

# NEWS CLIPS

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**Resource Conservation and Public Outreach**

Organized by date

# San Francisco Giants ordered to cut back on water use

Source: LA Times 11/6/15



The San Francisco Giants did not use any Champagne this September, but they used plenty of water.

They exceeded their water allotment that month by 70% -- not at AT&T Park, but at a team-run park across from McCovey Cove.

The Giants were ordered to cut water use there, according to utility records obtained by the San Francisco Chronicle.

The team blamed leaks that it said have since been repaired.

"We've had trouble with people stealing irrigation equipment there," Giants spokeswoman Staci Slaughter told the Chronicle. "We've fixed it."

The Chronicle reported last month that Billy Beane, the Oakland Athletics' executive vice president of baseball operations, "has been slopping nearly 6,000 gallons of water a day on the grounds of his Danville estate and his swimming pool." The Chronicle cited utility records that included Beane "among the top water hogs in the East Bay."

In a statement, Beane said leaks had been discovered on his property and would be fixed.

"We are more than displeased and embarrassed by the usage," he said in the statement, "and are taking immediate action."

Editorial

## Soak the rich to help solve California's water crisis

Source: LA Times 11/6/15

During a time of drought, when most urban dwellers are making do with less, nothing sticks in the craw quite like the cad in Bel-Air who reportedly is using 90 times as much water as the average household. Nothing would be more emotionally satisfying than socking him (or her, or them) with a hefty fine and sending a mob of angry Angelenos to stomp down his lawns, jump in his fountains and otherwise despoil whatever else may be sucking up all that water. Don't forget to bring your torch and your pitchfork. And your canteen.

But here's the thing about that particular guzzler and the others similarly situated: In the scheme of things, they're really not that big a problem. They account for a very small portion of water use, and they pay for their wanton ways through tiered rate structures that bill them at the highest rate for most of their usage. That's good not just for the utility's bookkeepers but for all the ratepayers who are able to keep paying a lower cost per gallon for their more modest consumption.

Meanwhile, the vast majority of urban water users are responsible Californians who have met the challenge of a shrinking snowpack and a less reliable water supply with substantial cutbacks.

Should the guzzlers pay even more than they already do? Yes. We're in the eighth year of a drought (not counting the wet winter of 2011) and are facing a future with less water to go around. By all means, the tier structure should be modified to encourage wiser use and at the same time bring in some of the money needed for recycling and other projects that can bring in more water. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and Mayor [Eric Garcetti](#) are correct to propose a fourth rate tier for the biggest users.

Penalties may ultimately also have a role in helping California work through its longer-term challenge, but they are fairly blunt instruments and accomplish little in allocating the state's shrinking water resources. Tiers offer incentives to conserve while ensuring that top users pay for their above-normal consumption.

Unfortunately, the tier system exists in a shadowy legal landscape due to the court ruling that struck down San Juan Capistrano's rate structure earlier this year. For now, most utility managers appear confident that their tiered rates can withstand legal scrutiny, but California has a lot of work ahead of it — in thinking, policymaking and litigating — to figure out the fairest way to parcel out water among residents.

# Early-season storm makes small dent in California's drought outlook

Source: LA Times 11/6/15



An early-season storm that blanketed mountains from Northern California to the Central Valley with snow showed tangible results on the state's historic drought, new federal data show.

Two areas of California considered to be in "exceptional" drought were upgraded to the "extreme" category — the best either area has seen since at least the beginning of summer, according to the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#).

A third area also was upgraded from extreme to severe, an even better improvement.

On Monday, a Pacific storm dumped between 11 and 30 inches of snow on mountains from Truckee to Mammoth. The new data show that a portion of Modoc County moved from exceptional drought to extreme.

That area had been in exceptional drought since early July. Farther south, in Mono and Inyo counties, two swaths of land that had been in exceptional drought since January and February were finally upgraded. One area bordering Nevada also moved into the severe category.

The U.S. Drought Monitor report, which comes out weekly and provides a glimpse of the nation's drought status by region, called the rain and snow an "early bonus" for California's water year, which runs from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30.

"But with 4 consecutive years of drought, this precipitation was just a start to moisten the soils for hopefully more (frozen preferred) precipitation this winter," the report stated.

The past six months have been unusually wet in the eastern part of the state, the report said, also laying the groundwork for more gains on the state's drought if there's a large El Niño rain season as many experts predict.

“This past 6 months of wetness in a semi-arid environment is significant and a good start to ... the water year,” it said.

There needs to be more snow in the Sierra Nevada, however, for experts to upgrade those areas. Much of the mountain range remains in the worst category. Less than two-tenths of a percent of California is not under some level of drought.

Snowpack is a key factor in California's water supply: In a normal year, melting Sierra Nevada snow provides the state with one-third of its water. Another third is pumped from aquifers, and the rest comes from rivers and reservoirs.

This spring, researchers found that the amount of water contained in the snow on April 1 was 5% of the average snow-water equivalent since monitoring began.

A new federal forecast released in October showed the upcoming El Niño could bring rains into Northern California, reaching more vital reservoirs than previously predicted. El Niño is a weather phenomenon that involves warming sea-surface temperatures and a change in wind that alters weather patterns in the atmosphere worldwide.

# Camarillo council OKs barrier project to protect Camarillo Springs

Source: Ventura County Star 11/5/15

The Camarillo City Council on Wednesday narrowly approved a debris barrier project to help protect a Camarillo Springs neighborhood from mud and debris flows this winter.

