ACWA NEWS
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California Air Resources Board (CARB) staff and Calaveras County Water District staff gather for a photo during a June 26 tour of the district's facilities, arranged by ACWA to help educate the Board about the challenges water districts face in implementing the Advanced Clean Fleets regulation.

CCWD Highlights Fleet Challenges Under ACF Regulation

In an effort to help educate California Air Resources Board (CARB) staff about compliance challenges presented by the Advanced Clean Fleets (ACF) regulation, ACWA staff has scheduled multiple field meetings with member agencies. One of the first meetings was hosted by Calaveras County Water District (CCWD) on June 26 and provided an opportunity for CCWD staff to share unique compliance challenges and insights.

CCWD is a small agency with a large service territory which means that all 47 medium- to heavy-duty vehicles are subject to being called into service during an emergency. Its trucks need to be equipped to deal with cross-country water and sewer lines, water line installation, emergency water line repairs, wildfires, snow and winter storm response.

CCWD Director of Operations Damon Wyckoff provided CARB staff with a presentation and then led a tour to Ebbetts Pass and West Point water and wastewater locations. The tour demonstrated how challenging it would be to get to Ebbetts Pass with a heavier, battery-operated vehicle and begged the question of where to strategically place charging infrastructure. On top of that, CCWD's operating elevations range from 200 to 5,500 feet and there are sharp turns and many paved and unpaved roads that must be traveled

CCWD continued on page 3 >

CAPITOL CORNER

Newsom Restores Funding for Healthy Rivers and Landscape Program

Gov. Gavin Newsom in late June signed a budget bill that restores more than $351 million in funding for the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes (HRL) Program. The bill replaces an earlier budget proposal from the Legislature that would have eliminated the funding that was appropriated in the 2022-'23 and 2023-'24 budgets for the HRL program. The restoration of this funding represents progress toward restoring the health of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Bay-Delta (Bay-Delta).

ACWA is a long-standing supporter of the HRL Program, previously referred to as Voluntary Agreements, as the best approach to protecting, restoring and enhancing the Bay-Delta. ACWA staff, in coordination with other associations and individual ACWA members, urged legislators to preserve the funding. ACWA also issued an Outreach Alert encouraging members to contact their legislators, which had a significant impact toward restoring this funding.

To learn more about the HRL Program, see pages 6 and 7.

Below are summaries and updates as of July 18 — the Friday before the Legislature's summer recess — on a few among dozens of bills on which ACWA advocacy staff is engaged. The Legislature will reconvene on Aug. 18.

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ACWA INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MARWAN KHALIFA

Help Build California Water's Future, Apply to Serve on an ACWA Committee



Now is the time to apply for an ACWA committee, where collaboration leads to real impact across California's water sector. Serving on a committee offers a unique opportunity to build professional networks, gain deeper insights into water policy and strengthen your leadership skills. It's also a great chance to collaborate with peers, contribute to meaningful work, and help shape solutions that support your fellow agencies across California.

I speak from personal experience, having recently served on and chaired ACWA's Finance Committee while working as Chief Financial Officer for Mesa Water District. Our committee's accomplishments included crafting strategies to reduce the association's pension liability. Perhaps not the most riveting topic for non-finance professionals, but you know what was exciting? Seeing solutions take shape in real time, interacting with the ACWA Board of Directors and building lasting working relationships with other financial professionals within the ACWA community.

To use a popular financial term, the experience represented a significant return on investment, and that's a value anyone in any professional sector of our association can appreciate.

ACWA recently launched the application process for those interested in serving on ACWA's 13 standing committees for the 2026-'27 term. See the accompanying list of committees and use the QR code to learn more.

ACWA committees meet throughout the year, providing key technical, policy and organizational input to the ACWA Board of Directors. Each committee has a specific mission, and together they function as a powerful network of knowledge and influence — a think tank grounded in real-world experience.

But these committees only work because of the dedicated people who serve on them.

In applying for a committee, please consider your availability. Committee work requires active, engaged participants who are ready to devote time and energy to advancing the work of the association.

For young professionals in particular, joining a committee presents an unparalleled opportunity to contribute while learning alongside seasoned leaders from across the state. There is a real need for fresh ideas, diverse voices and committed professionals who want to be part of shaping California's water future.

In short, committees are where ACWA's work begins and where lasting contributions are made.

