# **NEWS CLIPS**

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# Resource Conservation and Public Outreach

**Organized by date** 

### State outlines initial Oroville repair plans

Rushing to beat next rainy season, officials aim to sign a contract for work by April 17.



OFFICIALS SURVEY massive damage to the Oroville Dam's main spillway in February. The state's plans call for replacing portions of the upper chute by Nov. 1 in order to prepare the reservoir for the next rainy season. (Photographs by Rich Pedroncelli Associated Press) CREWS dredge the riverbed near the spillway, where repairs are likely to exceed a \$200-million estimate. ()

By Bettina Boxall LA Times 4/07/2017

State officials said Thursday that they hope to sign a contract for reconstruction of the heavily damaged Lake Oroville spillway by April 17.

"We're working very fast," said Bill Croyle, acting director of the Department of Water Resources, which is under intense pressure to get the spillway in shape before the start of next winter's rainy season.

Although Croyle said the department has to conduct in nine months design and construction work that would normally take several years to complete, he expressed confidence that it was possible.

"This is standard stuff that has been used very recently here in California," Croyle said. "They can get this done."

At a briefing in Oroville, department officials outlined preliminary design plans for rebuilding the upper part of the broken main spillway as well as measures for strengthening the eroded emergency spillway that came close to unleashing a disastrous torrent of water in February.

The state does not yet know the cost of the repairs, which is likely to be higher than the \$100-million to \$200-million estimate officials made earlier this year.

The reconstruction plans, which must be approved by federal regulators, are evolving as crews take rock core samples from the spillway hillside. In some places, Croyle said, the samples have found several feet of concrete beneath the spillway, revealing "a more robust structure" than anticipated.

In February, a huge crater developed in the long concrete chute that serves as the reservoir's main spillway, prompting dam managers to reduce releases. That caused lake levels to rise so high that water started to wash over the unpaved emergency spillway for the first time in Oroville's history.

The next day, erosion beneath the lip of the emergency spillway threatened to eat a hole in the side of the overflowing reservoir, prompting the downstream evacuation of more than 100,000 people.

Repair plans call for contractors to replace portions of the upper, intact main gated spillway by Nov. 1. The new chute would be designed to handle flows of 270,000 cubic feet of water per second. That is somewhat less than the capacity of the damaged spillway but far more than historical spillway releases.

A type of concrete that is pressed into place with heavy rollers would be used to fill areas of eroded rock near the lower chute, which would be partially rebuilt this year to accommodate releases of 100,000 cfs. Any flows above that threshold next winter would tumble down the eroded channel next to the chute. Work would be finished in 2018.

Repair options for the emergency spillway include buttressing the cement weir at its head with roller-compacted concrete and laying an apron of the same material that would extend partway down the hillside. To prevent erosion of the head, a concrete wall would be poured underground and anchored into bedrock.

The wall, considered the most critical part of the emergency spillway repair, would be constructed this year, and the other parts could be finished in 2018.



CREWS dredge the riverbed near the spillway, where repairs are likely to exceed a \$200-million estimate. ()

#### 2017-04-06 / The Acorn Community

# From the river to the city

Water's difficult, but safe journey important to locals

By Sylvie Belmond



BEHEMOTH—A unique look at Hoover Dam from below. Community leaders visited there last month. SYLVIE BELMOND/Acorn Newspapers

Turn on the tap and there it is: fresh water for drinking, bathing and garden use.

Seems like a simple proposition, but the science, engineering and political will that it takes to keep fresh water flowing into Southern California doesn't come easily.

Interested to learn more, *The Acorn* joined 30 local community leaders, business owners and residents who have an interest in water infrastructure on a recent three-day Colorado River Aqueduct Inspection Tour. The excursion was hosted by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and one of its 26 member agencies, the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District.

MWD and LVMWD host two inspection tours each year—a trip this fall will examine the Bay Delta region and the California Aqueduct—giving local residents and stakeholders the opportunity to learn about water management and how life's sustaining liquid is treated, transported and stored.



