ACWA NEWS
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Firefighters with the Los Angeles County Fire Department deploy a mobile HeloPod dip site within Crescenta Valley Water District's service area during the Eaton Fire, one of the devastating wildfires in the Los Angeles area.

Photo courtesy of Crescenta Valley Water District

ACWA Responding to Southern California Fire Devastation

ACWA staff are reaching out to key state legislative committees to provide resources and serve as a point of contact as questions arise about the deadly and catastrophic fires in Southern California.

As this tragic and unprecedented situation unfolds, ACWA will also work on ways to best help its many member agencies that have been affected by these significant events.

ACWA is currently working to connect member agencies with previous experience and expertise with catastrophic wildfires with Los Angeles area member agencies impacted by the disaster.

ACWA President Cathy Green sent the following email to ACWA Region 8 members on Jan. 9:

"On behalf of the entire team at ACWA, I would like to express our support for you, your colleagues and families affected by the fires in your region. The devastating impact of these fires is deeply concerning, and we want you to know that our thoughts are with you during this incredibly difficult time.

"We recognize the immense challenges your agency is facing as you work tirelessly to provide assistance, manage resources, and help the firefighting efforts. The dedication and resilience

FIRE continued on page 2

Members Join Coalition on Bay-Delta Plan Update

More than 50 signatories including ACWA member agencies and other partners signed an association-led coalition letter to the State Water Resources Control Board that expresses strong support for inclusion of the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes (HRL) Program in the Bay-Delta Plan update.

ACWA submitted the letter to the State Water Board on Jan. 10.

The letter addresses the draft of potential updates to the Sacramento River watershed, Delta eastside tributaries, and Delta portions of the Bay-Delta Plan. ACWA supports the HRL Program, previously known as the Voluntary Agreements, as the preferred pathway for updating the Bay-Delta Plan as opposed to an approach based solely on a percentage of flows.

"The HRL Program can be immediately implemented to establish a holistic and integrated approach to improving the Bay-Delta ecosystem for fish and wildlife by aligning a broad spectrum of habitat, science, and adaptive management tools. Concurrently, it would help secure water supply reliability for other beneficial uses of water, including California's communities, farms, recreation, and hydropower," the letter states.

ACWA advocacy in support of the HRL program is continuing. The State Water Board is expected to consider approval of the Sacramento/Delta updates and the final Staff Report as early as the second quarter of 2025.

Additional information is available at **acwa.com/hrl-program**.

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ACWA Association of California Water Agencies

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CAPITOL CORNER

Governor Releases Proposed Budget

On Jan. 10, Gov. Gavin Newsom released his proposed budget for 2025-'26. The governor proposes allocating just over $1 billion from the voter-approved climate bond (Proposition 4) on water and $325 million on wildfire.

The budget further includes General Fund allocations of $173.5 million to improve water storage, replenish groundwater, improve conditions in streams and rivers, and complete various water resilience projects and programs; however, the proposed budget would cut $47 million from dam safety and $51 million from recycled water from previous budgets.

On wildfire specifically, the governor proposed a tax exclusion for wildfire settlement monies for the 2025 tax year through 2029. And there is ongoing funding of $2.5 billion from prior investments, including $200 million annually through 2029.

Southern California Wildfires

Southern California has been hit by several significant climate-driven wildfire disasters exacerbated by dry conditions and unprecedented wind events. ACWA has been engaging with its members that provide critical retail water service to properties in the wildland urban interface across the state. These water systems were not designed to meet the significant demand from climate-driven wildfire that California experiences today.

ACWA staff are doing outreach to key legislative committees to provide resources and be a point of contact as questions arise from members of the Legislature. As the situation unfolds, ACWA will be working on ways to best help its many member agencies that have been affected by these significant events.

New Legislators

ACWA's advocacy staff are busy contacting the more than 30 new legislators who took office in December to set up initial meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to establish ACWA as a resource to these legislators as they sponsor and consider legislative proposals, as well as share ACWA's top legislative priorities for 2025. Staff have already met with two new Assembly members, one Senate office, and have several other meetings scheduled over the coming weeks.

