June 18. “There’s no free lunch.”

The portfolio of projects would mix and match brackish water desalination, NSIP, demand management and others, although the ultimate scale is yet to be determined, as has the funding strategy, leaving many still uneasy.



Experts have discussed pursuing outside funding from a mix of federal grants through the Bureau of Reclamation, or state bond funds through Proposition 4 for water-related infrastructure programs. DWR programs, such as the multibenefit land repurposing program, could also provide additional funding, which provides grants to convert agricultural land to less water-intensive uses.

However, grant funding alone is unlikely to cover the costs of implementation and local funding mechanisms would be required. Fees or assessments on water users, along with cost recovery from private beneficiaries could be imposed, depending on how the projects are ultimately owned, financed and operated.

All of this remains an unknown.

In the southern Salinas Valley, where water availability appears more stable and well beyond the reach of seawater intrusion, many growers argue they have become more efficient with irrigation. As a result, some question why they should bear the cost of solving a problem concentrated farther north.

These areas are also located closer to reservoir releases and groundwater recharge flows. And while they are still considered at risk of overdraft, they are nowhere near facing the overdraft in subbasins near the coast.

Some projects reach into the billions to build, a financial burden impossible for the northern Salinas Valley to tackle alone.

Whether seawater intrusion is a valley-wide problem or just an issue for the northern Salinas Valley to solve is “the biggest bone of contention,” says Bunn, whose family historically has farmed in the lower Salinas Valley in areas prone to seawater intrusion.

John Farrow, an attorney with the watchdog group Landwatch, argues that the economic case to support the biggest project, the brackish groundwater restoration project, relies on a worst-case scenario that may never happen. It’s an argument echoed by Tom Virsik, an attorney representing growers in the southern Salinas Valley.

“The project’s economic justification depends critically on the Valley-wide uniform cut assumption, which inflates the benefit by including large losses to inland subbasins,” Farrow wrote in a letter to the SVBGSA Board of Directors and advisory committee.



“It is no secret that stakeholders fundamentally disagree whether there is any hydrological or legal rationale for compelling southern subbasins to assume responsibility to mitigate seawater intrusion. If there is no such responsibility, then it may be unreasonable to assume the [state] would order cuts to these subbasins.”

The variations in the Salinas Valley that matter to state decisionmakers may not be political or cultural, but hydrological – and it may not be viewed as one basin.

Whatever the local SVBGSA board chooses, it is just a start.

“We have a long road ahead of us,” Harmon says. “Any project that is included in the preferred portfolio will go into initial design, CEQA, permitting, funding. Any of these steps could daylight fatal flaws and may require further refinement, modification or abandonment of a project.”

Church is looking at issues of both water supply and economic sustainability for the region.

“The rippling effect is so big,” he says. “If you move that money out of there, it lowers the income base in the whole area.”

In the question of who benefits and who pays, the answer will be baked somewhere within the suite of projects the SVBGSA is set to recommend in August for consideration by the state. While the path ahead is complex, the reality may be more simple: Something's got to change.

Katie Rodriguez

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# NEWSOM APPOINTS GIBSON AS NEW DWR DIRECTOR

**BY ACWA STAFF JUL 1, 2026 WATER NEWS**

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Gavin Newsom on June 29 appointed Thomas Gibson as Director of the Department of Water Resources (DWR). He succeeds Karla Nemeth, who joins ACWA as Executive Director effective Sept. 1. She had served as DWR Director since former Gov. Jerry Brown appointed her to the position in 2018.

Gibson's appointment as DWR Director requires confirmation by the state Senate. He would lead DWR after serving as its Chief Deputy Director since 2024 and has extensive experience as an attorney and through executive positions at the California Natural Resources Agency and Department of Fish and Wildlife.

"ACWA staff are excited to work with Director Gibson, and we look forward to continuing our long-term collaboration with the Department of Water Resources on behalf of our member agencies," ACWA Interim Executive Director Marwan Khalifa stated in a June 30 news release. "His years of experience at DWR, the California Natural Resources Agency and California Department of Fish and Wildlife make him an excellent selection for this vital leadership role in the California water space. This is especially true as the state faces multiple challenges in building water resiliency and identifying opportunities to establish a secure water future for California."

Gibson, of West Sacramento, also previously served as Chief Counsel at DWR from 2021 to 2024. He held multiple positions at the California Natural Resources Agency from 2014 to 2020, including serving as Deputy Secretary and Special Counsel for Water, Undersecretary and General Counsel.

Additionally, he served in multiple positions at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife from 2007 to 2014, including General Counsel and Assistant Chief Counsel. He previously worked for Best, Best, & Krieger LLP from 2002 to 2008, including as Partner and Associate. Gibson was also an Associate at Hyman, Phelps & McNamara PC from 1999 to 2002 and at Kronick, Moskowitz, Tiedemann & Girard PC from 1997 to 1999.

He earned a Juris Doctor degree from the Northwestern School of Law of Lewis & Clark College and a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from University of California, Davis.



# NEWSOM APPOINTS BLUMENFELD TO STATE WATER BOARD

BY ACWA STAFF JUL 1, 2026 WATER NEWS

Gov. Gavin Newsom recently announced the appointment of Jared Blumenfeld, former California Environmental Protection Secretary, to the State Water Resources Control Board.

Blumenfeld served as California Environmental Protection Secretary from 2019 to 2022. His experience also includes serving as Regional Administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency from 2010 to 2016.

Blumenfeld will succeed former Board Member Laurel Firestone, who departed the State Water Resources Control Board on June 18. Firestone was first appointed February 2019.

Newsom also announced the reappointed Dorene D'Adamo as Vice Chair of the State Water Board earlier this year.

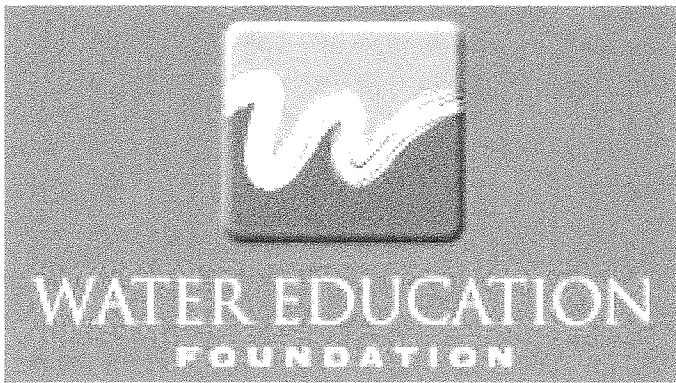
Blumenfeld's appointment requires state Senate confirmation.

"On behalf of ACWA, I congratulate Jared Blumenfeld on his appointment to the State Water Resources Control Board," said ACWA Interim Executive Director Marwan Khalifa. "ACWA looks forward to partnering with Mr. Blumenfeld in his important role on the Board to advance collaborative solutions that balance California's diverse water needs and strengthen the state's long-term water resilience.

"We also extend our appreciation to the former Board Member Laurel Firestone for her dedicated service and thank Board Member D'Adamo for her continued service to advancing sound water policy for California."

In addition to Blumenfeld and D'Adamo, the five-member State Water Board includes Chair E. Joaquin Esquivel, Sean Maguire and Nichole Morgan.





Western Water | June 25, 2026 | By Matt Jenkins

## THE COLORADO RIVER STATES ARE DEADLOCKED AND THE RIVER IS CRASHING. WILL A 'GRAND BARGAIN' FINALLY GET ITS DAY?

**WESTERN WATER IN-DEPTH: A 'WILD IDEA' TO DEFUSE THE COLORADO RIVER COMPACT'S LEGAL TIME BOMB HAS BEEN KEPT ALIVE BY SEASONED OBSERVERS WHO BELIEVE IT COULD STILL SAVE THE RIVER**

For the past 20 years, the Colorado River has been operated under a set of guidelines negotiated between the seven states that depend on the river. Those guidelines expire this year, and after five years of grinding negotiations over a new agreement, the upstream states of Colorado, Wyoming, Utah and New Mexico remain deadlocked against the downstream states of California, Arizona and Nevada.

Some 40 million people and 5.5 million acres of farmland depend on the river's water. But after the states failed to meet two federal deadlines in three months, the river is in a moment of unprecedented crisis. A dire snowpack has left flows just 15 percent of normal, many farms without water and several cities scrambling to secure water supplies as they gird themselves for shortages.