WATER WORLD—Las Virgenes board member Glen Peterson explains the science behind the water we drink. Below, participants from this year's Colorado River Aqueduct inspection tour visit the interior of Hoover Dam and get a rare look at its massive generators. Photos by SYLVIE BELMOND/Acorn Newspapers

"The trip revealed how complex and delicate the system is," said Herb Baron, a Calabasas resident, after a stopover at Hoover Dam on March 26.

The group took a guided tour into the heart of the dam where the public can no longer go due to security concerns after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

Completed in 1936, Hoover Dam created the 115-mile-long Lake Mead that supplies water to California, Nevada and Arizona. The dam is one of the country's largest hydroelectric facilities.



"It's absolutely remarkable how they can conceive and execute the idea—the talent, the engineering and the unbelievable amount of work that went into it." Baron said.

Hoover Dam runs entirely on the electrical power that it generates.

Local agencies such as Las Virgenes and Calleguas—which serve multiple Ventura County purveyors including Camrosa—rely on the imported water they receive from Metropolitan Water District. Most of that water comes from the California Aqueduct, which is connected to the California State Water Project in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Last year, however, MWD increased its draw from the Colorado River because of the ongoing drought in California.

But Lake Mead is also low due to a persistent Rocky Mountain drought and some believe that by 2018 the man-made lake may not be able to meet the demand for Nevada, Arizona and California.

The lake sits at only 36 percent of capacity and the last time it was considered full was in 1998.

The three states are working on a water distribution compromise should the shortage continue.

The river water takes about 72 hours to travel 240 miles from Parker Dam, which crosses the Colorado River about 150 miles downstream of Hoover Dam, to Lake Mathews in Riverside County. A series of dams, pumps, pipelines, reservoirs and aqueducts deliver the water to its end user.

Last week's tour began at the Weymouth Treatment and Water Quality Lab in La Verne, Calif., where up to 185 million gallons of water from the Colorado River are treated each day.

The Weymouth lab performs more than 300,000 analytical tests on source waters, treatment plant effluents and potable water distribution system samples each year. In addition to studying microbial, organic, chemical and radioactive constituents, scientists look for invasive species and disinfection byproducts to make sure the water is safe for consumption.

"We are the guardians, and we make sure that water is in compliance all the time so that every drop of water that gets delivered meets water quality standards and it exceeds the allowable expectations of water quality," said Theresa Slifko, a chemistry manager at the lab.

Because consumer safety is paramount, water treatment becomes one of the biggest expenses for water purveyors.

Other tour highlights included a visit to Diamond Valley Lake near Hemet, a boat ride on the Copper Basin Reservoir in San Bernardino County, a stopover at Parker Dam at the Arizona- California border and a tour of the Whitsett Intake Pumping Plant on Lake Havasu.

Much of the machinery at the intake plant is over 70 years old, but it's impeccably maintained.

A power player in the water realm, Metropolitan owns five pumping plants and 92 miles of tunnels along the Colorado River Aqueduct. It also owns large swaths of land and negotiates deals with adjacent landowners to keep the water flowing for L.A. area residents.

Navigating the choppy politics of water is a complex matter, said Glen Peterson, a veteran member of the Las Virgenes water district's board of directors who provided ample background information throughout the three-day bus tour.

While the snow pack in the Rockies reached 150 percent this spring, it would take several years of above-average rainfall to refill the reservoir, a tour guide at Hoover Dam said.

Even during optimal conditions there is not enough water in the river to meet the long range demands of consumers in the west, Peterson said.

"At some point, they (state and water officials) will need to sit down and reallocate the river, because it's been over-allocated," he said.

Peterson is an Arizona native whose grandfather worked on the construction of Hoover Dam.

#### IN A NUTSHELL

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California built the Colorado River Aqueduct, which was completed in 1941.

The 240-mile water conveyance project comprises four dams and five pumping plants that carry the river water 1,600 feet up in elevation as it journeys from Parker Dam at the Arizona border to Lake Mathews in Riverside County. It takes about three days for the water to make its way across the desert.