I encourage you to step up, serve and make a difference. Whatever your focus, our committees have a place for your expertise in water.

Check out the application information and committee descriptions today and help your agency — and ACWA — lead the way forward.

Find Your Place

Committees are structured to include representation from all 10 ACWA Regions, bringing together diverse voices on technical and policy matters.

- Agriculture
- Business Development
- Communications
- Energy
- Federal Affairs
- Finance
- Groundwater
- Legal Affairs
- Local Government
- Membership
- State Legislative
- Water Management
- Water Quality

Now Accepting Entries and Nominations for Fall Awards

HUELL HOWSER EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATION

Honors outstanding public water agency efforts in communicating important information to customers, legislators, media and the public.

Deadline: Sept. 2

ACWA EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION

Recognizes groundbreaking and unique programs, projects, practices and/or technologies implemented by ACWA member agencies

Deadline: Sept. 2

ACWA OUTREACH

Acknowledges members for their advocacy on issues critical to the water industry and the most active member agencies in each region.

Deadline: Oct. 1

Visit acwa.com/awards for more information and award guidelines.

CCWD continued from page 1

on in all conditions, ranging from snowfall to rain and mudslides.

"CCWD is doing the work to figure out what ACF compliance looks like, but also needs to be able to keep critical public water services online at all times. Part of the effort involves accurately conveying the challenges our teams face throughout the year to CARB and where ACF can be effectively implemented without negatively impacting water and wastewater operations," Wyckoff said.

The ACF regulation went into effect Jan. 1, 2024 requiring vehicle fleet owners and operators, including ACWA members, to start purchasing zero-emission vehicles with the goal to move California's medium- and heavy-duty trucks to zero emission, where feasible, by 2045. CARB is early in the process of amending the ACF regulation to accommodate requirements under AB 1594, the 2023 legislation amended ACF to better reflect additional flexibilities needed by public agency utilities.

The five CARB staff that joined the visit noted that the tour was very informative by personally seeing the challenges that water agencies in rural areas face in complying with the ACF regulation. CARB staff want to work with water agencies to understand their unique challenges and ACWA staff will continue to set up agency visits and advocate for flexibility for public agencies' compliance to keep essential services intact.



Left: CCWD Director of Operations Damon Wyckoff explains the difficulty of operating vehicles such as vacuum trucks under the Advanced Clean Fleets regulation. **Right:** Wyckoff describes wastewater treatment operations in a control room during the tour.

CAPITOL CORNER continued from page 1

SB 394/Water Theft

Author: Sen. Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica)

ACWA position: Co-sponsored with Las Virgenes Municipal Water District

What it would do: Allow local water agencies to adopt an ordinance with enhanced penalties for water theft from a fire hydrant. Additionally, the bill would remove the one-year reset on existing penalties for the third and additional violations for water theft committed via meter tampering and other methods. It would also help agencies recover damages by authorizing utilities to pursue civil remedies against any person who tampers with or diverts water from a fire hydrant without authorization.

Status: In Senate

SB 454/PFAS

Author: Sen. Jerry McNerney (D-Pleasanton)

ACWA position: Co-sponsored with League of California Cities

What it would do: Create a funding tool to help water and wastewater agencies pay for PFAS contamination treatment costs that would otherwise be covered by local ratepayers on their water and wastewater bills. There are currently multiple sources of funding aimed at addressing PFAS contamination (current and potentially future legal settlements, federal funding, state bond funding, etc.) that could be directed to this fund.

Status: In Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file with action expected following summer recess

AB 1146/Water Infrastructure

Author: Assemblymember Diane Papan (D-San Mateo)

ACWA position: Neutral

What it would do: AB 1146 aims to prohibit the release of stored water from a reservoir if the release is done under false pretenses. It also originally authorized the State Water Resources Control Board – absent a hearing or due process – to determine whether an operator violated the law and require the operator to immediately comply with its order under a new "interim relief" authority. ACWA coordinated with the California Chamber of Commerce in opposition, and the coalition successfully advocated to remove this provision, along with securing other amendments, which resulted in most coalition members removing their opposition to the bill.

