ACWA NEWS

VOL. 52 | 09 Sept. 20, 2024





Left: ACWA Region 8 speakers and Board members join association leadership for a photo during an Aug. 21 event that showcased women leaders in the water industry. *Photo courtesy of Civic Publications Inc.* **Right:** Panelists share perspectives on recruiting the next generation of water professionals during the Aug. 13 Region 9 event. See pages 8 and 9 for more details.

CAPITOL CORNER

ACWA State Advocacy Wraps Up Successful Legislative Session

Ending on Aug. 31, the 2023-'24 California legislative session included many wins for ACWA member agencies across numerous water-related issues. Below is an overview of action on some of the key bills in which ACWA staff advocated in support or opposition on behalf of members this year.

Gov. Gavin Newsom now has until Sept. 30 to sign or veto bills that passed out of the Legislature.

Rate Setting Process

The Legislature passed ACWA-sponsored AB 2257 (Wilson, D-Suisun City), which would help member agencies defend against Proposition 218 lawsuits. The bill would allow ratepayers to participate and raise specific objections to proposed rate changes before resorting to litigation after the new rates are approved. The bill would provide an opportunity for local agencies and ratepayers to resolve objections during the public process and avoid surprise litigation down the road.

As of Sept. 17, this bill was waiting for the governor to sign or veto.

LIRA

ACWA maintained an oppose-unless-amended position on SB 1255 (Durazo, D-Los Angeles) and it failed to make it out of the Assembly Appropriations Committee's suspense file, effectively stopping the bill.

CAPITOL CORNER continued on page 4

Celebrate Water Professionals Appreciation Week Oct. 5-13

California's annual Water Professionals Appreciation Week will kick off Oct. 5 and highlight the important role of water industry professionals and local public water agencies in ensuring safe and reliable water, wastewater and recycled water operations in California.

As part of the designated week, urban and agricultural water agencies are encouraged to utilize their communication channels to educate media, customers, local elected leaders and other key audiences on the essential role that water professionals play in providing safe and reliable water services.

ACWA is encouraging member agencies to utilize several customizable

WPAW continued on page 13

2 2024 Marked Year of Policy Success for ACWA Members

6 Randy Record: Farmer, Pilot, California Water Leader

10 Westlands Making Significant Progress on Groundwater Sustainability

ACWA Association of California Water Agencies

ACWA News is a publication of the Association of California Water Agencies

Periodicals postage paid at Sacramento, CA.

POSTMASTER:
Send address changes and subscription requests to ACWA News,
980 9th Street, Suite 1000
Sacramento, CA
95814-3514

916.441.4545
www.acwa.com

Executive Director
Dave Eggerton

Director of Communications
Heather Engel

Editor
Will Holbert

Staff Writers
Caroline Meade
Ellen Martin

Graphic Design
Katherine Causland

Copyright 2024. All Rights Reserved. Call ACWA for Permission to Reprint.

USPS 334030

Access *ACWA News* Online

ACWA members, associates and affiliates can access *ACWA News* online even if they currently do not receive the *ACWA News* subscription. Current and past issues are available at **www.acwa.com/newsroom**. Member login required.

Connect with us online:

facebook.com/acwawater
twitter.com/acwawater
linkedin.com/company/acwa
instagram.com/acwawater

ACWA STATE RELATIONS DIRECTOR ADAM QUIÑONEZ

2024 Marked A Year of Policy Success for ACWA Members



As I close out my final legislative session at ACWA and look forward to new opportunities, I want to take a moment to celebrate the successes of 2024 on both legislative and regulatory issues. With key legislation halted, regulations drastically improved, and new policies enacted, this year's accomplishments are a testament to ACWA's strategic advocacy and the collective voice of our members. This year highlighted ACWA's continued commitment to advocating on behalf of public water agencies for the betterment of California water.

One of the most critical victories this year was the passage of AB 2257, sponsored by ACWA and authored by Assemblymember Lori Wilson (D-Suisun City). This bill would allow ratepayers to participate in the ratemaking process and raise specific objections to proposed rate changes before resorting to litigation after the new rates are approved. The bill would provide an opportunity for local agencies and ratepayers to resolve objections during the public process and avoid costly surprise litigation down the road – a significant win for public agencies throughout California. As of Sept. 17, the bill was waiting for Gov. Gavin Newsom to sign or veto.

Water rights reforms also took center stage in 2024. AB 460 by Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (D-Orinda), which ACWA initially opposed, saw significant amendments that removed provisions granting the State Water Resources Control Board sweeping authority. Instead, the bill now focuses on penalizing illegal water diversions, a more targeted and reasonable approach. This bill marks the culmination of years of work to protect ACWA member water rights and ensure that illegal diversions are met with significant penalties. This victory was the result of tireless advocacy by ACWA staff and member agencies, whose unified voice was instrumental in securing amendments that protect the current water rights system.

