

# NEWS CLIPS

Published November 7, 2014



**Resource Conservation and Public Outreach**

Organized by date

## L.A. identifies riskiest pipes in aging water system



In July, a water main broke under Sunset Boulevard near UCLA, flooding the area. Since the rupture, officials have been debating whether to spend more money to upgrade the city's aging water system faster. (Jay L. Clendenin / Los Angeles Times)

By BEN POSTON, MATT STEVENS, EMILY ALPERT REYES *contact the reporters*  
LA TIMES 11/07/2014

More than 5% of L.A.'s water main pipes have reached or passed their expected life expectancy

L.A. identifies the riskiest pipes in its aging water system. Replacing them isn't going to be cheap.

'A reliable water delivery system is not a luxury, it is critical to our very survival'

As Los Angeles struggles to fix its decrepit water system, officials are most concerned about 400 miles of pipes that they say pose the greatest risk of breaking and causing major property damage.

The city issues letter grades to thousands of pipes in the sprawling water network based on the likelihood of failure and the potential consequences of a break. About 6% of the system earned grades of D and F, according to a Times analysis of Department of Water and Power data. Officials said replacing those pipes over the next 10 years is a priority. But it won't be cheap.

The data, obtained under the California Public Records Act, provide a detailed and sobering view of the challenges Los Angeles faces in modernizing the infrastructure, parts of which date to the 19th century. Blowouts that damaged both private and public

property have plagued the system. There have been more than 5,200 pipe leaks since 2010.

The data show that the average age of L.A.'s water pipes is 58 years and that two-thirds of the leaking pipes were installed before 1950. More than 5% of the DWP's water main pipes have reached or passed their expected useful life, The Times' analysis found, and another 8% are approaching the end of their usefulness.

More than 40% — 118,000 of the city's roughly 275,000 pipes — received a grade of C or lower, the data showed. Two pipes involved in last summer's major rupture on Sunset Boulevard near UCLA had received C and D grades. Water from that break inundated parts of the campus and caused millions of dollars in damage.

Since the UCLA pipe burst, city officials have been debating whether to spend more money to upgrade the system faster. Under the current plan, it would take about 300 years to complete.

But finding money for the crucial updates is a daunting challenge in a political environment hesitant to incur the wrath that rate increases would surely draw from L.A.'s water users.

"For a densely populated city like Los Angeles, a reliable water delivery system is not a luxury, it is critical to our very survival," City Councilman Joe Buscaino said in a statement. "These statistics clearly show the need to invest in our infrastructure, and that will cost money."



In September, water gushed along North Olive Drive in West Hollywood after a pipe broke. (Jay L. Clendenin / Los Angeles Times)

Mayor Eric Garcetti has promised not to increase water or electricity rates this year. His office noted the city boosted spending to maintain or replace water mains from \$82 million to \$112 million over the last four years.

Water main leaks and breaks occur on average about three times a day across the city, DWP officials said. The current rate of about 15 leaks per 100 miles is just shy of half the national average, officials say. The agency also said the number of water main leaks and breaks last year was 37% less than in 2006. The city has averaged nearly 1,200 leaks a year since 2010, The Times' analysis found.

About 200 leaks each year are classified as "blowouts" that damage more than 100 square feet of asphalt or pavement, said Joe Castruita, director of water distribution at DWP. In September, DWP data showed that water line blowouts had increased significantly over the summer.

Pipe leaks since 2010 have been reported across the city, but some areas saw more than others, The Times' analysis found. For example, neighborhoods in and around Hollywood Hills had more than 500 leaks combined, about 10% of all leaks in the city.

A lot of the pipes in the Hollywood Hills "are coming of age," Castruita said. "Some of the higher elevations have to operate at a higher pressure than the surface streets. So those can be somewhat susceptible to leaks."

Anastasia Mann said she was not surprised to learn just how dilapidated the city's pipes had become, especially in her neighborhood. Just this year, the president of Hollywood Hills West Neighborhood Council discovered water gushing from a ruptured pipe on gushing water down her street.

"It was like a geyser," she said. "I've seen so many water breaks over the years."



A water main break will continue to affect the busy Hollywood intersection of Santa Monica Boulevard and Highland Avenue on Tuesday after a second rupture occurred just as repairs were wrapping up overnight, utility officials said. ( Adolfo Flores, Jason Wells )

The data showed that Westwood, Silver Lake, Venice, Woodland Hills and Beverly Grove were among the other neighborhoods with an unusually high number of leaks.

The agency is increasing the amount of aging pipe it replaces each year. This fiscal year, DWP will replace 130,000 feet of pipe and plans to replace more than that next year. Castruita said DWP planned to ask for a rate increase next year.

Officials said they planned to target mainline pipes rated F and D for replacement. Factors such as age, leak history, soil conditions and proximity to schools or hospitals contribute to a pipe's poor grade. The average life expectancy of water main pipes, which make up the vast majority of pipes in the DWP system, is 100 years. The oldest water mains are more than 130 years old.

H. David Nahai, former head of the DWP, said the passage this week of Proposition 1, a bond measure that will fund water projects, will make new money available for infrastructure investments. But he said the bond alone won't solve the problem. Ratepayers will simply have to pay more to update and repair old, broken pipes, he said.