FIRE continued from page 1

displayed by you and your team in such dire circumstances is truly admirable.

"Please know that ACWA stands in solidarity with your agency as you continue your critical work ACWA's advocacy staff has already started reaching out to key legislative committees to start educating them about the issues you are facing and letting them know we can be a valuable resource in the future.

"Please let us know if there's more that we can do to help, especially in connecting your agency with other agencies who are experiencing, or have experienced, similar disasters.

"We are honored to be able to stand by your side during this challenging time."



Continuing Resolution Includes Disaster, Headwater Funding

Congress passed a continuing resolution last month that not only averted a government shutdown, but also included several provisions of interest to ACWA member agencies, such as extending the Farm Bill until Sept. 30, 2025.

The resolution also provided approximately $110 billion in disaster-related funding that can cover losses stemming from a variety of disasters, including droughts, wildfires and floods. The resolution also provides $1.5 billion in funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for rehabilitation, repairs, studies and projects to reduce the risks of future disasters, and to address water infrastructure needs facilitated by the Army Corps.

Additionally, it contains $920 million in funding for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program managed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Headwaters health is among ACWA's priority issues and a major focus in the association's federal advocacy.

The legislation also included $30 million in funding for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for expenses related to natural disasters occurring during or before 2024.

Eight ACWA Employees Recognized for 2024 Service Milestones

ACWA recently recognized eight employees for achieving service milestones during 2024. They are:

Five Years



Barry Wriedt Jr. started at ACWA on a temporary basis and was quickly hired full-time and advanced to Business Service Specialist II. In this capacity, Barry assists several departments in a wide range of duties as well as handles many of ACWA's administrative obligations.



Caroline Meade joined ACWA as a Communication Specialist and was promoted to Senior Communications Specialist in 2021. A master multi-tasker, she helps lead the association's Communications Department where her duties range from writing and editing to developing communication strategies and managing ACWA's website.



Julia Hall started at ACWA as a Senior Legislative Advocate before advancing to State Relations Manager and was recently promoted to Director of State Legislative Relations. Julia has served as Liaison to ACWA's Local Government Committee and now serves as Liaison to the State Legislative Committee.

10 Years



Alex Carlson began her career at ACWA as a Technology Coordinator. She has since been promoted to Information Technology Analyst II. She has played a crucial role in many technical projects during her time at the association, including the selection of new ACWA conference hardware.



Chris Do started at ACWA as a consultant before being hired as ACWA's Chief Technology Officer. Chris has led the technology group in accomplishing numerous achievements, including technology infrastructure integration and improvements, and implementation of CRM, event management and finance software.

20 Years



Donna Pangborn serves as ACWA's Senior Clerk of the Board, having originally started as Executive Assistant and Clerk of the Board. Donna has played an instrumental role in maintaining ACWA's critical institutional archives, which includes managing the election of Board officers, preparation of Board packets and meeting minutes, updates to the bylaws and Board policy manual, and facilitating logistics for on-site and off-site Board meetings.



Dan Gumpert has risen through several levels of leadership at ACWA, where today he oversees the association's financial health as Controller. Dan has led many notable projects for ACWA, including the management of ACWA's investment portfolio, the dues automation process and the sale of the 910 K Street headquarters building in Sacramento. He also serves as Liaison to the Finance Committee.

25 Years



Teresa Taylor is a familiar face and voice for many within the ACWA community through her long-term role with the association's Events team. Today, she works as an Event Planner I with responsibilities of providing registration assistance to ACWA members, coordinating conference logistics with staff liaisons, gathering speaker audio-visual requirements, and maintaining historical information associated with ACWA events.

SPOTLIGHT



From Flooded Fields to Thriving Habitats: The Role of Rice Farms in Conservation

Winter flooded rice fields in the Sacramento Valley are more than just remnants of America's sushi rice harvest—they are fields of life. Each winter, these rice fields transform into a critical stopover for snow geese, swans, and countless other birds migrating along the Pacific Flyway. With 95% of California's historical floodplains now gone, these surrogate wetlands provide vital ecological benefits.

