

SUSTAINABLE CALIFORNIA

WINTER 2024

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WATER JUSTICE
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Water Access: A Basic Right

As the executive director of the Southern California Water Coalition, I am privileged to collaborate with the Sustainable California and California Water publications, bringing you insightful explorations of the critical water issues that confront our region. This magazine issues a compelling call for water equity, a call deeply interwoven with our coalition's core values.



Charley Wilson

For most, turning on the tap is an act taken for granted, yet for nearly one million Californians, this simple act is burdened with uncertainty. Groundswell for Water and Housing Justice is at the forefront, championing the cause to ensure that clean, affordable water flows to every home. The Groundswell Rally for Water Justice for All, held

on January 16 at the Sacramento Capitol, was more than just a meet-up. It was a powerful declaration made by over 300 social justice advocates striving to break down the barriers to water equity.

This rally, in conjunction with an Advocacy Day of Action, manifested a determined call for swift and fair improvements to our water infrastructure. It's a plea for the basic human rights of our neighbors, friends, and families, who suffer most from inadequate systems — a situation that disproportionately affects communities of color.

We are united with the Groundswell movement, pushing for legislative actions that meet community needs. This aligns with California's commitment that every resident has the right to safe and affordable water. Moreover, achieving water equity means devising solutions that are effective without imposing excessive financial burdens on those they aim to serve.

Within this issue, we not only recount the rally's events but also investigate the intricate interplay between policy, infrastructure, and the personal narratives that lie at the heart of the water crisis. As you peruse this edition, I invite you to join us in affirming that access to water is a fundamental right, not a privilege. Together, let's pledge to a future where water equity is the standard for all.

Charley Wilson Executive Director

The Southern California Water Coalition, a nonprofit, nonpartisan public education partnership is dedicated to informing Southern Californians about our water needs and our state's water resources.



Coalition Fights for Water Justice Movement Advocates for Investment to Achieve Equity, Affordability

By Grace Washburn
Special Sections Writer

Just after Martin Luther King Day, hundreds of Californians gathered at the Capitol in Sacramento to advocate for an essential human right: clean, affordable water.

"This is the fourth largest economy in the world, the richest state in the nation and a million Californians don't have clean drinking water," said Antonio Villaraigosa, former Los Angeles Mayor. "In a state this big, this rich, we can't make the infrastructure investments to fix our pipes to make sure everybody gets water? No, we're going to have to fight for it."

The event was organized by Groundswell for Water and Housing Justice, a grassroots organizing group that has partnered with civil rights leaders, policy makers and water industry groups to advocate for water and housing equity for black, brown, indigenous and disadvantaged communities in California.

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About 300 people gathered at the State Capitol in Sacramento in January to advocate for clean, affordable water for all. The event organized by Groundswell for Water and Housing Justice, featured many prominent speakers, including former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, shown at the podium in the photo on the previous page. *Photos by Randy Pench*

"This is the fourth largest economy in the world, the richest state in the nation and a million Californians don't have clean drinking water."

Antonio Villaraigosa
Former Los Angeles Mayor

water policy decisions tend to sacrifice access for these communities and their suffering is largely ignored."

About 300 people traveled by bus from the greater Los Angeles area, Northern California and Central California farming communities. They gathered on the steps of the Capitol before meeting in small groups with all 120 legislators.

"The State of California vowed that water is a human right and we at Groundswell intend to hold the state to that," said Sanders.

"The weekend honoring the slain civil rights leader furthers reflection on how California water management policies may have a legacy of discrimination and segregation that still impacts communities today," said Groundswell spokesperson Ed Sanders, adding that two-thirds of those 1 million without clean water are in communities of color. "Past



"We urgently need investment in water infrastructure. We need to prioritize human lives. They have to find a way to cut through the red tape and speed up the process. We have to address the federal and state policies to ensure that water supply and conveyance projects that protect communities from either a lack of access or toxic pollution are expedited for completion."