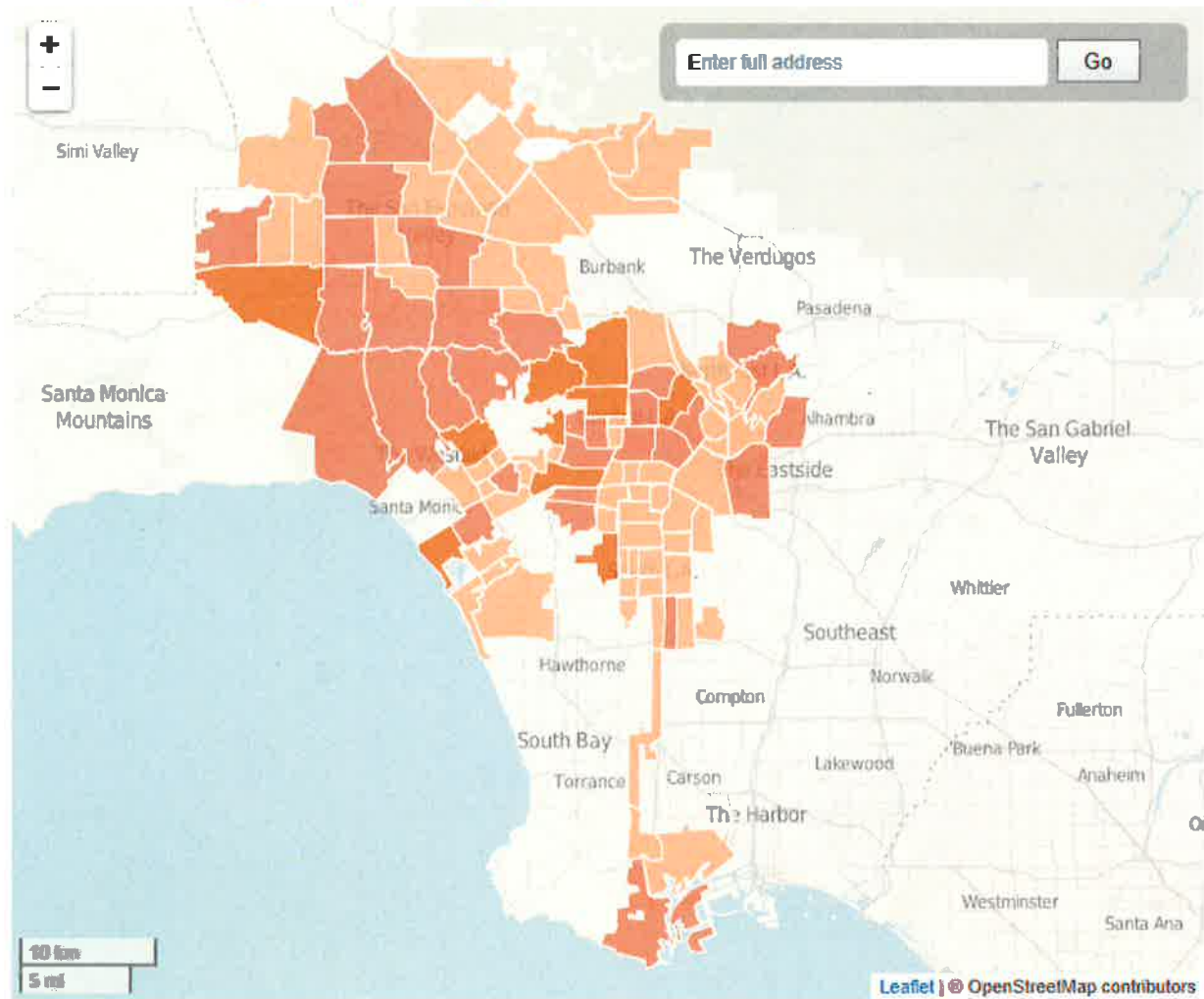
"Nobody likes rate increases ... but they are necessary," Nahai said. "The department needs to make this case to the public."

City Councilman Bob Blumenfield couldn't say whether he would support increasing water rates without knowing more about how that would affect ratepayers in the hottest parts of the San Fernando Valley.

"I am loath to see any sort of increase, but I'm also a pragmatist and a realist," he said.

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power has reported more than 5,200 pipe leaks in L.A. since 2010. A Times analysis found disparities in the number of leaks by neighborhood, with Hollywood Hills West leading the city.

**Number of leaks:** ■ 0 to 50 ■ 50 to 100 ■ 100 or more



Source: Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

## Peterson, Renger prevail in water board race—Steinhardt defeated

By John Loesing

<b>VOTE COUNT</b>	
<b>Jay Lewitt</b>	1,739
<b>Barry Steinhardt</b>	1,357
<b>Lee Renger</b>	1,631
<b>Michael Wilk</b>	1,090
<b>Glen Peterson</b>	1,185
<b>Hugh Wahler</b>	783

Six candidates ran for three seats on the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District board of directors in Tuesday's election.

Two incumbents won but a third did not.

The five-member board oversees sewer services and potable and recycled water delivery for Agoura Hills, Hidden Hills, Calabasas, Westlake Village and surrounding unincorporated areas.

During the campaign, the candidates debated the pros and cons of a 5-million-gallon water storage tank being built in Westlake Village, and how to best steer the water district through the ongoing drought.

Both Glen Peterson and Lee Renger grabbed strong, early leads over challengers Hugh Wahler and Michael Wilk, and never looked back.

But Barry Steinhardt found the going more difficult in his Agoura Hills district against challenger Jay Lewitt and trailed in the vote count right from the start.