That has set up a showdown over a legal time bomb that's been ticking away at the heart of the Colorado River Compact since the river's guiding document was signed more than 100 years ago. The Lower Basin states believe the Compact promised them a minimum delivery of water sent down the river from the Upper Basin. The Upper Basin states believe the Compact promised them a fixed amount of water that they could rely on to meet future growth. As the river's flows have dwindled, those two supposed guarantees are proving to be irreconcilable.

Experts have seen the showdown coming for a long time, but climate change has accelerated the day of reckoning. In 2000, a drought sunk its teeth into the river and hasn't let up. Dubbed the Millennium Drought, it is now recognized as one of the worst droughts on the river in more than 1,200 years — and may actually be the beginning of a long-term shift to a drier reality.

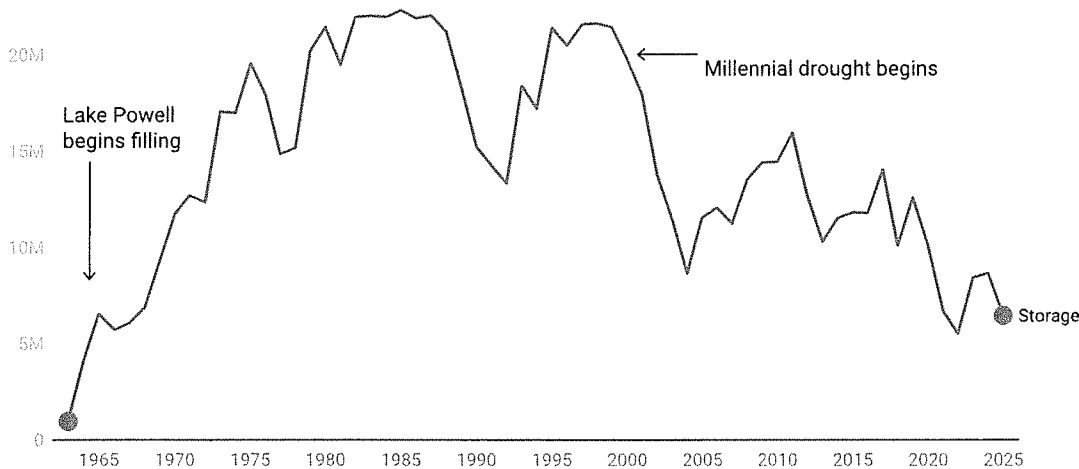
Despite near-endless negotiations to find a way to keep the river's massive reservoir system from crashing — an effort that began over two decades ago — the drought may have finally pushed the Colorado River Compact to its limit. Now, the system is nearly empty and runoff from this winter's snowpack, the source of any water that might offer even a small hope of relief, will be among the lowest since Glen Canyon Dam was built near the Arizona-Utah border, creating Lake Powell, more than 60 years ago. Flows in the river are perilously close to hitting the primary legal "tripwire" in the Compact. Once that's crossed, the Lower Basin states would likely try to force the Upper Basin to deliver their water apportionment downstream — a prospect long considered unthinkable.



Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell, one of the nation's largest-capacity reservoirs whose operation has been a point of contention between the Upper and Lower Basins of the Colorado River. (Alexander Heilner, The Water Desk)

## Lake Powell Storage

Two and a half decades of drought have sharply reduced water storage in Lake Powell, a key reservoir in the Colorado River system.



Storage in million acre-feet, as of Dec. 31 of each year.

Chart: Water Education Foundation • Source: US Bureau of Reclamation • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

“All those negotiations helped push the day of reckoning back further, and helped delay the inevitable,” says Doug Kenney, who heads the University of Colorado’s [Western Water Policy Program](#). “But at some point, you just have to acknowledge the fact that the numbers don’t add up and you’re going to have to deal with it. We’re at that point.”

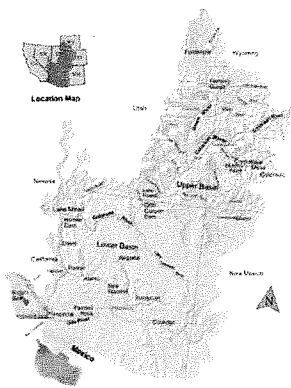
Two obvious paths now lie ahead. One is a courtroom fight, either against the U.S. Secretary of the Interior or a challenge between two states under the terms of the Colorado River Compact, which would go directly before the Supreme Court. A high court case would be a doomsday scenario, a messy and protracted legal battle that, until now, the seven states desperately sought to avoid. The other potential path is a stopgap fix, a short-term interim plan negotiated between the states or imposed by the Interior secretary. That could, at least temporarily, forestall a trip to court, but it wouldn’t resolve the fundamental conflict.

For more than two decades, however, the possibility of a third path has stubbornly persisted in the background: A “grand bargain,” an idea first proposed in 2005 by Colorado’s negotiating team early in the effort to grapple with the worsening drought. The concept was an unorthodox bid to defuse the ticking time bomb — but it would require each basin to trade away its most cherished claim on the river.

### ‘A WILD IDEA’

Roughly 90 percent of the Colorado River’s flow originates as snowpack in the Rocky Mountains. One of the principal goals of the 1922 Compact, which is essentially a seven-state treaty, was to avoid future legal battles by creating an “equitable division and apportionment” of water between the Upper Basin states in the river’s headwaters and the faster-growing Lower Basin. The Compact apportioned 7.5 million acre-feet a year from the mainstem of the river to each basin. (An acre-foot is 325,851 gallons, enough to supply the average annual needs of roughly 3 households, depending on their location and climate.)

The Compact also contains a requirement that the headwaters states not deplete the flow of the river below 75 million acre-feet, plus another roughly 7.5 million acre-feet (half of the apportionment earmarked for Mexico), on a 10-year running average. Those provisions were intended to provide surety to the downstream Lower Basin states that they would receive their 7.5 million-acre-foot annual apportionment and that the basins would share equally in the Mexican obligation. If the 10-year running average requirement is violated, the Lower Basin states could — at least in theory — initiate a Compact “call” against the Upper Basin in an attempt to force the headwaters states to deliver more water downstream.



The Colorado River Basin spans seven U.S. states and is divided into Upper and Lower Basins. Lake Powell, upstream from the Grand Canyon, and Lake Mead, near Las Vegas, are the two principal reservoirs in the Colorado River water-supply system. (Bureau of Reclamation)

For roughly 80 years after the Compact was signed, the prospect of a Compact call was purely theoretical. Then the Millennium Drought set in. By 2005, the two flagship reservoirs on the Colorado River — Lakes Mead and Powell — were half empty.

The drought was pushing the river's flows closer to a Compact violation trigger, making the risk of a call by the Lower Basin a growing probability. The Lower Basin, particularly Arizona, was insisting on guaranteed releases of water from Lake Powell. And because Colorado has the biggest share of the river within the Upper Basin and uses a greater portion of its apportionment than the other upstream states, it is most at risk. It began searching for a way to slip out of the legal noose of a Compact call.

In September 2005, the seven states' top negotiators met in Albuquerque, New Mexico. During a lunch break, Colorado's team made its pitch. The state's negotiators proposed that the Lower Basin waive its right to force a downstream delivery through a Compact call. In exchange, the Upper Basin states would limit their water use to less than what's strictly apportioned in the Compact, thereby reducing potential demand in the headwaters of Colorado and Wyoming that supply nearly the entirety of the river's flow.

The offer was essentially a simplification and reframing of a dizzying array of technical disagreements over various provisions of the Compact — an attempt to throw spaghetti at the wall to see if it would stick.

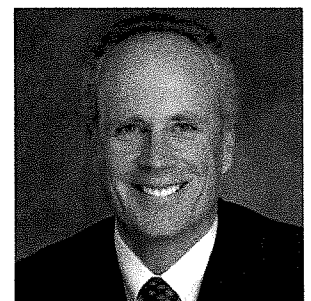
"My recollection was that it was a pretty spontaneous proposal," says Jim Lochhead, who had previously been Colorado's top negotiator and in 2005 was continuing to serve as a legal advisor on the state's team. "We weren't making any progress, and it was pitched as, 'If you really want to cut through all of this and get to the bottom, here's a wild idea.'"

The proposal sparked discussion among all the parties at the negotiating table but also raised difficult issues.

"It was a great concept on paper," says Pat Mulroy, who was the head of the Southern Nevada Water Authority and Nevada's principal negotiator at the time. "Whether it was politically doable or not is a whole other ball game."

In large part, that's because a grand bargain would have forced both basins to give up assurances in the Compact that they consider sacrosanct.