The water districts serving agricultural lands in the Sacramento Valley, such as Western Canal Water District, play a critical role in the conservation work happening on many rice farms during the off-season. For Western Canal, the ability to offer affordable water supplies during the fall and winter has made conservation practices popular in their district.

"Rural water districts are the voice of the growers, looking out for them and making sure that they have access to the water they need to help the environment as well as grow food for people," said Correen Davis, Board Member of Western Canal Water District. "From the perspective of (our farm) Gorrill Ranch, we have been in business for over one hundred years, and we would not be successful if we weren't environmental stewards as well as farmers."

The Sacramento Valley rice fields and neighboring wildlife refuges host approximately one billion birds migrating through the area annually along the Pacific Flyway, with nearly four million wintering waterfowl and 250,000 shorebirds spending time in the rice fields.

"Agronomically, the water on the landscape of a rice system is very helpful to aid in the decomposition of the straw left behind after the fall harvest," said Josh Sheppard, Board Member of Western Canal Water District and Board Chair of the California Rice Commission. "These shallow flooded fields are also perfectly suited for the needs of migrating birds to find shelter and food as they forage about the region. It's estimated the waste grain left behind from the rice harvest provides more than two-thirds of the nutritional needs of the ducks, geese and shorebirds that winter in the region."

Environmental benefits of these rice fields go beyond winter migration. In the spring, the densely planted rice fields and shallow water also create ideal nesting sites for waterfowl and other bird species, boosting breeding success rates. According to the California Rice Commission, there are more than 230 different wildlife species known to be connected to these rice fields, including many state and federally threatened species like the Greater Sandhill Crane, Tri-Colored Blackbird, Bald Eagles, Swainson's Hawks, Giant Garter Snake and the Western Pond Turtle – who all rely on the habitat these fields provide.

As the rice farmers, water districts and conservation partners began focusing on the needs of the species using these fields, they identified a shortage of habitat during one month in the spring, when farmers

are planting their fields, and for two months in the fall, when fields are no longer flooded as they prepare for harvest.

In response, partnerships between conservation groups, the California Rice Commission, and the California Ricelands Waterbird Foundation have developed programs like the Nature Conservancy's BirdReturns program and the Foundation's Bid4Birds program. These initiatives offer some cost share revenue to help growers keep water on the fields further into the spring or place water on targeted locations during late spring and early fall to fill the gaps in habitat.

"For decades now, our growers have seen firsthand how much their planted rice fields are used by wildlife all throughout the year," said Tim Johnson, president and CEO of the California Rice Commission. "Through sizeable research, The Rice Footprint report by the University of California Davis, set to be released late January, details a plan for the next decade to further enhance the value of California ricelands with scientific evidence outlining just how vital California's planted rice fields are to our ecosystem, in helping waterfowl, shorebirds, reptiles and fish thrive."

These innovative efforts between rice farmers, conservation groups and water districts have now continued beyond birds, to fish. Initial research shows that juvenile salmon that spend time in winter flooded rice fields grow larger and stronger after just two weeks in a rice field compared to the river. Rice fields provide the right conditions to create nutrient-rich food for young salmon helping them prepare for outmigration to the Pacific Ocean. Ideally, larger juvenile salmon could increase returning adult populations that spawn in local rivers.

The benefits of investing in these conservation efforts go beyond just benefiting the local wildlife, they benefit the community as well. Fishing and hunting provide economic benefits to the region. Ecotourism also contributes to the local economy with events like the upcoming Snow Goose Festival in Butte County bringing out of area visitors and waterbird enthusiasts from around the world to see and celebrate the large amount of wintering birds in the area.

The collaborative efforts in the Sacramento Valley demonstrate what can be achieved when innovation and stewardship converge. As water districts, farmers and others continue to invest in these partnerships, they are safeguarding critical habitat and creating a legacy of resilience and biodiversity for future generations, proving that agriculture can nurture both the land and life that it supports.









Opposite page: A group of Greater White-fronted Geese find food and habitat in a Sacramento Valley rice field. They are the first of the migratory geese to arrive in the valley each fall.

Right (from top to bottom): Fish are captured in a flooded rice field so they can be measured and tagged for tracking.

A shallow-flooded rice field serves as habitat for hundreds of migratory snow geese.