ACWA's advocacy also focused extensively on the budget process in 2024. With a significant budget shortfall projected for the next three years, lawmakers looked to make budget cuts wherever possible. This included a reduction in over $500 million for the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program, formerly known as the Voluntary Agreements, contained in the main budget bill AB 107 by Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel (D-Encino). ACWA and a broad coalition of partner agencies and associations successfully advocated for the restoration of this critical funding in the follow up budget bill, SB 108 by Senator Scott Weiner (D-San Francisco). This represents another huge win and hopefully the last time this funding is jeopardized.

On the regulatory front, ACWA worked extensively with its members and coalition partners over the last year to secure wide-ranging amendments to the State Water Board's Making Conservation a California Way of Life regulation. The changes have resulted in a more feasible and cost-effective regulation, and included changes to timelines for the outdoor water use standard and performance measures, inclusion of feasible alternative compliance pathways, modifications to compliance start dates and other significant changes that will assist agencies in complying with the regulation.

In short, 2024 has been a year of significant success for ACWA members. ACWA secured wins that protect ratepayer processes, modernize water rights, ensure funding for future resilience, move the state forward on water-use efficiency, and so much more.

Looking ahead, there is some un certainty. A special session in October related to oil and gas companies is on the horizon, a huge influx of new faces will be entering the Legislature in 2025, and a climate resilience bond will be on the November ballot. While the next legislative year may bring some surprises and some unknowns, one thing remains certain. ACWA will continue to advocate in the halls of the Capitol on behalf of its members with the same expertise and success that have defined this organization for years.

ACWA's staff and members have proven that when we come together with a clear and unified message, we can drive meaningful change on California water policy.



ACWA conferences are the premier destination for water industry professionals to learn and connect!

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Finance Program
- Unlocking Financial Opportunities Under the Federal Infrastructure and Inflation Acts

Policy Programs
- Leveraging Atmospheric River Forecasts in Water Management
- What's Next for the Bay-Delta Plan Update?
- Balancing the Water-Energy Nexus of Direct Potable Reuse
- Moving the Ball Forward on a Water Low-Income Rate Assistance Program

Region Forums
- Securing Water in Dry Times – Region 5
- SGMA Engagement Essentials – Regions 6 & 7
- Food is Life, Too – Region 9

Roundtable
- Attracting the Next Generation of the Water Workforce

Water Industry Trends
- A Decade of SGMA: Lessons Learned and What's Next

Many of the conference programs qualify for continuing education credits.
Get more information at www.acwa.com/events.
All conference programs are subject to change.



"I was so impressed with the diversity of panel topics and opinions across the water industry that were represented."

– Maya H., 2024 Spring ACWA Conference & Expo attendee

CAPITOL CORNER continued from page 1

ACWA recognizes the need for a water low-income rate assistance (LIRA) program, but it must be workable and efficient.

The bill was of serious concern to many ACWA members as it would have relied on voluntary contributions from ratepayers who were not eligible for the assistance, which is an uncertain funding source.

It also would have also capped the amount of administrative costs that could have been covered with the voluntary contributions.

Water Rights

The Legislature passed AB 460 (Bauer-Kahan, D-Orinda) after significant amendments limited the bill to increasing penalties for certain violations, including illegal diversions.

ACWA's State Legislative Committee voted to remove opposition to AB 460 as these amendments represented an extraordinary improvement to the bill, which previously would have granted the State Water Resources Control Board new and sweeping authority to prevent diverters from exercising their water rights. With the amendments, AB 460 would ensure penalties serve as a deterrent to illegal diversions.

As of Sept. 17, this bill was waiting for the governor to sign or veto.

Groundwater

AB 2079 (Bennett, D-Ventura), which would have banned local agencies from permitting some new groundwater wells, failed to pass out of the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee, effectively stopping the bill.

ACWA's State Legislative Committee adopted an oppose-unless-amended position due to concerns over the moratorium on new wells throughout much of the state and the potential legal liability it created for local agencies.

Climate Resilience Bond

The Legislature passed SB 867 (Allen, D-Santa Monica), a $10 billion climate resilience bond on July 3. Signed into law, this measure will appear on the Nov. 5 ballot as Proposition 4. It proposes $2.91 billion in funding for nine of the 10 water-related categories that ACWA and an ACWA-led coalition advocated to be included.

There are positive aspects, such as the measure includes significant funding for safe drinking water and dam safety projects. At the same time, the level of funding for the 10 categories is less than one-third of the bond, and funding levels are very low for some categories that are fundamental to water management.

Bay-Delta

SB 108 (Wiener, D-San Francisco), the Budget Act of 2024, was signed into law in June, and restored nearly $500 million for the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program, formerly known as the Voluntary Agreements.

The program represents an unprecedented opportunity to improve California's Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta ecosystem by creating a comprehensive program of habitat enhancement projects coupled with more water for fish and wildlife, managed in a collaborative, science-based manner.

Discontinuation of Service

ACWA-sponsored AB 2599, authored by the Assembly Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee, passed the Legislature.

AB 2599 would provide that this new authority does not cover personal property — as water systems do not have the authority to obtain personal property from their customers — and applies where there "has been unlawful conduct" as opposed to where there "may have been unlawful conduct."

As of Sept. 17, this bill was waiting for the governor to sign or veto.

