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**UNITED WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
KICKS OFF NEW WATER YEAR
WITH NEW WATER AGREEMENTS**

30,000 Acre Feet of New Water Recharge

**Defending Developments in Science and Best Practices for the Protection of
Natural Resources**

Working in Partnership to Insure Trustworthy Watershed Stewardship

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -- Kris Sofley (805) 525-4431 kriiss@unitedwater.org

Santa Paula, CA October 15, 2019 – United Water Conservation District (UWCD), administrator of water resources in the Santa Clara River watershed, has kicked off the new Water Year with a number of unprecedented agreements resulting in some 30,000 acre feet of *new* water procurement, benefitting the residents of Ventura County.

“Working in partnership with our neighboring water agencies and exercising the very best practices of regional watershed management, the UWCD Board has demonstrated its commitment to being good stewards of our most precious natural resource,” said UWCD General Manager Mauricio Guardado. “UWCD has taken the lead in identifying new opportunities to secure water in its efforts to insure against prolonged periods of drought, advance the latest science and employ the best water management practices so that we all may benefit in securing water sustainability.”

At its October 9 Board of Directors meeting, UWCD approved two first-time ever agreements for a water exchange with Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency to the east of the District’s boundary, and the City of San Buenaventura to its west. The partnership with Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency calls for an exchange of 2,000 acre feet of water for UWCD’s basin recharge efforts, while the partnership with the City of San Buenaventura will provide for a transfer of the city’s 4,600 acre feet of water from its State Water Contractor’s allocation, which UWCD will also use for basin recharge

As reported in June, UWCD and Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency partnered on bringing 15,000 acre feet of Article 21 water into the region for basin recharge. UWCD released the water from its Santa Felicia Dam/Lake Piru storage facility between June 3 and July 30, leveraging the saturated Santa Clara River bed to deliver the water to its Freeman Diversion. Basins in Piru, Fillmore and Santa Paula benefitted from the release, but it was the aquifer on the Oxnard Plain that garnered the most significant recharge, helping to replenish depleted groundwater levels and reduce nitrate levels in local wells and water systems.

Since it first purchased and released 10,000 acre feet of State Water Contractors’ Article 21 water in 2017, UWCD has secured some 30,000 acre feet of *new* water resources for the region.



In addition to sourcing and securing new water opportunities, UWCD has also been engaged in the development of Governor Newsom's Water Resiliency Portfolio and in defeating Senate Bill 1 (Atkins), due largely to the legislation's unintended consequences in its attempt to stymie current federal rollbacks on environmental legislation.

Seeing an opportunity to represent Southern California water industry interests on the committees drafting Governor Newsom's Water Resiliency Portfolio, UWCD's Guardado went to Sacramento to participate in groundwater discussions. As a result, local water issues such as seawater intrusion, improvement of water transfers and policies to combat prolonged drought were included in recommendations for the Governor's final portfolio document. By including these discussion points among the Governor's key message points, grant funding and other opportunities will be more likely to be available to Southern California water agencies.

In reviewing State Senator Tony Atkin's Senate Bill 1, intended to protect California's Air, Navigable Water, Drinking Water and Workers, which garnered strong support from the public, and environmental groups, Guardado recognized that, while the District strongly supports these public priorities, the legislation was overly broad, duplicative of current state law and created unintended adverse consequences for the agency and the residents of Ventura County by appearing to mandate the use of outdated biological assessments that relied heavily on anecdotal testimony (the only information available in 2007). Overlooking current scientific data and best practices that would result in greatly reducing the District's diversion rates and ultimately, reduce basin recharge operations, the UWCD Board and Guardado mounted a vigorous informational campaign that included in-person office visits, phone calls and letters to elected officials and their staff. Organizing a consortium of water agencies throughout the State to do the same, Guardado met with legislators to explain how this bill would negatively impact water supply and roll back scientific developments to the detriment of all. When Governor Newsom publicly declared that he would veto the bill, Guardado sent one more letter at the end of September, encouraging the Governor to do just that.

A strong believer in the power of partnerships, UWCD has also made significant strides in its relationship with the National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) regarding the District's Freeman Diversion operation. Although NMFS and UWCD have been struggling for more than 10 years over the design of the fish passage at the Freeman Diversion, impeding water diversions and reducing basin recharge, however, for the past several months the two agencies have been working in collaboration to develop a new, alternative fish passage which will secure the regions' water rights while continuing to provide water to satisfy the migratory instincts of endangered steelhead trout.

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About United Water Conservation District

Since 1927, United Water Conservation District (District) has served as a leader among water agencies by managing, protecting, enhancing and securing the water resources of the Santa Clara River and Oxnard Coastal Plain. The District works to protect the environment's natural attributes and conserves runoff from all major tributaries of the Santa Clara River including Piru, Hopper, Sespe and Santa Paula Creeks. Committed to managing the area's water supplies through groundwater replenishment and the construction and operation of efficient water supply and delivery systems, the District serves as the conservator of groundwater resources that are utilized by the cities of Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura, Santa Paula and Fillmore, as well as Naval Base Ventura County and several mutual water districts, farms and individual pumpers. The District also provides surface water for agricultural irrigation and treated drinking water to the cities of Oxnard and Port Hueneme.

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