Groundswell, which has faced opposition from some environmental groups, is not looking to "gut" the environmental review process, said Sanders. Groundswell has found that convening organizing meetings in the impacted communities gives the best understanding of the issues, he said. The community leaders and water industry leaders share a common outlook: The state must invest in water infrastructure to ensure an equitable and sustainable supply of water for all.

"One of the most affordable sources of water comes from the State Water Project, which serves the mass majority of black, brown and disadvantaged communities all over the state,"

[See **COALITION**, Page 4]



Groundswell for Water and Housing Justice coordinated bus transportation for hundreds of Californians, shown at left and above, so that they could advocate for clean and affordable water for their communities by gathering outside the Sacramento Capitol and meeting with legislators inside. Below, from left to right, Director Michael Camacho from the Inland Empire Utilities Agency (IEUA), Bridge Street Productions President & CEO Martin Ludlow, and IEUA Director Steve Elie at the event.

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"The State of California vowed that water is a human right and we at Groundswell intend to hold the state to that. We urgently need investment in water infrastructure. We need to prioritize human lives."

Ed Sanders

Groundswell Spokesperson

as Delta Conveyance, the Sites Reservoir, and other storage and recycled water projects in legislation and/or a bond measure. The

said President Rick Callender of the California/Hawaii State Conference of the NAACP. "When it comes to equity and social justice, it is clear to us that affordability and water rates for disadvantaged communities must be prioritized and protected by stabilizing the State Water Project and building the Delta Conveyance Project. This is a true matter of environmental justice."

The event leaders and community members made the trip to urge legislators to prioritize projects such

legislature did not agree on a Climate Resiliency Bond in time for the March ballot, but could still craft one for the November ballot.

"Public infrastructure is the skeletal backbone on which our communities are built and thrive. In order to meet critical needs of communities, we need to invest in critical infrastructure projects," said Executive Director Charley Wilson of the Southern California

"When it comes to equity and social justice, it is clear to us that affordability and water rates for disadvantaged communities must be prioritized and protected by stabilizing the State Water Project and building the Delta Conveyance Project. This is a true matter of environmental justice."

Rick Callender

President, California/Hawaii State Conference of the NAACP

Water Coalition (SCWC), a nonprofit, nonpartisan public education partnership. "Historically, water projects don't get as much attention, and we need a tightly woven tapestry of measures to provide a truly resilient water future."

The groups are advocating for a bond measure that would provide funding for a wide range of water investments because they say an "all of the above" approach is needed, especially to keep water affordable and climate resilient.

Across California, water rates are up. In Los Angeles rates increased 87% from 2010 to 2018. Climate variability is resulting in more severe droughts and floods and a less resilient water supply.

Last year ended on a positive note for water infrastructure advocates with the release and certification of the Final Environmental Impact Report of the proposed Delta Conveyance Project. The Delta Construction Authority will provide a new cost estimate and a benefit-cost analysis in mid-2024.

"The water that comes from the State Water Project (SWP) has to be protected. This is your cleanest, most affordable supply of water," said General Manager Jennifer Pierre of the State Water





Many prominent water and community leaders were at the Sacramento rally. Above, from left to right: Managing Director Rich Lambros of the Southern California Leadership Council; Advocacy Manager Alec Mesropian of LA County BizFed; Executive Director Charley Wilson of the Southern California Water Coalition (SCWC); BizFed Director of Advocacy Sarah Wiltfong; Director Steve Elie of the Inland Empire Utilities Agency (IEUA); State Senator Josh Newman (29th District); Director of Water and Environmental Relations Marci Stanage of Rebuild SoCal; IEUA Director Michael Camacho; Dave Sorem of the Engineering Contractors Association; Assistant General Manager Patty Cortez of Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District; and Executive Legislative Representative Jay Jefferson II of Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. At right, from top to bottom: State Senator Steven Bradford; President Rick Callender of the California/Hawaii State Conference of the NAACP; and SCWC Executive Director Charley Wilson speak outside the Capitol.