"I'm not sure the Upper Basin would ever have agreed to limiting their ability to fully develop their 7.5. It's like giving up your birthright — I'm not sure they could have sold that at home," says Mulroy. Conversely, she says, "giving up that call provision is really the only weapon the Lower Basin has."



Jim Lochhead, who had previously been Colorado's top negotiator and in 2005 was serving as a legal advisor on the state's team.

A grand bargain "was a great concept on paper. Whether it was politically doable or not is a whole other ball game."

*~Pat Mulroy, former head of Southern Nevada Water Authority*

And, indeed, following its spontaneous birth in Albuquerque, the proposal ran into stiff political headwinds back home in Colorado, where it failed to get then-governor Bill Owens' blessing.

"I wasn't directly representing the state of Colorado at that time; I was representing Colorado water users," Lochhead says. "And when I brought the idea back to the state, it pretty quickly got shot down: 'No, we can't agree to anything that would not keep the dream alive of 7.5 million acre-feet being developed in the Upper Basin.'"

The prospect of a grand bargain itself faded from discussion. And yet, in ways that aren't often acknowledged, it continued to shape the broad contours of the negotiations that unfolded over the next two decades.

The quest to escape the noose of a Compact call has remained central to Colorado's bargaining position.

"The concept of a waiver of a Compact call is alive and well," says Anne Castle, a former assistant Interior secretary who is now a senior fellow at the University of Colorado. "The quid pro quo for that waiver has taken different forms."

To a large extent, the details of the various offers the Lower Basin has made in exchange for a possible waiver — which have sometimes been characterized within the negotiations as "mini grand bargains" — have never become public. What is clear is that the two basins have consistently failed to cut a deal.

Instead, the seven states adopted a more incremental approach, negotiating a series of drought-protection agreements based on smaller, more politically palatable deals. While that's been a safer path for everyone politically, it has brought other kinds of risk.

"It just added layer upon layer of Gorilla Glue and Band-Aids that's made it much more complicated to try to unwind or develop new agreements," Lochhead says, "and has obviously proven to be inadequate in protecting the system."

## A SECOND LIFE

While the concept of a grand bargain led a short life at the negotiating table, it has gone on to live a remarkable second life. The idea was picked up and revived by a loose-knit group of seasoned observers of Colorado River issues who, for years, have called for more durable alternatives to the patchwork of ideas in play among negotiators.

Eric Kuhn was a member of Colorado's negotiating team when the grand bargain was proposed in 2005. At the time, he was the general manager of the Colorado River Water Conservation District based in Glenwood Springs and he has written thoughtfully and voluminously about the river's problems. After his retirement in 2018, he partnered with John Fleck, a former journalist who is now author-in-residence at the University of New Mexico's Utton Center, to write *Science Be Dammed: How Ignoring Inconvenient Science Drained the Colorado River*.

Kuhn and Fleck concluded the book by observing that "there is not enough water in the Colorado River for all the lawyers to be right," and suggested the grand bargain as a way to avoid the courtroom.

"The basic idea of a grand bargain is, in lieu of litigation, we're going to agree to something that both sides want," says Kuhn.

He and Fleck weren't the only ones who pushed for more serious consideration of the idea. Doug Kenney at the University of Colorado also has championed the concept. In 2012, he enlisted Kevin Wheeler, a widely respected engineer and fellow at Oxford University, to undertake modeling analysis of the kinds of trade-offs a grand bargain might require.

In 2021, Wheeler — together with a group of collaborators including Kuhn, climate scientist Brad Udall and Jack Schmidt, the director of Utah State's Center for Colorado River Studies — published a white paper called "[Alternative Management Paradigms for the Future of the Colorado and Green Rivers](#)." It was a comprehensive assessment of more ambitious strategies for weathering the drought and climate change than had emerged from now-perpetual negotiations between the states.

"New approaches that are responsive to significantly drier climate conditions and changing patterns of consumptive uses may require bolder policy initiatives that exceed the incremental approach of modern management," the group wrote. "It is critical to explore alternative water management strategies that may extend beyond the framework of the Law of the River as presently interpreted."



[Persistent drought has lowered Lake Powell's water level and exposed land that was once submerged at Wahweap Marina, as seen in this 2022 photo. \(Bureau of Reclamation\)](#)

The following year, the team published a paper in the journal *Science* titled "What Will it Take to Stabilize the Colorado River?" And, it turned out, stabilizing the system would take something that looked a lot like a grand bargain.

Assuming the drought persists as it has since 2000, Wheeler and his partners identified two scenarios that would stabilize the river, both of which assumed the Lower Basin had waived its ability to make a Compact call. In one, the Lower Basin would need to decrease its water use by about 2 million acre-feet a year when Lake Mead and Lake Powell reach low levels. That would assure it of about 78 percent of its apportionment — an amount roughly in line with cuts it has already committed to taking. In exchange, the Upper Basin would have to cap its water use at 4 million acre-feet. But that's only slightly more than half of its 7.5 million-acre-foot Compact apportionment, and roughly 300,000 acre-feet less than what it currently uses.

The second scenario — call it the "near-parity scenario" for simplicity — more equally distributed the Upper and Lower Basins' relative cuts in apportionment. In it, the Upper Basin would cap its use at 4.5 million acre-feet, leaving it with 60 percent of its Compact apportionment. The Lower Basin would be able to use about 67 percent of its Compact apportionment when reservoirs are low, just slightly more percentage-wise than the Upper Basin. But it would have to cut its uses by 3 million acre-feet below its apportionment.

That would stabilize the system — or at least go a long way toward doing so — while largely meeting existing water demands in both basins. The Upper Basin currently uses about 4.3 million acre-feet per year. The Lower Basin, after ramping up an aggressive water conservation effort since 2007, has driven its annual use down to about 6 million acre-feet per year, and has signaled that it could likely reduce demand further.

But it would leave practically no leeway for future growth, at least without reshaping the socioeconomic landscape across the entire Basin. In particular, any future urban growth could come only by shifting significant amounts of water from farms to cities.

## HARD MATH

Today, there is a simple, hard reality on the Colorado River: The available water supply is already maxed out. Water use throughout the basin needs to be reduced by roughly 25 percent just to make the numbers work now — to say nothing of the future, which is likely to be significantly drier.

In Colorado, that has raised hard questions about fairness, the "equitable division and apportionment" provision of the Compact, and the assurance the state thought it had that its water would be there to develop when it's finally ready.

"Everyone agrees that there should be an equitable division of water, and the word 'equity' is one that everyone will rally around," says Kenney. "But does equitable mean equal? That's the crux of the issue."

Over the past several years, Colorado's attorney general, Phil Weiser, has been building his office's staff of water lawyers. This January, Weiser, who is currently running for governor, appeared before a joint hearing of the state legislature's judiciary committees.

"If we can't get a deal — and I'm committed to not getting a bad deal just to get a deal — we'll be in litigation. We're ready for it," he said. "If and when we can get a reasonable deal based in reality, I'm for it. But if we can't, then we will be falling back on our rights under (the) 1922 Compact."

"Everyone agrees that there should be an equitable division of water.... But does equitable mean equal? That's the crux of the issue."

~Doug Kenney, University of Colorado's Western Water Policy Program

Because of the peculiarities of the water-rights hierarchy in the Lower Basin, Arizona is arguably most at risk there. In March, that state — whose governor, Katie Hobbs, is running for re-election — retained the high-powered law firm Sullivan &



Cromwell to represent it in potential Colorado River litigation. At the time, a spokesman for the governor said, “it’s critical that Arizona be prepared to defend ourselves in court if an agreement cannot be reached or the Law of the River is violated.”



Anne Castle, former assistant secretary at the Department of the Interior.

“It is very difficult for a political figure — and they’re all political figures, even if they’re not elected — to agree to reduce the water use of their constituents and keep their career alive,” says Anne Castle. “They have to be able to tell their constituents, ‘I’m fighting for your water. I’m doing everything I can to keep your water secure, and it’s the other guy’s fault.’ The political incentives are directly at odds with the kind of compromise that’s needed in this type of hydrologic situation.”

Following the breakdown in negotiations between the Colorado River states, the federal government has announced its intention to step in. In May, the Bureau of Reclamation, on behalf of the Department of the Interior, revealed that it is preparing the first of what could be a series of five two-year interim plans for the river.

The final details are expected to be released this summer. But the federal government has indicated that the Interior secretary could cut water deliveries to the Lower Basin states by up to 3 million acre-feet — 40 percent of their Compact apportionment. During a briefing for Arizona water users in May, Brenda Burman, the head of the Central Arizona Project, presented modeling analysis of the proposed reductions and noted that, given the diminished releases from Lake Powell, the Upper Basin is “in a definite breach of the Compact by Sept. 30 of 2026.”