Steinhardt, an opponent of the \$13-million water tank and a staunch supporter of low water rates, gained traction at the end of the race when the



**Glen Peterson**

Los Angeles County District Attorney's office issued a ruling against his fellow board members for violating the California Brown Act open meetings law during tank discussion.

But voters took issue with Steinhardt's contentious approach toward the other board members and turned him out of office after only one term in Division 5.

"I think one of his downfalls is that he was always saying no to everything," said Lewitt, an Agoura Hills resident and business owner who beat Steinhardt 56 percent to 44 percent.

Lewitt said he knocked on almost every door in his division in a bid to connect with voters.

He said would continue Steinhardt's policy of questioning fiscal waste at the water district office.

"It's the ratepayers' money, it's not our money," Lewitt said.





**Jay Lewitt**

“I’m beholden to nobody. I’m going to look at every single issue. I have one group in mind to represent and that’s the ratepayers,” he said.

To remain effective and keep water rates low, Lewitt said, the district needs directors who work together, do their homework and represent the best interests of the community.

A retired real estate broker who has represented Division 2 since 1986, Peterson said he wants to use his leadership skills and experience to keep LVMWD on a steady and productive course. He beat Wahler, a retired L.A. County deputy sheriff, 60 percent to 40 percent. The district includes homes and businesses in portions of Agoura Hills, Calabasas and surrounding areas.

Peterson represents LVMWD on the board of Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.



**Lee Renger**

Renger serves Division 3, which includes parts of Calabasas and surrounding unincorporated areas.

A member of the water board since 2005, Renger faced Wilk, an attorney from Calabasas, and also won by a margin of 60 percent to 40 percent.

Letters

## Turf removal and rebates

Kathy Morris, Ventura

I found The Star's recent article about a turf removal program in Camarillo that rewards residents who replace their lawns with artificial turf or drought-tolerant landscaping very interesting. One Camarillo resident in the article received a \$1,600 rebate from this.

The program is so popular that the Calleguas Municipal Water District has given it extra funding.

I did write Ventura Water here to ask why the city does not participate in such a program for us. The response I received was very disappointing; it was lengthy, full of political rhetoric and weak excuses.

You see, the city also has to participate in these rebate programs to make it available to homeowners and businesses, but it requires some money on its part.

My property tax bill has steadily gone up each year and, yes, our water bill is slated for a four-year rate hike.

As such, I would think the city has enough money in its coffers to participate in this very worthy program for Ventura residents.

The "don't-wash-your-car-for- a-month" campaign was small potatoes compared to this rebate program that even involves the businesses.

Let's get with the program and made a big difference where it's most effective.

*Copyright © 2014 Ventura County Star 11/06/2014*

# Californians along coast use less water

*Report finds residents still cutting back*

By Fenit Nirappil Associated Press  
Ventura County Star 11/05/2014

SACRAMENTO — Residents in coastal communities use far less water than their inland counterparts, but still find ways to cut back even more, residential per capita water use figures released for the first time Tuesday show.

The State Water Resources Control Board is collecting per capita data to better target conservation efforts as farms go fallow and reservoirs dry up. Gov. Jerry Brown called on Californians to reduce water use by 20 percent when he declared a drought emergency in January.

Californians are being asked to let their lawns go brown and take shorter showers as the likelihood of drought conditions worsening rises. The data released Tuesday shows big disparities in water habits.

Regional water use ranges from 84 gallons per person, per day in the San Francisco Bay Area to 252 in the Colorado River basin, which includes San Bernardino and Riverside. The figures exclude industrial, agricultural and business water users.

Median per capita water use is 131 gallons, according to estimates from 351 suppliers serving roughly 33 million Californians. Residents in California's three largest cities, Los Angeles, San Diego and San Jose, are using between 82 and 96 gallons a day.

In densely-packed San Francisco with lawns relatively rare, residents use 46 gallons a day. In the wealthy 5,000-person community of Cowan Heights in Orange County, water use is more than 569 gallons a day.

"If you have a place with a really high per capita (water use) and use is flat, it raises the question of what's going on," said Max Gomberg, senior environmental scientist with the water board.

Cowan Heights, for example, reported just a 2 percent drop in monthly water use in September compared to the year before. A request for comment was not immediately returned from a Cowan Heights spokesperson.

Regions with the lowest per capita water use, however, are reporting some of the biggest drops in monthly water use. The San Francisco Bay Area region decreased water use by 15 percent despite already having the lowest per capita consumption in the state.

Not all conservation is by choice. Residents in eastern Bay Area cities including Dublin,

Livermore and Pleasanton have endured mandatory restrictions with severe cutbacks in water imports. Coastal Santa Cruz with limited and outdated storage is rationing water, with offenders paying steep fines and attending corrective classes.

Cities and local water agencies are required to report the figures under emergency regulations approved by the water board in July. Those regulations also included mandatory outdoor water restrictions backed up with the threat of up to \$500 fines for violations.

Statewide monthly water use in September fell 10 percent compared to the same month in 2013, according to self-reporting by nearly 400 water agencies. But that's down from an 11.5 percent decline reported for August.

Water officials say residents need to conserve more.

"Some rain and cooler weather are welcome relief, but they don't mean the drought is over, not by a long shot," said Felicia Marcus, chairwoman of the state water board, in a news release. "By far, conservation is still the most cost effective and common sense way to meet our water needs during this prolonged drought."

*Copyright © 2014 Ventura County Star 11/05/2014*

Public safety briefs

LAKE SHERWOOD

## Pipeline shutdown slated for Saturday

The Calleguas Municipal Water District will shut down the only drinking water supply pipeline to the Lake Sherwood community south of Thousand Oaks on Saturday, officials said Tuesday.