"Access to clean, affordable water should not be limited to people in certain zip codes, socio-economic status or the color of your skin. We need robust investment in our water infrastructure."

Sen. Steven Bradford
35th District

be invested in those who are often overlooked."

Other speakers at the event included: Marc Morial, President of the National Urban League; State Senators Bob Archuleta and Steven Bradford; David Villarino-Gonzalez, President / CEO - Farmworker Institute of Education and Leadership Development (FIELD); and Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

"Access to clean, affordable water should not be limited to people in certain zip codes, socio-economic status or the color of your skin. We need robust investment in our water infrastructure," said Sen. Bradford, whose 35th District includes Compton, Inglewood, Watts and San Pedro. "The lack of quality water infrastructure and poor management decimates businesses, endangers people's health and can lead to people losing their homes and their property." ■

Contractors, a nonprofit association of public water agencies that contract for SWP water. "We can't let all of our infrastructure get dilapidated. It's 60 years old and it's time to reinvest. Water infrastructure is bipartisan and water infrastructure is water justice."

Miguel Luna, a Board of Directors member at Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) that supplies 40 percent of the region's water, spoke for the regional agency. "We passed our legislative priorities, which include supply resiliency and reliability. They include planning for conveyance and storage as a legislative priority and to improve affordability in the region, especially in disadvantaged communities. ... The needs are immediate. The funding must be targeted and must

"Public infrastructure is the skeletal backbone on which our communities are built and thrive. In order to meet critical needs of communities, we need to invest in critical infrastructure projects."

Charley Wilson
Executive Director
Southern California
Water Coalition (SCWC)



Steven Bradford



Rick Callender



Charley Wilson



Regional Water Agencies Aim to Bolster Local, State Supply

By Elizabeth Smilor
Special Sections Writer

For local water managers, a sustainable water supply must also be an affordable one. That is one reason why they support a plethora of water investments in everything from State water infrastructure for conveyance and storage to recycling and conservation.

“The State needs to fund improving their backbone system, which hasn’t been improved in decades, to be able to move more water to where it’s needed, especially to disadvantaged communities. That’s the cheapest water available,” said Three Valleys Municipal Water District (Three Valleys) General Manager and Chief Engineer Matt Litchfield. “Developing more local supplies is a good thing, but it has to be a little bit of everything and that includes the infrastructure improvements to move water in big storm events to where it’s needed, or else it just gets lost.”

The “backbone” to which Litchfield refers is the State Water Project that carries water from Northern California through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to Southern California. In December 2023, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) released and certified the Final Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Delta Conveyance Project (DCP).

“We’re very happy that the Delta Conveyance Project has reached this milestone. It’s a big step forward,” said Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Upper District) General Manager Tom Love. “The governor has indicated that before his term of office is finished, he’d like to see all the permits and approval done so the project can proceed to design and construction.”

Debate over Delta improvements has raged for decades and thus far no major project has made it past the permitting process. DWR’s next steps are numerous State and federal permits or authorizations, including those required by the State Water Resources Control Board, the Delta Stewardship Council, and compliance with State and federal Endangered Species acts. The Delta Construction Authority will provide a new cost estimate and a benefit-cost analysis in mid-2024.



"The State needs to fund improving their backbone system, which hasn't been improved in decades, to be able to move more water to where it's needed, especially to disadvantaged communities."

Matt Litchfield, P.E.

General Manager and Chief Engineer, Three Valleys Municipal Water District



"The alternative if we don't invest in this infrastructure is we will reach the point where we cannot provide a reliable water supply and the cost to disadvantaged communities will be much, much greater than the investments we make in improving the infrastructure."

Tom Love

General Manager, Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District



"Water and wastewater agencies are looking at huge future costs to develop large infrastructure projects that address water quality regulations. Without proactive investments by the State and federal governments, our ratepayers will feel the impact."