Owing to some quirks of river history, the secretary debatably has less authority in the Upper Basin, and so Reclamation has proposed no cuts there. But as climate change continues to eat away at snowpack and river flows, the Upper Basin states will likely be forced to cut back their uses anyway. Regardless of what the Compact says the Upper Basin gets, the water simply won’t be there.

And so now the seven states are facing a situation eerily similar to those in the near-parity scenario Wheeler and his colleagues laid out in their Science paper four years ago — but without a bargain.

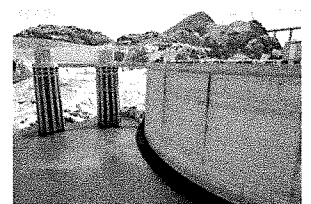
## COMING FULL CIRCLE?

In many ways, the prospects have never been worse for something like a grand bargain. Yet the fundamental problems the grand bargain was intended to solve have only grown sharper in the 20 years since it was first proposed.

“The grand bargain has gotten a bad name,” Kuhn says. “But if these issues aren’t resolved through a grand bargain, they’re going to be resolved through litigation.” In 2007, he says, the river’s reservoirs still had ample water to work with. “With empty reservoirs, you cannot finesse these issues.”

Litigation could come as soon as August, when Reclamation will likely release a record of decision for its proposed new operating plan. Legal action could take one of several paths. The one with the highest stakes would be direct enforcement of the Compact, likely in the form of a Compact call brought by Arizona and the other Lower Basin states against the Upper Basin states. Because the Compact is essentially a treaty between multiple states, that would go directly before the Supreme Court. But such cases are often grindingly long: Arizona’s 1952 lawsuit against California over Colorado River rights took a dozen years to resolve. A case in the Supreme Court could put the river in protracted litigation during a time of profound crisis.

Other, more limited challenges are possible, most likely against the Bureau of Reclamation or the secretary of the Interior for failure to comply with the Compact or violating environmental laws. But they, too, are not without risk.



Water level in Lake Mead, impounded behind Hoover Dam, barely reaches the bottom of the two intake towers in 2022, showing the effects of more than two decades of drought. (Bureau of Reclamation)

"I have a hard time believing you could keep litigation contained, once that genie's out of the bottle," says Kenney. "I just have to believe that inevitably blows up into a full-fledged interstate litigation and it bumping right up to the Supreme Court."

As the odds rise of a legal challenge to the Compact that could ultimately wind up before the highest court in the land, the fundamental tension the grand bargain was intended to resolve will likely be front and center before the justices. And, paradoxically, that could force the states themselves to finally make the really tough sacrifices they've been trying to avoid.

"I think that a road to a grand bargain runs through litigation," says Kuhn.

That's because in past interstate fights over shared rivers, the Supreme Court has typically appointed a water-law expert known as a special master to referee such cases. The most recent example is the dispute between Texas, New Mexico and Colorado over the Rio Grande. In that case, Kuhn notes, "the special master said, 'You don't want me or the court to decide this; get in a room and negotiate it.' The special master kept the pressure on the states to negotiate."

This May, the Supreme Court approved a settlement between those three states. Still, even that resolution only came a full 13 years after the case was initially filed, and it involves relatively small reductions in overall water use.

On the Colorado River, both water and time are in far shorter supply.

Western Water, our flagship publication by Foundation journalists, is available online. Check out our [latest articles](#). Reach writer Matt Jenkins at [mjenkins@watereducation.org](mailto:mjenkins@watereducation.org).

Know someone who wants to stay connected to water in the West? Encourage them to [sign up](#) for Western Water and follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).

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### Further Reading From *Western Water*

- As Colorado River Negotiations Near a Critical Deadline, a New Way of Looking at Risk is Revealing Hard Choices, [Sept. 25, 2025](#)
- Changes Loom for Innovative Lower Colorado River Endangered Species Program Amid Drought, New River Rules, [April 17, 2025](#)
- Tribes Gain Clout as Colorado River Shrinks, [Nov. 16, 2023](#)
- As Colorado River Flows Drop and Tensions Rise, Water Interests Struggle to Find Solutions That All Can Accept, [Dec. 9, 2022](#)
- As Climate Change Turns Up The Heat in Las Vegas, Water Managers Try to Wring New Savings to Stretch Supply, [June 25, 2021](#)
- Milestone Colorado River Management Plan Mostly Worked Amid Epic Drought, Review Finds, [Nov. 20, 2020](#)
- Questions Simmer About Lake Powell's Future As Drought, Climate Change Point To A Drier Colorado River Basin, [May 15, 2020](#)
- With Drought Plan in Place, Colorado River Stakeholders Face Even Tougher Talks Ahead On The River's Future, [May 9, 2019](#)

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# Monthly Briefing

*A Summary of the Alliance's Recent and Upcoming Activities and Important Water News*

**JUNE 2026 • Issue #287**

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## Board Member Quote of the Month



“The Family Farm Alliance strives to keep the importance of irrigated agriculture to the US food supply top of mind to Americans. Recent drought throughout the west and competition for water for non-agricultural uses makes the Family Farm Alliance’s activities to foster a sufficient water supply for agriculture critical if we desire food self-sufficiency. Educating people and guiding governmental decisions on the importance of water for food for us now and in our future is a goal of the Alliance. A sufficient water supply for agriculture is an objective that must be highlighted.”

**—Nate Eckloff, Family Farm Alliance Board of  
Directors & Second Vice President**

## CONTENTS

|                                                                                               |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <u>Drought Tightens Its Grip Across the West.....</u>                                         | <u>2</u>  |
| <u>Washington Update: Funding Decisions Will Shape the West’s Water Future.....</u>           | <u>3</u>  |
| <u>Colorado River Negotiations Enter a Critical Phase.....</u>                                | <u>6</u>  |
| <u>Proposed Federal Grant Rule Changes Could Affect Water and Infrastructure Funding.....</u> | <u>10</u> |
| <u>Supreme Court Activity Highlights Growing Importance of Western Water.....</u>             | <u>11</u> |
| <u>Investing in the Next Generation of Water Leaders.....</u>                                 | <u>12</u> |
| <u>Alliance Annual Conference: Save the Date!.....</u>                                        | <u>18</u> |

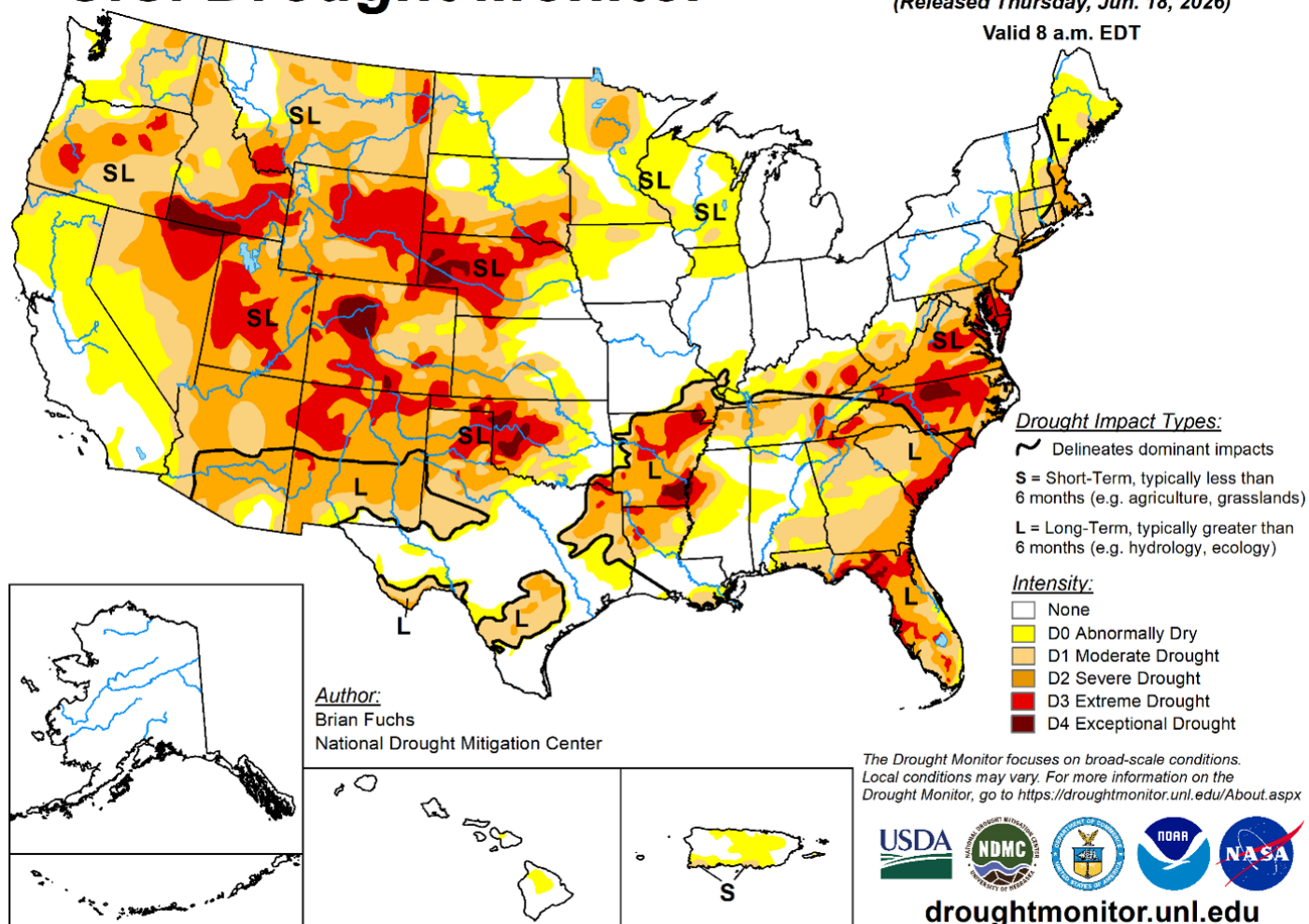
# Drought Tightens Its Grip Across the West