Officials will fill reservoirs before the pipeline is shut down. Susan Mulligan, Calleguas' general manager, asked Lake Sherwood residents "to limit their water use this weekend to essential needs only and to refrain from any outdoor watering."

The 24hour shutdown will begin early Saturday evening.

Workers need to inspect the pipeline and record video of a segment of the Lake Sherwood water feeder along Moorpark Road under the Highway 101 overpass, officials said.

The 24inch diameter conduit is close to where new pilings are being built as part of a highway widening project.

The pipeline, built in the late 1980s, delivers water to about 2,000 people in the Lake Sherwood area.

*Copyright © 2014 Ventura County Star 11/05/2014*

Letters

## Quagga mussels

Ralph J. Steele, Ojai

Re: your Oct. 27 article, "Upkeep is steep": I didn't know whether to laugh or cry after reading the article. For example, on the front page there was a beautiful scene, including reference to plans for upgrading the Lake Piru recreation area, and on Page 2, there was a dramatic photo of a colony of quagga mussels that had just been pulled from the lake!

One of the things about United Water Conservation District's pronouncements concerning quagga mussels since last January that amazes me is its impression that the mussels are going to be just another maintenance item, such as controlling algae or repairing leaks in the dam.

This perception will prove to be totally false because the mussels can and will reproduce in such huge numbers they will take over the lake. As this happens, the oxygen content of the water will drop, fish and plants will die, the beach will be covered with shells too sharp to walk on, and the lake will stink.

So, in addition to considering plans for upgrading the recreation area, I hope Lynn Maulhart, United's board president, will make one of their first priorities killing every quagga mussel in Lake Piru and Lower Piru Creek before damage from the mussels kills United financially.

*Copyright © 2014 Ventura County Star 11/05/2014*

# \$7.5B water bond advances

By The Associated Press  
Ventura County Star 11/05/2014

LOS ANGELES — California voters on Tuesday approved spending \$7.5 billion to improve the state's outdated and undersized water storage and delivery system amid a historic drought.

Proposition 1 had about two-thirds support among nearly 2.6 million votes counted, with millions more ballots left to tally. It calls for building two new reservoirs, investing in conservation measures, water recycling and groundwater cleanup.

Gov. Jerry Brown, who spent more time and money campaigning for the bond measure than his own re-election, said it will help California make investments in water that will pay dividends during future dry periods.

"I just spent the last several months saying, 'save water, save money,'" he said. "These are pillars because water is life. It is the basis of our well-being and also our economy."

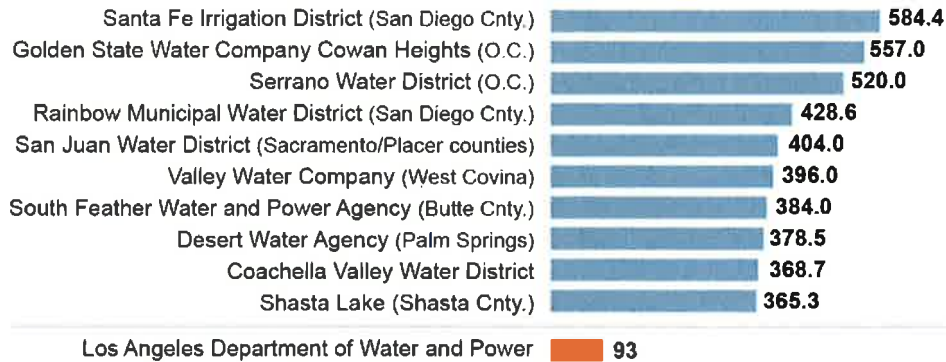
*Copyright © 2014 Ventura County Star 11/05/2014*



# In California, water use is all over the map

## Highest water consumption in California

Self-reported residential gallons per capita per day in September 2014: \*



\*12% of water districts did not report their data.

Source: State Water Board

@latimesgraphics

By MATT STEVENS *contact the reporter*

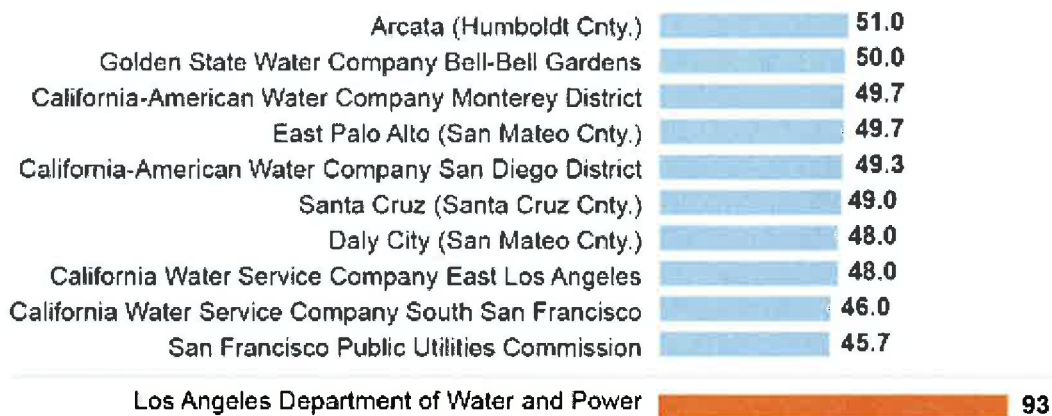
LA TIMES 11/05/2014

In L.A. County, Beverly Hills residents used 286 gallons per person daily, while Compton residents used 65

In posh parts of northern San Diego County, residents on average used more than 580 gallons of water a day in September. During the same month, Angelenos in less-affluent East L.A. used an average of 48 gallons a day, according to data that state water officials released Tuesday, which shows for the first time just how dramatically water use varies among California communities.