Shivaji Deshmukh, P.E.

General Manager, Inland Empire Utilities Agency



"Our goal has always been to minimize ratepayers' burden as we work to ensure a clean, safe and reliable water supply from the San Gabriel Basin."

Randy Schoellerman, P.E.

Executive Director, San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority

"The alternative if we don't invest in this infrastructure is we will reach the point where we cannot provide a reliable water supply and the cost to disadvantaged communities will be much, much greater than the investments we make in improving the infrastructure," Love said. "Spending money on infrastructure is better than the alternative of not having a reliable water supply statewide."

Love added that on the affordability front, he's encouraged by U.S. Senator Alex Padilla of California's recent leadership in advocating to restore funding for the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) for Fiscal Year 2024. Another statewide project local managers are tracking is Sites Reservoir, an off-stream reservoir in the Sacramento Valley. That project should begin construction this year with completion expected in 2030.

The other big piece of the water puzzle is local supply. Water agencies support a variety of local projects from stormwater capture to recycled water. The agencies are also tasked with helping users meet conservation goals.

"IEUA continues to make necessary investments in stormwater capture and storage projects to further expand local water supplies. Storms like the one California faced in early February serve as a reminder that we need to continue to pursue these creative projects that allow IEUA to capture and store stormwater during wet months, providing further reliability during dry months," said Inland Empire Utilities Agency (IEUA) General Manager Shivaji Deshmukh. "Investments in local infrastructure complement imported water supply demands, increasing reliability and helping to ensure that agencies continue to meet the ever evolving and continuously more stringent compliance requirements, as well as challenges posed by variable and severe weather changes."

For its part, IEUA continues to plan for the Chino Basin Program (CBP), a series of innovative water treatment and

storage projects that will provide an additional 15,000 acre-feet of advanced treated, purified recycled water for storage in the Chino Groundwater Basin each year. IEUA, a regional wastewater treatment agency and wholesale distributor of imported water that serves about 935,000 people in western San Bernardino County, is also maximizing other recycled water facilities. California's most recent storm event tasked IEUA with the challenge of capturing a substantial influx of stormwater while ensuring safety and compliance of current water supplies and facility operations. CBP storage projects will provide an opportunity to increase capacity limits, optimizing the capture and storage of water during future storm events.

IEUA along with Three Valleys, a water wholesaler with 13 members in the San Gabriel Valley, and Upper District that serves 18 cities and portions of unincorporated Los Angeles County, support Pure Water Southern California, a joint recycled water project by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts.

"Pure Water is a very important project for us. We will be receiving water from phase one of the project and we will be purchasing about one-third of the total capacity," said Love of Upper District. The first phase is estimated to be online in 2032. "That water we get from Pure Water will free up water from the State Water Project for other areas."

These wholesale agencies also assist their retail agencies in their efforts to keep rates affordable, especially in disadvantaged communities. Both Three Valleys and Upper District shared how they assist cities and agencies with loan and grant applications. Love said Upper District hopes to do a study to gauge how much local customers are paying for tap water in comparison to their total income.

[See **REGIONAL**, Page 14]



Sustaining a Clean, Reliable Water Supply

San Gabriel Basin WQA Addresses Emerging Contaminants

By Elizabeth Smilor
Special Sections Writer

"We are at the forefront in supporting the remediation of these 'forever chemicals' that have become a major area of concern around the world."

Mark Paulson
WQA Board Chairman

To be sustainable, a water supply must be safe and clean. For 1.4 million people in the San Gabriel Valley, clean water depends upon a clean groundwater basin that supplies about 80 percent of the area's drinking water.

"The Basin restoration is critical for a sustainable groundwater supply. Our mandate is to remove contaminants to ensure a safe, reliable source," said San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA) Executive Director Randy Schoellerman.