There are three aqueducts that serve Southern California: the California Aqueduct that delivers water from the Bay Delta, the Los Angeles Aqueduct that brings water from the eastern Sierras and the Colorado River Aqueduct.

# Celebrate Earth Day

It's the perfect time of year to treat your garden to nutrient-rich "Class A-Exceptional Quality" Rancho Las Virgenes Community Compost, the preferred choice of local residents, "green thumb" gardners and professional landscapers.

Anyone can pick up FREE compost, it's available every Saturday, 8 a.m. to1 p.m., at Rancho Las Virgenes Composting Facility, 3700 Las Virgenes Rd. in Calabasas.



Self loading only - bring sealable bags or containers.

For more information, visit www.LVMWD.com/community-compost











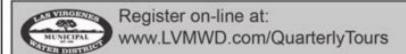
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# Saturday May 6, 2017 8:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Go "behind the scenes" to look at the planning, infrastructure and challenges to delivering safe, reliable, high quality water to your home everyday.

Reservations are a must for this FREE tour.

Preference given to customers of
Las Virgenes Municipal Water District.



Continental breakfast and light lunch provided.

Moderate walking and stairways. Restricted to ages 10 and older; children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

144188

# Pick Up FREE Recycled Water



Rancho Las Virgenes Composting Facility Corner of Lost Hills and Las Virgenes Roads in Calabasas

Training class Saturday, April 8th is CANCELLED.

Already attended training? Pick up will be open! Available each Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

See details at www.LVMWD.com/RecycledWaterFillStation

Open to customers of Las Virgenes Municipal Water District and Triunfo Sanitation District/Oak Park Water



www.LVMWD.com www.TriunfoSanitation.com Las Virgenes - Triunfo Joint Powers Authority



#### 2017-04-06 / The Acorn Letters

#### Water rate redux

I am writing about the lowering of water rates back to normal levels now that the drought is over.

I called the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District on March 30 and asked if the board had planned to discuss lowering the water rates and the answer was a resolute "no."

I was surprised about this so I went to their website to see what they were spending my money on.

On their website you can find their 2016-2017 Budget In Brief that allows for, among other things, a huge \$10.7-million expense for automated meter reading system implementation.

That system was placed on my property in 2014 and it failed due to the fact that the software company that administered the "smart reader" went bankrupt and has never been replaced.

There should no longer be an expense line item for this project since the program already failed. The removal of this expense item alone would allow for the district to lower rates.

LVMWD will hold its next board meeting at 5 p.m. Thurs., April 13. I plan to ask them their reasoning behind maintaining the punishing water rates that we have been paying for the last few years. I welcome others in the community to join me.

Lorraine Crawford Agoura Hills

# Mojave Desert water project gets Trump administration boost

ASSOCIATED PRESS Ventura County Star 4/06/2017

LOS ANGELES - Reversing an Obama-era policy, the Trump administration is clearing a path for a private company to pump water from beneath the Mojave Desert and sell it in Southern California. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management previously ruled that Cadiz Inc. couldn't use an existing federal railroad right of way to build a 43-mile pipeline to carry water from its private Mojave wells to the Colorado River Aqueduct.

The decision would have forced Cadiz to go through the long and costly process of completing environmental studies for the pipeline. But in a March 29 memo, the BLM revoked two previous instruction memos that provided policy guidance and underpinned that decision, effectively opening the way for a reversal. The new policy also removes a future decision from the BLM's field office in California — which made the 2015 ruling — and puts it in the hands of the agency's Washington, D.C., office. Environmental critics have charged that the groundwater pumping could dry up desert springs that plants and wildlife need to survive, especially in Mojave National Preserve and the new Mojave Trails National Preserve. However, environmentalists have lost several state court challenges to the project.

Cadiz was one of only a handful of California projects that made its way onto the Trump administration priority infrastructure list. It has garnered support from local government and in Congress.