A group of birdwatchers and naturalists take a tour of fields participating in the Bid4Birds program.

A scientist measures a juvenile salmon that has been using a flooded rice field for habitat during the fall.

Photos Courtesy of the California Rice Commission

DARCY VILLERE

Firebaugh Canal Water District Board of Directors, ACWA Region 6 Board and Assistant General Manager, J&J Farms

Villere manages his family's farm in the Firebaugh area and is a relative newcomer to California water leadership, having joined the Firebaugh Canal Water District Board of Directors in 2016. He also hosts the podcast "We Grow California" with Darcy Burke, who serves on the Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District Board of Directors.



Above: Villere holds his daughter, Esperanza Susana, while working on his farm. **Opposite page:** Villere, bottom, during a 2024 edition of the "We Grow California" podcast with co-host Darcy Burke, an Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District Board Director, and guest David Pedersen, General Manager of the Los Virgenes Municipal Water District. *Photos courtesy of Darcy Villere*

Describe your job.

I work for our family farm. My title is Assistant General Manager for J&J Farms, and the job involves all aspects of farm operations, from water budgeting to day-to-day management, which is really busy right now with everybody in the field. Most of our recent work has focused on harvesting processing tomatoes and pomegranates.

What got you into the water industry?

I moved to San Francisco for college in my early 20s and was there for 10 years. Then the housing market crashed. I'd just got my MBA, and I was looking at a career change during the worst possible time with the economy. My uncle said, 'Come on out to the farm, you can build owl boxes.'

I may have missed that early growing up on the farm experience that a lot of guys get, but I went from that to spraying, doing some tractor work and I slowly moved my way into more management type stuff. Then my uncle said 'Well, you know, we should do a better job of tracking the water, so why don't you do that?'

I started going to the (Firebaugh Canal Water District) meetings because of the drought, and that led to my getting on the Board in 2016.

What is the most challenging part of your job?

The most challenging part of my job is trying to out-think Mother Nature. Water certainty, I'd say, is the hardest part of the job. On the farm side, there are things like trying to make sure I've selected the right crop mix. We've spent a great deal of time and money investing into drip irrigation. We're now 100% drip, and we're constantly making sure that we are using the resources that are available to use as efficiently as possible.

The realities of water certainty are huge. One year, your allocations go to zero, and then another zero, and you're having to make choices and spend money you hadn't planned on spending just to survive. It's a real learning curve. What it's taught me is, you have to bend without breaking.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

I like doing things that make people's lives better. I like to think I'm doing my best to make sure I'm benefiting everybody, and when it comes down to even the work we do on the farm, I do my best to make sure my employees are doing well and that the produce I'm providing to the world is good quality.

Farming is interesting, in that you are doing a public good for your own private benefit, and you have to make sure you're balancing those two things.

What makes you tick?

I like being of service, but I also have a serious drive toward efficiency. I get frustrated when it feels like either time, money or energy is being wasted, and I'm always trying to make things better for everybody in a qualitative sense, but also better for everybody in a quantitative sense, in terms of "Why are we doing this? Couldn't we do that?"

I like leaving things better than how I found them, and that's how I feel about everything. You're always trying to leave everything better than when you got there, jobs, the environment, whatever you've got.

What drives me too is my family, my wife and three kids, and I'm always wanting to be better for them.

What's next?

Right now, my goal is getting ready for next year. My goal is to get my tomato beds turned around and get my pomegranate fields ready. Things like that. I like learning along the way, so that next year I can do it better, faster and cheaper.

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

Be a sponge. Every year you're going to be learning something new. There is just so much to learn and know about the entire system, it's just fascinating. So be a sponge, because you're going to be learning your whole career.

WE GROW CALIFORNIA

Podcast



WRDA Funding Bill Passes House and Senate

California water managers will benefit from the December passage of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2024, a critical bill authorizing water infrastructure projects overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

ACWA has remained a strong advocate for passage of WRDA bills and most recently led a coalition letter focusing on expanding water supply opportunities at facilities managed by the Army Corps.