The WQA was established by the State Legislature in 1993 to develop, finance, and implement groundwater treatment programs in the San Gabriel Basin after contaminants were identified in the late 1970s. The contamination is believed to be the result of decades of improper chemical handling and disposal practices by various industries. As a result, water suppliers had to shut down wells and large portions of the basin were placed on the federal Superfund cleanup list in 1984.

There are 32 active groundwater treatment plants in the San Gabriel Basin. The WQA has coordinated cleanup efforts that have resulted in the treatment of more than 2 million acre-feet of water. An acre-foot is equal to 326,000 gallons.

However, the cleanup continues and the role of the WQA remains vital especially considering the onset of new investigations and regulations regarding emerging contaminants, such as PFAS (Per- and Polyfluorinated Substances).



At far left and above is the Puente Valley Intermediate Zone Remedy Operating Unit, which is one of 32 active groundwater treatment facilities that are integral to the cleanup coordinated by the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority. At left, the water percolates into the groundwater basin from the Santa Fe Spreading Grounds near the 210-605 freeway interchange.

“We are at the forefront in supporting the remediation of these ‘forever chemicals’ that have become a major area of concern around the world,” said WQA Board Chairman Mark Paulson. PFAS, which remains in the environment, has been used to manufacture everything from Teflon for pots and pans to Scotchgard for fabric protection. “We remain dedicated to ensuring San Gabriel Valley residents have a clean, safe and reliable water supply.”

In March 2023, the U.S. EPA proposed a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation to establish legally enforceable levels, called Maximum Contaminant Levels, for six PFAS contaminants in drinking water. That same month, WQA filed a lawsuit against 3M, DuPont and other companies in an effort to recover cleanup costs in the Basin.

“Our agency is responsible for overseeing the cleanup and restoration of the groundwater Basin,” said Schoellerman in announcing the lawsuit. “The Basin has been impacted by PFAS detected in numerous wells requiring the construction of additional treatment systems. Ongoing remediation costs associated with the PFAS contamination will continue for decades. It is part of our mission to pursue responsible parties for those costs.”

The WQA lawsuit is one of hundreds of similar lawsuits filed by cities, states, water agencies and others in the last several years. It alleges the defendants knowingly contaminated drinking water

over a period of years in the Basin (and across the country) as a result of the manufacture and use of a group of more than 4,000 synthetic harmful chemical compounds, collectively known as PFAS.

The San Gabriel Basin is the primary source of drinking water for 25 cities and unincorporated areas of the San Gabriel Valley. The cleanup coordinated by the WQA includes funding from State and federal monies as well as contributions from the responsible parties. This funding helps to lessen the burden on local ratepayers.

In the past two fiscal years, the WQA has received two \$10 million federal allocations as well as some State grants. The California Legislature has extended the life of the WQA to July 1, 2050.

“We will continue to advocate for funding to address emerging contaminants,” said Schoellerman. “Our goal is to restore this vital groundwater supply for future generations.” ■



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Focus on the Delta

Metropolitan's Nina Hawk Speaks at Three Valleys' Event

By Elizabeth Smilor
Special Sections Writer

"A healthy Delta means a more reliable water source which translates to vitality back at home."

Nina Hawk

Chief of Bay-Delta Resources
Metropolitan Water District
of Southern California

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is at the heart of the State Water Project, which is essential to a sustainable and reliable water supply for 27 million Californians and millions of acres of farmland. It is also home to more than 750 plant and animal species, over 500,000 residents, and is a rich agricultural area that faces seismic and climate change threats.

"A healthy Delta means a more reliable water source which translates to vitality back at home," explained Nina Hawk, Chief of Bay-Delta Resources at Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. "We have a responsibility as stewards to look at the Bay-Delta as a beautiful hub and an opportunity to really impart our investments, time and expertise, and work together, to tackle these difficult issues."

