

NEWS CLIPS

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Resource Conservation and Public Outreach

Organized by date

Front to bring light rain, cooler conditions

Source: Ventura County Star 12/18/15



VENTURA COUNTY, Calif. - The National Weather Service reported that a cold front will move into the area Friday night into Saturday bringing periods of light rain and cooler conditions.

Friday will be sunny in Ventura County with highs in the mid 60s to around 70 along the coast and mid 60s to lower 70s in the interior valleys. For Saturday, the highs will be in the upper 50s to mid 60s. The highs for Sunday will be in the upper 50s to mid 60s and mid 50s to mid 60s farther inland.

Skies will be mostly clear to partly cloudy early next week, according to the National Weather Service. There will be a more significant system likely to affect the area Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

El Nino

Source: Ventura County Star 12/17/15

For those of you looking skyward and awaiting cataclysmic rainfalls, floods and slides, take it easy - at least for a while. The widely hyped "Monster El Nino" so far has not lived up to its billing here.

In fact, the county is at about 15 percent of normal rainfall and is well behind last year's woeful rainfall to date. No measurable rain is in the forecast through the end of 2015. Any potential storm so far has been battered by a relentless ridge of high pressure that hovers over Southern California about 350 days a year, and it's showing no signs of moving.

Currently, the wet weather is over 500 miles to the north of us, and "El Nino" is actually having more effect on the Northeast, with no measurable snow and balmy weather. New York City is predicted to be around 60-plus degrees on Christmas Day.

Thankfully, Northern California and the Sierras are getting some meaningful rain and snow, so there is some hope for us yet. Nobody should be relaxing their vigilance when it comes to reduced water use, as it could be another bone dry year.

The bottom line is we have about 90 days — from Jan. 1 to the end of March — to get some serious water for our reservoirs, lakes and aquifers. Otherwise the water use restrictions currently in place will look like a walk in the park compared to the draconian water cuts we can all expect next summer. In the meantime, pray for rain.

Ronald J. Peters,
Thousand Oaks

Water taken for granted

Source: The Acorn 12/17/15

In the past, many of us Californians have taken water for granted and have not realized the effect we have had on the earth. Our misuse of water has taken a toll this year.

Citizens planted synthetic grass, took shorter showers and washed fewer clothes. But this conservation trend was a short fad. After about three weeks of attention to the drought, people went back to their normal ways, still conserving more than before but not keeping up with their initial push.

The conservation of water should not be a trend, as it has a tolling effect on the rest of the nation's environment, agriculture and economy.

If residents are shown the hard facts about how fast this could spiral downward, they would act otherwise.

I care a lot about not only my environment, but my country and world as well. I believe that if people were more aware of the consequences they hold for nature, they would become much more responsible.

Camila Roson

Agoura Hills

Roson is a senior at Agoura High.

Let's figure out how to save the storm water

Source: The Acorn 12/17/15

Los Angeles County Supervisor

Earlier this fall, heavy rains pounded the Los Angeles region. Water poured onto our streets and sidewalks, raced through gutters and drains, and vanished into the Pacific Ocean. Result: another lost opportunity for Los Angeles County.

During that September storm, Los Angeles County saw more than 2.5 inches of rain—10 times the amount we usually get at this time of year. Thanks to our existing regional stormwater infrastructure, some of that water was saved, but it could have been so much more.

We should be saving and reusing every drop of storm water to help keep our tree canopy alive, to further replenish depleted underground aquifers and to help us become less reliant on imported water sources.

If the El Niño predictions come true, Southern California will see much more rain over the next few months. We know that one wet winter can't solve the drought or make us more water resilient. We also know that conservation alone won't be the cure-all.

While Angelenos have resoundingly answered Gov. Jerry Brown's call to reduce water use, that reduction is only part of the equation. We also need a 21st-century stormwater infrastructure that will save as much rain as possible instead of losing it to the ocean.