ACWA Legislative Proposals Due Oct. 11

ACWA is now accepting legislative proposals from member agencies for the 2025 legislative session. Proposals are due by Oct. 11, and ACWA's State Legislative Committee (SLC) will evaluate them, provide feedback to the proposing agency and determine whether to take a position.

SCAN ME

Agencies submitting proposals may be asked to present them to the SLC at its Dec. 5 planning meeting during the 2024 ACWA Fall Conference & Expo in Palm Desert.

Member agencies that wish to submit proposals for consideration can do so online through the SLC webpage at **www.acwa.com**. Member login is required.



LEADERSHIP FORUM
executive EDGE

ACWA Debuts Executive Edge, New Professional Development Opportunity

Approximately 70 people participated in ACWA's newest professional development opportunity designed for general managers and other executive-level water agency staff.

Held Aug. 29-30, the training was facilitated by Dr. Steve Swafford, IOM, with more than 30 years of experience in strategy, leadership development, communication and governance.



Some photos courtesy of San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority

RANDY RECORD

Farmer, Pilot, California Water Leader

Record served as ACWA President during the 2012-'13 term, one part of his long career in water which has included 24 years on the Eastern Municipal Water District Board of Directors and 20 years as its representative on the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California Board of Directors, leading it as Chair from 2014 to 2018. He plans to retire this December after a lifetime as a California water leader.



Record plans to retire from water and become a full-time farmer at his vineyard in the Paso Robles area.

Describe your job in California water.

My job involves working with people to agree on a pathway toward a more resilient water supply for generations to come. And because people often have divergent opinions, especially about water, the job requires a great deal of patience, listening and a willingness to appreciate other perspectives. That's often the hard part of the job, but it's also the most effective way to achieve success.

A case in point has been bringing together water users from urban and agricultural backgrounds to find common solutions to California's water challenges, such as advancing the California Water Fix and our Regional Recycled Water Program. I'm incredibly proud of having an opportunity to help continue the accomplishments made by my fellow EMWD Board members, district staff and our agency partners.

What got you into the water industry?

I'm a farmer, and you can't farm in California, especially Southern California, and not be very aware of water. So, I was always thinking about it, and then my dad was on the Eastern Board and decided not to run. And people, mostly other farmers, asked me if I would run, and I said 'Geez, I don't know if I can do that.' But my dad told me I'd be great at it, and so I went ahead and ran, and won. It was one of the best things I ever did.

What is the most challenging part of your job?

I think the biggest problem is just, how do we make sure we have a reliable, affordable water supply going into the future? Our population keeps growing, we have way more farmland than we have water for, yet California is such a wonderful place to grow things. So, the bottom line is achieving reliability and affordability.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

There are probably several things, but it's working on an issue that has a lot of diverse positions, then working through it and coming to some sort of an accommodation or agreement. Often, this doesn't give everybody everything they want, but it's better than what was there before. We've worked through an issue, and going forward, the future is better.



Record flying his Cessna 210 with his wife Anne. Photos courtesy of Randy Record.

I've had the privilege of experiencing this on every board I've served on, including the ACWA Board, where you have a lot of different interests on a large board with a wide diversity of representatives from every region of the state. With so many agencies having different needs, you have to work hard to reach a consensus. But when you succeed with a solution that ultimately works to benefit people and communities, that's the reward.

Finally, one of the best things about being in water is the people I've met, many of whom have become lifelong friends.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up on a dairy farm as a fourth-generation San Jacinto native, so I've been involved in agriculture my entire life. I graduated from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo with a bachelor's in ag management and started farming in 1977 using recycled water, growing dairy feed, alfalfa and barley. I've continued farming and have grown wine grapes outside of Paso Robles for many years.

What makes you tick?

I just love farming. People say that farmers don't retire, they die, and I think that's probably accurate. No two days are ever the same, no two years are ever the same, and every year you get a chance to start over. You can't be a farmer without being optimistic all the time. You make it through one season, and it's a tough season, but for whatever reason you decide "I'm going to do this different next year, and we're really going to kick some butt."

You're certainly at the mercy of Mother Nature, markets and you name it, there's so many challenges. But there's just something about making something grow.

I also like to fly, own a Cessna 210, and like to travel and see relatives.

What's next?

When I leave Eastern, I'll be a full-time farmer, which is great. We currently have 72 out of 110 acres planted in Paso Robles, mostly cabernet grapes. I have two grown daughters and three grandsons, and they've all ended up in Paso Robles during the last year, so I'll have my family here, which is just phenomenal.

What advice would you give someone starting a career in California water?

My advice is, that if you don't consider yourself a consensus builder or team player, it may not be a good fit. I think ACWA is a perfect example of that. ACWA is such a wonderful organization because it brings together all aspects of water in California – it's ag, it's urban, it's north, south, coastal, inland, deserts, and you name it.

I would say, try to consider the other person's perspective and not just force your own on them.



Record speaking at the ACWA 2012 Spring Conference during his first year as ACWA President.