Hawk presented an overview of the Delta and its ongoing projects at the Three Valleys Municipal Water District Leadership Breakfast on Oct. 26 at Mountain Meadows Golf Course in Pomona. About 90 guests attended the event, including water industry leaders from such agencies as the Rowland Water District, Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster, Valley County Water District, Walnut Valley Water District, the Inland Empire Utilities Agency, and more. Municipal representatives also attended from cities including Claremont and La Verne.

"There's always this misconception that we could be self-sustaining through recycling and groundwater projects. The fact of the matter is that in Three Valleys' service area, more than half the customers have no access to groundwater and only a little access to recycled water," said Three Valleys Board Vice President Mike Ti. "The State Water Project (SWP) provides lower salinity water that we need in order to recycle. We need that water to blend in and recycle. We need to continue to support the SWP upgrades."



Photo courtesy of California Department of Water Resources

At left, Nina Hawk, Chief of Bay-Delta Resources at Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, addresses water and city officials at the Three Valleys Municipal Water District Leadership Breakfast late last year at Mountain Meadows Golf Course in Pomona. Hawk gave an overview of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, shown above, and its many challenges and ongoing projects. Metropolitan, the nation’s largest wholesale water supplier with 26 member water agencies, has invested millions of dollars in maintaining and improving the Bay-Delta. Below, Hawk talks with Three Valleys Director David De Jesus, who also sits on the Metropolitan Board.



Mike Ti

Metropolitan is the nation’s largest wholesale water supplier with 26 member water agencies, including Three Valleys, a wholesaler for 13 retail agency customers. Hawk provides strategic oversight and coordination for Metropolitan on key projects in the Central Valley region. Metropolitan is the largest investor in the Delta Conveyance Project (DCP), a proposed single tunnel east of the Delta that would carry from the North Delta to Bethany Reservoir in the South Delta. Metropolitan has committed over \$160 million to the planning phase. Metropolitan also has

invested \$20 million to the development of Sites Reservoir, an above-ground, off-stream reservoir that would capture and store water when Sacramento River flows are high.

“These projects are coming to the forefront in the next 2-4 years,” Hawk said, looking ahead to the release of the DCP Final Environmental Impact Report, which was released Dec. 8 and certified Dec. 21, 2023, as well as the Cost-Benefit Analysis expected by the middle of this year. “We are looking at affordability through a very different lens. The cost-benefit analysis is extremely important in Metropolitan’s decision-making.”

Many cities and water agencies with representatives at the breakfast are in support of the Delta Conveyance Project and feel the state needs the project to ensure long-term water supply reliability in Southern

“There’s always this misconception that we could be self-sustaining through recycling and groundwater projects. The fact of the matter is that in Three Valleys’ service area, more than half the customers have no access to groundwater and only a little access to recycled water.”

Mike Ti
Three Valleys Board
Vice President

California. The State Water Project provides about 30 percent of our region’s water. About 50 percent is local water from the Los Angeles Aqueduct, groundwater, recycling and desalination; and 20 percent is from the Colorado River.

“I’m encouraged to hear about progress with the Delta Conveyance Project. My concern is that progress on this project is happening toward the end of Gov. Newsom’s term. If a new administration doesn’t like the plan, it could all end up in turmoil,” said Claremont City Councilmember Corey Calaycay. “I’m hopeful they will be able to get it moving to a point that it will be supported and not changed again by a new administration.”

As a member agency, Three Valleys will be monitoring State and Metropolitan decision making closely in the coming months.

[See **FOCUS ON THE DELTA**, Page 12]





About 90 water industry and city leaders attended the breakfast and presentation hosted by Three Valleys Municipal Water District. The District schedules three such events each year to update and inform area officials about ongoing water issues. Above left, TVMWD Board Director David De Jesus, left, Board President Jody Roberto, and Director Bob Kuhn. In the center photo, from left to right; Three Valleys IT Manager Robert Peng; TVMWD CFO Jose Velasquez; San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA) Executive Assistant Stephanie Moreno; TVMWD Finance Manager Brittany Aguilar; and WQA Executive Director Randy Schoellerman. Above right, speaker Nina Hawk from Metropolitan with TVMWD General Manager and Chief Engineer Matt Litchfield.