Status: Passed the Senate Judiciary Committee on July 11 and is awaiting a hearing by the Senate Appropriations Committee

AB 263/Water Rights

Author: Assemblymember Chris Rogers (D-Healdsburg)

ACWA position: Oppose

What it would do: Set precedent by keeping in place emergency drought regulations adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board instead of following established processes. The bill stems from the State Water Board's adopting emergency regulations implementing long-term instream flow for the Scott and Shasta river watersheds during the last drought.

Status: Awaiting Senate floor vote

Water Quality/SB 601

Author: Sen. Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica)

ACWA Position: Oppose

What it would do: The bill was introduced with the intent of safeguarding California's water quality protection regime from federal rollbacks; however, its approach would go far beyond simply maintaining the status quo. It would greatly complicate the state's water quality permitting system and expand upon federal permitting requirements, ultimately restricting progress toward overcoming the state's severe housing shortage and water supply reliability challenges. ACWA is part of a coalition opposing the bill and member agencies are encouraged to join.

Status: SB 601 is in the Assembly Appropriations Committee

SB 599/Forecasting

Author: Sen. Anna Caballero (D-Merced)

ACWA Position: Favor

What it would do: Encourage improvements in atmospheric river forecasting and by extension allow more details on their impact on water supply, flooding, post-wildfire debris flows and environmental conditions. The bill would achieve this aim by requiring the Department of Water Resources to include the use of experimental tools that produce seasonal and sub-seasonal atmospheric river forecasts, encouraging research, development and implementation of novel forecasting methods.

Status: In Assembly Appropriations Committee suspense file with action expected following summer recess

ACWA IN ACTION

Bottom left (l-r): ACWA Interim Executive Director Marwan Khalifa talks with Tulare Irrigation District (TID) General Manager Aaron Fukuda during a visit with member agencies in ACWA Region 6 and ACWA Region 7 in early July. **Bottom right (l-r):** ACWA State Relations Advocate Stephen Pang joins Fukuda and Khalifa on a tour of TID's irrigation system, including a canal headgate at McKay Point. Following the tour, Khalifa and ACWA staff joined a number of Region 6 and Region 7 member agency leaders for a lunchtime meeting. ACWA staff regularly visit member agencies throughout the state to gain firsthand knowledge of regional issues.