Passed in December by both chambers of the U.S. Congress with robust bipartisan support, the latest WRDA bill directs billions of dollars in funding for projects throughout the nation, including more than 80 projects in California. It also contains numerous policy provisions aimed at expanding Army Corps efforts in relation to water supply.

One of its provisions affecting California is strengthening the Army Corps' ability to employ Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations, or FIRO, which combined with advances in weather forecasting can potentially revolutionize water storage management in response to climate change.

This includes directing the Army Corps to incorporate FIRO considerations into updates of water control manuals at its projects and requiring the Army Corps to include a FIRO assessment of each reservoir in six Western states, including California. ACWA has actively supported efforts to expand the use of FIRO by federal agencies.

The latest WRDA bill also authorizes the Army Corps to accept funds from non-federal partners to formulate, review, or revise operational documents at federal reservoir projects. This authorization will help water managers get operational documents done with greater efficiency.

In addition, a declaration in the bill clarifies that the policy of the Army Corps is to "prioritize opportunities for water supply, water conservation and drought resiliency within the operations of Corps projects."

These were among several sections in a portion of the bill championed by retiring California Congresswoman Grace Napolitano. ACWA is grateful for Congresswoman Napolitano's service to the nation and her dedication to the water community.

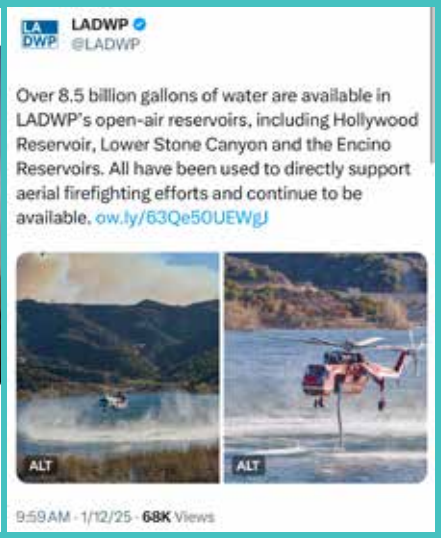
LIKE, SHARE & FOLLOW

EXPLORING THE WATER WORLD ACROSS SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a tool that ACWA members can use to be creative, educate their customers on programs and share important information. During times of crisis, social media channels can be used to disseminate updates during an emergency or rapidly evolving situation. During the current wildfires in Southern California, many ACWA members are using social media to update their customers on the situation, answer concerns about water quality and educate the customers on their district's plan if something similar were to happen in their service district.

Below are some examples seen recently on Facebook, X and Instagram.







To see more social media examples from ACWA members, be sure to follow along on @ACWAWater

Resolution Approved to Dissolve Los Vaqueros Reservoir JPA

The Los Vaqueros Reservoir Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Board on Jan. 8 approved a resolution to officially dissolve the JPA and directed staff to proceed with all actions to support the decision.

The project, estimated at one point to cost approximately $980 million, planned to expand the capacity of Los Vaqueros Reservoir by 72% along with adding new conveyance infrastructure and developing water supplies for environmental water management. However, a combination of rising costs and lowering expectations of water supplies anticipated from the expansion — due to permitting and regulatory requirements – forced the project's eventual dissolution.

"Without question, this is a significant and somber day for the JPA and the Phase 2 Los Vaqueros Reservoir Expansion Project (Project)," read a statement released by JPA Chair Anthea Hansen following the Board's decision. "As we move forward with the dissolution process, it is important to document the contributions and lessons learned from this effort. The Phase 2 Expansion Project brought together diverse partners representing urban, agricultural, and environmental entities to work together to maximize broad public benefits and regional resilience."



Members Strengthening Cybersecurity Through Cal OES Grants

Rancho Water and Marina Coast Water District recently received cybersecurity grant funding from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) through its the 2024 State & Local Cybersecurity Grant Program. They were among some 133 awardees, including more than 35 ACWA member agencies.

Cal OES awarded the grants to protect local governments, school districts, special districts and federally recognized tribes from cybersecurity risks.

Rancho Water reported receiving a $250,000 grant. The funds will support a variety of essential cybersecurity initiatives at Rancho Water, including the replacement of older firewalls and installing industrial-grade security devices for data acquisition systems, deploying encrypted Ethernet radios to secure critical communications, and developing and implementing a comprehensive cybersecurity policy, according to a district news release.

