Morris Dam, San Gabriel Canyon

San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority:

Model for Successful Government and Getting the Job Done

"We are the only agency of our kind that exists. We've become a successful model for others to follow."

Randy Schoellerman
Executive Director
WQA

The mission of the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA) was very specific when the California Legislature established this unique special agency 28 years ago: clean up contaminated local water and provide safe drinking water to the 1.4 million Southern Californians who depend on this natural resource for a secure water future.

The WQA is succeeding. To date, Basin projects have cleaned up 1.8 million acre-feet of contaminated groundwater. All the while, highlighting the public and private partnerships to foster Basin restoration efforts that preserve a clean and reliable water supply.

With offices in West Covina, the WQA is an example of government working at its best: A local agency created to solve a local problem, with solutions crafted and implemented by local people who live and work in the San Gabriel Valley and leaders who all have connections to the Valley.

"We are the only agency of our kind that exists. We've become a successful model for others to follow," said WQA Executive Director Randy Schoellerman. "We have been effective for the past 28 years. We continue to make progress and we are proud of our record."

The WQA develops, finances, coordinates and implements groundwater treatment programs in the Main San Gabriel Basin, a 167-square-mile underground aquifer that provides water to most of the people living and working in the San Gabriel Valley. The projects are successfully removing pollutants in the Basin while preventing the contamination from spreading.

It's important to keep local water sources clean and the WQA is a huge part of this effort. Those who live and work in the San Gabriel Valley use 90 percent local water, which is less expensive and more reliable than the other 10 percent, which is water imported from the State Water Project or the Colorado River. Imported water is unreliable due to drought conditions.

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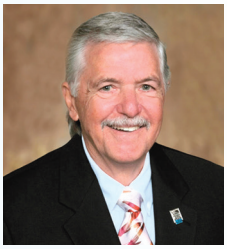
Board Members

Valerie Muñoz
Chairwoman
Representing cities
without pumping rights.

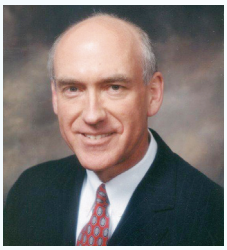
Mark Paulson
Vice-Chairman
Representing the San Gabriel
Valley Municipal Water District.

Jorge Marquez
Treasurer
Representing cities
with pumping rights.



Bob Kuhn
Secretary
Representing Three Valleys
Municipal Water District.

Lynda Noriega
Board Member
Representing San Gabriel
Basin water producers.



Michael Whitehead
Board Member
Representing San Gabriel
Basin water producers.

Ed Chavez
Board Member
Representing Upper San Gabriel
Valley Municipal Water District.

The San Gabriel Basin has 32 active groundwater treatment plants, including the San Gabriel Valley Water Company's Plant B6 above. The Water Quality Authority has coordinated cleanup efforts that have resulted in the treatment of more than 1.8 million acre-feet of water.

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The California Legislature established the WQA in 1993 to develop, finance, and implement groundwater treatment programs in the Valley. Contaminants were first detected in the Basin in 1979 and by 1984, over 59 wells in the Basin were found to have elevated levels of volatile organic compounds, a common groundwater contaminant typically comprised of chemical industrial solvents. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) added the Basin to the National Priorities List for cleanup.

The WQA is led by a seven-member board: one member each from an overlying municipal water district, one from a city with pumping rights and one from a city without pumping rights, and two members representing water producers in the San Gabriel Basin.

The WQA board meets monthly and keeps the public informed of its progress. The WQA continually tracks, and deals with, areas of contamination, and continues to collaborate with the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, EPA, Department of Toxic Substances Control, Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster and water producers.

The WQA has received $35.3 million in Proposition 68 funding from that State Water Resources Control Board Division of Financial Assistance. The WQA applied for, and was awarded, $35.3 million in Proposition 68 funds for 24 of the 32 water treatment facilities in the Main San Gabriel Basin. The WQA is using the funds to help local water producers clean contaminated water and provide safe drinking water to the public. ❍

Learn more about your water and the
WQA's efforts to keep it safe and clean.

Visit www.wqa.com

Our History in San Gabriel Basin

After severe groundwater contamination was detected in the San Gabriel Basin and the EPA designated four Superfund sites in the area, a plan of action was needed. The WQA has coordinated the cleanup efforts since its creation more than 28 years ago. As a result, 1.8 million acre-feet of water has been treated, thus making the region less dependent upon imported water.

2021 WQA secures $35.3M in Prop. 68 funding.

2020 WQA secures additional $2.2M in Prop. 1 funding.

2019 Construction begins on the first reverse osmosis treatment system in the San Gabriel Valley.

2014 WQA acquires the General Discharge Permit needed to continue the cleanup.

2012 WQA secures $10 million in state funding for four projects.

2009 WQA obtains additional $50 million for WQA Restoration Fund. H.R. 910, which established the San Gabriel Basin Restoration Fund to facilitate groundwater cleanup, became Public Law 106-554.

2002 The first 15-year BPOU project agreement is executed.

1999 WQA spearheads legislation for $75 million in federal funding.

1995 WQA's first treatment facility is completed in Monrovia.

1994 WQA adopts a consensus approach to integrating water supply and cleanup programs.

1993 WQA is established by the California State legislature.

1983 The US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) declares four Superfund sites in portions of the Main San Gabriel Basin.

1979 Groundwater contamination is first detected in the San Gabriel Groundwater Basin.

cleanup by the **numbers**

1,802,133 Acre-feet of groundwater treated in San Gabriel Basin as of June, 2021.

325,851 The amount of water in gallons in just one acre-foot.

6,700 The number of times you could fill the Rose Bowl with the 1.8 million acre-feet of treated water.

194,674 The amount in pounds of contaminants removed as of June, 2021.

20 Number of adult orca whales equal to the weight of the contaminants removed.

28 Years WQA has been coordinating the cleanup effort.

32 Active groundwater treatment facilities in the San Gabriel Basin.

2 New treatment plants are under construction.

WQA San Gabriel Basin
Water Quality Authority

www.wqa.com