

Water Features

Goleta Water District News – Winter 2014



Lake Cachuma – the primary source of water in the region.

Feature story: Goleta Water District Supplies

Celebrating 70 Years of Reliable Water Service to the Goleta Valley.

The Goleta Water District was formed in 1944 to represent the water interests of the Goleta Valley and to provide reliable water service to residents and commercial customers. District water supplies are delivered throughout our service area via an extensive distribution and treatment system infrastructure. As the District celebrates its 70th anniversary in 2014, continued investment in our water treatment and distribution systems will ensure ongoing service reliability for customers.



1944  **2014**

70 YEARS OF SERVICE



Message from General Manager John McInnes

Celebrating 70 Years of Reliable Water Service to the Goleta Valley.

California is known for its cycles of drought and Santa Barbara County is no exception. Lake Cachuma, the region's primary source of water, spilled as recently as 2011 while, just two years later, 2013 was one of the driest years on record. Having served this community for 70 years, the Goleta Water District Board of Directors and management know that effective water resource planning is critical to providing water to our customers regardless of the weather. With the support of our community, we have developed a robust and

flexible water supply portfolio inclusive of Lake Cachuma supplies, groundwater, State Water, and recycled water. This supply diversity has prepared us for the current dry conditions. Our ongoing investment in water treatment and distribution infrastructure, developing recycled water and additional imported water supplies, as well as responsible management and protection of our groundwater basin reduces the impact these inevitable weather cycles have on our community.

Water conservation has been a way of life in Goleta since the 1970s, helping to protect and stretch our precious water resources in times of drought and times of plenty. District customers can be proud of the fact that we have the lowest residential water use on the South Coast. The average residential District customer uses 60 percent less water per day than the average residential customer on the South Coast and 50 percent less water per day than the average residential customer statewide.

No two water districts are the same and drought affects each water provider's ability to meet customer demands differently. As some of our colleagues along the South Coast and across the State are being forced to implement drastic drought responses now, the Goleta Water District's long term planning coupled with your commitment to conservation, enables us to supply enough water to meet current customer demand through two more dry seasons, if needed. This is not to say we are immune to drought cycles. If current dry conditions extend beyond 2015, we will have to ask our customers to conserve more and may need to purchase costly supplemental water supplies to meet demands. Regardless of the weather, our customers can be assured that the investments we have made in our water resources have prepared the District to meet the water demands of the community today and into the future.

John McInnes

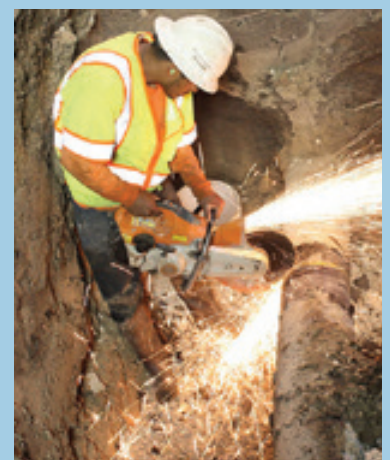
General Manager



1944 **2014**

70 YEARS OF SERVICE

Goleta Water District Crews at Work Yesterday and Today



Edible Garden Featured on Garden Wise TV Program

Come visit the latest addition to our Demonstration Gardens: the Edible Garden. This new garden section illustrates how landscaping can be water-efficient, beautiful, and provide local food options. Located on the grounds of the District Administrative Headquarters, the Edible Garden replicates a typical residential yard, and provides examples of low-maintenance plants that are easy to grow, well-suited for our local climate, and delicious. The Edible Garden was featured in **Episode 6** of the **Garden Wise TV** program and can be viewed at www.sbwater.org/GardenWiseTV.



Protecting Steelhead and Water Supplies

The United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) built the Bradbury Dam and associated facilities along the Santa Ynez River in the 1950s creating what we know now as Lake Cachuma. Today, the Project provides approximately 85% of the water supplies for more than 250,000 residents and 12,000 acres of agriculture along the South Coast of Santa Barbara County. Since 1993 the five Cachuma Member Agencies, including the Goleta Water District, have worked with the federal government and other Santa Ynez River stakeholders to develop fish management programs that protect both the endangered Southern California Steelhead as well as the region's water supplies. This collaboration includes the development and ongoing implementation of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) 2000 Biological Opinion, which has enhanced Steelhead populations and habitat in the River.