"We are grateful for the bipartisan efforts to reverse this errant BLM policy," Cadiz CEO Scott Slater said in a statement Tuesday. Slater is a water attorney affiliated with Brownstein.

Hyatt, Farber, Schreck, a law firm that runs a Washington lobbying operation. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a California Democrat who has opposed the Cadiz project for years, said the Trump administration "has once again put corporate profits ahead of the public's interest" and was trying to muscle through a project that would have an "irreversible" impact on the California desert.

"The Mojave Desert is a national treasure that belongs to the American people, not a private company" and Feinstein said she will fight the latest move. She has argued that Cadiz would withdraw more water from the desert aquifer each year than could be replenished through natural sources.

Cadiz said she was relying on outdated data.

The project "will safely and sustainably create new water for 400,000 people, has broad bipartisan community support, will generate 5,900 new jobs, and will drive nearly \$1 billion in economic growth," its CEO said.

# Trump clears way for desert water project

Cadiz plan to pump groundwater from Mojave and sell to urban areas had been blocked by Obama.

By Bettina Boxall LA Times 4/05/2017

In another U-turn from existing environmental policy, the Trump administration has eased the way for a controversial California desert water project that President Obama's team had blocked.

Federal directives drafted under Obama had erected a major obstacle to Cadiz Inc.'s long-standing plans to pump Mojave Desert groundwater and sell it to urban Southern California.

But in a March 29 memo, an acting assistant director at the U.S. Bureau of Land Management revoked two legal guidances that underpinned the agency's 2015 decision that Cadiz could not use an existing federal railroad right-of-way for a new water pipeline to carry supplies from the project's proposed well field to the Colorado River Aqueduct.

That meant Cadiz would have to go through federal environmental review to construct a pipeline over federal land, a lengthy and costly process that the company wants to avoid.

Cadiz immediately asked the BLM to reverse what it called a flawed decision. The Obama administration declined to do so.

The new administration appears sympathetic to the company's concerns.

Although the one-page order doesn't mention Cadiz, it sets the stage for reversing the finding by BLM's California field office, which determined that the company needed federal approval for its proposed 43-mile pipeline.

The memo from the BLM, issued under Trump, also states that future right-of-way decisions will be made by the agency's Washington office.

Cadiz Chief Executive Scott Slater said that he is "cautiously optimistic" that the new decision will open the way for a pipeline on the right-of-way.

U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), a longtime opponent of the groundwater project, condemned the move.

"The Trump administration has once again put corporate profits ahead of the public's interest," she said in a statement.

Feinstein called the reversal "a blatant attempt to muscle the Cadiz water project through," and "an effort to circumvent an environmental review that any project of this magnitude on federal land would normally undergo."

The Cadiz project was approved by San Bernardino County, and the company prevailed in several environmental lawsuits filed under state law.

But Feinstein, who was instrumental in creating the nearby Mojave National Preserve, has doggedly fought Cadiz. For years she has attached a rider to congressional appropriations bills barring the BLM from spending money on the Cadiz project.

Cadiz wants to pump enough groundwater from beneath its private Mojave holdings to supply 100,000 homes a year and sell it to urban California at prices that could, over the project's 50-year-life, reap \$1 billion to \$2 billion in revenue.

Federal hydrologists have said Cadiz experts are overstating the natural recharge rate of the desert aquifer. And public land advocates argue the pumping could dry up springs vital to wildlife on surrounding federal land, a claim that Cadiz rejects.

The company has garnered congressional support, including from Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), the chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee. Bishop was one of 18 members of Congress who a month ago urged Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to withdraw the BLM directives — which they said threatened businesses' ability to run power, telephone or fiber optic lines along railroad rights-of-way.

"I think it has a lot to do with things other than Cadiz," Slater said.

The issue revolves around how much leeway railroads have in letting other interests use their rights-of-way.

An Interior Department solicitor's 1989 opinion concluded that the 1875 railroad law allowed railroads to authorize other uses without Interior approval. A later solicitor opinion modified that, saying other uses had to derive from or further a railroad purpose.