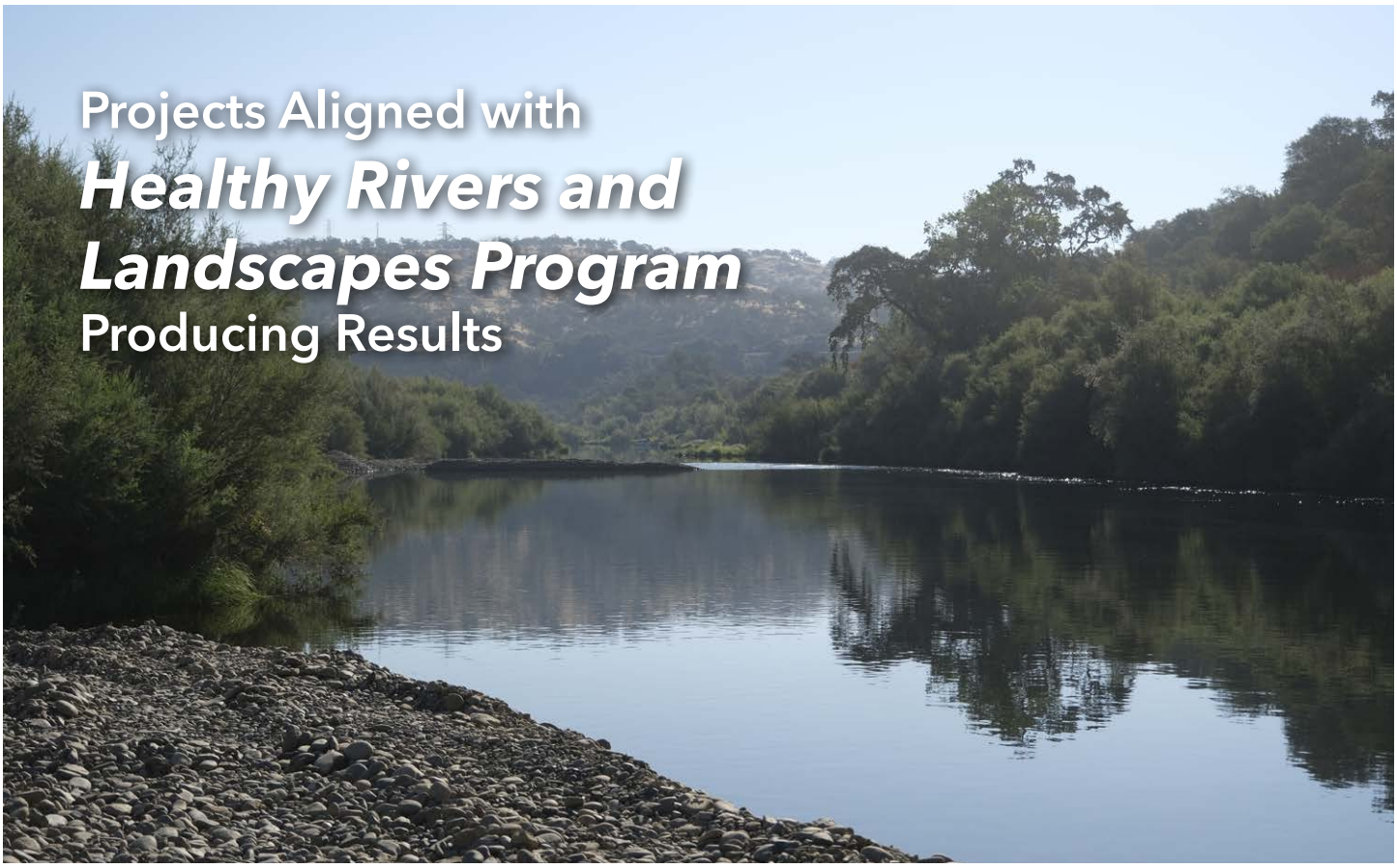


ACWA Executive Director Recruitment Continues

ACWA's nationwide search for its next Executive Director is moving forward, led by recruitment firm WBCP and overseen by a 10-member committee appointed by ACWA President Cathy Green. The committee expects to conduct interviews this summer, with a new Executive Director to be named by fall.



SPOTLIGHT



Projects Aligned with *Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program* Producing Results

ACWA has long supported the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes (HRL) Program as the preferred pathway for updating the state's Bay-Delta Plan for the Sacramento River and its tributaries, as opposed to an approach based solely on a percentage of flows.

Previously known as the Voluntary Agreements, the HRL Program includes habitat enhancement projects coupled with more water for fish and wildlife, managed in a collaborative, science-based manner. It is supported by federal, state, and local water leaders and represents a modern and holistic approach to improving the Bay-Delta ecosystem and water supply reliability.

The State Water Resources Control Board is expected to approve an update to the Bay-Delta Plan in the near future. However, many projects called for under the HRL Program have already been completed or are underway and delivering measurable results, increasing the potential for recovering healthy fish populations.

Three projects that are part of the HRL Program are outlined below.

Tuolumne River Mainstem Channel Restoration Upstream of Old La Grange Bridge Project

With this project, Modesto Irrigation District (MID), Turlock Irrigation District (TID), and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) provided more than 7.5 acres of mainstem restoration, more than 2.5 acres of floodplain habitat and more than 50,000 cubic yards of spawning gravel. These actions are expected to result in a five-fold increase of trout and salmon habitat upstream of Old La Grange Bridge.

Spawning habitats were created by cleaning, washing, and returning gravel originally removed from the river during the Gold Rush to the lower Tuolumne River in the form of riffles and gravel bars. In addition to the creation of spawning habitat, large wood features and boulder clusters were added to increase in-channel habitat complexity and diversity.

The project began in June 2024 and was completed four months later in mid-October. The total cost of the project was estimated at $7.8 million, which includes a grant from the California Department Fish and Wildlife, along with MID, TID and the SFPUC's self-funded commitment of $2.3 million. The project was successfully completed under budget and is an example of the multiple restoration projects included in the districts' and SFPUC's HRL Program work.



Middle Creek Gravel Project

The Middle Creek Gravel Project was completed in the winter of 2024 with cooperation from Sacramento River Settlement Contract partners: Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District, Reclamation District 108, Sutter Mutual Water Company, and River Garden Farms, as well as the Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority. The gravel injection created critical spawning habitat for salmon south of Keswick Dam.

Lower American River Salmonid Habitat Enhancement Program

The American River Salmonid Habitat Enhancement Program is an ongoing program created to address habitat reduction and fisheries decline in the lower American River.