Marina Coast Water District received a $215,000 grant from Cal OES through the grant program. With this latest grant, Marina Coast can elevate its already robust cybersecurity programs to new heights, according to a district news release. The funding will be used for comprehensive vulnerability assessments and penetration testing across its systems.



Department of Water Resources staff members conduct the first snow survey of the season at Phillips Station Jan. 2. They recorded 24 inches of snow depth and a snow water equivalent of 9 inches, 91% average for the location. Statewide, the snowpack was 108% of average for the date.

Photo courtesy of DWR

Member Agency Boards Name Officers, Swear in Directors

Palmdale Water District







Kathy Mac Laren-Gomez, **Scott Kellerman** and **Cynthia Sanchez** have started new four-year terms on the Palmdale Water District Board of Directors.

Voters elected Board President Mac Laren-Gomez and Sanchez in November. Kellerman ran unopposed. Mac Laren-Gomez is serving her fourth term having been originally elected in 2011. Sanchez and Kellerman were appointed to fill vacant seats in early 2024 and 2022, respectively.

Turlock Irrigation District





Michael Frantz and **Becky Hackler Arellano** have been sworn in for four-year terms on the Turlock Irrigation District (TID) Board of Directors.

Frantz, elected Board President, won re-election to a seat he has held since 2009. Arellano ran unopposed for a seat vacated by former Board member **Rob Santos**. She is the first woman in TID's history to serve on the Board of Directors. The TID Board also selected **David Yonan** as Vice President and **Joe Alamo** as Secretary. **Ron Macedo** served as President during 2024 and completes the five-member Board.

Padre Dam Municipal Water District



Kim Hales has been sworn in as the newest



member of Padre Dam Municipal Water District's Board of Directors. **Suzanne Till** was also sworn in for her second term on the Board. Both were elected in November.

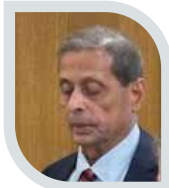
Yorba Linda Water District



The Yorba Linda Water District has appointed retired U.S. Air Force Colonel **Wayne R. Scott** as a new Board of Directors member. He will fulfill the remainder of the unexpired term of former Board member **Phil Hawkins** until 2026.

Calleguas Municipal Water District







Calleguas Municipal Water District Board Directors **Raul Avila**, **Reddy Pakala** and **Scott Quady** began new four-year terms. **Andy Waters** retired as Vice President after 12 years of service on the Board.

Avila was first elected to the Board in 2020. Pakala joins the Board having been elected in 2024 and is a former Director of the Ventura County Water and Sanitation Department. Quady was first elected in 2008 and currently serves as President.

Rancho California Water District



The Rancho California Water District Board of Directors has selected **Brian Brady** as President and **J.D. Harkey** as Senior



Vice President for the upcoming one-year term.

Brady was first elected to the Board in 2020 and Harkey in 2022.

Otay Water District



Delfina Gonzalez was sworn in as a new member of the Otay Water District Board of Directors in December after having won election in November. She brings a multifaceted career to the Board that spans education, labor organizing, business ownership and community relations.

Cucamonga Valley Water District





Mark Gibboney and **Kevin Kenley** have been sworn in to serve four-year terms on the Cucamonga Valley Water District, with Gibboney presiding as Vice President. Both have served on the Board since 2019.

Helix Water District







Daniel H. McMillan, **Joel A. Scalzitti** and **Mark Gracyk** will serve new four-year terms on the Helix Water District Board of Directors following their re-election, with McMillan continuing as President and Scalzitti as Vice President.

Gracyk and McMillan were first elected to the Board in 2016. McMillan represents Helix at ACWA JPIA. Scalzitti joined the Board in 2012.

West Valley Water District







Greg Young, **Angela Garcia** and **Estevan Bennett** are beginning new four-year terms on the West Valley Water District Board of Directors. Young joined the Board in 2015 and was reconfirmed as President, with **Dan Jenkins** reconfirmed as Vice President.

Garcia has served on the Board since 2022, and Bennett was appointed to the Board last September to fill a vacancy.