After a contentious meeting that ran several hours, the council voted 3-2 shortly before midnight to approve a contract with San Luis Obispo-based Access Limited Construction for an amount not to exceed \$1.7 million.

Mayor Bill Little and Councilman Mike Morgan opposed the deal that calls for constructing a project designed by Kane Geotech. It involves using flexible debris barriers to increase the storage capacity on three existing debris platforms on the hillside above Camarillo Springs. Grading also would be done on the hillside.

Access also is expected to provide one year of maintenance on the project at a cost of \$150,000. The contract states that Access has 45 days to complete the work.

Before construction can begin, the city needs written permission from the Camarillo Springs Homeowners' Association to access a private road to complete the project.

The council's decision disappointed several residents who favored an alternative proposal offered by the Camarillo Springs Common Area Association and designed by a geotechnical firm. It would've widened the three debris platforms and built a fixed, rigid barrier wall, among other things.

Saturday was the one-year anniversary of the first debris flow of mud and rocks that inundated the neighborhood during heavy rains last year, seriously damaging 10 homes.

Public Works Director Tom Fox said city officials evaluated both options and found that industry experts agree that flexible barriers have been tested and are able to dissipate energy in the event of another debris flow.

Fox said the debris barrier project has more science behind it, would cost \$100,000 less than the alternative project and have a shorter completion schedule. He said the project would include 13-foot barriers that can be more easily maintained and withstand greater loads, and that it could be tested after installation, unlike the alternative project.

The public works director said after the council's approval, the city would put the order in immediately to get the materials delivered for the project.

The council already authorized in October for city staff to order up to \$400,000 in materials for the debris barrier project.

Several residents spoke about how the city expressed their approval of the alternative proposal at previous meetings with homeowners.

“We started out tonight talking about option one and option two. After that, there was virtually no discussion of option two, and everything that was said was simply denigrating the value (of) the proposal that we put forward,” said Jim Lingl, the attorney for the Camarillo Springs Common Area Association.

Tom Staben, a property owner, said option two had several advantages, including that it could be started more quickly and an \$11 million liability policy would follow the project for 10 years.

Morgan said he would like to have both options available as the city moves forward.

Little said he didn’t mind going along with option two since the residents were willing to take care of the maintenance and not come back with change orders.

Councilwoman Jan McDonald said she has talked to many Camarillo Springs residents who say they just want something done to protect their homes.

“I think that’s what we as a City Council at this point in time have to do and we got to get moving. We can’t sit here and argue and point fingers or anything else,” said McDonald.

Barbara Williams, president of The Springs Homeowners Association board, said the city will be notified by Friday if the private road can be used, though she noted that debris from the road previously contributed to damaging homes below.

Little said he was frustrated with residents, saying the city has delayed work to protect homes. He said it was actually the homeowners who wanted a different project, and that the city has gone back and forth trying to reach an agreement with residents and property owners.

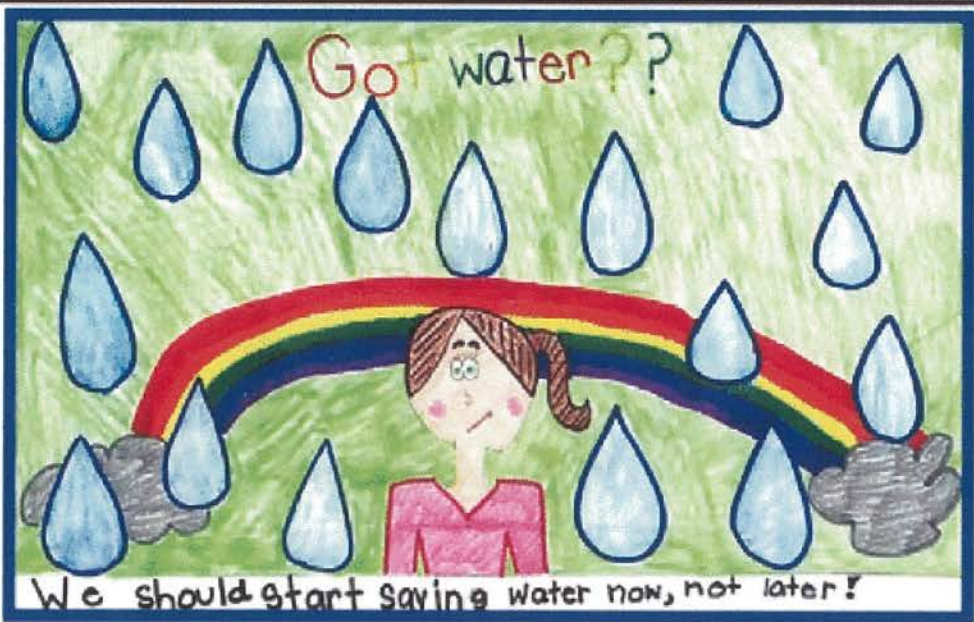
“I’m tired of the city taking the heat, making it appear that we’re the ones that dragged our feet. We did not drag our feet,” Little told the residents.

In other action Wednesday, the council unanimously approved increasing city water rates by 7 percent a year for the next two years.

City officials said the increases are necessary for funding water infrastructure capital improvement projects and meeting water safety control measures and imported water costs.

The council also unanimously re-declared a Stage 2 water shortage in the city and established a water conservation credit program, which would require new development to implement water conservation measures to offset water demand in order to receive new water service.

Source: The Acorn 11/5/15




Got water??

We should start saving water now, not later!


