

Issues & Insights

Your supply for
Ventura County water news



Freeman Diversion: Expanding Groundwater Recharge for a Sustainable Future

Since its construction in 1991, the Freeman Diversion facility has diverted an average of 60,000 acre-feet per year for groundwater recharge. In 2023, the facility diverted a record-breaking 148,000 acre-feet (48 Billion gallons of water).

To maximize regional benefit, UWCD is ramping up the facility's recharge capabilities. The Freeman Diversion expansion is a multiphase, \$60 million project that includes conveyance system upgrades and expanded intake and fish screens.



Key Information

UWCD built the Freeman Diversion to redirect water from the Santa Clara River to percolating basins. The 25-foot-high facility spans 1,200 feet across the Santa Clara River. It includes a fish ladder, allowing steelhead trout to migrate upstream, and a screened fish bay to keep fish out of the canals and recharge basins.



Why Diversion?

With 60,000 acres of prime agricultural lands, groundwater recharge is vital to the Oxnard Plain. It replenishes the aquifers beneath Ventura County's productive farms and slows seawater intrusion from the Pacific Coast. The groundwater also benefits municipal users in Oxnard, Port Hueneme and Ventura, which have wells that draw on local aquifers.



By the Numbers

- More than 377,000 people depend on the aquifers that UWCD recharges through the facility
- Sustains \$1.08 billion in annual crop production in Ventura County

- Supports 16,800 jobs and \$994 million in direct and indirect agriculture income
- Agriculture industry contributes about \$3.5 billion to Ventura County's economy and employs nearly 43,000 people



Freeman Diversion Expansion

In 2021, UWCD initiated Phase 1 of the Freeman Diversion Expansion by replacing the headworks of the grand canal. This phase is estimated to be completed in 2028 and will increase groundwater recharge and in-lieu surface water deliveries by 6,000 acre-feet per year.

The District plans to enhance a series of three conveyance systems that will raise the headworks' flow capacity from 375 to 500 cubic feet per second (cfs). In addition, the fish passage will be improved and a Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) will be delivered to regulators in February.

Phase 2 is estimated to be completed in 2036 and will increase groundwater recharge and in-lieu surface water deliveries by 10,000 acre-feet per year. The phase will focus on conveyance expansion including new canals, pipelines, flow bifurcation structures, basin partitioning and underground road crossings.

Benefits:

- Increased recharge of water from high river flows, which improves groundwater quality, reduces nitrate levels for small mutual water companies and disadvantaged communities in El Rio and Saticoy, and combats seawater intrusion
- Requires minimal energy, resulting in very low greenhouse gas emissions and costs per acre-foot of yield
- Provides significant energy savings to customers who use diverted surface water instead of pumping from their wells



To date, the expansion project has received a \$1 million grant with a 50 percent match from the Department of Water Resources (DWR), along with \$2.5 million from the DWR Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program.

The Freeman Diversion is a core piece in UWCD's mission to manage and enhance the region's natural resources. Expanding the facility is part of the District's vision for a sustainable water future.



Board Update

UWCD's Board of Directors represents more than 215,000 people in Ventura County, governing a system that supplies about 15,000 acre-feet of water per year to several agencies in the Oxnard Plain, including the cities of Oxnard and Port Hueneme, two Naval bases, and several smaller water companies. The Board typically meets on the second Wednesday of each month.



2024 Meeting Schedule

At the January 10, 2024, Board Meeting, the UWCD Board of Directors adopted a 2024 meeting schedule that can be found at www.unitedwater.org/governance/

Meet the Officers

New Board appointments in 2024 ensure the continued success of UWCD. The Board of Directors named officers Sheldon G. Berger as President, Lynn E. Maulhardt as Vice President, and Catherine P. Keeling as Secretary/Treasurer. Meet the directors below.



Sheldon G. Berger | President, *Division 7*

Director Berger represents portions of the City of Oxnard and Port Hueneme as well as the Naval Construction Battalion Center Port Hueneme and several unincorporated beach communities. A resident of Oxnard for more than 38 years, Director Berger has been a licensed realtor since 1989 and serves as a Trustee on the Ventura County Association of Realtors BOR-PAC Committee. Currently serving as Treasurer for the Association of Water Agencies (AWA), he has also chaired the Ventura County MTBE Committee and is a past President of AWA. Director Berger has served on the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) State Legislative Committee, ACWA Federal Affairs Committee, and as an ACWA Region 5 Committee Liaison. He has been a UWCD Board member

since 1983 and was most recently re-elected in November 2020.



Lynn E. Maulhardt | Vice President, *Division 4*

Director Maulhardt represents the area northeast of the City of Oxnard. He is a managing partner of a Ventura County farm and was raised in a family that has been farming since 1869. Director Maulhardt is active in community water issues and served as Chairman of the Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency from 1987 through 2017. He is a Vietnam War veteran and a retired commercial airline pilot. He received a Bachelor of Science in Physics from Loyola University, Los Angeles, and a master's in Management and Human Relations from Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri. Director Maulhardt has been a member of the UWCD Board since 1985 and was most recently re-elected in November 2020.

Catherine P. Keeling | Secretary/Treasurer, *Division 2*



Director Keeling represents Western Santa Paula, parts of East Ventura, Saticoy, El Rio and Riverpark. She is a fourth-generation resident of Ventura County who currently farms her family's avocado and lemon operation in Santa Paula. Director Keeling is a returned Peace Corps Volunteer and holds a master's degree in Social Work from the University of Chicago. She currently serves on the Santa Paula Basin Pumpers Association and the School Site Council at ATLAS Elementary. Director Keeling was elected to her seat in November 2022. In this capacity, she also serves as the United Water Conservation District's member director to the Mound Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (MBGSA).

Speaking Opportunities

UCWD welcomes opportunities to connect with the community and discuss water supply, groundwater resources and current threats to our system. If you'd like to book a presentation from one of our staff, please contact:

Murray McEachron
Principal Hydrologist
Email: murraym@unitedwater.org
Phone: (805) 695-3716



Glossary

- **Acre-Foot** – A unit of volume commonly used in the United States to reference large-scale water resources, such as reservoirs, irrigation water and river flows. One acre-foot is equal to the volume of a sheet of water one acre in area and one foot in depth, or approximately 326,000 gallons.
- **Aquifer** – A body of rock or sediment that holds groundwater, which is the precipitation that has permeated the soil beyond the surface and collected in empty spaces underground.
- **Diversion** – Taking water by gravity or pumping from a surface stream or subterranean stream into a canal, pipeline, or other conduit. Includes impoundment of water in a reservoir.
- **Groundwater Recharge** – A hydrologic process where water moves downward from surface water to groundwater. Recharge is the primary method through which water enters an aquifer. Recharge can occur naturally through the water cycle and artificially.
- **Saltwater Intrusion** – The movement of saline water into freshwater aquifers, which degrades groundwater quality and impacts local agriculture, municipal and drinking water use.

Share Today's Newsletter!



1701 North Lombard Street, Suite 200, Oxnard, CA 93030
(805) 525-4431 | unitedwater.org

Is the content of this email relevant to you?

Yes

No

United Water Conservation District | 1701 North Lombard Street, Oxnard, CA 93036

[Unsubscribe tara@cvstrat.com](#)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data
Notice](#)

Sent by tara@cvstrat.com powered by



Try email marketing for free today!