## U.S. Drought Monitor

June 16, 2026

(Released Thursday, Jun. 18, 2026)

Valid 8 a.m. EDT



For much of the West, the 2026 water year is becoming a stark reminder that water remains the limiting factor for agricultural production. While isolated storms and localized improvements have provided some relief in a handful of regions, the broader picture remains troubling: many farmers and ranchers are entering the heart of the growing season with water supplies well below what is needed to fully irrigate crops and sustain agricultural production.

The latest drought monitoring data shows significant portions of the West remain in drought, with conditions particularly severe across the Southwest and parts of the Pacific Northwest. Low snowpack, poor runoff, and below-average streamflows continue to drive water shortages throughout many major agricultural basins.

In New Mexico, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham recently declared a statewide drought emergency, citing historically low snowpack, record-low runoff, worsening wildfire conditions, and declining water supplies. The Executive Order directs state agencies to coordinate drought response efforts and



highlights the growing challenges facing communities, farmers, ranchers, and water managers throughout the state. All seven Colorado river basin states have declared some form of federal drought emergency, while two other states, Idaho and Washington are also operating under drought declarations.

In Washington's Yakima Basin, senior water rights holders are expected to receive full allocations, but junior users are limited to just 52 percent of normal supplies despite relatively healthy reservoir storage. Reduced snowmelt runoff has significantly constrained available water, creating challenges for many irrigators during the peak growing season.

In Idaho, water managers are warning of one of the most difficult irrigation seasons in recent memory. Significant curtailments are expected for many junior water users in the Snake River Basin as low snowpack, poor runoff, and ongoing groundwater challenges continue to strain available supplies. Many producers face difficult decisions regarding crop production, irrigation scheduling, and risk management as deliveries fall well below demand.

California presents a more mixed picture. Spring storms allowed federal water managers to modestly increase Central Valley Project allocations for some agricultural contractors, and several major reservoirs currently sit near historical averages. However, the state's below-average snowpack, continued groundwater challenges, and uncertain outlook underscore that these improvements should be viewed as temporary relief rather than a return to long-term water security.

Taken together, these conditions reinforce a reality the Family Farm Alliance has emphasized for years: drought is no longer an occasional emergency but a recurring feature of water management across much of the West. Farmers and ranchers continue to adapt, but adaptation alone cannot overcome persistent shortages.

As Congress debates water infrastructure funding and Colorado River negotiations continue, the current drought serves as a powerful reminder that investments in storage, conveyance, conservation, reuse, watershed health, and water supply augmentation are not optional. They are essential to maintaining the reliable water supplies needed to support Western agriculture and the nation's food security in an increasingly uncertain future.

## **Washington Update: Funding Decisions Will Shape the West's Water Future**

As Congress shifts into appropriations season, the conversation in Washington is increasingly focused on one question that matters deeply across the rural West: will federal investment keep pace with the growing water challenges facing agricultural producers, rural communities, and the nation's food supply?

The answer remains uncertain, but the coming months will be critical.

Congress has formally begun work on Fiscal Year 2027 spending bills while simultaneously debating additional budget reconciliation packages, a new Farm Bill, and broader permitting reforms. At the same time, drought conditions continue to intensify across much of the West, Colorado River negotiations remain unresolved, and water infrastructure needs continue to outpace available funding.



*L-R: Zane Kessler, Colorado River Conservation District; Greg Morrison, National Water Resources Association; Paul Arrington, Idaho Water Users Association; Lane Dickson, Family Farm Alliance*

Against this backdrop, the Family Farm Alliance has remained actively engaged with both Congress and the Administration to ensure Western water priorities remain front and center. In June, the Alliance participated in a briefing for Congressional Western Caucus staff focused on drought conditions, water infrastructure needs, and funding priorities. That meeting built upon our congressional testimony on the same subjects earlier this spring, as well as a series of funding request letters submitted to appropriators in April.

While the Administration's proposed budget includes significant reductions to several federal water, environmental, and conservation programs, early congressional action suggests lawmakers recognize

the importance of maintaining investments that directly support water reliability and drought resilience.

This is particularly important because the West's water challenges are not getting smaller.

Across the West, declining snowpack, persistent drought conditions, aging infrastructure, and growing competition for water resources continue to place pressure on communities that depend on reliable water supplies. At the same time, grocery prices remain a top concern for American families, highlighting the direct connection between water security and food security.

For those of us who work in agriculture, that connection is obvious. Water infrastructure may not generate headlines in the same way as inflation reports or grocery store prices, but the relationship is undeniable. When water supplies become less reliable, production risks increase. When production risks increase, food supplies tighten. And when supplies tighten, consumers ultimately feel the impact at the checkout counter.

That is why sustained investment in water infrastructure remains one of the most effective long-term strategies for protecting both agricultural production and food affordability.

Several important funding opportunities are currently available through the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Program. New funding rounds are now open for Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse projects, desalination construction projects, and Enhancing Water Resources initiatives. These programs support many of the solutions the Alliance has advocated for over the years, including water recycling, water reuse, watershed restoration, infrastructure modernization, conservation projects, and drought resilience efforts.

These programs are valuable, but they also highlight a larger challenge. Demand for water infrastructure funding consistently exceeds available resources. Across the West, communities are competing for limited dollars to address decades of deferred maintenance, aging delivery systems, storage limitations, watershed degradation, and emerging water supply challenges.

Meanwhile, discussions surrounding a new Farm Bill are beginning to gain momentum in the Senate. Several provisions under consideration could provide additional support for drought resilience, water conservation, and working lands stewardship. The Alliance continues to engage with lawmakers on these issues while emphasizing the importance of practical conservation programs that provide flexibility for producers and measurable benefits for water resources.

The broader budget debate unfolding in Washington ultimately comes down to priorities.

The West is home to some of the most productive agricultural regions in the world. Those farms and ranches support rural economies, provide jobs, contribute to national food security, and generate

billions of dollars in economic activity. Yet the water systems supporting those operations increasingly face challenges that cannot be addressed through local resources alone.

Federal investments in storage, conveyance, conservation, reuse, desalination, watershed restoration, and rural water infrastructure are not simply expenditures. They are investments in long-term economic stability, domestic food production, and community resilience.

As Congress continues its work on appropriations, reconciliation, and the Farm Bill, the Family Farm Alliance will continue advocating for funding levels that match the scale of the challenge facing the West.



The need is particularly acute in the Colorado River Basin, where ongoing drought, declining reservoir levels, and unresolved post-2026 operating agreements have created significant uncertainty. But the challenge extends far beyond the Colorado River.

Communities throughout the West are facing similar pressures and competing for the same limited resources.

The reality is simple: the need for water infrastructure investment in the West significantly exceeds current funding levels.

If we want reliable food supplies, healthy rural economies, resilient communities, and a secure water future, Congress must move beyond short-term drought response and commit to consistent, long-term investments that build projects, improve reliability, and expand water supplies.