The Cachuma Member Agencies and USBR are currently engaged with NMFS in a Biological Opinion Reconsultation on the Project. As this process moves forward, there are growing concerns that the updated Biological Opinion may require substantial additional water releases for fish protection from Lake Cachuma. These requirements could result in a loss of water supplies for the region and could potentially increase water costs for our customers. In our ongoing efforts to protect our water supplies and keep costs low for customers, we are diligently working to ensure this process builds on the success of the 2000 Biological Opinion in an ongoing collaborative approach that safeguards both fish and water supplies.

AIMing for the Future

The District delivers water to its customers through a complex treatment and distribution system of approximately 270 miles of pipelines, six groundwater wells, a state-of-the-art water treatment plant, eight reservoirs and various other facilities. The condition of these facilities varies widely based on their age, materials, and exposure to environmental conditions, leaving the system vulnerable to infrastructure failures and inefficiencies. In keeping with our commitment to serving the community today and for generations to come, the District embarked on the first phase of a multi-year Advanced Infrastructure Management (AIM) Program in November 2013.

The initial phase of the AIM Program will include a high-level risk analysis and review of all District infrastructure and assets, some of which were installed when the District was formed 70 years ago and are reaching the end of their useful life. Phase 1 of this important new program will build upon our current Infrastructure Investment Plan and replacement programs to provide a roadmap for vital ongoing capital investment.





Prudent Supply Planning for a Dry Day

Throughout our 70 year history, the Goleta Water District has been committed to providing cost-effective, safe, and reliable water for the community. Our investment in water supplies, infrastructure, and ongoing conservation has resulted in both a robust and diverse water supply portfolio and the lowest per capita water use on the South Coast. As the region heads into what is predicted to be another dry year, we are well prepared to meet the water demands of the community. Any water source can be vulnerable, so our ability to draw from a variety of sources gives us the flexibility to meet existing customer demands through two more dry seasons.

Goleta Water District Water Supply Portfolio

The District treats and delivers approximately 14,000 acre feet per year (AFY) of water to the community. Each acre foot contains 325,900 gallons and provides approximately six months of water to an average family of four.

We have invested heavily in water supply development and infrastructure to create a healthy water supply portfolio from four distinct water sources – Lake Cachuma, the Goleta Groundwater Basin, recycled water, and imported water from the State Water Project. We have approximately 16,500 AFY of water available for our service area in an average year and access to additional groundwater and State Water under certain circumstances. Access to these diverse water supplies coupled with the community's commitment to conservation allows us to meet the water demands of 87,000 residential, commercial, and agricultural customers in the Goleta Valley.

Lake Cachuma 9,322 acre-feet/year

Lake Cachuma provides about 85 percent of the water for the 250,000 residents and 12,000 acres of agriculture along the South Coast of Santa Barbara County. Supplies from Cachuma are also released for downstream water rights and fish protection requirements. The District is entitled to 36 percent, or 9,322 AFY, of the Lake's yield, which provides for approximately two-thirds of our customer demand.

Cachuma supplies are delivered to the District through the Tecolote Tunnel and treated at the Corona Del Mar Water Treatment Plant. Using Cachuma supplies to meet the majority of our customer demand keeps costs low as Cachuma is our most inexpensive source of water.

Groundwater 2,350 acre-feet/year

The Goleta Groundwater Basin is a reliable source of ongoing supply as well as a supplemental source of water in emergency or drought situations. The 1989 Wright Judgment and 1991 voter-approved SAFE Ordinance set forth a complex set of management parameters including pumping limits, storage requirements, allowed uses, as well as the establishment and maintenance of a Drought Buffer. The District has a water right to pump and treat 2,350 AFY, or about 14 percent of customer demand. The portion of the annual water right not used by the District is stored in the Basin for use in dry years. As of 2013, the District has approximately 50,000 AF of water stored in the Basin.

Six wells owned and operated by the District can collectively pump up to 4,500 AF each year. Two current well rehabilitation projects will increase our pumping capacity by 40 percent. The District also uses these wells to inject excess water into the Basin during wet winters, providing additional stored water for future use.

Recycled Water

1,000 acre-feet/year

Since 1995, the District has served recycled water for irrigation and restroom facilities through a partnership with the Goleta Sanitary District. Our largest customers are the University of California, the City of Santa Barbara, and several golf courses in the area. Using recycled water for irrigation and other non-potable uses helps to conserve and stretch our potable water, improving supply reliability and keeping costs lower for customers.

