

United Water's June Water Release Largest in Decades!

As part of its efforts to recharge the local aquifer, dilute nitrates and neutralize sea water intrusion issues for Ventura County, United Water Conservation initiated an immense water release from its Santa Felicia Dam at Lake Piru on June 3, 2019.

The historic release is another critical step taken by United Water to recharge Piru, Fillmore, Santa Paula, Mound and Oxnard Plain basins, improve water quality and help neutralize sea water intrusion issues for Ventura County.



Pictured left to right: UWCD Board member Lynn Maulhardt, Camarillo City Councilmember and Fox Canyon GMA Board member Charlotte Craven, Fox Canyon GMA Board Vice Chair David Borchard, UWCD Board member Edwin T. McFadden III, UWCD Board member and Fox Canyon GMA Board member Robert Eranio, Ventura County Supervisor Kelly Long, UWCD Board member Sheldon Berger, UWCD Board President Daniel C. Naumann and UWCD General Manager Mauricio E. Guardado, Jr.

“This historical release of water at our Santa Felicia Dam resulted in the diversion of high-quality water at our Freeman Diversion facility, helping to recharge the area’s aquifer which is still recovering from the drought and helping to offset the increasing nitrate levels of wells within the immediate vicinity of El Rio. It will also help with sea water intrusion issues we continue to see on the Oxnard Plain,” explains Mauricio Guardado, General Manager for United Water Conservation District.

The release of the combination Article 21 and rainwater from Lake Piru was made possible by the Fox Canyon GMA, which granted \$3 million it accrued in fines towards the purchase of the water.

“The contribution by the Fox Canyon GMA was crucial in making this water release happen. We look forward to more partnerships of this type with agencies that will benefit our region’s water quality and supply,” commented Guardado.

“The timing of the release is crucial in that we wanted to take advantage of the high saturation level of the Santa Clara River that exists with all of the rain we’ve had. This will allow us to make the most of the water release,” added Guardado.

The release of water, the largest amount in decades, will help combat rising nitrate levels such as those recently seen in the El Rio community in May of this year, which forced the shut-down of a drinking water well for 364 residential and business customers of Vineyard Avenue Acres Mutual Water company.

The water release also helps offset sea water intrusion. Since seawater cannot be used to irrigate crops or be consumed by people, seawater intrusion can be very problematic to coastal communities that rely on fresh groundwater supplies for their livelihood.

Normally, conserved water is released from Santa Felicia Dam in the fall of each year, but, due to the saturated conditions in the Santa Clara River and its tributaries, the water release in June will assure maximum regional benefits such as replenishing local aquifers.

The water travelled down Piru Creek and merged with the Santa Clara River before making its way to the District’s recharge basins and the Freeman Diversion facility.



UWCD Saticoy Recharge Basin