The West has never lacked innovation or determination. What is needed now is a federal commitment that matches the scale of the challenge and the importance of the resource upon which so much of America's food supply depends.

## Colorado River Negotiations Enter a Critical Phase

The future of the Colorado River is about far more than reservoir elevations, shortage tiers, or interstate negotiations. At its core, it is about ensuring that the American West can continue producing the food, fiber, and agricultural products that feed and support our nation. As drought,

declining runoff, and growing competition for water supplies continue to challenge the Basin, the decisions being made today will shape the future of irrigated agriculture for decades to come.

That reality was front and center this month at the University of Colorado Law School's conference, *The Colorado River: Searching for Solutions in the Face of Uncertainty*, where federal officials, state leaders, Tribal representatives, water managers, conservation groups, and agricultural stakeholders gathered to discuss both the immediate challenges facing the Basin and the long-term path forward. The timing could not have been more important.



Colorado River negotiations remain at an impasse as the seven Basin states continue to work toward a post-2026 operating framework. At the same time, Congress is signaling increasing frustration with the lack of progress. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Mike Lee (pictured here) recently suggested that federal lawmakers may be forced to

take a more active role if the states cannot reach agreement, noting that Congress has ultimate authority over interstate compacts and could influence future drought funding decisions.

Meanwhile, the Bureau of Reclamation is preparing to release a new interim management framework later this summer that could establish operating rules if consensus remains elusive. Current discussions include two-year operating cycles within a broader ten-year framework, while emergency actions continue throughout the Basin to protect critical infrastructure and reservoir elevations.

The challenges facing the system are significant. Colorado River reservoirs remain near one-third capacity, runoff forecasts continue to underperform historical averages, and questions remain about how future shortages will be shared among states, Tribes, water users, and sectors. At the same time, most of the federal drought funding made available through the Inflation Reduction Act has already been committed, creating uncertainty about how future conservation and resilience efforts will be financed.



Throughout the conference, one message was clear: agriculture remains central to any durable Colorado River solution.



Like most of the West, irrigated agriculture accounts for the largest share of water use in the Basin, making it the focus of many conservation discussions. Yet the conversations throughout the conference also highlighted something often overlooked in broader public discussions: farmers and ranchers have already been adapting.

Speakers showcased agricultural modernization projects, irrigation efficiency improvements, innovative conservation efforts, and voluntary water management programs already underway across the Basin. From California's Imperial Valley to Tribal agricultural operations and Upper Basin irrigation districts, producers are finding ways to stretch limited supplies while continuing to provide food and economic stability for their communities.

The lesson is not that agriculture can simply absorb unlimited reductions. Rather, it is that agriculture has consistently demonstrated a willingness to be part of the solution when solutions are practical, collaborative, and supported by adequate resources.

One of the most valuable aspects of the conference was the recognition that future Colorado River management cannot rely solely on conservation. While demand management remains an important tool, long-term success will require a broader strategy that includes infrastructure investment, watershed restoration, system modernization, operational flexibility, and the development of new water supplies.

That message was reflected in discussions surrounding a growing coalition effort calling for at least \$2 billion in near-term federal investment to help stabilize the Basin while long-term operating agreements continue to be negotiated.

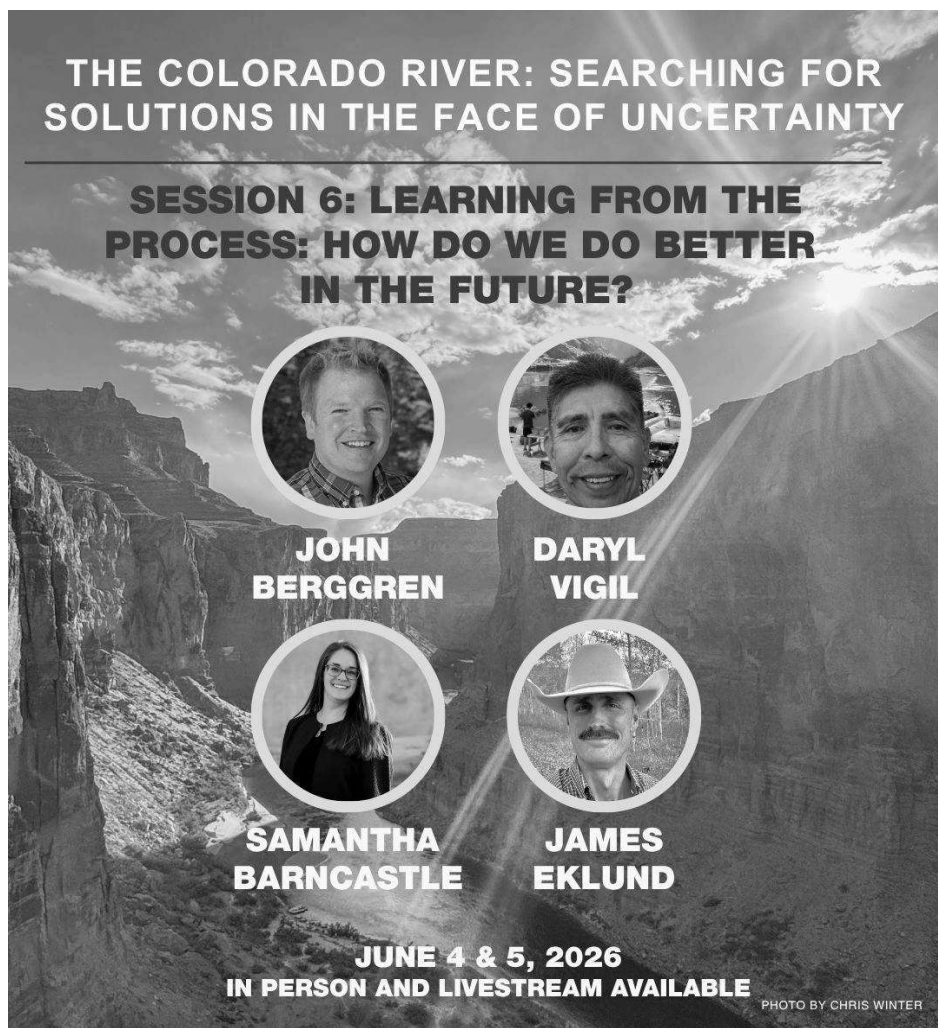
These investments would support a range of priorities, including conservation and efficiency projects, modernization of critical water delivery infrastructure, watershed and forest restoration efforts, voluntary compensated conservation programs, Tribal water projects, ecosystem reliability initiatives, and the evaluation of new water supply opportunities such as water recycling, reuse, desalination, groundwater storage, and other augmentation strategies.

Importantly, these investments should not be viewed as a substitute for the difficult policy decisions that still lie ahead. Rather, they represent a bridge that can help protect communities, water users, infrastructure, and economies while long-term solutions are developed.

Executive Director of the Alliance, Samantha Barncastle, had the opportunity to represent agricultural interests during the conference's closing panel discussion, which focused on lessons learned from the post-2026 negotiations and how future Colorado River processes can be improved. Her perspective is shaped by years of representing farmers, ranchers, irrigation districts, and local communities in water disputes across the Southwest. Despite the diverse backgrounds on the concluding panel, the consensus was clearly focused on collaboration. While every stakeholder at the table may approach these challenges from a different perspective, one lesson remains consistent: durable solutions are

built through collaboration, not conflict. As Sam likes to say, “Court orders don’t solve these kinds of complex water issues, people collaborating on the ground do.”

Litigation may sometimes be necessary, but it rarely produces the kind of durable, flexible outcomes required to manage a river system as complex as the Colorado. The future of the Basin depends on creating processes that bring states, Tribes, agricultural producers, municipalities, conservation interests, federal agencies, and Mexico together early, often, and in meaningful ways. Collaboration also means recognizing existing rights – senior water rights, Tribal sovereignty, and State and Federal jurisdictional boundaries. The challenges facing the Colorado River are real. But so are the opportunities.



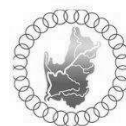
The West has a long history of innovation, adaptation, and cooperation. The same producers

who transformed deserts into some of the most productive agricultural regions in the world are already helping lead the next generation of water management solutions. With the right investments, collaborative processes, and commitment to practical problem-solving, we can protect both the river system and the communities that depend upon it.

As negotiations continue in the months ahead, the Family Farm Alliance will remain focused on a simple but essential principle: a reliable water supply is fundamental to a secure food supply. The future of Western irrigated agriculture, rural communities, and our nation's food security depends on getting these decisions right.