2015 Water Awareness Poster Contest Finalist  
Ereka Tousseau, 5th Grade  
Mrs. Lorch, Sumac Elementary School

**Learn to Conserve from Children!**




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# Five Million Gallon Tank Open House

Saturday, November 14, 10am - 1pm

Join Us To Tour The Latest Improvements To Your Water System

Saturday, November 14, 10am - 1pm



Las Virgenes MWD customers are invited to an open house and tour of the completed 5-million gallon tank at Las Virgenes Reservoir in Westlake Village.

Guests may also tour the Westlake Filtration Plant while visiting the site.

Enjoy a complimentary hot dog, drink and scenic views - share photos using #LVMWD5mil.

There is no public parking at Las Virgenes Reservoir. Free shuttle service will be available throughout the event with pickups at Three Springs Park or along Three Springs Drive and Torchwood Place.

*Participants should wear comfortable closed-toed walking shoes suitable for uneven terrain and unpaved surfaces. Sun protection is recommended. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.*

Las Virgenes Municipal Water District  
[www.LVMWD.com](http://www.LVMWD.com)



**Briefs The Acorn 11/5/15**

## **Open house leads to new water tank**

Las Virgenes Municipal Water District will host a community open house from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sat., Nov. 14 to mark completion of the 5-million gallon Torchwood storage tank project at Las Virgenes Reservoir in Westlake Village

The event is open to the public. Complimentary refreshments and hot dogs will be served.

During the open house, visitors will be able to walk to the new tank and take photos of the reservoir site, speak with engineers about the project and take a guided tour of LVMWD's Westlake Filtration Plant.

To access the facility, visitors can park on Three Springs Drive or on Torchwood Place and ride a free shuttle to the site.

The \$10.7-million Torchwood tank is part of the district's multi-year Backbone Improvement Program intended to provide better flows across the LVMWD service area, additional water reserves during times of peak demand and added operational flexibility in emergencies.

Projects under the Backbone Improvement Program have been built on a "pay as you go" basis, using financial reserves set aside for this purpose, while avoiding the added costs of borrowing.

**Briefs The Acorn 11/5/15**

## **Free car washes for veterans Nov. 11**

Free full-service car washes will be offered to all veterans and active military personnel from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wed., Nov. 11 in Thousand Oaks at Janss Mall Touchless Car Wash, 467 N. Moorpark Road and Village Hand Wash, 3369 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd.

This offer applies to any veteran or military personnel with proof of service or vehicle plates that display POW, veterans or military medal/ribbons status.

For more information, email Joseph Solis at [Joe.Solis@washdepot.com](mailto:Joe.Solis@washdepot.com).

## EDITORIAL

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# ***Drowning in high bills while reserves grow fat***

The drought is not just turning our lawns brown and depleting our reservoirs, it is depleting our pocketbooks as well.

The Las Virgenes Municipal Water District last week approved five more years of water and sewer rate hikes starting in January, mainly because of the higher price LVMWD must pay for its wholesale supplies.

Consumers will sadly discover that while they are using less water—a very commendable 35 percent less—their bills will probably be higher. It's an unfortunate irony that's hard for us to swallow, but it doesn't necessarily have to be that way.

When a normal business sees its demand falling and cost of goods rising, it doesn't react by jacking up prices. That would be suicide. A public utility, however, doesn't have to behave like a normal business.

While we agree the district's operational and distribution costs must still be covered even as revenues are falling, we do not believe

the customer should have to take the full hit. LVMWD is sitting on approximately \$60 million in reserves, including an \$8-million "rate stabilization fund" that's been tapped into but is still only a drop in the bucket. Now that rates are going even higher, it's time for the water district to spend down its reserves.

The question also must be asked: Why is the district putting so much capital into expansion when growth has slowed and water usage has declined going forward?

We applaud the headquarters in Calabasas for reducing total staff from 137 employees in 2009 to about 125 today. But while the average salary from 2009 to 2013 rose 12 percent (the last available data from the state Controller's Office), the district's retirement and healthcare costs *doubled*. Today, LVMWD spends about 45 cents on every salary dollar for employee benefits.

While running the district requires jobs with high technical expertise, it's not all

rocket science. With one phone receptionist making \$53,000 (more than \$77,000 when benefits are added in) and one public affairs "assistant" earning in the six figures, it's no surprise our water bills are going up.

Personnel costs for the most part exceed private industry standards, and part of the glut is because of labor union demands and the inability of the district to draw a line in the sand. Former general manager Jim Colbaugh began the free spending in the late '90s and early 2000s, and little has changed since then.

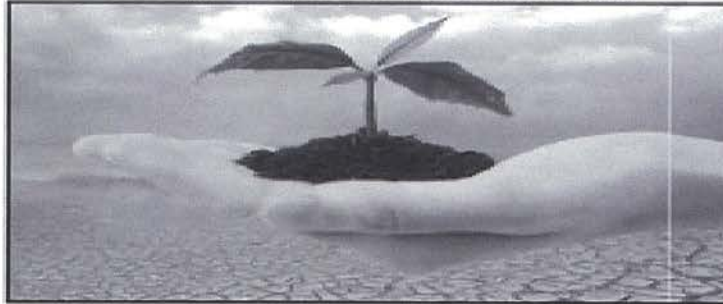
But let's not begrudge the golden parachute. Let's attend the water district meetings and ask why more of the \$60 million in reserves, money that has been accumulated through previous rate increases, can't be used to cover the drought shortfall.

Ratepayers have done their part by using less water; it's time for the water district to do its part by dipping into the rainy-day fund. If this isn't an emergency, what is?