The two rescinded memos laid out guidelines for deciding what furthered railroad purposes. And the California BLM office subsequently concluded that "conveyance of water for public consumption is not a railroad purpose."

That finding, said opposition attorney Adam Keats, can still be used against the project.

"This is not an easy thing for the Trump administration to unwind," he said.

Slater is a water attorney and shareholder of the law firm Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, which runs a high-profile lobbying operation in Washington. For three years Slater was co-chair, along with David Bernhardt, of the firm's Natural Resources Department. Bernhardt, who served as Interior Department solicitor under George W. Bush, is reportedly a candidate for a top-level Interior position under Trump. Interior oversees the BLM.

Slater said Bernhardt was not behind last week's action. "David did not lobby for us.... I do not believe that he had anything to do with it."

### Weather damage could cost state \$860 million

Record amount of rain leaves roads in bad shape — and a big bill



GINA PICCIOLO photographs a boulder on Topanga Canyon Boulevard. Road repair costs in L.A. County are estimated at \$55 million. (Genaro Molina Los Angeles Times) ABRAHAM FLORES walks a deserted Highway 1 last month. In Monterey County, it will cost Caltrans about \$26.5 million to replace the damaged Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge in Big Sur. (Mel Melcon Los Angeles Times)

By Joseph Serna LA Times 4/4/2017

There were many dramatic images from California's extreme winter: flooded interstates, buckled bridges, highways covered in mud, snowbanks blocking key highways.

In Topanga Canyon, the lasting memory for many locals was the massive boulder that blocked Topanga Canyon Boulevard in January after one fierce rainstorm. The huge rock became a popular spot for selfies and social media posts.

The boulder has been removed, but the storm has left a costly legacy in the canyon and on roads across California.

Officials estimate it will cost more than \$860 million to repair the state's roads, bridges and highways damaged by this winter's storms.

A combination of snow-heavy storms flowing south from the Gulf of Alaska and atmospheric rivers moving east from the tropical Pacific in recent months produced some of the wettest conditions California has seen in generations and finally vanquished the drought.

But it left many roads in bad shape.

"I can tell you that it was a momentous series of storms that drenched our region," said Michael Comeaux, spokesman for Caltrans District 7, which includes L.A. and Ventura counties.

In Los Angeles County alone, emergency and permanent repair costs for all the damage will total more than \$55 million, according to a Caltrans preliminary damage assessment. Nearly half that cost is for one project on Highway 27, also known as Topanga Canyon Boulevard.

During a weekend in January, a wave of massive boulders and mud crashed onto two sections of the road about a mile apart, forcing a 3.5-mile closure of the winding pass through the Santa Monica Mountains between Pacific Coast Highway and Grand View Drive.

"Everything came down," Comeaux said.

About 2,100 cubic yards of earth, rock and debris were scattered across the road. It took heavy-duty haulers more than 200 trips over several weeks to clear it.

"It was a major impact on the community," Comeaux said. "Because material could fall conceivably while people were working and there's heavy equipment being used, there was no way we could allow people to drive through."

Emergency repairs to the hillside cost about \$2 million; but permanent restoration, which includes geotechnical assessments, moving utility lines and stabilizing the slope, could cost an additional \$21 million, Caltrans estimated.

Caltrans faces an even costlier project farther north in Monterey County, where the Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge in Big Sur was destabilized earlier this year after a mudslide. It will cost Caltrans at least \$26.5 million to replace it, the agency estimated. Officials said a new bridge could be reopened by October.

The most expensive job, however, goes to Caltrans District 4 in Santa Clara County, where a 200-foot-long section of Highway 35 slid downhill more than 50 feet. A

permanent rebuild of the highway and stabilization of the hillside is estimated to cost more than \$29.5 million.

Of Caltrans' dozen districts, repair work in District 3 in Northern California is expected to cost the most overall, the assessment shows. The district — which includes Sacramento, Yolo, Yuba and Butte counties — experienced repeated floods in January and February as multiple rivers were overwhelmed with powerful storms. Repairs there are estimated to cost more than \$360 million, the Caltrans assessment shows.