With efficient infrastructure, we can capture more storm runoff, clean it and store it for later use. We can clean up our polluted water ways, create good-paying jobs and make our communities more sustainable and livable.

And we know how to do this: we already have the technology and engineering expertise to reshape our concrete basin into a "green sponge" by building regional and neighborhood-scale water capture projects.

Take, for instance, Sun Valley Park, where the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, the City of Los Angeles and the environmental organization Tree- People came together to build a stormwater treatment system under a park. This multi-benefit project not only fixed a chronic local flood problem, in only a decade it has captured nearly 250 acre-feet of storm water—enough to supply about 50 families of four each year—that would have otherwise been lost to the ocean.

Other cities, like Philadelphia, are doing this on a much larger scale. So what's stopping L.A. County from scaling up?

First, we need better cooperation. Local government entities, including cities, water providers and wastewater utilities, need to look beyond their core missions and come together around green infrastructure planning and construction.

Second, constructing the necessary stormwater infrastructure will require a sustained investment of funds. It isn't cheap, but it's far less expensive than doing nothing. So far, investment in new stormwater infrastructure has been intermittent and inadequate. The region's governments must invest more in infrastructure to capture and reuse rainfall. Recent surveys show that the public supports investing in water. Now is the right time to step up.

The prospect of an epic season of winter storms in the middle of an historic drought has to make us all rethink our relationship with storm water. Losing billions of gallons of rainwater, simply because we lack the infrastructure or political will to capture it, is just not smart. We need to do it now.

There is no time, or water, to waste.

Agoura Road widening project on schedule

Source: The Acorn 12/17/15

The Agoura Road widening project underway in Agoura Hills will expand the street just south of the 101 Freeway from two to four lanes and will include newly landscaped medians, sidewalks and a pedestrian bridge over Medea Creek.

The additional lanes will improve traffic flow and stormwater drainage, city officials said. Bike lanes in both directions will also be provided.

“There remains minimal work for phase one between the westerly city limits to Reyes Adobe Road,” city engineer Ramiro Adeva said. “The remaining work will include street lighting and landscaping.”

The majority of the work underway is in the second phase of the project, between Reyes Adobe and Kanan roads.

“It consists of undergrounding overhead utilities, installation of a Las Virgenes Municipal Water District-funded recycled water main line, installation of retaining walls, and realignment and widening of the roadway,” Adeva said. “The third and final phase, between Kanan Road and Cornell Road, is in the early stages of preparing for installation of a retaining wall and undergrounding of overhead utilities.”

Adeva said Los Angeles County Measure R sales tax dollars are paying for the \$17-million job.

“The road widening is an important upgrade to the city and the region,” Mayor Harry Schwarz said. “It creates safety features for everyone, pedestrians, bicycle enthusiasts and traffic in general, especially in the case of emergency vehicles and overflow traffic from the freeway.”

Are storms tip of the iceberg?

Source: The Acorn 12/17/15

Just another El Niño story, you say?

True, it remains to be seen whether last weekend's showers are really the beginning of bigger storms to come. Maybe not, but either way, the City of Agoura Hills is taking no chances.

In a better-safe-than-sorry move, Ramiro Adeva, director of public works, outlined steps that every homeowner should take before the deluge begins.

Speaking at a Dec. 9 City Council meeting, Adeva explained how the city is preparing for the upcoming storms.

Drainage is critical to the city and homeowners, he said, especially since the three local creeks—Lindero, Medea and Palo Comado—could rage during a prolonged rainy season and pose a variety of risks.

The city is sending out information on safety measures to homeowners associations, owners of hillside properties and golf courses, developers and contractors. For instance, residents who own boats on Lake Lindero should secure their vessels to avoid having them swept away during a storm.

The city and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District removed debris from catch basins and public culverts along major streets to avoid flooding and instructed homeowners and HOAs to do the same on private roads.

The city is also working with the Lost Hills Sheriff's Station and the Los Angeles County Fire Department to get the word out to homeowners about preparation.