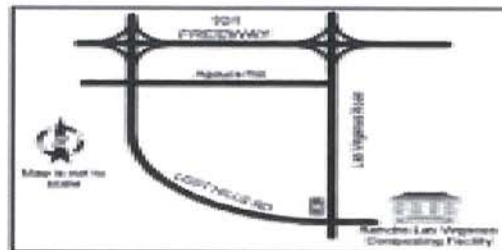
## **Winter Time is Compost Time!**

After the long summer growing season, now's the time to replenish your garden soil with Rancho Las Virgenes Community Compost. Adding compost now allows its nutrients to enrich and blend with your soil through the winter, giving your plants the food they'll need when spring arrives.

Our compost qualifies for the "Class A-Exceptional Quality" rating by the U.S. EPA and is the preferred choice of many local gardeners and landscapers.



**Anyone can pick up *FREE* compost every Saturday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., at our Rancho Las Virgenes Composting Facility located at 3700 Las Virgenes Rd in Calabasas.**



For more information, visit [www.LVMWD.com/community-compost](http://www.LVMWD.com/community-compost).



# New water bills coming down the pipe

Source: The Acorn 11/5/15

The Las Virgenes Municipal Water District approved rate increases for potable and recycled water and sewer services that will take effect Jan. 1.

Under the new billing, property owners will receive a water budget with a monthly allotments that depends on factors such as lot size, landscaping, number of occupants and the presence of livestock. Allotments will change from month to month to reflect seasonal needs for outdoor watering.

District officials say the new plan will encourage efficient water use. The individualized water budgets recognize that all customers have different needs that vary from season to season.

They also say the plan will help LVMWD recoup its rising wholesale cost and the expense needed to operate a water treatment and distribution system that serves 65,000 customers in Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Westlake Village and surrounding unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County.

“Those who are wasteful will bear the additional cost that their high water use demands on the system,” LVMWD general manager David Pedersen said at a water hearing Oct. 26.

Over the past year, the district hosted half a dozen meetings and workshops to inform ratepayers about the new billing system.

Herb Eckerling, who lives in Morrison Ranch, expressed concerns about the rising cost of water and sanitation services.

Water use is down, but bills are going up, he said.

“How do you intend to keep this fair so that people don’t pay more for less?” Eckerling said.

Another speaker, who has lived in Agoura Hills for 24 years, said he’s taken steps to conserve, yet his water bills have doubled in the last 10 years.

“Clearly there is no justification to a rate increase,” the resident said.

Pedersen said keeping rates low has been a challenge for water agencies throughout California.

LVMWD must cover both fixed costs and variable costs. A reduction in water consumption does not mitigate those costs.

But, Pedersen said, “If you do reduce your water usage, you will pay less, not more.”

With regard to sanitation fees, Pedersen said the district faces mounting costs because it must meet state guidelines to treat wastewater before it is released into Malibu Creek.

Under the new billing system, customers with smaller households will see a reduction in their sanitation rate.

Hal Helsley, a former water district board member, praised LVMWD officials for their work. Although few residents seem concerned about the change at the present time, he said, the true test will be when the ratepayers receive their allotments.

Board member Glen Peterson said the district worked hard to create a new rate system that will reward people who conserve.

“To me it is a good solution. . . . This will be a very fair rate structure,” Peterson said.

Directors will review the need for rate increases in each of the next five years as they consider the rising cost of wholesale water from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, LVMWD’s supplier.

## **Oak Park rates up too**

Source: The Acorn 11/5/15

Higher rates and supply restrictions based on parcel size have gone into effect for residents of Oak Park.

The increase includes 3 percent higher tier 1 water rates, 8 percent higher tier 2 and 10 percent more for tier 3.

Residents in apartments and condos receive 6 units, or 600 cubic feet, of water per month. There are 748 gallons in 100 cubic feet.

Homes on parcels that are between 2,450 square feet and 4,950 square feet were allotted 13 units per month. Larger lots can use no more than 15 units, with the maximum residential allotment capped at 32 units of water for lots greater than 9,950 square feet.



## **Tax never ends**

If you pay someone else's bills, they will let you. Measure E, the school tax, is a good example.

The lottery was to help the schools' finances. Eventually the money the schools got from the lottery was taken away for the regular state budget, so back to square one.

Pass Measure E and even more of the state budget will be taken away.

The state has money to subsidize college for illegals. They have money for Gov. Brown's bullet train (\$55 billion so far) but they don't have money for basic education.

They have money for bike lanes along the L.A. River with ornamental gates and upgraded ornament bridge railings, but no money for schools.

We are fighting someone else's war in the Middle East and the American taxpayers are paying for it while these same countries are sticking it to us with high oil prices. We should be taking the oil to pay for our military operations and veteran benefits. Veterans' care has become a disgrace; in fact, they are not getting the care they need.

If solar power is such an economic success, why is it being subsidized by the government? If it is so wonderful and economical, the people should buy it with their own money. We have money for this boondoggle but no money for the schools.

We have refugees being welcomed here and given jobs and benefits while Americans are unemployed with no benefits. We have money for this but not for our schools.

If getting rid of your lawn and saving water saves you money, why is this being subsidized? When we use less they charge us more. Great economic logic.

What did the legislature do with the windfall they got from the sales tax on the gas prices when they were in the \$4 to \$5 bracket? They are squandering it while we pay for their lunacy.

Remember that a new government bureau or tax is the closest thing you can get to eternal life on Earth. It is time to quit paying for the folly of the legislature and other government agencies.