Photos by Steven Georges

[FOCUS ON THE DELTA, Page 11]

“Her excellent presentation certainly demonstrated the complexity of the Bay-Delta system and the importance of it to our water supply,” said Three Valleys General Manager and Chief Engineer Matt Litchfield. “The State needs to step up. We continually advocate for Delta Conveyance. The member agencies have a lot of say as to Metropolitan’s decision.”

In her overview of the Delta, Hawk explained Metropolitan’s role in safeguarding the complex Delta ecosystem. In 2016, Metropolitan bought five islands in the Delta with over 20,000 acres for \$175 million. Hawk said Metropolitan is using four of the islands for habitat restoration, agriculture and to stockpile supplies to mitigate a seismic breach of the levee system. Metropolitan sold one island back to the state Department of Water Resources for habitat.

“Her [Nina Hawk’s] excellent presentation certainly demonstrated the complexity of the Bay-Delta system and the importance of it to our water supply.”

Matt Litchfield
Three Valleys
General Manager
and Chief Engineer

Hawk works closely with Metropolitan’s science program in the Delta, which is working to revive endangered species including the Delta smelt (a tiny fish endemic to the Delta that is considered “functionally extinct” in the wild). She outlined the key challenges in the Delta as: salinity

“Things are really changing in the Delta. I found it interesting how Metropolitan has bought islands to protect the environment, but also protect our water supply.”

Jody Roberto
Three Valleys
Board President

through there. It is a tidal area, so it’s affected by sea level rise. We need to think about what it needs to be for the future.”

Hawk concluded her presentation with an explanation of Metropolitan’s Climate Adaptation Plan for Water. “We are looking at our water supply today and in the future in light of climate change, reliability and affordability to put together portfolios of water supply options,” she said. “Our member agencies are an important part of this process.”

Executive Director Randy Schoellerman of the Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA), which was formed by the EPA to coordinate cleanup of the San Gabriel Basin groundwater, said: “I appreciated hearing an overview of Metropolitan’s role in the Delta. Her presentation was very informative and reminds us of the challenges in the Delta and its importance.” ■

intrusion, sea-level rise/climate change, loss of habitat, subsidence of islands, seismic activity, and eco-system disruptions.

“We altered this landscape that once sustained all these species. We industrialized. We reclaimed it for agriculture and communities. The result is channelized areas where we forced the water,” said Hawk. “To keep it that way, we have to maintain it. When you layer climate change on top of that, it really changes how the water moves

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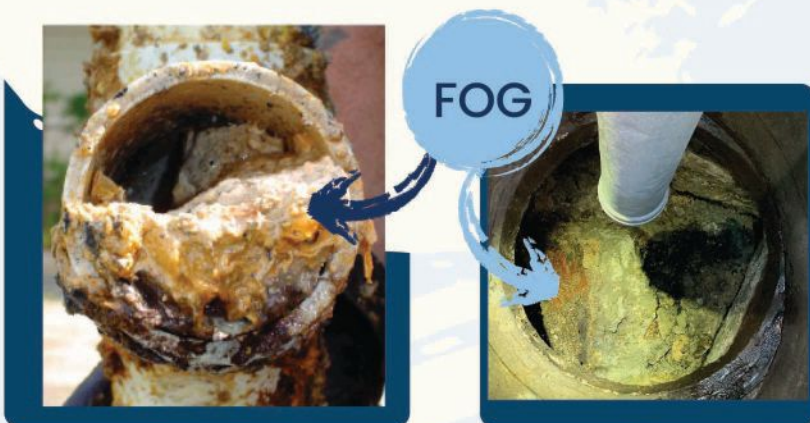
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Above, the Joint Water Pollution Control Plant (JWPCP) in Carson treats about 260 million gallons of wastewater per day, but most goes to the ocean. Pure Water Southern California, a joint project of the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, would produce 150 million gallons per day (mgd) of purified water from the JWPCP for 15 million people upon completion in 2032. At right, the Sites Reservoir Project will be situated on the west side of the Sacramento Valley, approximately 10 miles west of Maxwell in Glenn and Colusa Counties.

