

Issues & Insights



Ventura County's
supply of water news



DISTRICT OPENS ITS DOORS TO AGRICULTURE LEADERSHIP EXCHANGE PROGRAM



On Wednesday, October 16, 2024, UWCD welcomed 30 professionals from the agriculture industry, including representatives from agencies such as the USDA and the EPA. The group toured the Freeman Diversion as part of the California Agricultural Leadership Foundation's Washington, D.C. Educational Exchange Program (D.C. Exchange).

The D.C. Exchange program invites agriculture experts for a week of experiential learning, open dialogue and the free exchange of ideas within an educational program. More than 600 individuals have participated in the leadership development opportunity.

UWCD's Hydrologist Supervisor Murray McEachron and Principal Hydrologist Dr. Bram Sercu led the attendees on an engaging tour of the Freeman Diversion, after a discussion of water resources management and lunch at the District's Saticoy facility.

The tour focused on Ventura County water and agriculture.
Key takeaways included:

- The Freeman Diversion diverts an average of 60,000 acre-feet per year for groundwater recharge
- In 2023, the Freeman Diversion diverted a record 148,000 acre-feet, or 48 billion gallons of water
- Groundwater recharge via the Freeman Diversion is vital to the region, with 60,000 acres of prime agricultural lands that rely on the local water supply

- Groundwater recharge through the Freeman Diversion replenishes the aquifers beneath Ventura County's productive farms and slows seawater intrusion from the Pacific Coast
- To maximize the benefits of groundwater recharge across the Oxnard Plain and Santa Clara Valley, UWCD is expanding and upgrading the Freeman Diversion in a \$60 million, multi-phase project

The California Agricultural Leadership Foundation established the D.C. Exchange Program in 1992. Exchange program locations rotate, and attendees visit 11 alumni regions over four years. The program is typically held in the late summer to early winter months.

UWCD is grateful for the opportunity to have presented to the program, providing a detailed look at the water needs of Ventura County's rich agricultural landscape.



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