Getches-Wilkinson Center  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO LAW SCHOOL



Water & Tribes Initiative  
Colorado River Basin

# Proposed Federal Grant Rule Changes Could Affect Water and Infrastructure Funding

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has proposed a significant overhaul of the federal grant regulations that govern nearly all federal financial assistance programs, including funding for water infrastructure, conservation, rural development, transportation, energy, and public safety projects. Published on May 29, 2026, the proposed revisions to the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200) represent the most substantial changes to federal grant administration in more than a decade and could affect grant eligibility, compliance requirements, reporting obligations, and funding strategies for irrigation districts, local governments, utilities, and other public entities.



The Family Farm Alliance encourages members who receive or administer federal funding to review the proposal and consider submitting comments. Agencies with practical experience navigating federal grant programs are particularly well-positioned to provide feedback on how these changes could affect project delivery, administrative costs, and access to funding. Comments supported by real-world examples and data are often the most influential in shaping final regulations.

The public comment period closes July 13, 2026, and OMB is targeting an October 1, 2026 implementation date. Comments may be submitted through Regulations.gov under Docket No. OMB-2026-0034.

Members are encouraged to consult with legal counsel, grant administrators, and advocacy teams to evaluate potential impacts and determine whether participation in the comment process is warranted. Given the importance of federal funding to many water, conservation, and infrastructure projects throughout the West, this rulemaking may have significant long-term implications for project sponsors and funding recipients.

# Supreme Court Activity Highlights Growing Importance of Western Water



The U.S. Supreme Court was unusually active on Western water issues this month, issuing decisions and receiving recommendations that could have significant implications for agriculture, water management, and food production across the West.

Most notably, the U.S. Solicitor General urged the Court to hear Nebraska's claims that Colorado is violating the South Platte River Compact by consuming water that should flow downstream. If the Court accepts the case, it would mark another high-profile interstate water dispute at a time when increasing scarcity is placing additional pressure on states, water users, and agricultural producers throughout the region. The federal government's recommendation reinforces the reality that competition for limited water supplies is likely to intensify as Western states balance agricultural, municipal, industrial, environmental, and recreational demands.

At the same time, the Supreme Court declined to revisit the scope of federal Clean Water Act jurisdiction under the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) framework. By refusing to hear a new challenge, the Court left its 2023 *Sackett* decision firmly in place, providing continued regulatory certainty for farmers, ranchers, irrigation districts, and other landowners while EPA works to develop a new WOTUS rule. The Family Farm Alliance continues to monitor that rulemaking closely given its potential impacts on permitting, water infrastructure, and land management decisions throughout the West.

Finally, the Court formally approved the settlement ending the long-running Texas v. New Mexico Rio Grande litigation, bringing nearly two decades of legal battles to a close. While the settlement provides some legal certainty for water users in the basin and largely preserves existing operations, it also offers an important lesson for other Western watersheds. Litigation can resolve legal disputes, but it cannot create new water supplies. As drought conditions worsen across much of the West and

major decisions loom in the Colorado River Basin, long-term water security will depend not only on legal frameworks, but also on investments in infrastructure, water management, conservation, and collaborative solutions that sustain both rural communities and the nation's food supply.

Taken together, these developments serve as a reminder that water law, water policy, and food security remain deeply interconnected. The legal decisions being made today will help shape how the West manages increasingly scarce water supplies for generations to come.

## **Investing in the Next Generation of Water Leaders**

One of the Family Farm Alliance's most important responsibilities is helping develop the next generation of leaders who will shape water policy, agricultural advocacy, and natural resource management in the years ahead. This summer, we welcomed four outstanding interns who are spending ten weeks working alongside Alliance leadership to gain firsthand experience with the complex water, agricultural, and policy challenges facing the West. Throughout the summer, these students will assist with research, communications, policy analysis, member outreach, and the development of new advocacy initiatives designed to strengthen the Alliance's voice on behalf of farmers, ranchers, irrigation districts, and rural communities. We are excited to introduce them to our membership and look forward to sharing the fresh perspectives, energy, and ideas they bring to the important work of protecting the water resources that sustain Western agriculture and our nation's food supply.

### **Law Clerk**

***By Siobhan Lally***

Siobhan Lally attended her first Family Farm Alliance conference in 2005 as an infant, watching her grandfather, Pat O'Toole, be inducted as the President of the Alliance. Siobhan grew up as the sixth generation on the Ladder Ranch in south central Wyoming where her family, including board member Eamon O'Toole, raises cattle, sheep, and horses. Her childhood was defined by days on the back of a horse, in the tractor, or sitting in boardrooms at advocacy meetings, and, she was instilled with a deep passion for the land and animals they raised. This, paired with an understanding of the importance of both traditional and modern practices in stewardship, created a foundation rooted at the intersection of agriculture and conservation to create sustainable systems for resilient landscapes and a stable food supply.

Siobhan attended the University of Wyoming where she received bachelors degrees in agricultural business and economics and political science with a focus on federal lands issues, as well as a certificate in geospatial information systems. Siobhan just completed her first year of law school at Wyoming College of Law. She is also working towards a master's degree in Environment and Natural



Resources. Together these degrees will give her the tools needed to support agricultural producers and create sustainable governance.



Siobhan interned in Washington DC at the Department of Interior office of Water and Science. She worked on the then-impending Colorado River crisis, meeting with a variety of stakeholder groups who brought their personal experiences to guide regulatory decisions. Watching how these stories guided the federal process from the inside gave Siobhan insight into how she could make an impact.

After returning to the West, Siobhan found a renewed passion for advocacy based on real experiences by real stakeholders. She worked with the Headwaters of the Colorado Initiative, a collaborative built to facilitate funding and boots-on-the-ground work to support resilient ecosystems, communities, and economies in Wyoming and Colorado through participation and partnerships between federal, state, and local governments, landowners, environmental groups, and other key stakeholders.

Siobhan's experiences ingrained in her the importance of collaborative conservation in local communities to build an environment where each interest is represented and creates a long-lasting solution that is a benefit to all. However, she saw a consistent divide between landscape-based practices and policy enactment that created barriers. Siobhan decided that she wanted to work to bridge this divide between science, legal framework, and on-the-ground experience through communication and collaboration.

Siobhan is excited to work with the Alliance to help represent agriculturalists and landscapes and build awareness for ongoing issues facing the industry. Over the course of this summer, she aims to bring a voice of collaboration and agricultural experience to provide meaningful involvement through research and written communications. Siobhan believes the best way she can do her part to close the divide between science, policy, and industry is to provide succinct explanations of the different problem areas from each side to reach a common objective. Ultimately, Siobhan wants to ensure that the lands we all value will continue to be here so her kids can grow up in the saddle and boardrooms.

## Water Policy Intern

*By Alyssa Granados*

Alyssa Granados is passionate about agriculture, natural resource policy, and serving rural communities, and she is excited to learn from her time at the Alliance working under its Executive Director, Sam Barncastle, while contributing to the important work the Alliance does on behalf of producers throughout the West.

Alyssa is from Las Cruces, New Mexico, where agriculture has long been an essential part of the region's identity and economy. Growing up surrounded by chile fields, pecan orchards, cotton, and onion production gave her a deep appreciation for the hard work, resilience, and dedication required to sustain agricultural operations. Although she did not come from a traditional agricultural background, her exposure to the industry inspired a strong respect for producers and the critical role agriculture plays in supporting communities, economies, and food systems.



That appreciation ultimately led Alyssa to pursue a degree within the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences at New Mexico State University. She recently graduated with University Honors, earning a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Business, along with minors in Finance and Business Administration. Throughout her undergraduate career, she participated in research projects, leadership organizations, professional competitions, and community outreach initiatives that strengthened her analytical, communication, and problem-solving abilities. These experiences provided valuable insight into the challenges facing agricultural producers and rural communities, including issues related to resource management, economic sustainability, and access to opportunities.

One of the most impactful experiences of Alyssa's academic career was serving as a Program Assistant for university grant-funded projects. In this role, she managed financial documentation, monitored grant compliance requirements, coordinated communications among project partners, and supported program administration. Through these responsibilities, she developed strong organizational and professional skills while gaining experience working with stakeholders from diverse backgrounds. Her research, leadership, and administrative experiences have prepared her to be an asset to the Family Farm Alliance by bringing a strong work ethic, attention to detail, and a genuine commitment to supporting agricultural communities.