The council approved Adeva's request to increase the public works department's emergency preparedness budget by \$150,000. He said the city has spent \$75,000 so far.

Rain gutters, sandbags

Sandbags will be available at various fire stations for Los Angeles County residents, including Fire Station 89 at 29575 Canwood St. in Agoura Hills, (818) 597-2272, and at Fire Station 65 at 4206 N. Cornell Road, (818) 889-0610.

While sand and sandbags are free, residents and businesses must bring equipment and tools to fill their own bags. There is a 25-bag limit per person and business.

Adeva said homeowners should inspect their roofs, prune trees, clean rain gutters and discuss an emergency plan with family members, including a plan to evacuate.

Insurance policies should be reviewed for adequate coverage, he said, especially for properties in a flood zone.

Emergency kits should be assembled at homes in case of the loss of electricity, gas and other services. Families should also know where they should go in case of an evacuation.

The city will use the notification service Connect-CTY to provide residents with necessary updates. To register for the Connect-CTY system, visit www.ci.agoura-hills.ca.us, link to the El Niño page and then Connect- CTY Registration.

Adeva said residents should know the city's hotline number, (818) 597-7356, and sign up for SeeClickFix, a phone app that allows residents to report storm-related issues.

"The public can help with extra eyes," he said.

Mayor Harry Schwarz said he was concerned about mudslides around the Morrison Ranch homes and flash flooding in Old Agoura.

"Roads will be impassable," Schwarz said.

Adeva said an emergency plan has been established with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in case of flash flooding.

The public works director said the sheriff's department "fully anticipates what can happen in these storms. . . . They're prepared, definitely."

Councilmember Linda Northrup said the city's Community Emergency Response Team is also ready to help.

"I don't know whether the El Niño will be a godsend or not," Councilmember Bill Koehler said. "We're going from a scorched earth to treading water. Part of the responsibility belongs to community members themselves. Emergency information is out there."

DWP board approves water rate hike to fix aging pipes

Source: LA Times 12/15/15



The board that oversees the [Los Angeles Department of Water and Power](#) on Tuesday approved the utility's plan to increase water rates by about 4.7% each year over the next five years.

Under the proposal, typical customers would pay about \$11 more on their monthly bills by the end of the five-year increase. The new rate structure, approved in a 4-0 vote, would also change the number of "tiers" from two to four and charge the highest rates to customers who use the most water.

Utility officials have said they need the approximately \$330 million in additional revenue to repair aging water pipes and other infrastructure.

Board President Mel Levine called the water rate hike "critically important."

"The risk of not passing this increase is certainly substantially greater than any risk of passing it," he said.

The city's ratepayer advocate said last week that the water rate proposal was "reasonable" and on Monday, L.A. Mayor [Eric Garcetti](#) announced his support for the plan.

"No one likes to raise rates," Garcetti said in a statement. "But the price of inaction will be much higher for all of L.A.'s residents."

The rate hike is half of a broader DWP proposal that would also increase electricity rates. The Board of Water and Power Commissioners is expected to discuss the proposed power rate increase in the coming weeks.

Any ordinance related to water and power rates must also be approved by the City Council. DWP officials want the increases to ultimately take effect by April 1.

Los Angeles Mayor Garcetti announces support for higher water rates

Source: LA Times 12/15/15

Los Angeles Mayor [Eric Garcetti](#) on Monday announced his support for a plan that would raise city water rates by about 4.7% each year over the next five years.

The mayor said the increase would amount to \$11 more a month for the typical customer after five years. The L.A. Department of Water and Power asserts the increase is needed to improve the city's aging pipes and water infrastructure.

"No one likes to raise rates," Garcetti said in a statement. "But the price of inaction will be much higher for all of L.A.'s residents."

The rate hike is half of [a broader DWP proposal](#) that would also increase electricity rates. Garcetti has not yet expressed his position on the new proposed power rates.