The two main highways through Sierra Nevada — Interstate 80 and U.S. 50 — were repeatedly closed by heavy snow and blizzard conditions. The pounding storms left both roads with significant damage.

Also hit hard was Highway 17, which connects Santa Cruz to San Jose. It was closed repeatedly because of mudslides.

The assessment does not include repairs needed for Lake Oroville in Butte County, which is a Department of Water Resources project that was severely damaged in February. Permanent fixes to the facility's flood control spillways and hydroelectric plant are estimated to exceed \$200 million, agency officials said last month.

On Sunday, the Federal Emergency Management Agency announced that a slew of counties will receive emergency aid for storms that hit in February. Details on how much of that money will cover Caltrans repair work were not immediately available.

California officials are hoping to get some of the federal money for road repairs.

ABRAHAM FLORES walks a deserted Highway 1 last month. In Monterey County, it will cost Caltrans about \$26.5 million to replace the damaged Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge in Big Sur. (Mel Melcon Los Angeles Times)

# \$87 million for Flint water pipes

Michigan agrees to replace the lines to settle a lawsuit over lead contamination.



MICHIGAN AGREED to replace 18,000 lead or galvanized-steel water lines in Flint. The city "can finally look forward to a long-term solution to a catastrophe that has devastated the community," a lawyer said. (Chris Ehrmann Associated Press) "WE JUST want to turn our tap on and not be afraid of it," resident and plaintiff Melissa Mays said. (Molly Riley Associated Press)

By Alene Tchekmedyian LA Times 4/4/2017

Michigan will spend \$87 million to replace thousands of aging water pipes in Flint to settle a federal lawsuit over lead-contaminated drinking water, promising to bring an end to a water crisis that made the city a national symbol of crumbling infrastructure.

A federal judge on Tuesday approved the deal, in which the state agreed to replace 18,000 lead or galvanized-steel water lines over the next three years using state and federal funds.

Officials will keep an additional \$10 million available in reserves to spend if needed.

"We knew all along that the only way we were going to be safe again was if the pipes were ripped out of the ground," said Melissa Mays, a Flint resident who was a plaintiff in the lawsuit. "So this, today, was a huge win."

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder said in a statement that the settlement "continues the state's commitment to providing the resources necessary for the residents of Flint to recover from the crisis."

He added, "The state will continue striving to work on many priorities to ensure the city of Flint has a positive future, including economic development, job placement and riverfront revitalization."

The saga stretches back to April 2014, when in an effort to save money, the struggling Rust Belt city stopped piping expensive water from Detroit and instead drew water from the Flint River until a new pipeline could funnel less expensive water from Lake Huron.

State financial and environmental officials signed off on the proposal, which the state treasurer said would bring "desperately needed" savings.

When they made the switch, Mays said, city and state officials assured residents they'd be safe. But four months later, bizarre things started happening.

Her hair started falling out. Rashes broke out on the skin of her three sons. Her youngest got pneumonia. Her whole family was having trouble breathing.

In some homes, the water came out brown.

She, along with other activists, independently tested the water. In February 2015, she said, they found it was contaminated with lead.

After that, her life changed.

Her family, like many other Flint residents, had to brush their teeth with bottled water. They took lukewarm showers — eight minutes max — with the windows open to avoid inhaling the steam. Eventually, they had to drive out of town to do their laundry because the water reeked, Mays said.

"Our life, it used to be fun," Mays said. "There's no way that filters, bottled water and going to pick up your rations is any dignified way to live. We just want to turn our tap on and not be afraid of it."

It wasn't until October 2015 that the public was told to stop drinking the water.

Officials had failed to treat the water to prevent corrosion. As a result, dangerous amounts of lead leached out of the pipes. More than a dozen people were criminally charged in connection with the crisis.

"Never in our lives would we have thought we were being poisoned by our city and state government," Mays said.