Program objectives consist of increasing the quantity and quality of spawning and juvenile rearing habitat for fall-run Chinook salmon and Central Valley steelhead. This ongoing effort is made possible by continued collaboration between the Sacramento Water Forum, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (as part of their Central Valley Project Improvement Act Habitat Restoration Grant Program). Since its inception in 2010, this program has created more than 30 acres of spawning beds, 1.2 miles of side channels, and has placed 92,000 cubic yards of spawning gravel.

For more information about the HRL program, including background and a timeline, visit acwa.com by scanning the accompanying QR code.

Opposite page: The Tuolumne River near the Old La Grange Bridge. *Photo courtesy of Turlock Irrigation District*

Above: A crew installs a "rockwad" along the Sacramento River to help provide juvenile salmon and trout refuge against larger predators. Learn more about this project and others by using the QR code below. *Photo courtesy of Sacramento River Settlement Contractors*

PCWA Breaks Ground on New Treatment Plant

Placer County Water Agency (PCWA), joined by state and local leaders, in June celebrated the groundbreaking of the new Colfax water treatment plant — a milestone investment in reliable drinking water for the foothill communities of eastern Placer County.

The $36 million project to replace an existing, aging facility marks PCWA's first new treatment facility to be built in more than a decade and underscores the agency's commitment to long-term water supply resilience, smart planning, and improved water access across the foothill communities.

"This project represents a smart and necessary investment in the future of our region," stated PCWA Board Director Josh Alpine in a news release. "It's not just about replacing aging infrastructure — it's about taking an opportunity to plan ahead so that communities like Colfax, Shady Glen, Heather Glen, and Weimar have a safe and sustainable water system for decades to come."



Photo courtesy of PCWA

Event speakers included PCWA General Manager Andy Fecko, State Water Resources Control Board Member Laurel Firestone, Placer County Supervisor Cindy Gustafson, and Colfax City Mayor Sean Lomen, who highlighted the project's regional benefits and collaborative planning efforts.

The new plant will replace the original facility built in 1958, which is reaching the end of its operational life. Once complete, treatment capacity will increase from 1.24 to 2 million gallons per day, with future plans to expand to 3.0 million gallons per day to serve additional unserved and underserved areas.

Construction will take approximately two and a half years to complete. The project is financed through a combination of local and state sources, including a $10 million zero-interest loan and $2.5 million in principal forgiveness from the State Water Board's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund delivered by the Safe and Affordable Funding for Equity and Resilience (SAFER) program.

IRWD Helps Keep Orange County Beaches Clean

Orange County recently reported surpassing other regions in the state with top water-quality marks on Heal the Bay's annual Beach Report Card, with Irvine Ranch Water District taking part in efforts that resulted in A+ grades for two top-ranked beaches: Los Trancos and Muddy Canyon.

IRWD uses diversion pump stations at these Crystal Cove sites to divert polluted urban runoff to sewers, where it is later treated and recycled as part of Orange County Water District's Groundwater Replenishment System. This decreases the amount of pollution that makes its way to beaches from activities such as washing a car, overwatering or hosing off a sidewalk.

"Los Trancos and Muddy Creek were heavily polluted before IRWD's involvement," stated IRWD Natural Resources Manager Ian Swift in a news release. "The extensive work of staff over recent years has contributed significantly to the improvement in water quality."

District staff from various teams collaborate daily to operate the pump stations 24/7, one of many examples of the district's longstanding commitment to sustainability.


Photo courtesy of IRWD

Other examples include the San Joaquin Marsh and 45 other wetland sites, which naturally treat urban runoff in the San Diego Creek Watershed before it makes its way to the Upper Newport Bay and ocean.