Garcetti has long said he supported increases to both water and power rates in principle but wished to wait until the DWP's independent ratepayer advocate had issued an opinion before endorsing the utility's specific proposal. Last week, the [ratepayer advocate](#) signed off on the plan for raising water rates.

Department of Water and Power commissioners are scheduled to discuss and possibly vote Tuesday on the proposal. The City Council must also approve the new rates.

Garcetti campaigned for office in 2013 on promises to "reform" the DWP, the nation's largest municipal utility, but the agency has suffered from [persistently low customer satisfaction](#) over his time in office.

"Since my first day in office, reforming the DWP to increase efficiency and maintain reliability has been a top priority," Garcetti said in his statement. "To do this we need to have an honest conversation about the work that lies ahead, but we must do this in the face of an aging infrastructure and a historic drought that demands swift action."

Water bill increase expected for Newbury Park residents

Source: Ventura County Star 12/14/15



Newbury Park residents could see their water bills increase yet again because the local water agency continues to miss the conservation goal set by the state.

In September, California American Water service enacted a drought surcharge as a way to help meet the conservation target of 32 percent. The surcharge is an added fee for residents who use beyond 8,976 gallons, or 1,200 cubic feet of water per month. Households using less than 1,200 cubic feet of water are not affected by the additional fee.

The water district is now seeking permission from the California Public Utilities Commission to double the surcharge starting Jan. 1.

In the period of June to November, the district that serves the neighborhood of Newbury Park and a small portion of Camarillo, Thousand Oaks and unincorporated Ventura County saved 27 percent compared to the same period two years ago.

"It's not that our customers are not doing a good job," said Brian Barreto, spokesman for California American Water. "Twenty-seven percent is a lot of water not being used. But we're still falling short of our 32 percent."

The district expects the state utilities commission to green light its new surcharge proposal. If that's the case, the 21 cents per 100 gallons of water used over the 8,976 gallons threshold will increase to 41 cents.

For example, a household that uses 12,000 gallons of water with a monthly bill of \$79 and a surcharge of \$6 will see its surcharge increase to almost \$12.

In October, 7,700 households received a surcharge and in November, 8,300 households did. The district has about 21,100 customers.

Thousand Oaks is serviced by three water agencies and all of them are narrowly missing their target.

"We're feeling good, but not great," said Doug Varney, manager of the California Water Service, which serves the Westlake neighborhood.

Under an executive order, Gov. Jerry Brown called for a 25 percent water use reduction statewide, although some agencies like the three in Thousand Oaks have higher conservation goals. The reduction is calculated by comparing current water data with that of 2013.

Part of the challenge has been the warm fall temperatures compared to two years ago.

In October, a record hot month, statewide agencies on average missed the 25 percent mark for the first time since the governor's mandate.

November was warm, too. In Thousand Oaks, the three agencies missed their targets by 10 percent or more.

Public Works Director Jay Spurgin is not too worried. To date, the city across the three districts has conserved on average 31 percent, about a percent less than the citywide goal.

"Overall everyone is doing pretty good. It's within a percent. That's nothing that the state is that concerned about," Spurgin said. "Residents and businesses have cut back over a third. Everyone needs to be commended for that."

Barreto said California American Water is asking all of its customers to meet the individual district goal of 32 percent to help the entire state reach the 25 percent goal.

This week customers will begin to receive mailers about the proposed surcharge increase. The district will also reach out to the top 250 water users and help them find ways to cut.

For more information about California American Water rebates and water-saving devices or for questions about the proposed surcharge, call 498-1266 or visit www.californiaamwater.com/drought.

Storm causes flooding, I-5 stretch shutdown for 3-plus hours

Source: Ventura County Star 12/14/15

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Authorities say flash flooding sent mud and rock across Interstate 5 north of Los Angeles, forcing an hourslong closure of northbound lanes in Castaic and causing traffic to back up for miles.