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Conservation, they say, is necessary, but can also be costly.

“IEUA supports and promotes conservation within our service area, but we also want to ensure an appropriate balance with affordability. The State’s draft conservation regulations will pose some real affordability challenges as they are currently written. We are helping our retail agencies advocate for changes in the draft regulations to ensure realistic efforts can be made in reasonable timeframes,” said IEUA’s Deshmukh. “As originally drafted, the regulations show disproportionate impacts, heavily affecting inland areas like IEUA and, in addition, could cost our service area over \$1 billion to achieve compliance within the timeframe set out.”

Love shares concerns with the Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life framework because it doesn’t give enough credit for recycled water use and thus will not incentivize its development. Deshmukh points out that compliance with new and increasingly stringent clean water regulations will also come at a cost.

“Water and wastewater agencies are looking at huge future costs to develop large infrastructure projects that address water quality regulations,” said Deshmukh “Without proactive investments by the State and federal governments, our ratepayers will feel the impact. Protecting public health is a key priority and responsibility we do not take lightly, and access to safe drinking



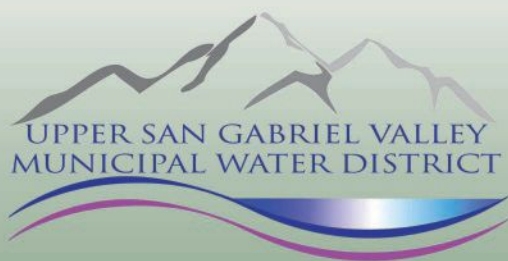
water and sanitation services are fundamental human necessities. IEUA continues to be successful in receiving grants for resiliency and water quality projects to offset costs. Ratepayers should not have to be concerned about its affordability.”

Emerging contaminants such as PFAS (Per-and Polyfluorinated Substances), considered “forever” chemicals because they remain in the environment, are catalysts for the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority to seek government funding as well as money from the responsible parties. The WQA joined a lawsuit last year against 3M, DuPont and other companies to recover cleanup costs. The WQA was established by the State Legislature in 1993 to develop, finance, and implement groundwater treatment programs in the San Gabriel Basin.

“Our goal has always been to minimize ratepayers’ burden as we work to ensure a clean, safe and reliable water supply from the San Gabriel Basin,” said WQA Executive Director Randy Schoellerman.

Finally, the water managers are always watching the weather.

“We’re seeing a lot of hydrologic variability from year to year and we have to plan for that in the future,” said Three Valleys’ Litchfield. “It’s a long winter, so I think we’ll be OK, but you just never know.” ■



Spring Events

Our Landscaping Workshops and Spring events are back! Join us virtually or in person to learn more about drought tolerant landscaping and other fun activities.

- 13 Feb** CA Friendly and Native Plant Landscaping
Virtual - 6pm - 7pm
- 24 Feb** Advanced Design
Upper District Office - 9am - 10:30am
- 7 Mar** Design Challenges (Firescaping)
Virtual - 6pm - 7:15pm
- 9 Mar** Watershed
San Gabriel Canyon - 8am - 12pm
- 19 Mar** Leak Detection
Virtual - 6pm - 7pm
- 6 Apr** Watershed
San Gabriel Canyon - 8am - 12pm
- 9 Apr** Pollinators
Virtual - 6pm - 7pm
- 25 Apr** Transformation on a Budget
Virtual - 6pm - 7pm
- 11 May** WATERFEST
Arcadia County Park - 10am - 2pm
- 6 Jun** Nature and Health
Virtual - 6pm - 7:15pm



For more information on water conservation visit
www.upperdistrict.org/water-smart-workshops/



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