## Lowest water consumption in California

Self-reported residential gallons per capita per day in September 2014: \*



\*12% of water districts did not report their data.

Source: State Water Board

@latimesgraphics

Hoping to increase conservation, the State Water Resources Control Board released estimates of residential daily water use per person in September, as reported by more than 300 urban water suppliers. The heaviest water users, the data showed, used more than 10 times as much as those who used the least.

Statewide, residents in some water districts used an average of more than 500 gallons per capita a day, while others used as little as 46 gallons. The Santa Fe Irrigation District, which serves residents in an affluent part of northern and coastal San Diego County, recorded the highest average, 584 gallons. Southland water users served by the Desert Water Agency and Coachella Valley Water District, both in desert areas, weren't far behind, using more than 360 gallons per capita a day.

Two water distributors in San Francisco and one in East Los Angeles recorded the lowest average totals, 46, 46 and 48, respectively. In Santa Cruz, which has some of the toughest conservation measures in the state, residents used an average of 49 gallons per person a day.

In Los Angeles County, Beverly Hills residents used 286 gallons per person daily, while Compton residents used only 65. Residents served by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power used 93 gallons a day. About four-dozen water districts did not report per capita data.

Still, water officials and experts said the information will help water districts understand exactly how much residents use and identify areas for improvement.

We're hoping water agencies will look at this list and use it for self-evaluation: How are people in their area doing and how they can do better?- Felicia Marcus, chairwoman of the State Water Resources Control Board

"We're hoping water agencies will look at this list and use it for self-evaluation: How are people in their area doing and how they can do better?" Water Resources Control Board Chairwoman Felicia Marcus said. "It's not a report card; It's an instructive thing."

Experts said higher per capita water usage make sense in areas where lot sizes are larger and in hotter regions of the state where water evaporates faster. A recent UCLA study also found that household income is a primary driver of increased water use.

"If those communities that could do something haven't done anything [to conserve], we're missing a huge opportunity to work together as Angelenos," said Miguel Luna, executive director of Urban Semillas, a community organization focused on food and water issues. "South L.A. and East L.A. have done their part. Now the affluent communities need to ante up."

The new data come as Californians work to cut water usage to meet Gov. Jerry Brown's goal of a 20% reduction statewide. Since May, the state water board has been reporting water usage reductions. Overall, Californians continued to use less water in September, but the reductions were more modest than in August. The board announced that statewide water consumption dropped 10.3% — about 22 billion gallons — in September, compared with the same month a year earlier. In August, water use fell 11.5% compared with August 2013.

Water officials and other experts have long maintained that Southern Californians have been aggressively conserving water for years, a factor they say accounts for the region's smaller monthly usage reductions compared with other areas of the state. Many Northern California areas have reported steeper monthly cuts, but officials have warned against drawing comparisons because southern residents already use less water.

Tuesday's data showed that, on average, Southern California residents used 119 gallons per person a day — the fourth-lowest average among 10 regions the water board tracked.

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power saw an 8% decrease in water use in September compared with the same month last year after reporting a similar decrease in August. In a statement, DWP General Manager Marcie Edwards said the September numbers show that DWP customers "continue to watch their water use and do their part during the drought."

Copyright © 2014, Los Angeles Times

In Cambria, rift over water treatment plant is a drain on parched town



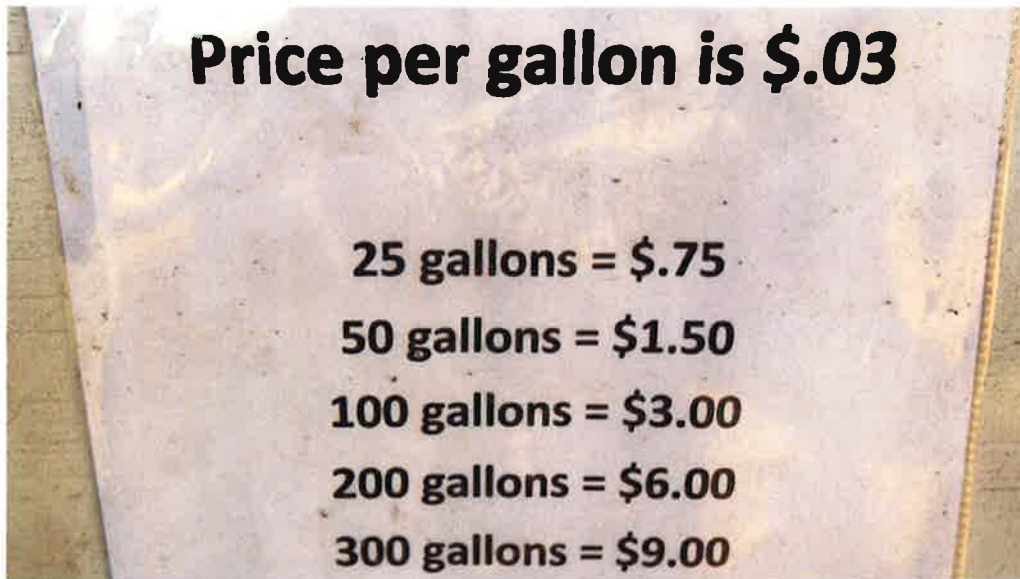
Jon Pedotti walks on the cracked bottom of a dry lake bed on his ranch in October. (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)