**Charles Ammann**  
**Calabasas**

2015-11-05 / Letters The Acorn

## **Skeptical about water board**

Barry Steinhardt's recent letter exposes a latent underbelly of local politics, the machinations and avarice of a few who will profit by the collective imposition of their agenda on an unsuspecting populace.

I am not saying this is a Richard Daley/Chicago political machine, but it is well-organized and supported by small voter turnout and uninformed voters.

By the way, here's a good rule of thumb: if the LVMWD is involved or is just "for it," you should be against it.

I don't disparage those who try to work the system to their advantage; it seems to be the American way. What you all should know that besides uncontrolled, unabated rate hikes and other nearly larcenous behavior—or just stupidity like their ill-advised investment in a literally bankrupt faulty meter system seemingly designed to overcharge—comes out of all our pockets.

I cannot wait for the next opportunity to toss out as many of the LVMWD board members as possible by vote and end the Golden Sunset agenda of their administration.

**Randall Kennedy**  
**Agoura Hills**

# Planned purification plant would eliminate need for imported water, officials say

Source: LA Times 11/4/15

As the worst drought in California history threatens to enter a fifth straight year, officials are advocating a variety of water reuse projects they say will reduce Southern California's unquenchable thirst for imported water.

On Tuesday, officials at the Water Replenishment District of Southern California unveiled drawings for the latest such proposal: A \$95-million water purification plant they said would make the district entirely self-reliant on local water.

"Not only are we helping to become independent from imported water, we're also helping states in the southwest region by using less water that comes from the Colorado River," district President Sergio Calderon said.

Funding for the facility has yet to be finalized, but officials insisted construction would begin in the spring of 2016 at a Pico Rivera industrial site that was purchased this year for \$10 million.

Officials said funding for the treatment plant could come from at least two sources: A \$7.5-billion state water bond passed by California voters last year, as well as locally issued bonds.

The water treatment facility, which is the key component of the district's Groundwater Reliability Improvement Program, would be completed in 2018, they said. It would take water from a nearby sewage treatment facility and, using advanced procedures such as reverse osmosis, purify that water to meet or exceed drinking water standards.

The replenishment district manages two enormous underground aquifers -- the Central and West Coast Groundwater Basins -- that provide water to roughly 40% of the population of southern Los Angeles County.

The district is charged with ensuring that the aquifers don't run dry from overuse. In order to accomplish this, the district recharges the aquifers with a mix of treated sewage water from the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, imported water purchased through the Metropolitan Water District and State Water Project, and storm-water runoff.

The water is deposited in enormous man-made ponds, or spreading grounds, where it then percolates through soil and replenishes the aquifer.

Currently, regulations cap the amount of treated sewage water the district can use for aquifer replenishment, so it relies on storm-water runoff and roughly 21,000 acre-feet of imported water each year to service the aquifers.

By using the plant to purify locally treated sewage water, the district would no longer need to purchase imported water from the Colorado River or the California Delta. It would use the purified water instead.

"This allows us to step in for mother nature in a way," said Robb Whitaker, general manager of the replenishment district.

Officials argue that it's also cheaper.

Currently, an acre-foot of imported water costs more than \$1,000. However, treated sewage water can be purchased for less than \$200 an acre-foot. (An acre-foot is enough water to supply two households for one year.)

In addition to purifying water, the facility will include an outdoor amphitheater for community events, indoor community meeting facilities, a large patio, public access across the property to connect with an existing bike path and walking path along the San Gabriel River, and educational exhibits on water recycling.

# El Niño-fueled summer storms helped reduce smog in Southern California

Source: LA Times 11/4/15



Rare summer rainstorms fueled by a strengthening El Niño helped Southern Californians breathe easier this year by sweeping away smog, air quality officials say.

The region had nine fewer bad air days during this year's summer smog season than in 2014, according to the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

There were 83 days when ozone, the lung-damaging ingredient in smog, exceeded federal health standards, down from 92 days in 2014.

The air quality gains should come as welcome news following an upswing in pollution over the previous two years that California regulators have blamed on the dry, stagnant weather of the drought.

While emissions reductions are driving a long-term decline in air pollution, some of this year's improvements have the signature of El Niño, the weather-altering climate pattern that is [gaining steam](#) in the Pacific Ocean, said Joe Cassmassi, a meteorologist who is planning and rules director for the South Coast air district.

Warm ocean waters from the developing El Niño sent moisture-laden tropical storms through Southern California in July and September, stirring up the air and flushing out pollution at a time when hot, stagnant conditions usually push ozone to its highest levels, Cassmassi said.

"This year with El Niño, it disrupts the pattern," Cassmassi said.

Cassmassi hopes El Niño will bring more pollution-clearing rainstorms in the coming months and cut down on bad air days this winter and next summer. That's what happened with the robust El Niño of 1982-83, he said. "Ozone values dipped precipitously."

The region could use nature's assistance. Despite sharp improvement in air quality from decades of emissions-cutting regulations, the Southland still has the nation's worst smog and has failed to meet a series of federal health standards.

The South Coast air district has blamed the drought for [missing a 2015 deadline](#) to clean fine-particle pollution, or soot, that builds up during the winter. But environmentalists fault the agency for not doing enough to cut pollution and accuse officials of essentially waiting for rain to clean the air.

"Eighty-something bad air days is still not something to be proud of," said Allen Hernandez, an organizer for the Sierra Club in the smoggy Inland Empire. "If they are serious about reducing bad air days they can prove it with tougher restrictions on gas plants and refineries that are hurting our communities."