Left: Patricia Mulroy delivers a keynote address during the Region 8 event. **Right:** Attendees participate in discussions during the Region 8 event that focused on women leaders in water. *Photos courtesy of Civic Publications Inc.*

Region 8 Event Highlights Women Leaders in the Water Industry

By Region 8 Chair Anthony R. Fellow, Ph.D.

Showcasing a stellar cast of women leaders in the water industry, ACWA Region 8 co-hosted an afternoon talk by one of the most noted figures who brought about the Colorado Quantification Agreement and a panel discussion of three of Southern California's most impressive water managers.

Patricia Mulroy, Senior Fellow at the University of Las Vegas William S. Boyd School of Law and leader in the international women water community for more than 25 years, encouraged many of the young woman in the audience of 220 to follow her career path as a leader in the water industry. And what an impressive record she has achieved. She was an important voice in bringing about the 2007 Quantification Settlement Agreement for water-sharing between the Western U.S. and Mexico on the Colorado River.

Between 1989 and early 2014, Pat Mulroy served as General Manager of both the Las Vegas Valley Water District, a municipal purveyor serving more than 350,000 accounts, and the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA), the regional agency responsible for acquiring, treating and delivering water to two million Southern Nevadans and 40 million annual visitors.

Mulroy was a principal architect of the SNWA, helping to guide Southern Nevada through an unprecedented period of growth and one of the worst droughts in the history of the Colorado River.

Mulroy emphasized the need for innovative approaches to water management, particularly in the face of changing hydrology and persistent drought.

"We need to look beyond short-term fixes and focus on both demand-side and supply-side solutions," she said. "There must be hope, and there must be creativity – only then can the river community come together to find solutions."

She offered advice to women in the water industry: "Be true to yourself. I've seen women try to emulate men and fail. You're a woman – own it."

Another highlight of the event was hearing from Marlene Ortega, ACWA Foundation scholarship recipient and student at CSU Monterey Bay. Ortega shared her passion for environmental policy and outlined her aspirations for contributing to the future of the field.

The afternoon concluded with a panel discussion hosted by the San Gabriel Chapter of Women in Water. Moderated by ACWA Past President Pamela Tobin, the panel featured three accomplished women leaders: Nina Jazmadarian, General Manager of Foothill Municipal Water District; Kristine McCaffrey, General Manager of Calleguas Municipal Water District; and Stacie Takeguchi, Assistant General Manager in the City of Pasadena. Each panelist shared their personal journey into the water industry and offered practical advice for fostering the next generation of women leaders.

McCaffrey underscored the importance of mentoring and modeling leadership. "You can influence others, even when you may not realize it," she said.

Sponsors of the Region 8 Board event included ACWA JPIA, Best Best & Krieger, Lagerloff, San Gabriel Valley Water Company, SCV Water, Stantec and Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District. ACWA staff assisted in the successful event.

Together, we are shaping a future of leadership, innovation, and inclusivity in water management.





Left: Region 9 Vice-Chair Carol Lee Gonzales-Brady welcomes attendees to the program at Wilson Creek Winery. **Right:** Dr. Dale Marsden presents his keynote on innovating the water workforce and building a talent pipeline.

Building the Future: Region 9 Discusses Water Workforce Development Solutions

By Region 9 Vice Chair Carol Lee Gonzales-Brady

ACWA Region 9 hosted a program on Aug. 19 that addressed the pressing workforce challenges facing the water industry. The event drew a sold-out crowd with more than 90 people in attendance at the Wilson Creek Winery in Temecula. Attendees heard from a panel in the morning, then took part in a roundtable discussion during lunch and finished with a keynote from Tomorrow's Talent Founder Dr. Dale Marsden. Attendees were invited to stay for a dessert networking reception.

The panel of experts shared insights on igniting student interest in water careers, recruiting skilled candidates, and diverse avenues for attracting future employees. The importance of organizational culture was a large part of the discussion when looking to attract the future workforce and when looking to attract local partners to work with on workforce development. The next generation is looking for diverse and inclusive work environments.

Another key part of improving interest in jobs in water is looking at job descriptions and requirements like driver's license requirements, allowing for work experience to replace education requirements and reviewing legacy and out of date information.

All panelists discussed ways they have been partnering with local water agencies to develop local programs to attract new employees and move current employees up by providing educational opportunities. Water Energy Education Alliance Executive Director Tiffany Baca put it best, saying, "We can't continue to keep talking to ourselves. We need to reach out and find local partners who can help us."

CSU-WATER Executive Director Steve Blumenshine echoed those sentiments, "Amplify opportunities through partnerships – and engage. Tell us what you need and want so that we can help you reach the end goal."

The roundtable discussions during lunch provided for a lively discussion between attendees and were led by a designated person at each table. Following lunch each table reported on their discussion providing some great insights into different ways agencies are addressing workforce development issues including, engaging with students and teachers, reverse interviews, and succession planning.

To wrap up the program, Dr. Marsden gave a dynamic keynote. He urged attendees to find ways to invest in the next generation of workers, helping them develop the skills that will make them successful as they progress in their careers.