In January of last year, President Obama declared a state of emergency in Flint.

A few months later, he visited Michigan and, in a televised address, drank from a glass of filtered Flint water.

"I've got your back," Obama told residents. "I will not rest, and I'm going to make sure that the leaders at every level of government don't rest, until every drop of water that flows to your homes is safe to drink and safe to cook with and safe to bathe in, because that's part of the basic responsibilities of a government in the United States of America."

This month, Flint Mayor Karen Weaver met with President Trump and asked for his continued support, the Detroit News reported.

Last year, Trump visited Flint on a campaign stop, where he criticized local elected officials, saying they had "no clue" how to handle the water crisis.

"It used to be cars were made in Flint, and you couldn't drink the water in Mexico," Trump said later that day in Cleveland. "Now, the cars are made in Mexico, and you can't drink the water in Flint."

Under the settlement, the state is required to extensively monitor Flint's tap water for lead and continue to distribute bottled water to residents until Sept. 1. Also, residents will be hired to canvass households door-to-door, making sure faucet filters are properly installed.

No amount of lead is considered safe for humans. Exposure could lead to kidney damage, impaired reproductive function, elevated blood pressure and impaired cognitive performance.

"After nearly three years of grappling with lead-poisoned water, the residents of Flint can finally look forward to a long-term solution to a catastrophe that has devastated the community," Michael J. Steinberg, an attorney representing residents on behalf of the ACLU of Michigan, said in a statement.

He called the water crisis a "tragic example" of government displacing democracy to save money.

"This groundbreaking settlement marks a huge step toward restoring a long-neglected community to some semblance of normalcy," he said.



"WE JUST want to turn our tap on and not be afraid of it," resident and plaintiff Melissa Mays said. (Molly Riley Associated Press)

# Coming: An inundation of insects

A wet winter should produce bumper crops of butterflies, beetles, moths and other bugs.



A CATERPILLAR that will turn into a sphinx moth chews foliage at Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. (Mark Boster Los Angeles Times)

By Paul Sisson LA Times 4/3/2017

Long-legged bugs that look like mosquitoes on steroids are the first wave in what's expected to be a prolonged inundation of insects this year in San Diego County and much of the rest of California.

Experts said heavy winter precipitation has fueled plant growth not seen since at least 2005, and that in turn should produce bumper crops of butterflies, moths, beetles, mosquitoes and even subterranean termites.

"Because of the rain we've had, there is an abundance of food out there. Insects are famously reproductive; they lay a ton of eggs, so if there is food available, they will get to work," said Michael Wall, curator of entomology at the San Diego Natural History Museum.

Chris Conlan, the county's supervising vector ecologist, put it in a more declarative way: "It's going to be a buggy spring for sure."

Some of the critters are harmless — including Tipula silvestra, the crane fly, that previously mentioned creature that resembles a giant mosquito (but actually has no relation to mosquitoes and doesn't eat them). Crane flies don't bite or sting or otherwise hurt people during their short life span.

Other insects, such as termites and caterpillars, can wreak havoc on houses and gardens with their voracious appetites. Still others are considered public health threats because they can carry devastating, even deadly, diseases. West Nile virus, dengue fever and the Zika virus are among the threats associated with mosquitoes, which breed in lakes, pools and even droplets of standing water.

"All of the conditions are right for us to see more mosquitoes this year than usual," Wall said.

Crane flies have been the first to create a buzz in San Diego County. Conlan said residents have been calling for weeks to report sightings of the insects. "People call because they think they're big mosquitoes or daddy longlegs. They look imposing," he said.

Why are there so many crane flies, often mistakenly called mosquito hawks, this year? Wall said their eggs, which are laid in soil, are best activated when exposed to certain settings.

"They do best in moist, decaying leaves and dead organic matter, and there has been a lot of that recently," he said.