THIS MONTH IN ACWA HISTORY

10 years ago

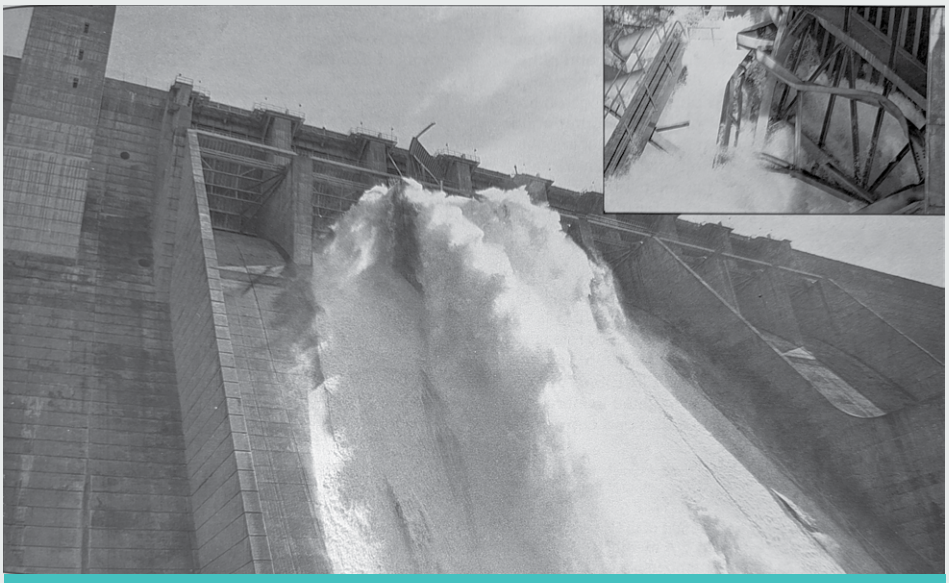
ACWA leadership praised the introduction of the California Emergency Drought Relief Act of 2015 by Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer. In a news release, then-ACWA President John Coleman and ACWA Executive Director Timothy Quinn applauded introduction of the bill, which proposed a range of tools to help California tackle severe drought conditions.

20 years ago

ACWA and water agencies across the country celebrated the House and Senate passage of a national energy bill that abandoned a product liability exemption for producers of the fuel additive MTBE. The legislative victory eliminated a "safe harbor" provision that would have prohibited courts from recognizing MTBE as a defective product, effectively barring water districts from recovering cleanup costs for groundwater contamination related to the fuel additive.

30 years ago

A radial spillway gate failed at Folsom Dam, causing water to blast out at 40,000 cubic-feet-per-second. The accident prompted a veritable flood of questions, ranging from the effect of federal budget cuts and consequences from aging infrastructure to the need for the Auburn Dam. The incident attracted national attention because dams throughout the country relied on the same type of spillway, including more than 60 dams in California alone.



Water gushes through a failed spillway gate at Folsom Dam in in this photo from a July 1995 edition of *ACWA News*.

40 years ago

The U.S. House of Representatives approved $800 million for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for spending during 1986 — $200 million less in spending than the current year — through its Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill. The legislation passed with little of the controversy familiar with past bills. Among several items related to California was $12.6 million to fund studies of the Kesterson Reservoir.

50 years ago

ACWA News reported that the Department of Water Resources will use metric measurements as well as their English equivalents in future publications. DWR stated that it would continue using measurements in both systems until the metric system becomes common in the United States.



LIKE, SHARE & FOLLOW

EXPLORING THE WATER WORLD ACROSS SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a great way to get important messages and information out to the public, but it can also be used as a tool for recruitment and retention efforts. As water agencies face challenges in workforce recruitment and retention, creative posts on social media can be a great way to get the attention of the next generation of workers for the water industry.

Here are some creative recent examples of how ACWA members have advertised for jobs and promoted their agency as a top employer.

Be sure to follow us on Facebook, X, LinkedIn and Instagram @ ACWAWater to see more of what other ACWA member agencies are doing on social media.



Placer County Water Agency recently used social media to show footage of its annual employee event and highlight award winners, with static posts of the winners and a reel showcasing the event.



Tahoe City Public Utility District did an Instagram post with multiple job opportunities as a great way to get people thinking about working for the district. Highlighting multiple opportunities at once can also encourage people to see what else might be available if those jobs don't pertain to them.



Eastern Municipal Water District dedicated a recent The Drop podcast episode to the topic: "Tapping into Talent: Educating Tomorrow's Water Workforce." Scan the QR code to listen to the episode.



SCV Water got creative with its search for a new Public Affairs Specialist by showcasing in a reel about how much fun its team has!



Rochelle Patterson

SCV Water Promotes Patterson to AGM

SCV Water has promoted Chief Financial and Administrative Officer **Rochelle Patterson** to Assistant General Manager – Finance and Administration.

Patterson's 26-year career with the agency started on the accounting team for the former Newhall County Water District, among four local agencies that merged in 2018 to become SCV Water.