Panel: "Building the Future: Water Workforce Development Solutions"

Speakers: (Moderator) Christiana Daisy, Deputy General Manager, Inland Empire Utility Agency; Tiffany Baca, Executive Director, Water Energy Education Alliance; Steve Blumenshine, Executive Director, CSU-WATER; Patrick Ellis, Chair, Riverside County Workforce Development Board

Keynote: "Innovating the Water Workforce: What if we could build an intergenerational talent pipeline for the next 100 years?"

Speaker: Dr. Dale Marsden, Founder, Tomorrow's Talent

"I say 'We' because it can't be done alone. It needs to be a concerted effort of a group to bridge the divide we are facing recruiting the next generation of the water workforce," Dr. Marsden said to encourage agencies to reach out and form local partnerships.

Overall, the event provided attendees with an array of resources and ideas they can share with their agencies to help recruit future generations of water leaders.

On behalf of ACWA's Region 9 Board, we want to thank sponsors ACWA JPIA and Stantec for making this event possible, as well as ACWA staff for helping organize the event.

SPOTLIGHT

WESTLANDS Celebrates Progress on Groundwater Sustainability

DISTRICT FACTS

Location
Fresno

About
Westlands is the largest agricultural water district in the United States, made up of more than 1,000 square miles of prime farmland in western Fresno and Kings counties. Westlands has federal contracts to provide water to the district's family-owned farms.

Groundwater
Westlands was able to recharge almost 400,000 acre-feet during 2023 and plans to double that to 800,000 acre-feet through partnerships and initiatives such as its Pasajero Groundwater Recharge Project.

Water System
Westlands' water distribution system is comprised entirely of buried pipeline (approximately 1,100 miles of pipe) and is outfitted with over 3,000 water meters. It is among the few, if not the only, agricultural water agencies in the United States that distributes water through an entirely enclosed system.

Economic Impact
Farmers in Westlands produce approximately 60 different high-quality crops for the fresh, dry, canned and frozen food markets, domestically and abroad – worth nearly $2 billion and generating more than $4.7 billion in farm-related economic activity each year, supporting over 35,000 jobs.

Website
www.wwd.ca.gov



Westlands Water District recently marked the latest in a string of milestone accomplishments toward maximizing its groundwater recharge and storage capabilities.

On Aug. 22, Westlands celebrated the completion of Phase One of its Pasajero Groundwater Recharge Project. Attended by federal, state and local leaders, Westlands' ribbon cutting ceremony recognized not only the completion of phase one of the project but also partnerships contributing to its success and others like it in the future.

Phase one of the project features a new 30 cubic-feet-per-second conveyance turnout from the Coalinga Canal and six basins, and results in up to 21,000 acre-feet per year of recharge capacity. The second phase will include the addition of up to 10 dry wells with a recharge capacity of up to 5,000 acre-feet to convey surface water directly into the aquifer.

Last year Westlands was able to recharge nearly 400,000 acre-feet of water, and with projects like this and through partnerships, Westlands plans to nearly double that capacity up to 800,000 acre-feet.

"The Arroyo Pasajero Groundwater Recharge Project and other similar projects hit a sweet spot in California water," stated John Watts, Senior Counselor to U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Maria Camille Calimlim Touton, in a news release. "Groundwater recharge provides a mechanism to capture the flood flows from atmospheric rivers and other increasingly concentrated winter storms — and then store that much-needed water for use in droughts to allow the San Joaquin Valley to keep supplying food for the nation."

Regional Collaboration

This landmark project will revolutionize water management for Westlands but also demonstrates the effectiveness of collaborative partnerships between the Bureau, California Department of Water Resources, and regional water agencies who have worked together toward a reliable and resilient water future for the San Joaquin Valley.



Opposite page: Federal, state and local leaders gather for a ribbon cutting ceremony that recognized the completion of phase one of Westlands' latest groundwater sustainability project.

Left: Phase One of Westlands' Project features a new 30 cubic-feet-per-second conveyance turnout from the Coalinga Canal and six basins, and results in up to 21,000 acre-feet per year of recharge capacity. *Photos courtesy of Westlands Water District.*

Westlands signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and Friant Water Authority during the ACWA 2024 Spring Conference & Expo in Sacramento, with the parties agreeing to work toward solutions with shared interests such as water storage and banking.

Westlands is a member of the San Joaquin Blueprint which also entered into an MOU with Metropolitan. In addition to the agreements among water districts, Westlands has been actively involved in the creation of the framework for a South-of-Delta Long-Term Drought Plan which culminated in an MOU with the Bureau and South-of-Delta Central Valley Project contractors. The plan includes the creation of a "drought pool" where South-of-Delta water users contribute water to be stored for future use in dry years. These MOUs advance collaboration on goals, including water banking and conveyance, and have laid the foundation for the development of pilot programs with both Valley Water and Metropolitan.

A Role for Flood Control

Also this year, the state Department of Water Resources (DWR) awarded Westlands a $1 million grant as part of its Flood Diversion Recharge Initiative. This grant will assist the state's efforts to reduce flooding by increasing flood flow diversion volumes to recharge areas and expand local capacity to divert future flood waters. These efforts in turn reduce downstream flood impacts and facilitate groundwater recharge.