The next likely insect to take flight in explosive numbers this spring is chewing contentedly on vegetation in Borrego Springs, Ramona, Torrey Pines and Chula Vista. Thousands of distinctive green caterpillars will soon turn into white-lined sphinx moths. These moths will be most prevalent in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, where the wildflower bloom this year has been particularly impressive. But they're also likely to swarm out closer to the coast.

These moths have been known to show up prolifically after notably wet winters. Conlan said Anza-Borrego visitors may get an up-close look at this species.

"It can be very common to the point where they're crisscrossing the roads in huge numbers," he said.

# Blooming is booming

Perfect conditions yield rainbow of wildflowers across state

CHERI CARLSON

Ventura County Star 4/02/2017

Ribbons of white, orange and yellow stretched over the hills as Joseph Algiers rounded a bend in La Jolla Canyon last week.

The restoration ecologist with the National Park Service crouched down to look at a cup of white petals of a mariposa lily as he walked along the dirt trail, later pointing to a purple patch of lupines and blue dicks.

For wildflowers, this year turned out to be a phenomenal one.

"If people are coming out right now, they're going to see a great diversity of native, annual wildflowers," said Algiers, with the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

The bloom — or what some call a "super bloom" — showed upon the west end of the Santa Monica Mountains, and just about anywhere else in Southern California.

"This is happening across the state," Algiers said.

After five years of drought, the thirsty ground got a boost from a wet December. Then the rain kept coming, not all at once, but a storm or two at a time.

That spaced-out rainfall gave the soil a chance to soak up water, dry out a bit, and then soak up some more — conditions ideal for wildflowers, Algiers said.

Blooms covered the remote Channel Islands off Ventura, where a rare flower was found for the first time in recorded history on small Santa Barbara Island.

In San Diego County, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park has a wildflower hotline set up for people to call, and huge crowds have converged on the Antelope Valley Poppy Preserve in Lancaster.

Locally, more visitors have caused fewer issues, since the bloom isn't hyperfocused on any one location.

"Here, it is interspersed throughout the whole Santa Monica Mountains," said Craig Sap, superintendent for the Angeles district of California State Parks.

He was in Point Mugu and Leo Carrillo state parks over the past week, finding chocolate lilies, poppies, lupines and blue dicks in bloom.



Wildflowers are blooming along La Jolla Canyon Trail at Point Mugu State Park. JUAN CARLO/THE STAR

As far as the variety of wildflowers, this is the best he has seen in recent years.

"Right now, we're at the perfect moment for giant coreopsis," he said of the bright yellow flowering plant that favors some of the steep hillsides near the coast.

Ani Yeremian, a native Southern Californian, recently hiked in the Lake Elsinore area in Riverside County, "which was beautiful."

"But it feels like it's more here," she said, standing at the foot of the Ray Miller Trail in Point Mugu State Park.

That could be because of a fire that tore through the parkland four years ago.

In May 2013, the Springs Fire swept over the canyons, leaving little but scorched ground in its wake.

"The kind of bloom that you're seeing right now, we generally see the year after a fire," Algiers said.

While some flowers bloomed earlier, the drought delayed much of the response.

"So several years later, you're seeing a bloom that you would expect to see the year after a fire," Algiers said.

"It's pretty amazing," he said, looking up at the tall golden hill behind him.

Debbie McGee booked a trip from her home in

New Jersey after hearing about the super bloom in Southern California. She started her trip in the desert at Anza-Borrego, Joshua Tree, Indian Cave and other spots before heading to the coast.

The bloom seemed to be past its peak at some spots she visited, but the views had been worth the trip, she said, her camera hanging from a shoulder.

"I'm falling in love with this place," she said Algiers warned that the bloom won't last forever as temperatures climb.

"Right now is the best time to see them," he said. "Get out there soon."



Joseph Algiers, a restoration ecologist with the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, looks at wildflowers in bloom at La Jolla Canyon Trail at Point Mugu State Park. Throughout Southern California, this year has been a fantastic one for flowers. PHOTOS BY JUAN CARLO/THE STAR



Spaced-out rainfall this winter created conditions ideal for wildflowers.