



OCWA
Orange County Water Association
ESTABLISHED 1957

Water Matters

News for the Orange County Water Community

Fourth Quarter 2023

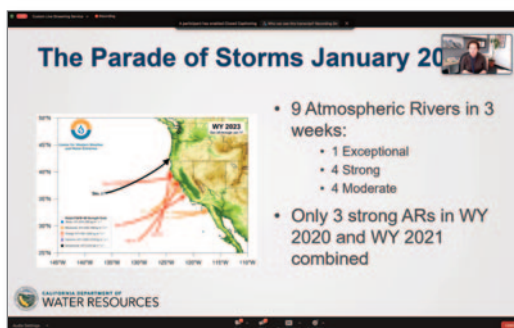
State Prepares for a Possible Wet El Niño Year

With the possibility of another wet winter before us, given the strong El Niño conditions which are developing, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) is highlighting how the State and its federal and local partners are preparing for the new water year which started October 1.

California's investments in forecasting and emergency preparedness paid off during last season's storm events and the State is incorporating lessons learned during the last water year and advancing the science and technology that will be critical to managing water in the coming years. DWR will utilize the most advanced forecasting tools with our partners like NOAA, Scripps, and others to prepare for whatever may come to California in the months ahead.

DWR and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which operate the State Water Project and Central Valley Project respectively, are closely coordinating to ensure the state's reservoirs have flood space available under a second year of flood conditions as well as store as much water as possible in case of a return to drought conditions.

This past winter's storms provided a huge boost to the State Water Project. Lake Oroville levels recovered and had the single biggest increase in the State Water Project's history last year. The SWP was able to capture a total of 3.5 million acre-feet in reservoirs since December 1, 2022. Oroville is currently at 136 percent of historical average today, up from 64 percent of average a year ago. San Luis Reservoir, the jointly operated reservoir in Merced County, sits at 190 percent of



historical average today, up from 67 percent this time last year. You can find additional reservoir levels at [California Water Watch](#).

In addition to smart water management, DWR is working to prepare local communities for the threat of a second year of flood conditions. DWR is providing vulnerable communities with funding, flood fight training, and continued material support across the state. DWR is starting this water year with more flood fighting materials on hand than last year, including 2.4 million more sandbags, pre-positioned at more locations.

The State-Federal Flood Operations Center (FOC) is working with local counties and communities to provide flood fight training and pre-season emergency response coordination across the state to ensure vulnerable communities have the resources and training needed to respond to potential flooding.

The Governor, in partnership with the Legislature, has invested a total of more than \$430 million in the most recent budget to support flood response and projects to protect communities from future flooding.

As the new water year gets underway, communities and all Californians are urged to be aware of local flood risks, be prepared to evacuate and know your evacuation routes, and take action immediately when evacuation orders are issued by local authorities. State agencies are coordinating during [California Flood Preparedness Week](#), October 21 – October 28 to help local communities prepare for possible flooding.

YOUR VOTE IS NEEDED!

2024 OCWA Board of Directors Election

The 2024 OCWA Board of Directors will be selected on Wednesday, November 15, 2023 during the November meeting. Plan to attend to ensure a quorum.

U.S. Senate and House, in Coordination with EPA Stage Multiprong Focus on PFAS Contamination

Report by ACWA Staff

This summer, the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (EPW) published a draft bill focused on addressing PFAS issues. Similarly, the House Armed Services Committee advanced a proposal to tackle “forever chemicals” as part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2024. ACWA has been tracking regulatory and legislative developments on PFAS closely.

Congress’ focus on PFAS pollution and contamination has been encouraged by a series of rulemakings from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) spanning several years, starting in 2019. Since then, EPA has moved forward with a proposed rule to set federally enforceable limits for six PFAS in drinking water; published a proposed rule to designate PFOA and PFOS as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA); and released an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking input on the development of regulations pertaining to additional PFAS under CERCLA. Most recently, EPA pushed the timeline for the final CERCLA rule from August 2023 to February 2024.