Through this internship, Alyssa hopes to gain a deeper understanding of the legal and policy frameworks that influence agriculture, water management, and rural development. She is particularly interested in learning how advocacy, collaboration, and policy development can be used to address complex challenges facing producers and landowners. She also looks forward to learning from professionals who work directly with agricultural stakeholders and to developing the skills necessary to become an effective advocate for rural communities.

Looking toward the future, Alyssa plans to pursue a master's degree in Agricultural Economics at New Mexico State University with a focus on natural resource and agricultural policy. Her long-term goal is to contribute to the development of policies that strengthen rural communities, protect natural resources, and support a secure and sustainable food system. As a member of the next generation of agricultural professionals, Alyssa believes young leaders have an important role to play in addressing emerging challenges such as food security, water scarcity, and the growing demand for agricultural production. By combining her background in economics, agriculture, and policy, she hopes to help develop innovative and practical solutions that ensure future generations have access to a resilient food system while supporting the producers who make that possible.

Alyssa is proud to represent Southern New Mexico and grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the work of the Family Farm Alliance! She looks forward to growing both personally and professionally throughout this experience while continuing her commitment to serving the agricultural communities that have shaped her academic and career journey.

## Water Policy Intern

*By Caelee Jimerson*



Caelee Jimerson recently graduated from New Mexico State University with a degree in Agricultural Economics as a Crimson Scholar with Honors. Caelee is from Las Cruces, New Mexico and comes from a family that owns a pecan harvesting company in Southern New Mexico. Agriculture has always been a major part of her life, as she comes from a family that farms pecan trees. Growing up around agriculture gave her a firsthand understanding of the challenges and opportunities that farmers face every day. Because of this background, she has developed a strong appreciation for the agricultural industry and the important role it plays in supporting communities, economies, and food production across the country.

Caelee is excited to spend her summer as an intern for the Family Farm Alliance. She looks forward to learning more about issues that directly impact agriculture, particularly

here in the west. Water is one of the most important resources for agriculture in the western United States, especially in regions like New Mexico. Having grown up around farming, she has seen how critical water management is to the success and sustainability of agricultural operations. This internship provides a unique opportunity to better understand the legal, policy, and management decisions that affect water users and agricultural producers.

Caelee applied for this internship because it combines many of her interests that contribute to her academic and professional goals. Her studies in Agricultural Economics has helped her understand the economic and policy aspects of agriculture, while her personal experiences on her family's farm has helped her appreciate the practical challenges producers face. Through this internship, she hopes to gain a deeper understanding of how agricultural policy is developed and how legal frameworks influence water management and resource allocation. Caelee is especially interested in learning how the different groups involved work together to address these water issues while balancing the needs of agriculture, communities, and the environment.

In addition to her agricultural background, Caelee brings strong communication, organizational, and analytical skills developed through academic coursework, leadership experiences, and involvement in agriculture. She looks forward to learning from professionals in the field, expanding her understanding of water and agricultural policy, and contributing to the Family Farm Alliance's efforts to advocate for western irrigated agriculture.

Looking ahead, she plans to continue her education by pursuing a master's degree in Agricultural Economics. She is interested in exploring a career related to water policy, agricultural law, or resource management. This internship is an incredible opportunity to build knowledge, gain professional experience, and learn from experts who are working to address some of the most important issues facing agriculture today.

She is grateful for the opportunity to be on this intern team this summer and looks forward to learning, growing, and contributing to the Family Farm Alliance throughout her internship experience.

## **Business and Communications Intern**

### ***By Jadyn Ostic***

Jadyn Ostic is a proud northern New Mexico native currently pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration in Economics at New Mexico State University, alongside a supplementary major in Law & Society and a minor in Business Law. She is also working towards graduating with university honors, and the communities, culture, and people of New Mexico have shaped much of the way she views both her education and future career path.

She has always been drawn to the connection between law, economics, and public policy, especially in the ways these systems directly affect everyday people and communities. Her background in business

and economics gives her an understanding of how policy decisions affect real lives, including understanding how policy decisions work through agricultural operations and how regulatory changes create financial pressures. What interests her most about law is not only the structure of it, but the human side of it. As someone entering the legal field, she believes that younger voices that come from various backgrounds and offer different perspectives are exactly what this area of law needs, as she is prepared to bring that to the Family Farm Alliance and those that it serves.

This fall, she will begin her senior year while studying abroad in The Hague, Netherlands, with a focus on International Law and Legal Studies. Long-term, she plans to pursue a Juris Doctor degree and continue pursuing work in the legal field.



Jadyn's interest in water and natural resource law began after attending a guest lecture at NMSU led by the Executive Director of FFA, Samantha Barncastle. Before that experience, it was not an area of law she had seriously explored, but learning about this work significantly changed her perspective. What stood out to her most was how this area of law could connect policy, economics, and public service in such a direct way. That experience gave her a new sense of direction academically and professionally, and her excitement for this field has continued to grow since.

When the opportunity arose to join this internship team, she immediately knew it was something she wanted to be part of. She brings to this work a great understanding of economics and a fresh perspective and thinks across disciplines and approaches problems with a lot of excitement. In return, the Alliance offers her an opportunity to get technical experience, with a connection to the farming communities whose livelihoods depend on this work. Additionally, learning alongside such an amazing group of young women who are equally passionate about law feels like a meaningful step in a field I am genuinely excited to continue exploring.

Through this internship, she hopes to gain a greater understanding of water law and the environmental, regulatory, and human issues connected to it. She is especially interested in learning more about how these systems shape access to resources and how policy decisions affect communities across the Southwest and the Pacific Northwest. She also hopes to gain practical experience in the legal field, particularly in legal writing, research, and communication.

She is very grateful for the opportunity to be part of this internship and is looking forward to learning alongside such a thoughtful and accomplished team.



## Alliance Annual Conference: Save the Date!

Join farmers, ranchers, water managers, and policymakers from across the West for three days of frank discussion on the issues shaping the future of Western water and irrigated agriculture.

Rooms are open now. Reserve your hotel through our group block:

<https://book.passkey.com/go/SRFFA6>

The full agenda and registration will be available in the coming months. Watch this briefing for details.

We hope to see you there!

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### DONOR SUPPORT

#### What's The Secret to our Success? Grassroots Members Like You

Join our membership of agricultural producers, agribusiness, water purveyors, supporting industries, local governments, and community members. Your membership will strengthen our advocacy and connect you to cutting-edge research, analysis, and insight on the policies impacting **agricultural water**.

We encourage you to visit the **RESOURCES** page on our website: [www.familyfarmalliance.org](http://www.familyfarmalliance.org) to view Reports, Insightful Monthly Briefings and Information Water Reviews. We believe our accomplishments and activities speak for themselves. While you're there, join our email list to be kept up-to-date on our efforts on your behalf.



LEARN MORE 

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#### Defending Western Irrigated Agriculture

The Family Farm Alliance is a powerful advocate for family farmers, ranchers, irrigation districts, and allied industries in seventeen Western states. The Alliance is a focused organization. **Everything we do supports one mission — to ensure the availability of reliable and affordable irrigation water supplies to Western farmers and ranchers.**

## CORRESPONDENCE LIST

### JULY 2026

1. June 12, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Santa Ynez Community Services District Regular Board Meeting on June 17, 2026.
2. June 12, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Eastern Management Area Groundwater Sustainability Agency Citizen Advisory Group Meeting on June 18, 2026.
3. June 17, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board’s Regular Board Meeting on June 22, 2026.
4. June 18, 2026 – District sent Past Due Letters to seven customers.
5. June 22, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Central Coast Water Authority Regular Board Meeting on June 25, 2026.
6. June 25, 2026 – District received a Public Records Act Request from C. Case.
7. June 26, 2026 – District sent a Can and Will Serve Letter to one customer.
8. June 29, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Los Olivos Community Services District Grants Subcommittee Meeting on June 30, 2026.
9. July 1, 2026 – District sent a Water Service Requirements Letter to two customers.
10. July 2, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Central Coast Water Authority Operating Committee Meeting on July 9, 2026.
11. July 5, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Los Olivos Community Services District Regular Board Meeting on July 8, 2026.
12. July 6, 2026 – District sent a Water Service Requirements Letter to one customer.
13. July 6, 2026 – District sent a Can and Will Serve Letter to one customer.
14. July 6, 2026 – District sent a letter to C. Case regarding response to Public Records Act Request.
15. July 10, 2026 – District received the Notice and Agenda for the Santa Ynez Community Services District Regular Board Meeting on July 15, 2026.