California Highway Patrol Officer Peter Bishop said a 35-mile stretch of northbound lanes were closed Sunday night due to flooding at Fort Tejon, about 75 miles north of downtown Los Angeles.

The flooding was part of a storm system that brought rain and strong winds across Southern California. The National Weather Service said some mountain and foothill areas received a half inch of rain on Sunday.

Bishop told The Los Angeles Times that the northbound stretch reopened after more than three hours.

The same area of Interstate 5 was shut down in October when a mudslide stranded hundreds of vehicles on the major north-south thoroughfare.

Ventura Pier remains closed; high surf continues

Source: Ventura County Star 12/14/15



The Ventura Pier remains closed Monday morning after being slammed by high surf over the weekend, officials said.

Ventura police closed the pier early Friday. Spectators gathered around and under the pier during the day to watch waves crash into and over the venerable structure.

According to the city, wooden piles, cross bracings and handrails were destroyed. Public works officials are working with inspectors to evaluate the extent of the damage and stabilize the pier.

It is unclear when the pier might reopen, but restaurants on the pier remain open, officials said.

A palm tree near Surfers Point fell over Friday and erosion was impacting the bike path and promenade.

A high surf advisory remains in effect until 4 p.m. Monday, according to the National Weather Service.

Surf heights are expected to increase to 5 to 8 feet, with local sets predicted at 10 feet.

Surf will be highest on west-facing beaches like the Ventura Harbor and Port Hueneme, officials said.

The weather service advises that high surf can increase the risk of ocean drowning. Sneaker waves can suddenly wash people off beaches and rock jetties.

Northbound Interstate 5 reopens after mudslide; winter storm slams California

Source: LA Times 12/14/15



Matt Hamilton Contact Reporter

A mudslide triggered by a storm moving through Southern California on Sunday forced the closure of northbound Interstate 5 in the Grapevine for just over three hours, authorities said.

The mudslide was reported about 7:45 p.m. in the Fort Tejon area, said Officer Peter Bishop of the California Highway Patrol.

Northbound lanes of highway at Parker Road were closed to traffic and then reopened about 11:15 p.m., Bishop said. Motorists were detoured to State Route 126 and the northbound 101.

The storm moving across the Southland brought gusty west winds, snow and showers. Los Angeles and Ventura counties were expected to see up to half an inch of rain, while foothills above the 210 Freeway were expected to see up to three-quarters of an inch.

The showers are expected to continue through Monday morning.

In Northern California, a storm system brought strong winds and rains along with snow in the Sierra Nevada.

The San Francisco Bay Area and the San Joaquin Valley were expected to receive up to half an inch of rain, according to Nathan Owen of the National Weather Service.

The Bay Area was also under a strong wind advisory that remained in effect through Sunday evening. The heavy winds caused delays in air traffic at the Oakland and San Francisco airports.

Chilly winds to sweep through Southern California after rainstorm

Source: LV Enterprise 12/14/15



Strong, chilly winds will roar through southwestern California on Monday as a fast-moving cold front that brought rain and snow moves out of the area.

Gusts could reach 80 mph along the Interstate 5 corridor and 55 mph in the Antelope Valley through 1 p.m., according to the [National Weather Service](#). Blowing dust could create reduced visibility in the Antelope Valley, making for dangerous driving conditions.

Meanwhile, Sunday's storm had lingering effects on some communities.

In Lake Arrowhead, snow left roads icy and forced [campus closures](#) in the Rim of the World Unified School District. Less than an inch of rain and snow blanketed Pearblossom in about 15 minutes, the weather service said.

Earlier, a mudslide triggered by the storm forced the closure of the northbound Interstate 5 in the Grapevine for three hours.

Rain could stick around Monday as the cold storm moves through the Central Coast, keeping temperatures in the 60s.

Temperatures will warm up for the rest of the week, except for Wednesday morning, when it could be at or below freezing in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. Los Angeles will stay above 40 degrees, but near freezing conditions will be felt along the Ventura County-Los Angeles County line.