The push for legislation to address PFAS spans a variety of issues including disposal methods, community outreach, prohibition of



PFAS in certain substances like aqueous firefighting foam and cosmetics, research on the health impacts of PFAS, relief for impacts of PFAS on agriculture and protections from CERCLA liability for various sectors. The draft legislation proposed by EPW focuses on creating a deadline for EPA to set a drinking water standard, providing additional funding for research and treatment technology, setting a definition for PFAS, author-

izing a new emergency response program for disadvantaged communities, as well as other provisions. As of now, the draft legislation does not include CERCLA liability protections for water and wastewater providers.

Irvine Ranch Water District Lauded for Dam Safety

The Association of State Dam Safety Officials has honored Irvine Ranch Water District with its 2023 Dam Safety Award for the western region. ASDSO’s Dam Safety Award is given to organizations that make exemplary contributions to the improvement of dam safety in the United States.

Putting safety at the forefront of its mission, culture and purpose, IRWD is always seeking out new technologies and approaches to measure, monitor and ensure the safety of its dams. That includes these recent improvements:

- ◆ A Risk Informed Decision-Making method of evaluation, known as RIDM, that identifies risks, and prioritizes efforts to minimize them.
- ◆ Satellite monitoring that provides millimeter-scale precision in examining and tracking thousands of dam points for consistent, frequent and reliable monitoring.
- ◆ An Automatic Data Acquisition System to digitally read, store and transmit measurements for monitoring dams in real time.

IRWD owns and operates five reservoirs in and around its service area: San Joaquin, Sand Canyon, Syphon, Rattlesnake and Santiago Creek, as well as a small, non-jurisdictional dam in Harding Canyon.

For more information on IRWD’s Dam Safety Program, visit [IRWD.com/dam-safety](https://www.irwd.com/dam-safety), where you can view the District’s [video](#) on dam safety.



October 18: Industry Insight – *In Person*

Lessons Learned in Stormwater Capture and Groundwater Recharge in 2022-2023

Presenter: **Ben Smith**

Director of Recharge & Wetland Operations, OCWD



Turn the handle and the water flows from our taps. It seems effortless, but behind the scenes lies an intricate system of more than two dozen groundwater recharge basins in north and central Orange County that percolate into the aquifer more than 83 billion gallons of water per year.

Managing the water for those recharge basins is an ongoing challenge for the Orange County Water District. And in the past year, the District's efforts have been tested in a multitude of ways.

After a winter of unusually high rainfall, OCWD had to deal with the unexpected impact of this summer's Tropical Storm Hillary, which dumped record amounts of rain in the Santa Ana River watershed.

Plan now to join us, October 18, to learn firsthand about the efforts OCWD undertook this year to capture, store, and percolate stormwater, recycled water, and imported water to ensure the surface recharge basins continue to operate efficiently. The lessons learned this year will guide OCWD's efforts in the years ahead, but they'll be tested this winter, as most forecasts see a wet El Niño before us.

About Our Speaker

Ben Smith

*Director, Recharge & Wetland Operations
Orange County Water District*



As the Director of Recharge and Wetland Operations for the Orange County Water District, Ben Smith is responsible for operations of both the surface recharge facilities on the Santa Ana River and the constructed wetlands behind the Prado Dam. Among his responsibilities, Ben optimizes system percolation and storage, manages facility planning maintenance, and oversees the management of stormwater, as well as imported and recycled water recharge.

Ben started at OCWD in 2010 in the engineering department where he was the project manager of more than \$100 million in capital improvement and repair projects.

In addition to bachelor and master's degrees in civil engineering, Ben also earned a master's degree in public administration.

We are Proud to Recognize Our Corporate Sponsors for the October 2023 Webinar



Wednesday, October 18, 2023

In-Person at Dave & Busters

In-Person Member: \$30 • Non-Member: \$45

In-Person Sign-In: 11:30,

Lunch: 12:00, Presentation 12:30

Cancellations received AFTER Tuesday, October 17 CANNOT be refunded.