A windmill-powered well feeds water to a trough for some of Jon Pedotti's 280 head of cattle in October. For the others, he hauls a 500-gallon tank of water to sate their thirst on his 1,561-acre ranch located along San Simeon Creek in the foothills near Cambria. (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)



Pedotti closes a gate in in the Santa Lucia Mountain foothills. "The residents of Cambria are heroic," he said. "They're living on less water than anyone else in this state. You can't squeeze another drop out of Cambria." (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)



San Simeon Creek rancher Clyde Warren sells Cambria residents non-potable water. Opponents of a water treatment plant say they would prefer to build a reservoir to bank water during rainy years on land Warren has said he would sell to the Cambria Community Services District. (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)



The Park Hill residential neighborhood in the Central Coast town of Cambria, which has cut water consumption 40%. Some residents are fighting the \$9.13-million brackish-water treatment plant under construction along one of two creeks that feed Cambria's aquifer. (Al Seib / Los Angeles Times)

By AMANDA COVARRUBIAS

LA TIMES 11/04/2014

Over the last year, Cambria has reduced water use 40%, but that's not enough

They're the trees that gave this quaint Central Coast village its nickname: Cambria Pines by the Sea.

But the towering Monterey pines — one of only three such native forests in the United States — are being ravaged by the drought. Most are brown and brittle. Weakened by lack of water, some have toppled. Others were cut down to prevent them from falling on cars and houses.

"The town lost 25% of its trees last year, and half of those that are standing are brown and dead," said Rick Hawley, a founder of the preservation group Greenspace, who waters some of the younger, more vulnerable trees.

The trees are a symbol of the drought's effect on the relatively isolated Central Coast, which — despite its proximity to the world's largest body of water — is particularly vulnerable to shortages because it relies on an unstable networks of creeks, lakes and State Water Project allocations.

The residents of Cambria are heroic. They're living on less water than anyone else in this state. You can't squeeze another drop out of Cambria.- Jon Pedotti, rancher

As the three-year drought drags on, cities and towns on the Central Coast are looking for alternatives: Santa Barbara may dust off its dormant desalination plant, and San Luis Obispo County wants to connect two pipelines to deliver emergency water to Morro Bay and state and county agencies along Highway 1.

In Cambria, the water shortage is particularly acute because its 6,000 residents get all of their supply from two shrinking local creeks. To prevent the creeks from going dry, the Cambria Community Services District is building a controversial treatment plant to essentially make the town's water go further.

Over the last year, Cambria embarked on a massive civic effort to reduce water consumption, and it succeeded: Water use dropped 40%.

Yet that was not enough for the unincorporated community six miles south of Hearst Castle. The Community Services District declared an extreme water shortage in January and soon secured a fast-tracked county permit to build the water treatment plant along one of two creeks that feed its aquifer.

"We were faced with well levels dropping precipitously, and we needed to take action," said Jim Bahringer, president of the district's board of directors.

But critics say the \$9.13-million water treatment plant will damage the delicate ecosystem, particularly San Simeon Creek lagoon, and burden ratepayers for years. They say there never really was a drought emergency because of successful conservation measures, and some liken the plant to a land grab to spur future growth.

"They're trying to turn this into Carmel," resident Tina Dickason said recently as she photographed mallards floating in the marshy lagoon. "If we wanted to live in Carmel, we would have moved there."



Now in its third year, the drought in California has reached record-breaking levels of dryness, with more than half of the state under the most severe level of drought. In some of the hardest hit communities, taps have run completely dry, leaving hundreds of households with no access to running...

Water rates will increase "significantly" to cover construction and operating costs, Bahringer said, with the amount depending on usage and whether the customer is a home or business. The district also has applied for state drought relief grants to help cover the cost.

The treatment plant being built upstream from the lagoon would replenish the town's wells in drought years by treating brackish water — a combination of groundwater, percolated wastewater treatment plant effluent and a mix of fresh water and salt water — and eventually returning it to the aquifer.

The plant is being built under an emergency permit approved by San Luis Obispo County, but Bahringer said the goal is to make it permanently available during drought years when the wells fed by San Simeon and Santa Rosa creeks run dangerously low.

On Oct. 14, an environmental group called LandWatch San Luis Obispo and Stanford Law School's Environmental Law Clinic filed a lawsuit alleging the Community Services District violated state laws by rushing the plant through the permit process.

District officials denied the allegations, especially the notion that there is no emergency.

"This is a preposterous position given the undeniable reality of the water crisis Cambria is facing," officials said in a statement. "The fact that Cambria is in an unprecedented emergency has been recognized by every level of government in the permitting process."

Bahringer and other proponents, including a new group called Cambrians for Water, bristle at suggestions the project is a front to enable development.

"Our opponents have always used water as a weapon to stop growth," said Greg Hunter, a group founder. "But the problem is they've also stopped us from developing a reliable and sustainable water source that will take our residents and businesses through drought periods."

Opponents said they would prefer the district build a reservoir to bank water during rainy years. And they say they know the perfect site: a canyon near San Simeon Creek on land that rancher Clyde Warren has said he would sell to the district.

For now, many Cambrians are taking advantage of another offer made by Warren: He sells them non-potable water for three cents a gallon to keep their gardens from withering.