San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District







San Bernardino Valley's Board of Directors in January named **T. Milford Harrison** as President, **Gil Botello** as Vice President, and **Susan Longville** as Treasurer. Harrison was first elected to the Board in 2018 and reelected in 2022. Botello has served since 2020 and Longville since 2014.

Yuba Water





The Yuba Water Agency Board of Directors has selected **Jon Messick** as Chair and **Wayne Bishop** as Vice Chairman for the 2025 calendar year. The board also welcomed **Renick House** as its newest Board member.



Sean Bigley

Bigley Named Environmental Utilities Director

Roseville City Manager **Dominick Casey** in December named **Sean Bigley** as Director of Environmental Utilities. He succeeds longtime director **Richard Plecker**, who has retired.

Working at the city for nearly 20 years, Bigley most recently served as Assistant Environmental Utilities Director. He will lead a team of 285 dedicated professionals serving 150,000 people with more than 50,000 utility connections, two regional wastewater treatment plants and a 100 million gallons per day water treatment facility.

Bigley holds a master's degree in public administration from California State University, Sonoma.



George Murdoch

Region 10 Names Murdoch to Board

ACWA Region 10 Board members have voted to appoint **George Murdoch** to fill the vacant Vice Chair position. As Vice Chair, Murdoch will also serve on the ACWA Board of Directors.

Murdoch is President of the East Orange County Water District and replaces **Charles Gibson**, who vacated the seat in December.



Michiko Mares

Humboldt Bay MWD Appoints New GM

The Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District Board of Directors has appointed **Michiko Mares** as General Manager. Mares replaces **John Friedenbach**, who is retiring later this year.

Mares' 28 years of water industry experience includes serving as Engineering Manager of Water Infrastructure Construction at East Bay Municipal Utility District, where she was responsible for delivering a $1 billion capital improvement program.

She is a third-generation resident of Humboldt County and graduated from Cal Poly Humboldt, earning a degree in environmental resources engineering with an emphasis on water.



Dana Friehauf

Water Authority Seats Friehauf

Dana Friehauf was seated on the San Diego County Water Authority Board of Directors in January to represent the Santa Fe Irrigation District, where she is Board President. Her term expires in December 2026.

Friehauf also serves on the ACWA Board of Directors as Region 10 Board Chair. Her current Water Authority Board appointments include the Engineering and Operations Committee, the Resource Strategy Work Group and serving as Vice Chair of Water Planning and Environmental Committee.

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- State Water Project Allocation Increases Following Recent Storms – Dec. 23
- Three Calleguas Municipal Water District Directors Sworn In – Dec. 20
- Yuba Water Agency Board Names Chair and Vice-Chair, Welcomes New Director – Jan. 8
- Yorba Linda Water District Welcomes New Board Director Wayne R. Scott – Dec. 20
- District Launches Revamped Bill Pay Experience For Customers – Jan. 2

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

FEBRUARY 2025
5–6
2025 CALDESAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE
CalDesal | Temecula

Mark your calendars for the 2025 CalDesal Annual Conference. This year's conference will continue to highlight the crucial role desalination plays in California's water resiliency, security, and sustainability.

FEBRUARY 2025
25–27
ACWA DC2025 – ANNUAL WASHINGTON, D.C. CONFERENCE
ACWA | Washington, D.C.

The 2025 D.C. Conference will give water professionals a close-up perspective on federal water policy while offering a breadth of topics and a variety of speakers. Registration is now open.

FEBRUARY 2025
26–28
URBAN WATER INSTITUTE 2025 SPRING CONFERENCE
Urban Water Institute | Palm Springs

Experts will tackle key water management issues, with networking, keynote speakers, and meals included. UWI Conferences bring together California's top water leaders, making this a premier event.

MARCH 2025
26
ACWA 2025 LEGISLATIVE SYMPOSIUM
ACWA | Sacramento

Save the date for the ACWA 2025 Legislative Symposium, an annual event that keeps California water professionals informed on key policy issues.

MAY 2025
13–15
ACWA 2025 SPRING CONFERENCE & EXPO
ACWA | Monterey

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