Adding to the challenge is the decision last month by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to [strengthen the limit](#) on ozone from 75 parts per billion to 70 parts per billion. Under the new standard that takes effect on Dec. 28, the South Coast air basin would have had 113 bad air days over the 184-day May-to-October smog season.

# Freezing temperatures expected after warmest October on record in Southern California

Source: LA Times 11/4/15

Antelope Valley residents are in for a cold couple of days.

A frost warning issued for Wednesday morning -- meaning temperatures could hover just above 32 degrees -- will be followed by an advisory for possible freezing temperatures after sundown, the National Weather Service said.

The freeze advisory is in place for Lancaster, Palmdale and surrounding communities through Thursday morning but could stretch into Friday, the weather service said.

Residents in freeze-advisory areas are advised to keep pets and plants vulnerable to cold inside while the advisory is in place. By the weekend, it could warm up a few degrees, meteorologist Richard Thompson said.

The expected cold weather follows what was the warmest recorded October for much of Southern California, including Long Beach, downtown L.A. and Oxnard. It was the third-warmest October in Lancaster.

"It's like flipping a switch" this time of year, Thompson said.

Skies were crystal clear Wednesday morning after two days of wet weather cleared out and allowed temperatures to drop dramatically overnight in Los Angeles County mountains, valleys and deserts.

There were scattered showers across Southern California on Monday but farther north, from Mammoth Mountain to Truckee, resort communities saw anywhere from 11 to 30 inches of snow in a single day.

The snowfall was so bountiful in Mammoth that resorts decided to open a week on Thursday rather than on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, tourism officials said.

# Ballot measure is new obstacle to diverting water to Southern California

Source: LA Times 11/3/15



Californians will act on a ballot measure next year that would require voter approval of many large public works projects, including Gov. Jerry Brown's twin-tunnel plan to divert water south around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The secretary of state on Monday said that a random sample has determined that Stockton-area farmer and food processor Dean Cortopassi has submitted at least 585,407 signatures of registered voters to qualify the constitutional amendment for the November 2016 ballot.

The initiative would require voter approval before the state could fund projects costing more than \$2 billion with revenue bonds, those repaid using receipts from projects they pay for rather than taxpayers in general. Brown is proposing such bonds for the \$15-billion twin-tunnel project to be repaid by water users.

If the initiative passes, it would require Brown to win voter approval of the two-tunnel water diversion plan that has strong opposition from Cortopassi and other Delta-area landowners who resent the diversion of water to thirsty cities to the south, including Los Angeles.

Gov. Brown opposes the ballot measure, according to spokesman Gareth Lacy.

"This is a really bad idea that would cause costly delays in repairing our roads, colleges and water systems and make it harder to respond to natural disasters," Lacy said. "The governor is strongly opposed to this initiative."

The ballot measure, if approved, would also affect the state's high-speed rail project, according to Tom Ross, a political consultant for Cortopassi. He said the wealthy businessman, who is the nation's largest supplier of tomato sauce to restaurants, is focused on the state's debt overall, not any specific project.



"He started looking at the state debt issues and how do we control the state debt," Ross said. "If Californians are expected to pay for projects of \$2 billion or more, they ought to have a say on them. This gives Californians an opportunity to vote."

Cortopassi has also been a leader of and top fundraiser for Restore the Delta, the group leading the opposition to the tunnels project.

A campaign has already been organized against the ballot measure by a coalition of business and labor groups, including the California Chamber of Commerce and the State Building and Construction Trades Council.

"This ballot measure is both deceptive and dangerous," said Allan Zaremborg, president of the California Chamber of Commerce. "It's deceptive because revenue bonds are not repaid by taxpayers, they're repaid by users of a project. Since neither the general fund nor state taxpayers are on the hook for repayment, it's misleading and unnecessary to call for a statewide vote."

Zaremborg, who is co-chair of the Citizens to Protect California Infrastructure campaign committee, said the ballot measure is dangerous because "it would stall or stop vitally needed infrastructure projects all over the state," including those for water delivery, road and bridge repairs and university buildings.

Opponents of the measure note that Cortopassi has provided the \$4 million spent to qualify the measure through a signature drive.

Gov. Brown did not comment specifically on the ballot measure but said in a statement Friday that the tunnel plan is an essential project for California.

"The Delta pipeline is essential to completing the California Water Project and protecting fish and water quality," Brown said. "Without this fix, San Joaquin farms, Silicon Valley and other vital centers of the California economy will suffer devastating losses in their water supply."

Claims to the contrary, Brown said, are "false, shameful and do a profound disservice to California's future."

Building trades council President Robbie Hunter, also a co-chair of the campaign committee, promised in a statement that there would be an aggressive campaign to defeat the measure.

He said it would allow voters statewide to reject a project that one city or area of the state needs.

"Our state is suffering from a massive backlog of essential needs across the state, including outdated water systems that are vulnerable to earthquakes, crumbling roads and bridges and overcrowded hospitals and universities," Hunter said. "This measure worsens an already grave situation, and threatens our economy and job creation."

# Season's first major storm is a wet blanket

Source: LA Times 11/3/15



Snow blanketed parts of the Sierra Nevada on Monday as the first major storm of the season moved across California's drought-stricken mountains and valleys, bringing rain and colder temperatures.

At Kirkwood Mountain, just south of Lake Tahoe, about 11 inches of snow had accumulated by afternoon, according to the ski resort. In Donner Pass, northwest of Lake Tahoe, about 5 inches of snow fell, National Weather Service meteorologist Travis Wilson said.