On a scorching afternoon, Heather Menges jumped out of her pickup and stuck a hose into the 500-gallon tank in the bed. It was one of 10 trips she makes to Warren's well six days a week, delivering water to residents and to hotels on Moonstone Beach. She



started her business, the Watering Can, in September 2013, thinking it would last only a few months and she could become a stay-at-home mom to her 21/2 -year-old.

"It's scary," she said of the long-running drought. Although she lives in Cayucos, Menges grew up in Cambria and said she supports the water treatment plant.

"Any kind of backup plan is good," Menges said. "It's insurance for Cambria."

Many residents have bought their own backyard tanks to water their yards and gardens, and water trucks large and small are a common sight.

"People basically let their gardens die or they bring in their own water," said Catherine Ryan Hyde, a writer who has lived in Cambria for 30 years. She recently installed a 300-gallon tank in her yard to sustain hers, especially a cherished dwarf lemon tree, a birthday gift from her mother before her death.

"Even if I have to buy quart bottles of drinking water, I'm going to hold on to it," she said of the tree.

Beyond its yards and gardens, Cambria's famed Monterey pines also are at risk. Experts say the drought could kill as many as 40% of them. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection is planning to survey the extent of the devastation, said Alan Peters, a unit forester for the agency in San Luis Obispo County.

"There's been a dramatic increase in dead, orange trees," Peters said. "You can see it. They're not going to come back, even if it poured rain."

Hawley of Greenspace opposes the plant and says offers by ranchers to help Cambria through the drought, or even leasing a mobile desalination plant, are preferable alternatives.

"By the way, we're not going to run out of water," Hawley said of warnings by the community services board that Cambria could run dry by year's end. "That's a scare tactic."

On a recent bright morning, Jon Pedotti piloted his pickup over the brown hills of his 1,561-acre ranch as San Simeon Bay glistened in the distance. A natural spring that once sated the thirst of his 280 head of cattle has long since dried up, so he hauls a 500-gallon tank through an oak-studded canyon twice a day to water them.

On a different part of the ranch, past the parched lake bed where his cows once drank unfettered, a windmill-powered well feeds another trough.

To Pedotti, the water wars in Cambria are personal. He has owned, worked and lived on this land since 1973. He has seen what his neighbors have accomplished in the face of ever-diminishing water supplies.

"The residents of Cambria are heroic," Pedotti said. "They're living on less water than anyone else in this state. You can't squeeze another drop out of Cambria."

Although no one asked him to, Pedotti has left half the 103 acres of irrigated land on his ranch unplanted to ease the toll on the local aquifer — and, by extension, his friends in Cambria. As a result, two unused wells could be tapped by the water district, and he figures they could supply about one-third of Cambria's water needs for the next three months.

"There's not a rancher here who wants to see Cambria run out of water," Pedotti said. "If every agency signed off on this [water treatment plant] based on the fact that there was an emergency, then why won't they take the water from our wells?"

[amanda.covarrubias@latimes.com](mailto:amanda.covarrubias@latimes.com)

Twitter: [@amcovarrubias](https://twitter.com/amcovarrubias)

Copyright © 2014, Los Angeles Times

GUEST COLUMNIST

## County ignores stakeholders; bans well-drilling

John Krist

Ventura County Star 11/02/2014

Re: your Oct. 29 article, "New well curbs OK'd": There is no question that California is gripped by extraordinary drought, perhaps the most severe in its recorded history. And there is no question that many of Ventura County's groundwater basins are under intense stress. Long-term imbalances between extractions and recharge, exacerbated by three years of extremely low rainfall, have sent water levels in some basins plummeting.

The Oct. 28 approval of a well-drilling moratorium by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, however, will do nothing to address this. In fact, the most likely result of this exercise in political theater will be to make proper management of local groundwater basins more difficult.

The reason for the moratorium's ineffectiveness is simple: The county lacks jurisdiction and authority to constrain the actions of state-authorized entities. This means the moratorium does not apply to or within any incorporated city in the county.

It does not apply within the area managed by the Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency, which encompasses more than half the county's irrigated farmland and nearly all of the most severely depleted aquifer systems. It does not apply to the Santa Paula Basin, which underlies a significant stretch of the Santa Clara River Valley. It does not affect pumping by any existing well owner anywhere in the county.

The moratorium instead applies to just a tiny fraction of the groundwater in the county, and prevents only some theoretical future increase in extractions that might result from new wells. And the only groundwater users it will affect are farmers, not urban residents. It's primarily for these reasons the Farm Bureau opposed the ordinance.

These points were made clearly and repeatedly during the public hearing on the moratorium proposal, but to no avail. Board Chairman Steve Bennett justified the ordinance's inequitable impact on just one category of user — agriculture — by noting that this is the only category of user the county has legal authority to regulate.

That's true, but it's a hollow justification, like using a hammer to repair a clock simply because a hammer happens to be the only item in your toolbox. Common sense would suggest not doing anything. Or, better yet, handing the task over to someone who does have the right tools, even if that means living with a broken clock for a while.

There soon will be the equivalent of groundwater repair shops that do have the right tools. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, which takes effect Jan. 1, requires that basins experiencing the most serious stress be brought under the authority

of yet-to-be-created groundwater sustainability agencies.

The law grants those agencies the regulatory tools and statutory responsibility to craft management plans for those basins.

That is going to be a very difficult task, legally, logistically and politically. It's going to take some time, and it will only succeed if undertaken in a context of trust and collaboration. And this is why the potential effect of the Board of Supervisors' action is to make matters worse, not better.

