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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**DISTRICT SHOWCASES UNIQUE INFRASTRUCTURE IN LIMITED STATEWIDE PARTNERSHIP**

*Transforming a seasonal challenge into an opportunity*

**Oxnard, CA (February 18, 2025)** – United Water Conservation District (UWCD) is now the first Southern California-based entity to partner with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) on its innovative Flood Diversion and Recharge Enhancement (FDRE) Initiative to bolster water supply and reduce local flood risks. This effort is designed to mitigate California’s ever more extreme weather patterns and address ongoing climate shifts.

As one of only 15 statewide partners, UWCD’s contributions to the program include utilizing the Freeman Diversion facility to redirect some of the highest storm flows that could cause downstream erosion and flooding to nearby spreading basins where they are used to recharge the underlying aquifers. These flood diversions supplement UWCD’s normal diversions and recharge operations, resulting in remarkable improvements in groundwater levels and water quality in the region over the past two years. The supplemental groundwater recharge ultimately benefits municipal customers in the cities of Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura, and several mutual water companies serving the disadvantaged communities.

“Working with the State on this program allows us to demonstrate the capabilities of our infrastructure on a grander stage while also helping to further California’s overall water conservation goals,” said UWCD General Manager Mauricio Guardado.

In 2023, after nearly four decades of drought, a series of unprecedented atmospheric rivers caused Lake Tulare to fill and flood the surrounding area. In response, DWR secured emergency funding and launched the Temporary Flood Diversion Equipment and Recharge Enhancement Emergency Effort (2023 Emergency Effort). Partnering with seven local water agencies and districts, DWR successfully diverted more than 11,000 acre-feet (3.5 billion gallons) of water, helping mitigate flood damage and recharge local aquifers.

Building on the success of the 2023 Emergency Effort, DWR secured additional funding in December 2023 to launch the FDRE Initiative. The initiative includes key project activities such as temporary pump rentals and purchases, design and installation of protective screens, land clearing, development of temporary flood basins, and temporary conveyance system improvements.

With the additional funding, DWR signed emergency contracts in June 2024 with 15 local water agencies and districts, including UWCD. These contracts will provide flood diversion and groundwater recharge benefits through at least June 2026.

With the additional funding provided by DWR, UWCD was able to lease three trailer mounted diesel pumps from July to September 2024 to facilitate diversion of an additional 4,204 acre-feet (1.3 billion gallons) of water, which was used for groundwater recharge and direct surface water deliveries to its customers. UWCD will continue to leverage this unique opportunity to enhance groundwater recharge operations.

“We’re extremely grateful for the partnership that has been forged between UWCD and the Department of Water Resources,” said UWCD Water Resources Supervisor John Lindquist. “Our goal is to take advantage of the limited rainfall we receive and recharge the region for the next few winter seasons.”

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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. [www.unitedwater.org](http://www.unitedwater.org)