Clouds and cooler weather will move in on Saturday and bring a chance of rain on Sunday.

DWP Billing Problems

Continue

Those of you that have been following my DWP bill situation, it is getting more interesting. The bill started out at \$1,830.25 and I made a recent payment. My latest bill is now \$2,226.81. Interesting how the bill continue to increase even after I make a payment. Talk about a department that has billing problems.

With our *L.A. Times* rated "C" in both leadership and effectiveness, City Controller Ron Galperin at the helm, we can't expect him to audit the management operations of the DWP. We can't expect that much from an elected city official that is rated AVERAGE (C) in both leadership and effectiveness.

I did receive an email from Dr. Pickel, the Ratepayer Advocate, offering to assist me with the DWP Bill situation. I will be happy to see if Dr. Pickel can help resolve the matter. I will keep you informed as this situation continues.

Merry Christmas to all and may the blessings of love and happiness be with you and your families during this holiday season...

Health & Wellness Update

“El Nino” - Batten Down the Hatches

By **Janey M. Rifkin**

Seems a foregone conclusion by now that El Nino is chasing us and closing in – and there is a growing claim among scientists that California’s drought would need at least two winters of full-throttle El Nino rainstorms to amass enough snow pack and stored water to return the state to some semblance of normalcy.

El Nino occurs when winds in the equatorial Pacific slow down or reverse direction. That event warms water over a vast area, which in turn can upend weather around the world. The recent storm that slammed into the Antelope and high mountain valleys of SO/CAL in mid-October, released rivers of mud which trapped 200 cars, literally burying them.

The mid-October storm was viewed as “preview of what’s to come...”

Incredibly, that raging storm was not related to El Nino, according to weather service meteorologists. It was rather a product of the warm weather pattern combined with high humidity to create enough instability in the atmosphere to trigger the intense thunderstorms and torrential rainfall. The National Weather Service described it as a 1,000-year rain event.

Climatologists view that record storm as “A preview of what’s to come,” although some voices still doubt the inevitability of the long-sought El Nino, which would ease the drought and hopefully save many thousands of trees in the Southland, so desperately in need of hydration.



Janey Rifkin

Four parched years has brought water conservation measures to the entirety of California, as citizens wait and watch for relief.

An alarming prediction just published in the Journal Geophysical Research is that temperatures will rise in the state in the next few decades. The article holds global climate change partly responsible for California’s crippling drought. According to A. Park Williams, bioclimatologist at Columbia University, “By the 2060’s more or less permanent drought conditions will set in.”

The last major El Nino to hit California, in the late 1990’s, caused deadly flooding, mudslides and other problems. Across the Southland officials are racing to clear debris basins and making other preparations so that the region’s flood-control systems can combat floods and mudslides which are expected to hit the dangerous and damaging El Nino downpours.

Janey Rifkin is a Calabasas-based journalist; executive editor of a national magazine; and a syndicated health columnist.

Updated Mandatory Water Conservation Schedule



1* and Done

* Even addresses - Monday
Odd addresses - Tuesday

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

**Las Virgenes Municipal Water District
Limits Irrigation to Once a Week**

LVMWD has fallen behind the state's mandatory reduction goal of 36%. In order to further reduce usage, irrigation is now limited to once a week.

Addresses ending in even numbers may irrigate Mondays.
Odd-numbered addresses may irrigate Tuesdays.

Failure to meet the state's goals could result in the District facing fines of up to \$10,000 per day.

You can help avoid this waste of ratepayer money by only watering on the appropriate day.

Plants require far less water during the shorter, cooler days of winter.

Avoid a penalty - be sure to adjust your irrigation controller now, before you forget.

And remember-

- ✓ No watering between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.
- ✓ No watering during rain or in the 48 hours following rain.
- ✓ Check your irrigation system for leaks and runoff.