The new law describes a process of basin plan development that is open, transparent, and heavily dependent on the guidance of local stakeholders. Yet, development of the county moratorium was anything but open and transparent. And during the Oct. 28 hearing, supervisors and others were dismissive of stakeholder involvement in resource-management policy, characterizing it as nothing more than a delaying tactic to avoid making hard decisions.

Sometimes that is true, but more often it is not, and that blanket dismissal insults everyone who's ever participated in such an effort in good faith. It is also a troubling indication that the county may be an impediment, not a partner, as this region attempts to comply with the new groundwater act.

As Ventura County's primary users of groundwater, farmers and ranchers deserve a prominent role in the development of such plans, regardless of who leads and which other stakeholders participate. In fact, the effort cannot succeed without them.

But unless growers are treated as partners, not adversaries, that cooperation will be difficult to secure. And in the wake of the Oct. 28 hearing, it will not be easy to gain their trust.

John Krist is chief executive officer of the Farm Bureau of Ventura County.

*Copyright © 2014 Ventura County Star 11/02/2014*

Letters

## Water security

Jessica Reinhardt, Agoura Hills

Ventura County Star 11/02/2014

Local elections are vitally important; they have the most power to affect our everyday lives. That is why I am supporting Jay Lewitt for the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District board.

Lewitt understands that we need a comprehensive approach to our water security. We need elected officials who will act in the public interest all the time, not just in ways that sound good at election time.

The incumbent has been foolish and ineffective, while ignoring multiple experts who say we need to strengthen our water infrastructure now. Instead, his delays have added significant costs to a needed project.

Lewitt is invested in our community, raising a family and building a successful business. We need that common sense and financial knowledge to assure a way of life that makes our community a better place.

Without a reliable water system, we cannot thrive. There can be no compromise where it comes to having safe, reliable and affordable water.

That's why I'm voting for Jay Lewitt, and I respectfully ask my Agoura Hills neighbors to join in sending a respected and highly qualified person to the Las Virgenes Water District board.

# Craven knows water

Al Fox, Camarillo

Ventura County Star 11/02/2014

Do you know why Charlotte Craven gets my vote for Camarillo City Council? It's because she knows water, and we need her to help make some big water decisions very soon.

Charlotte represents cities on the Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency board. A new law gives them more power, and we need her to make sure cities and water agencies, not just farmers, are allocated water fairly. Charlotte has been learning about water ever since the drought in the '90s. She also has earned the trust and developed a working relationship with the other board members.

Here's the deal. We're not getting water from Northern California anymore. Think of our water supply as money in the bank. Using surface water is like writing checks on your checking account. Using groundwater is like taking money out of your IRA/401(k). If you take too much out, it'll take a lot longer to replenish it than it did to take it out.

Developing new, fair water rules could be a free for all. When the board makes new rules, I want fair treatment for my city and water agency. Vote for Charlotte Craven for City Council.

*Copyright © 2014 Ventura County Star 11/02/2014*

Public safety briefs

FARIA BEACH

## Pipe breaks; sewage spills into ocean

About 720 gallons of raw sewage spilled Thursday into the ocean south of the Pacific Coast Highway between Solimar and Faria beaches in an unincorporated part of Ventura County, environmental health officials said Friday.

The discharge started about noon Thursday and came from a 30-year-old sewer main, county officials said. They blamed the "stress of concrete encasement over time on the pipeline."

The discharge was stopped about 7 p.m. Thursday, and workers repaired the line by 3 a.m. Friday.

County officials posted warning signs along the south end of the PCH where the discharge happened.

The signs will stay there until sample results show the water meets state ocean water quality standards, county officials said.

The public is urged to avoid contact with ocean water in the area. Shellfish from the area may also have been exposed to the sewage and should not be eaten, officials said. For more information, call 378-3015.

*Copyright © 2014 Ventura County Star 11/01/2014*

View it online anytime at [www.cityofcalabasas.com/enews/2014/november2014.html](http://www.cityofcalabasas.com/enews/2014/november2014.html)



## CITYWIDE SMART IRRIGATION SYSTEM PROJECT RECEIVES ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AWARD



Last month, Calabasas hosted a ribbon-cutting to mark the implementation of a Citywide Smart Irrigation Control System project. Senator Fran Pavley honored the City with the Environmental Sustainability Award noting that with this project, the City will reduce water use in public streets, parks, and city facilities, demonstrating admirable leadership during California's challenging drought situation.

Smart controllers are irrigation clocks that automatically adjust irrigation run times in response to environmental changes and use sensors and weather information to manage watering times and frequency. As conditions vary, the controllers increase or decrease irrigation. The Calabasas system will reduce runoff and total water usage through a central control station that utilizes current evapo-transpiration (ET) and wireless technology.

"Calabasas prides itself on saving money and being good stewards of our environment,"



said Mayor David J. Shapiro. “Our smart system will reduce approximately 25% of the City’s water consumption.” In addition, Calabasas will expand reclaimed water irrigation at several parks.

The project is funded primarily by Proposition 84 from the California Department of Water Resources and directly addresses the water conservation and water quality objectives of the proposition.



Change  
YOUR Clocks

Check  
YOUR  
Sprinklers



*It's that time of the year again - time to turn our clocks back.  
Sunday, November 2 is the official end of daylight savings time.  
We gain an extra hour of sleep and we save significant amounts  
of water by using the time change as a reminder to check our  
sprinkler system for leaks and to reset timers.*



[www.LVMWD.com](http://www.LVMWD.com)