The grant will support the removal of 450 acres of orchards from land recently acquired by Westlands. Located in an area of Westlands identified as subsidence-prone, adjacent to the San Luis Canal, the cleared land will reduce demand for groundwater near critical infrastructure, improve the availability of surface water and sustainable groundwater allocation(s), provide the Westlands with increased recharge capabilities, and provide a site to temporarily retain diverted floodwater when needed. The subject land is part of 4,245 acres acquired since 2022, including the removal of 2,144,930 acres of orchards and vines, at a total investment of over $58 million.

Stability Through Flexibility

Meanwhile, the Pasajero Groundwater Recharge Project increases the flexibility for storing water outside of the San Luis Reservoir and will provide groundwater banking and exchange opportunities for Westlands and partners.

"The Pasajero Groundwater Recharge Project is a great example of what can occur when the state and agricultural communities come together and work towards a common goal," stated DWR Director Karla Nemeth in a news release. "Increasing groundwater storage is crucial in strengthening our state's water stability and meeting our water needs. This project will be an effective way to improve groundwater quality in the San Joaquin Valley."

The project received nearly $4 million in funding assistance from DWR's Sustainable Groundwater Management Proposition 68 Implementation Grant Program and more than $2.6 million from Westlands. Additionally, Westlands was awarded $25 million from the federal Inflation Reduction Act to fund similar recharge projects that would help advance the implementation of additional collaborative drought resiliency efforts.

"Our changing climate and unpredictable water supply requires Westlands to remain innovative in how we secure and store water, the technologies we offer our landowners, and the partnerships we build," stated Westlands General Manager Allison Febbo stated in a news release. "Strengthening water security in California isn't something that can be done by just one water district, one water agency, or one region. The Pasajero Groundwater Recharge Project demonstrates the importance of prioritizing collaboration to develop comprehensive solutions to advance California's water goals."

Phase Two of the Pasajero Groundwater Recharge Project will begin with the construction of dry wells in the first half of 2027.

LIKE, SHARE & FOLLOW

EXPLORING THE WATER WORLD ACROSS SOCIAL MEDIA

Next month is Water Professionals Appreciation Week (October 5-13) which is a great opportunity to highlight the amazing staff at your agency. Below are some great examples of how different water districts highlight their employees throughout the year.

To see more of the creative efforts on social media of ACWA members, be sure to follow along on @ACWAWater



Don't forget about the interns! Coachella Valley Water District showcased its amazing team of interns on Facebook. This also provides an opportunity to highlight careers in water while thanking current interns.

Metropolitan Water District shared a two-part video series on Instagram Reels about "A day in the life of a water quality chemist." This not only highlights the work that these individuals do but also encourages others who might be interested in a career in water.

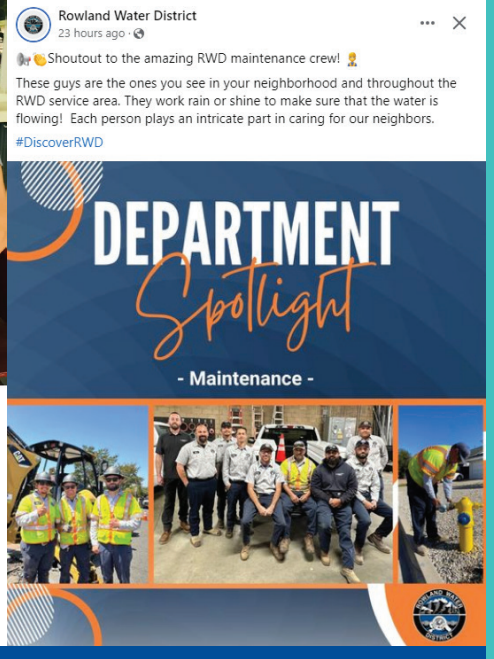
Social media is a great way to highlight new employees like how Citrus Heights Water District recently introduced its new Director of Public Affairs.



Yuba Water District took the time earlier this year to showcase "Faces of Yuba" like in this example of a Project Manager posted on Instagram.



Rowland Water District did a "Department Spotlight" where they featured the whole RWD maintenance crew.



Also, be sure to check out the new Water Professionals Appreciation Week Toolkit available on the website at **www.acwa.com/resources**.

THIS MONTH IN ACWA HISTORY

10 years ago

Gov. Jerry Brown signed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, or SGMA, into law during a ceremony that included ACWA Executive Director Timothy Quinn. Preparing for and implementing SGMA would go on to become a dominant issue in California water that continues to this day.

20 years ago

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger announced his support for Proposition 1A during a news conference in Los Angeles. ACWA supported the proposition, which prevented the state from permanently taking and using local government funds. Voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 1A the following November.

30 years ago

A groundbreaking ceremony that attracted more than 500 people marked the beginning of construction of the Los Vaqueros Reservoir Project. The Contra Costa Water District spent nine years planning and obtaining permits for what would become a 100,000-acre-foot reservoir, the first major California water storage project to receive all approvals in more than a decade.