Areas below 7,000 feet saw scant powder but heavy rain, with more than 2 inches falling in parts of the Central Valley. Downtown San Francisco saw a half-inch of rain, while other parts of the Bay Area reported between 1/2 to 1 1/2 inches.

A band of thunderstorms triggered flash-flood warnings for recent wildfire burn areas, where the risk of debris flows is especially high.

As of 8 p.m., the warnings were called off with no reports of damage. But thunderstorms and rain knocked out power to scattered clusters of customers, including more than 300 in Chico who lost electricity because of lightning storms, according to Pacific Gas & Electric.

"It brought more rain than expected in the Central Valley, but it pretty much shaped up as we expected," Wilson said. "It's a good first storm of the season, but we need many more like this."

The small relief from the state's ongoing drought came with the usual roadway delays and accidents, including a 20-vehicle crash just south of Bakersfield.

The collision occurred shortly after noon along southbound California 99. Six people were taken to the hospital with minor injuries and several others were injured but did not require hospitalization, said California Highway Patrol Officer Scott Jobinger.

Investigators believe the crash was caused by low visibility brought by the storm, he said.

Some motorists reported mud flowing across northbound Interstate 5 near the Tejon Pass, but all lanes remained open. It was far less mud than the October deluge that trapped nearly 200 vehicles in up to 20 feet of mud along California 58 near Tehachapi.

In Southern California, the first relatively cold storm system of the season brought showers and gusty winds.

Light rain fell in Van Nuys, Lancaster, Palmdale and Burbank, but totals for the coasts and valleys were expected to be below a quarter-inch.

By Monday night, just over a tenth of an inch had fallen in Pasadena.

Colder temperatures are expected to persist through the first half of the week, said Robbie Munroe, a National Weather Service meteorologist.

The below-average temperatures will continue Tuesday, with highs in the 30s and 40s across higher terrain in the L.A. County mountains, and in the upper 60s to about 70 for the coastal and valley areas.

Meanwhile, the Southland could see scattered rainfall through Wednesday. Up to 3 inches of snow could fall in southwestern mountains at elevations above 5,500 feet.

The sudden arrival of snow and rain is the result of a cold Pacific storm system moving through the state, said Eric Kurth, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Sacramento.

Snow is good news for the Sierra Nevada, where officials said levels hit a record low this year. Snow there provides one-third of California's water supply.

"It's certainly good to see the snow falling," Kurth said.

But the snow may not stick around very long. Some of it is likely to melt by the end of the week, when temperatures are expected to climb.

# Northern California, Mammoth Lakes see first heavy seasonal snow

Source: LA Times 11/3/15



Mammoth Mountain was covered in its first significant snowfall of the season Monday and forecasters say more is on the way.

About 11 inches of snow fell on Mammoth Lakes, the National Weather Service said. Up to 2 inches more are expected to blanket the resort town Tuesday while temperatures remain in the teens or lower 20s, said meteorologist Brian Brong. The cold weather is magnified by stinging 30-to-40-mph winds, he said.

Video of the area tweeted out by [MammothLakes](#), the area's tourism bureau, showed a white winter landscape buried in inches of fresh powder. The area is open for recreational use in nine days or less, tweeted [MammothMountain](#).

More precipitation is expected in the next few days but nothing as significant as Monday, Brong said. At nearby Yosemite National Park, park rangers [posted a photo](#) on Twitter of rain-soaked valleys and roads amid dense fog and gray skies Monday morning.

The Sierra Nevada south of Lake Tahoe was also blanketed in snow, the National Weather Service said. Heavy rain poured from San Francisco to the Central Valley, briefly triggering flash-flood warnings.

Lighter rain was expected through mid-week in Southern California, including the L.A. County mountains.

## **Letter: Simi Valley water**

Source: Ventura County Star 11/3/15

After living here for 10 years, something or somebody is going wacko.

No. 1, they ask us to conserve on water (we did a real good job) and what happens? The same folks who told us to save are now going to repay us by raising the cost of water.

Also, the same ones who asked us to conserve our water say OK to the building of several homes, or units, north of Highway 118, then west of the bowling alley on Los Angeles Avenue, and more to come just west of the post office. Real brilliant during this "water shortage."

Russell E. Spencer,  
Simi Valley

## **Letter: Utility charges**

Source: Ventura County Star 11/3/15

I keep reading about tax-supported salaries in all facets of government being increased, but Social Security recipients are not to see any increase because the price of gasoline is lower. At the same time, my water bill has a surcharge of \$55.43, a 32 percent bump because of the drought, even though I used 10 percent less water than last month.

Seniors have alternatives to driving but not to the necessity of utilities for basic living needs. These utility companies should use the same basic management techniques as their counterparts in private industry are compelled to utilize, but they don't. They simply protect their own salaries and increase billings to all customers.

California American Water Co. and all others should refund this surcharge and exempt all households where the prime user is over age 65 and exempt them from future exorbitant fees.

Bruce Hamilton,  
Westlake Village

# Ventura County recovering from record-breaking October heat

Source: Ventura County Star 11/2/15



Cool and wet weather on Monday brought out jackets that had mostly stayed in the back of closets in October.

Last month was unusually hot for most of Southern California, including Ventura County cities not used to triple digits in August, let alone in the month of Halloween. In Camarillo, it reached 108 on Oct. 9, breaking the city's record for any day of the year. In Oxnard, the average temperature in October was 71 degrees, three degrees warmer than the record set in 1983.

Evenings didn't bring much respite.

"For the Camarillo Airport, the average low for the month was just a couple degrees lower than the average daily temperature," said Robbie Munroe, meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Oxnard.