In her new role, she will continue overseeing the agency's core administrative and operational support functions, while working more closely with General Manager **Matt Stone** on special projects and long-range planning. She will also help strengthen internal operations, support workforce growth, and ensure the agency is well positioned to meet future infrastructure and customer service needs.



Esther Saenz

Saenz Succeeds Johnson as Desert Water GM

Esther M. Saenz has succeeded **Steve Johnson** as Desert Water Agency (DWA) General Manager following Johnson's retirement July 4.

Johnson originally announced his retirement last year but continued working to guarantee a smooth transition. Previously DWA Finance Director, Saenz originally joined DWA in 2010 and becomes the first female General Manager in the agency's history.

The DWA Board of Directors recognized Johnson for his outstanding commitment and contributions with a resolution.

"Steve's leadership and devotion to public service for the past three decades has made a lasting impact on the agency and the community it serves. His dedication will be missed," stated DWA Board President **Paul Ortega** in a news release.



Jose Reynoso

San Gabriel Valley MWD Names Reynoso GM

The San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District Board of Directors has announced the appointment of **Jose Reynoso** as General Manager.

Reynoso brings more than 25 years of public service experience in local government and water management to the position. Prior to joining the district, he served in leadership roles in several San Gabriel Valley cities, including Sierra Madre, where he most recently served as City Manager.

The leadership transition follows the retirement of **Darin Kasamoto**, who originally joined the district in 1997 as Assistant General Manager and was appointed General Manager in 2004.

"We are incredibly grateful for Darin's dedication and leadership," stated Board President **Dr. Steve Placido** in a news release. "He has earned the respect of the Board, staff, and stakeholders, and leaves behind a legacy of excellence that has positioned the district for continued success."



Kathy Narum

Zone 7 Announces New Board Leadership

The Zone 7 Water Agency Board of Directors in July unanimously elected **Kathy Narum** to serve as President during its annual board reorganization. The Board also elected **Dawn Benson** to serve as Vice President.

Narum has served on the Zone 7 Board since 2023, with her current term extending until June 30, 2028. A Pleasanton resident, Narum holds a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering and currently manages a family commercial property business in Iowa. She previously served on the Pleasanton City Council and has more than two decades of local and regional experience on a range of issues, including water, transportation, regional development, schools and the environment.

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ACWA Election Deadline: Sept. 19

ACWA emailed ballots on July 21 to each member agency's authorized voting representative, allowing them to vote for President, Vice President and Region Board members for the 2026-'27 term.

Learn more at **acwa.com/elections**.

MOST CLICKED

Subscribe to ACWA's eNews at **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.

- Firefighting Helicopter System Takes Flight in the San Gorgonio Pass – July 2
- Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Funding Restored – July 1
- ACWA Accepting Applications for 2025 Fall Awards – June 25
- PWD Celebrates Start of Palmdale Ditch Pipeline Construction – July 1
- United Water Conservation District Lawsuit Defends Water Rights – June 25

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

AUG 2025
13

ACWA Quarterly Policy Committee Meetings
ACWA | Virtual

ACWA's Agriculture, Energy, Groundwater, Water Management and Water Quality committees will meet to discuss key water policy issues. Open to non-committee members. Registration required.

AUG 2025
20

ACWA Region 3 Webinar
ACWA | Virtual

ACWA Region 3 is hosting a webinar focused on helping small public water agencies access grant funding.

SEP 2025
5

Orange County Water Summit
OCWD / MWDOC | Costa Mesa

The OC Water Summit fosters discussion of new and ongoing water supply challenges, water policy issues, and other critical topics impacting the water industry. Registration required.

SEP 2025
8–12

Klamath River Tour
Water Education Foundation | Klamath Falls

Join WEF for an in-depth exploration of water issues along the 263-mile Klamath River – from its spring-fed headwaters in south-central Oregon to its redwood-lined estuary on California's Pacific coast.

SEP 2025
12

ACWA Region 1 Tour and Program
ACWA | Windsor

Mark your calendar! Don't miss ACWA Region 1's Regional Water Infrastructure Program and Tour, highlighting innovative water solutions in the Town of Windsor.

SEP 2025
26

ACWA Region 5 Event
ACWA | San Francisco

Mark your calendar! ACWA Region 5 is hosting an event and tour of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Water Infrastructure.