Visit the OCWA website to make reservations:

www.ocwater.org

RSVP IS A FINANCIAL COMMITMENT. NO-SHOWS WILL BE BILLED.

EPA Announces Availability of \$20 Million in Grants to Create Water Career Opportunities

By U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced the availability of over \$20 million in grant funding to support training for workers who protect and treat our nation's drinking water and provide critical wastewater services. Through the Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Grant program, EPA will support training and career opportunities in the water sector. With the Biden-Harris Administration's historic investment in water infrastructure, growing and sustaining the water sector workforce is more important than ever for ensuring clean and safe water for generations to come.

"The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to Investing in America, and that means investing in the workers that build and operate our nation's water systems," said EPA Administrator for Water Radhika Fox. "Our Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Grant Program supports local programs that help people get the training they need to enter the water workforce or the necessary upskilling to advance in their careers."

Frontline workers at water and wastewater treatment utilities across the country are central to public health, environmental, and economic well-being in all communities, big and small. The water industry is facing wide-spread shortages of qualified workers due to expected retirements, needed investments in the nation's infrastructure, and new technical and scientific skill sets required to operate and maintain these systems. Current estimates indicate that as many as one third of water workers will be eligible to retire within the next 5-10 years.

The focus of the Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Grant program is to build a strong pool of skilled and diverse workers in the water and wastewater utilities sector. This grant program supports collaboration among federal, state, and local governments and institutions of higher education, apprentice programs, labor organizations, high schools, and other community-based organizations to provide access to workforce opportunities and build career pipelines in the water sector. There are six program areas:

- ◆ Targeted internships apprenticeships for skilled water utility trades.
- ◆ Education programs designed for elementary, secondary, and higher education students.
- ◆ Regional industry and workforce development collaborations to hiring qualified candidates.
- ◆ Leadership development, occupational training, mentoring, or cross-training programs that support career advancement.
- ◆ Education and training programs designed for decentralized (septic) water workers to support public health for communities

that rely on private wells for drinking water or septic systems.

- ◆ Training and development for workforce development programs that reduce

greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants to benefit disadvantaged communities.

Questions about applying for EPA funding for the Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development cooperative agreement must be received by October 17, 2023. Questions can be submitted by emailing waterworkforceRFA@epa.gov. Applications must be received by EPA by November 17, 2023. EPA encourages all eligible organizations who have an interest to apply.



EPA Proposes CCR Updates

The Environmental Protection Agency recently published a proposed rule to alter the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) Rule in an attempt to make annual drinking water quality reports more accessible to the public.

When finalized, the proposal would:

- ◆ Improve the readability, clarity, and understandability of water quality reports
- ◆ Enhance risk communication
- ◆ Encourage modern electronic delivery options
- ◆ Clarify information regarding lead levels and efforts to reduce lead in drinking water
- ◆ Provide translation for customers with limited English proficiency
- ◆ Require reports to be issued twice a year (for systems that serve 10,000 or more people)
- ◆ Require states to submit compliance monitoring data to EPA

States already collect compliance monitoring data. However, current EPA regulations limit the data available to EPA. EPA states that this proposed change will help the agency identify trends that will improve transparency and accountability.

This CCR Rule update is required by the America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) of 2018. If finalized, CCRs would need to meet new requirements beginning in 2025.

2023 OCWA Corporate Sponsors

By their generous support, the following corporations and agencies have helped ensure the OCWA Board of Directors will be able to pursue its many goals for 2023.

On behalf of the membership, and the entire Orange County water community, we thank you.

Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud & Romo

Ardurra ♦ Black & Veatch

Civiltec ♦ Cla-Val ♦ CIPO ♦ Clow Valve

DN Tanks ♦ Dopudja Wells ♦ Genterra

Hazen & Sawyer ♦ Irvine Ranch Water District

John Robinson Consulting ♦ LEE + RO

Linkture ♦ Mesa Water ♦ Misco Water

MKN Associates ♦ Moulton Niguel Water District

Michael Baker International ♦ Mueller WP

MWH Constructors ♦ Ninyo and Moore

Peterson Structural Engineers ♦ Psomas

SA Associates ♦ Specific Engineering

SPI Engineering ♦ Stantec ♦ TE Roberts

Tetra Tech ♦ Wood Rodgers

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

OCWA Members and their organization can post unlimited job listings to the Association website for FREE. Listings are promoted with weekly e-blasts sent to our 1,600+ contacts, representing over 45 agencies and more than 120 companies county-wide.

This is saturation coverage throughout the County. What else would you expect from the only Orange County Association dedicated to the local water community?

If you would like to post a job opening here, and are a current member, please send a PDF, or a link to a web page detailing the position to the OCWA webmaster.

CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES:

WEROC: Water Emergency Response of O.C. Specialist

SEJPA - Operator I ♦ SEJPA - Operator II

SEJPA - Mechanic I ♦ SEJPA - Mechanic II

OCWD - Senior Programmer Analyst

OCWD - Staff Accountant

OCWD - Contracts Administrator

OCSAN - Principal Staff Analyst (Insurance and Compliance)

OCSAN - Principal IT Analyst

IRWD - Recycled Water Project Specialist (10-22)

SCWD - Safety & Health Program Manager

SCWD - Customer Service Field Representative (Part Time)

OCWD - Senior Maintenance Technician - Grade III

and many more listings on the website . . .

For further information on these and other currently open positions, please visit the "Opportunities" section of the OCWA website:

www.ocwater.org/Job-Opportunities

Members and their agency or company can post Opportunities to the OCWA website, free of charge, as often as they'd like. If you wish to post a job opening, and are a current member, please send a PDF or a link to your web listing to the timhogan@socal.rr.com. We'll post the listing to the website and send out a weekly jobs e-blast to over 1,600 people in the OC water community.

Board of Directors

President

Dave Jones

(916) 769-8753

drjones@hazenandsawyer.com

Vice President

Candice Espinoza

(714) 765-5323

CEspinoza2@anaheim.net

Secretary

Derek Kurtti

(949) 471-3898

KurttiD@BV.com

Treasurer

Bobby Young

(949) 342-1440

BYoung@lbcwd.org

Directors

Taryn Kjolsing

(949) 541-1327

tkjolsing@scwd.org

Tanner Bennett

(818) 720-2922

tanner.bennett@dn tanks.com

Todd Dmytryshyn

(949) 831-2500

TDmytryshyn@mnwd.com

Ex-Officio

Sandy Scott-Roberts

(949) 275-0816

SScottRoberts@BrwnCald.com

Key Contacts

Membership

Derek Kurtti

(949) 471-3898

KurttiD@BV.com

Legal Counsel

Jeff A. Hoskinson

(949) 453-4260

jeff.hoskinson@aalrr.com

Programming

Candice Espinoza

(714) 765-5323

CEspinoza2@anaheim.net

Golf Tournament

Michael Sinacori

(949) 644-3342

msinacori@newportbeachca.gov

Public Outreach

Dave Jones

(916) 769-8753

drjones@hazenandsawyer.com

Communications

Tim Hogan

(714) 903-3991

timhogan@socal.rr.com

OCWA's Board of Directors meets on the third Wednesday

of each month, unless notified otherwise.

The next meeting is scheduled for:

**October 18, 2023
10:30 am to 11:30 am**

Dave & Buster's Restaurant
Irvine Spectrum
Entertainment Center

♦ ♦ ♦

Unless otherwise noted, all articles in this newsletter reflect the views or opinions of the authors and not the official opinion of OCWA, its membership or Board of Directors.

All Advertisements contained in the newsletter are subject to the OCWA Advertising Policy. The OCWA Advertising Policy is available on request from the Association.