



Contact: Tara Mulally | (510) 300-5843

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Water District Leader Explores Regional Water Challenges and Innovative Infrastructure Solutions on Podcast

Southern California Water Experts Sit Down With General Manager for In-Depth Interview on Industry Trends and Future Challenges

Oxnard, CA (November 21, 2024) – United Water Conservation District (UWCD) General Manager Mauricio Guardado recently appeared on H2Know-It-Alls, a podcast by Public Water Agencies Group’s Conservation and Education Team (PWAG CET). Guardado joined hosts Brittnie Gildea and Joe Yersky to discuss UWCD’s service to its community, the Extraction Barrier Brackish Water Treatment (EBB Water) Project, and the District’s Grant Task Force.

Guardado illustrated the unique water landscape of Ventura County and UWCD’s customer base. He highlighted how UWCD ensures a reliable water supply for 400,000 residents while supporting the region’s \$2 billion annual agricultural industry. He also discussed UWCD’s operation of Lake Piru, a vital reservoir with an 82,000 acre-foot storage capacity, and the District’s Freeman Diversion, which collected 148,000 acre-feet of water in 2023 to enhance groundwater recharge from the Santa Clara River.

Guardado explained that historically Ventura County relied on precipitation for its water. UWCD found a way to harness that precipitation through infrastructure such as Lake Piru and the Freeman Diversion. UWCD also depends on its Strategic Plan and Sustainability Plan, which enables the District to take advantage of recent significant precipitation to put water back into the ground.

The podcast highlighted UWCD’s EBB Water Project, one of the first of its kind. UWCD is working in close collaboration with the U.S. Navy to combat seawater intrusion and create a local and drought-resilient water supply for beneficial use in the region. The project will develop an extraction barrier by creating a hydraulic barrier and intercepting the inland flow of seawater near the coast. The extracted saline water, also known as brackish water, will be treated using membrane desalination to provide the U.S. Navy with a high-quality, potable local supply. The water will also be used for groundwater recharge.

“It’s incredible how a project like this can bring the entire region together,” Guardado shared on the podcast. “We’ve received overwhelming support—letters from legislators, businesses, key stakeholders, cities, and municipalities. The outpouring of collaboration and unity has been truly remarkable.”

Guardado underscored the importance of outreach for projects like EBB Water and others, explaining how the EBB Water Project began with a simple tour of UWCD’s facilities by a U.S. Navy Captain. When UWCD staff and the U.S. Navy team met, they discovered that UWCD was a major contributor of water to the region and there was potential for more collaboration.

When asked how funding supports projects at UWCD, Guardado pointed to the District’s Grant Task Force. The four-member District team has secured \$45 million in grant funding to support the design and construction of vital water infrastructure at UWCD.

The podcast also delved into regulatory and policy challenges within the water industry. “Too often, we see arbitrary interpretations of laws and policies that prevent groundwater recharge or reservoir filling—not based on science, but on opinions and emotions,” Guardado explained.

He added, “When we’re unable to fill reservoirs during times of availability, much of that water ends up flowing to the ocean unnecessarily. This leaves us with a smaller baseline to endure drier periods.” Guardado emphasized the importance of staying engaged with legislation and policies to address these barriers and their regional impacts.

The H2Know-It-Alls podcast interviews water experts about today’s water issues, including how water gets to your tap, why conservation is such a hot topic, and how droughts and water rights affect your water supply.

To listen to the podcast, visit open.spotify.com/episode/2HbiCctMFVV3MnxbhYrsje?si=NqOK54h7SIWMvcMEIXYHgQ

###

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. www.unitedwater.org