A September 1994 groundbreaking ceremony for Contra Costa Water District's (CCWD) Los Vaqueros Reservoir Project included (l-r) CCWD General Manager Wally Bishop, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Dan Beard; CCWD Director Bette Boatmun, U.S. Rep. George Miller, CCWD President Joseph Campbell, CCWD Director Donald Freitas, CCWD Vice President Elizabeth R. Anello and CCWD Director James Pretti.

40 years ago

The Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District dedicated a $10 million main pumping plant. A major element in the Northern California agency's rehabilitation project, the new plant replaced an original pumping plant that had been constructed in phases between 1909 and 1922.

50 years ago

ACWA News reported that Gov. Ronald Reagan, under increasing public pressure, called a special session of the California Legislature at the end of the month to consider possible amendments to legislators' retirement system. The news item noted that this would also permit the Legislature "to delve into any matter that was pending at the time of adjournment on August 31."

WPAW continued from page 1

toolkit items available at **www.acwa.com/resources**. Tools include talking points, a template Board resolution/proclamation, sample social media posts, logos, customizable social media graphics and a bill insert. Additionally, the toolkit offers a template for customizing a short slideshow video to post on social media.

If your agency participates in Water Professionals Appreciation Week, please share your story and any photos with ACWA by emailing **acwanews@acwa.com**.



San Bernardino Valley Starts Process Toward Acquiring Hydroelectric Facilities from SCE

The San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (San Bernardino Valley) recently entered into an Asset Purchase Agreement with Southern California Edison (SCE) to acquire seven hydroelectric plants from the energy utility.

The Asset Purchase Agreement is the first of many steps needing to take place before the official transfer can be completed, including the transfer of certain licenses issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) from SCE to San Bernardino Valley, and the approval of the transactions contemplated by the Asset Purchase Agreement by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

The move marks a significant milestone in the organization's commitment to enhancing effective water management practices and regional sustainability.

"This agreement between SCE and San Bernardino Valley demonstrates the importance of protecting reliable water supplies and energy resources for our community," stated San Bernardino Valley Board President Paul Kielhold in a news release.

SCE would pay San Bernardino Valley $34 million at the close of the transaction. The sale is conditioned upon regulatory approvals from the CPUC and FERC. San Bernardino Valley plans to continue operating the facilities as hydroelectric plants.

Pending regulatory approvals, San Bernardino Valley, will own and operate two facilities along the Santa Ana River, two in Mill Creek and three in San Antonio Creek. Continuing the operation of these facilities is essential for ensuring reliable surface water deliveries in the region as well as supporting a sustainable water supply for future generations.

"The region has benefited from these facilities for over 100 years. They are an important piece of the geographic and cultural history of the Santa Ana River watershed. With SCE's support, we're



strengthening our capacity to manage local water supplies for maximum benefit to the people we serve while protecting other land and habitat values. This is a significant win for our community and the environment." stated San Bernardino Valley CEO and General Manager Heather Dyer in the release. "We are not only working towards a resilient water supply, but an integrated and comprehensive approach to maintaining a healthy watershed for decades to come."

> We are not only working towards a resilient water supply, but an integrated and comprehensive approach to maintaining a healthy watershed for decades to come. – San Bernardino Valley CEO and General Manger Heather Dyer

ACWA IN ACTION

(l-r) ACWA Executive Director Dave Eggerton visits with California Congresswoman Grace Napolitano along with ACWA Federal Relations Representative Caleb Raspler during a recent trip to Washington D.C. Napolitano will retire from Congress at the end of the year after championing water quality and supply issues throughout her 26-year career in the U.S. House of Representatives. Eggerton, Raspler and ACWA Director of Federal Relations Ian Lyle met with members of the California delegation over three days at the nation's capital to discuss federal policy affecting ACWA member agencies.



Sweetwater Authority Launches Low-Income Customer Assistance Program

Sweetwater Authority recently launched the agency's first Low-Income Customer Assistance Program to help eligible households pay their residential water bills.

The program highlights the commitment by the authority's Governing Board to support low-income members of the community by providing bill assistance for essential water service.

Eligible customers can receive up to $120 of bill assistance each year. The program, funded by non-rate revenues as required by California law, allocates about $500,000 per year that can assist approximately 4,000 households with their water bills.

"The Board is dedicated to keeping our costs low while also exploring ways to



help those customers who may benefit from additional assistance," stated Board Chair Paulina Martinez-Perez in a news release. "We're proud to have developed this in-house program that will help so many of our community members save on their water bill."

The authority also offers customers additional resources to help with water bills, including 24-month payment plans, subject to eligibility.

PEOPLE NEWS



Kevin Phillips

Phillips Appointed to Region 2 Board

The ACWA Region 2 Board recently appointed **Kevin Phillips** to fill a vacancy.

Phillips is Chief Financial Officer at Paradise Irrigation District, where he helped lead the system's recovery following the 2018 Camp Fire.

ACWA Region 2 is comprised of Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Shasta, Sutter, Tehama and Yuba counties in Northern California, representing 44 water, utility, irrigation, levee, sewer and reclamation districts as members.