Munroe said the hot temperatures this fall are not necessarily connected to the El Niño but a similar weather pattern occurred in 1997-98.

"The warm water off the coast is keeping temperatures warmer than usual," Munroe said.

October temperatures broke records from San Luis Obispo to Long Beach, with both cities seeing a high of 105.

But the heat didn't bring the serious wildfires to Ventura County that many had feared.

"As hot as it was in October, I think we feel pretty good about the results," said Mike Lindbergy, spokesman for the Ventura County Fire Department. "It was definitely weird weather-wise for all of us, but the biggest impact was high surf."

In one weekend, there were about a dozen rescues in the Oxnard and Port Hueneme area.

Now firefighters are preparing for a potential fire caused by Santa Ana winds or flooding and other issues caused by El Niño.

On Monday, rain and much cooler temperatures kicked off the start of the month. Most cities in Ventura County saw a 10- to 20-degree drop in temperatures.

The cold front will continue into Thursday with overnight lows Tuesday and Wednesday night near the 50s at the coast and mid to upper 40s in the valleys. In Ojai, temperatures for the next two nights will be in the 40s and upper 30s.



# Ventura County hikers urged to take caution if El Niño rains kick in

Source: Ventura County Star 11/2/15

While a light rain doesn't deter most hikers, the El Niño deluges that are forecast could turn Ventura County neighborhood and backcountry trails dangerous. Rain-swollen streams, slick clay trails and falling rocks are the result of a lot of rain pouring down in a short period of time.

"Situational awareness is a big issue when hiking," said Diane Rendano Cross, assistant recreation officer for the Ojai Ranger District. "Check weather forecasts before going on longer hikes or overnight trips, or carry a battery-operated weather radio that provides alerts. Don't rely on a cellphone."

Rainy weather has a definite appeal to many hikers, offering an entirely new array of sights and smells. Flowers bloom, and the rich fragrance of the backcountry comes alive. Poor conditions actually offer solitude on the trails not often experienced in Ventura County.

"Follow the basics of dressing in layers in wet weather, with a rain jacket, and avoid dehydration even though it's cool out," Cross said. "Trust your gut if something isn't right when it's wet or rainy. Stop, assess the situation and determine if you should continue, take a break or turn around."

Hiking in groups and letting a responsible person know where you are going can be a life saver.

"The buddy system is recommended, but ideally you want four or more people on a longer hike," Cross said. "One person can stay with an injured person, and two can go for help. The best thing to do is leave an itinerary with a responsible person, including the year, make and model of your car. If you don't get back in a couple of days the responsible person will get in touch with search and rescue."

Hikers are gearing up for wet weather by buying rain jackets, waterproof boots and other accessories.

"Gaiters are made of a nylon material and wrap around your ankle and calf and extend the amount of protection from mud and water," said Matt Duarte, who works at the REI outdoors store in Oxnard as a sales lead. "Hiking boots are going to give you much better traction and keep your feet dry, and also from getting bruised or sore from protruding rocks. I don't advise hiking even in dry conditions in sneakers or flip-flops. It's just not safe."

The drought and fires have reduced the vegetation from hillsides in the Santa Monica Mountains and in the Los Padres National Forest, so heavy rains won't easily percolate into the ground.

“The Chorro fire off Highway 33 on Aug. 2 burned 200 acres,” Cross said. “That fire was relatively small, but it did affect the watershed as a whole and could have an impact on the Chorro Grande Trail. The vegetation is denuded, and there’s increased potential for flooding.”

Devastating flooding was the topic last month at the Oak View Community Center, as more than 300 people gathered for an Oct. 13 town hall meeting on El Niño preparedness.

“We only expected 40 people and it was standing room only,” said Roy Leckbee, a U.S. Fire Service assistant fire-engine operator out of the Casitas Fire Station. “If you see that Pineapple Express of storms lining up, it’s probably a good idea to change your plans and stay home. Don’t drive across brown water. There were references to the six Boy Scouts who lost their lives in 1969 on the Sespe River.”

During January and February of 1969, heavy rains caused major flooding, mass evacuations in Ojai, Santa Paula and Fillmore and caused the deaths of 13 people, including the six Boy Scouts.

“That tragedy is not forgotten,” Leckbee said. “It’s important to check the condition of trails and roads after rain. There’s information from fire stations, your local police and your local Forest Service office. There may be problems with Highway 33 and getting up to those hiking areas, so check the Caltrans website for updates.”

## Low pressure could mean rain, snow

Source: Ventura County Star 11/2/15



VENTURA COUNTY, Calif. - The National Weather Service reported that low pressure aloft will move overhead Monday into Tuesday before exiting east. The low will bring the potential for rain and high elevation snowfall through Tuesday with even the potential for thunderstorms Monday afternoon and evening north of Point Conception.

It will be partly cloudy to mostly cloudy in Ventura County on Monday with patchy drizzle in the morning. There will be a 50 percent chance of rain in the afternoon. The highs will be in mid 60s to around 70 for the coast and interior valleys. For Tuesday, the highs will be around 70 and mid 60s to around 70 further inland.

Offshore flow will develop on Wednesday and continue through the second half of the week, according to the National Weather Service. This will bring warmer and dry conditions.



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Our  
**WATER**  
SaveOurH2O.org

Change  
YOUR Clocks

**Check  
YOUR  
Sprinklers**



*It's that time of the year again - time to turn our clocks back.  
Sunday, November 1 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 your sprinkler  
system for leaks, reset timers and change the backup battery.*



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