ACWA's 10 Region boards are integral to the leadership of the association. The Chair and Vice Chair of each region serve on ACWA's Board of Directors and recommend all committee appointments for their region.

AUGUST 2024 | MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION MONTH

GIVEAWAY WINNERS

ACWA Baseball Cap
Stacy Taylor

ACWA Collapsible Water Bottle
Edgar Dymally

ACWA Yeti Tumbler
Victoria Llort

ACWA Region Event Registration
Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency
Stockton East Water District

$25 Starbucks Gift Card
Sarah Boudreau
Jesica Cleaver
Aaron Fukuda

ACWA 2024 Fall Conference Registration
Quartz Hill Water District



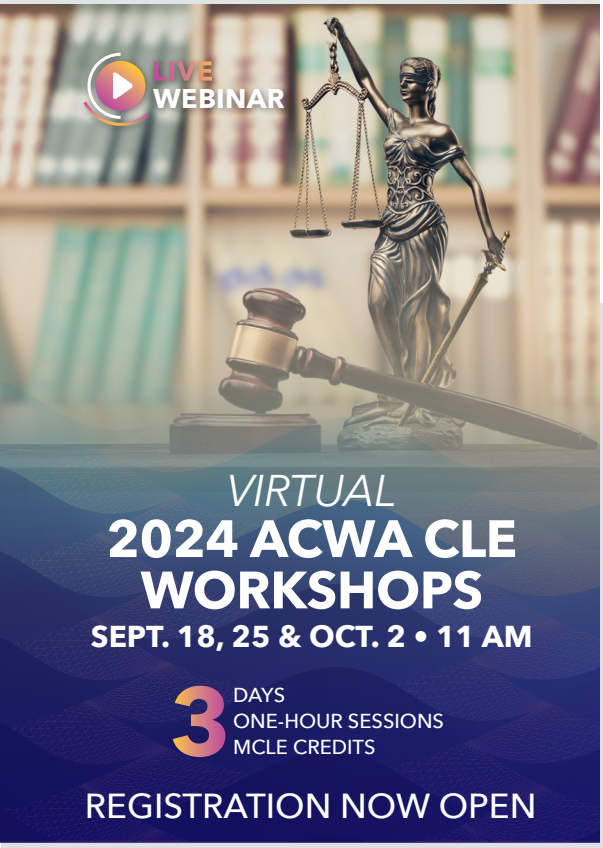
Scan code to view the ACWA Member Directory

NEED TO UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION?
Email your information to updates@acwa.com

Association of California Water Agencies
980 9th Street, Suite 1000
Sacramento, CA 95814-3577

Time Valued Material

Periodicals Postage
PAID
Sacramento, CA



MOST CLICKED

Subscribe to ACWA's eNews at **www.acwa.com/newsletters/ACWA-eNews** for weekly email updates on the latest association news. Check out some of the top stories from the past month on ACWA's website.

- Local Expert Highlights the State's Complex Water System in Debut Podcast – Sept. 3
- Newsom Adapts State Drought Response to Changing Conditions – Sept. 4
- East County Advanced Water Program JPA Issuing Green Bonds – Sept. 3
- Legislature Passes ACWA-Sponsored AB 2257 – Aug. 27
- San Bernardino Valley Enhances Resiliency with Hydroelectric Facilities – Sept. 5

UPCOMING EVENTS

Visit **www.acwa.com/events** for complete listing and registration

OCTOBER 2024
2
CA WATER / WASTEWATER CYBERSECURITY INCIDENT RESPONSE PREPAREDNESS
SCV Water, EPA, CISA, WaterISAC | Virtual

Part one of at three-webinar series: This session will focus on how to start and prepare a cybersecurity incident response plan.

OCTOBER 2024
11
ACWA REGIONS 6 & 7 SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY WATER FORUM
ACWA | Coalinga

This forum will gather experts, policymakers, and stakeholders for panel discussions on funding capital projects, navigating regulatory barriers, and managing groundwater sustainably.

OCTOBER 2024
15
ACWA REGION 10 EVENT
ACWA | Placentia

This event will address key water quality issues, future contaminants, and balancing regulatory compliance with affordability. A panel of general managers will discuss PFAS impacts on groundwater and surface water and how agencies are proactively tackling the issue.

OCTOBER 2024
16–18
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA TOUR
Water Education Foundation | Sacramento

Explore the Sacramento River and its tributaries through a tour while learning about the issues associated with a key source for the state's water supply.

OCTOBER 2024
30
ACWA REGION 1 EVENT
ACWA | Corte Madera

Join us for an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of Marin Water's critical water infrastructure, including the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed, Marin Water's San Geronimo Treatment Plant, Alpine Dam, and more.

SHARE YOUR EVENT

WITH OTHERS IN THE WATER INDUSTRY BY POSTING ON ACWA'S ONLINE EVENT CALENDAR

1. Go to **www.acwa.com/events**
2. Click the "**Submit Event**" button on the upper left
3. Complete the event form and click "**Submit**"