State Water

3,800 acre-feet/year

State Water is a vital supplemental source providing our community with added insurance against the impacts of long-term dry periods. In 1991, following a severe drought, District customers voted to purchase State Water. We are entitled to up to 7,450 AFY which includes an additional 2,500 AFY purchased in 1994 to improve reliability and availability in dry years. The District's State Water entitlement represents more than 40 percent of the entire South Coast allotment.

State Water deliveries are limited by the annual allocation set by the Department of Water Resources based on the water content of the Sierra snowpack and statewide water availability. While an average of 3,800 AFY of State Water is available to the District, we are able to meet customer demands with less than 1,000 AF of State Water under normal conditions. Any allocated State Water that we do not use in a given year is remotely stored for future District use in San Luis Reservoir located in Merced County. This long-term investment in State Water results in increased flexibility to import water in dry years when we need it most. This forward-thinking investment is a critical reason why the District can defer the need for extreme water conservation or rationing during prolonged dry periods. Accordingly, this helps avoid the damaging economic and lifestyle impacts those restrictions can have on our community.

Water Supplies in 2014

2013 was one of the driest years on record throughout California and many long-range forecasts predict 2014 will again be dry. Water purveyors across the state are exploring options for meeting water demands with limited supplies. No two water districts are the same and because of the water resource investments our community has made over the years, we are in the advantageous position of having robust and flexible water supplies to meet demands during extended dry periods.

In 2014, the District will maximize our use of State Water to protect our other supply sources as long as possible in the event of a multi-year drought. Using State Water supplies directly reduces our need to draw on both Cachuma and the Groundwater Basin in 2014, preserving these sources should dry conditions persist.

Our continuous investment in proactive water supply development and planning, coupled with the community's commitment to ongoing water use efficiency as a way of life have prepared us for the dry weather we are currently experiencing. While additional strategies to reduce demand may be necessary if dry conditions persist through 2015, our long-term infrastructure investment and water supply planning supports sustainable supplies today and into the future. For more information and updates on current conditions, please visit our website at: www.goletawater.com.

The District's investment in diverse water supplies, and the community's long time water thriftiness will help us get through this dry weather period.

Billing System Implementation

Providing accurate, regular water bills every month is an integral part of our commitment to the community. The recent billing system implementation has fallen short of the high quality customer service we are dedicated to providing. Since the launch of the new billing system, we have experienced problems in delivering bills in a timely manner resulting in frustration, inconvenience, and confusion for some of our customers. While the majority of our customers have not been affected by the billing system transition, any disruption to our ability to provide regular and accurate bills is unacceptable. Over the last several months, we have been working diligently with our billing service provider to resolve all outstanding issues and return to a regular billing schedule. Rest assured, the District will continue to work tirelessly until every customer is receiving the reliably scheduled billing service they expect and we are committed to providing.

Two years ago, we began reviewing options for a new billing system that would improve operational efficiencies and provide specific features requested by customers such as more flexible and convenient payment options including online billing and the ability to make credit card payments. After an extensive vendor search and vetting process, we engaged Global Water Management, Inc. (Global Water) to implement a new billing system that promised to meet, and in some cases exceed, customer and District requests. After extensive planning and coordination with Global Water to prepare for the transition, the District initiated the new billing system in December 2012.

Replacement of any utility billing system is a significant and complex technical undertaking. Despite our due diligence prior to moving forward with Global Water as the billing system vendor, we experienced unexpected and unacceptable implementation challenges. We are extremely disappointed and frustrated with the impact that the new billing services have had on some of our customers. The majority of the problems we have encountered are associated with specific sub-groups of customers including those who have moved in or out of a property or had changes to their meters since the transition. Additionally, customers with unique accounts requiring special programming and analysis have experienced delayed, intermittent, or missing bills.

We are working with Global Water to correct the remaining billing issues early this year. This is the fastest and most cost-effective option for returning our customers to normal billing cycles. If Global Water cannot resolve the outstanding problems in a timely manner as promised, the District is prepared to pursue other options. However, it is important to note that should we need to pursue alternative options, the likely result will be a protracted transition period where a portion of District customers would continue to experience delayed or missing bills.

In our ongoing efforts to ease the impact these difficulties are having on our customers, we have waived late fees and, in cases where customers have difficulties paying their bills, we have arranged payment plans. We remain committed to resolving the problems at hand as quickly as possible, and minimizing the impacts on our customers and the community.

Benefits of the New Billing System

While there have been setbacks in implementation of the new billing system, the new system provides customers improved access to account information, water use history, and other online tools. The online portal also offers flexibility in how and when customers can make payments. Some of the benefits and options allow customers to:

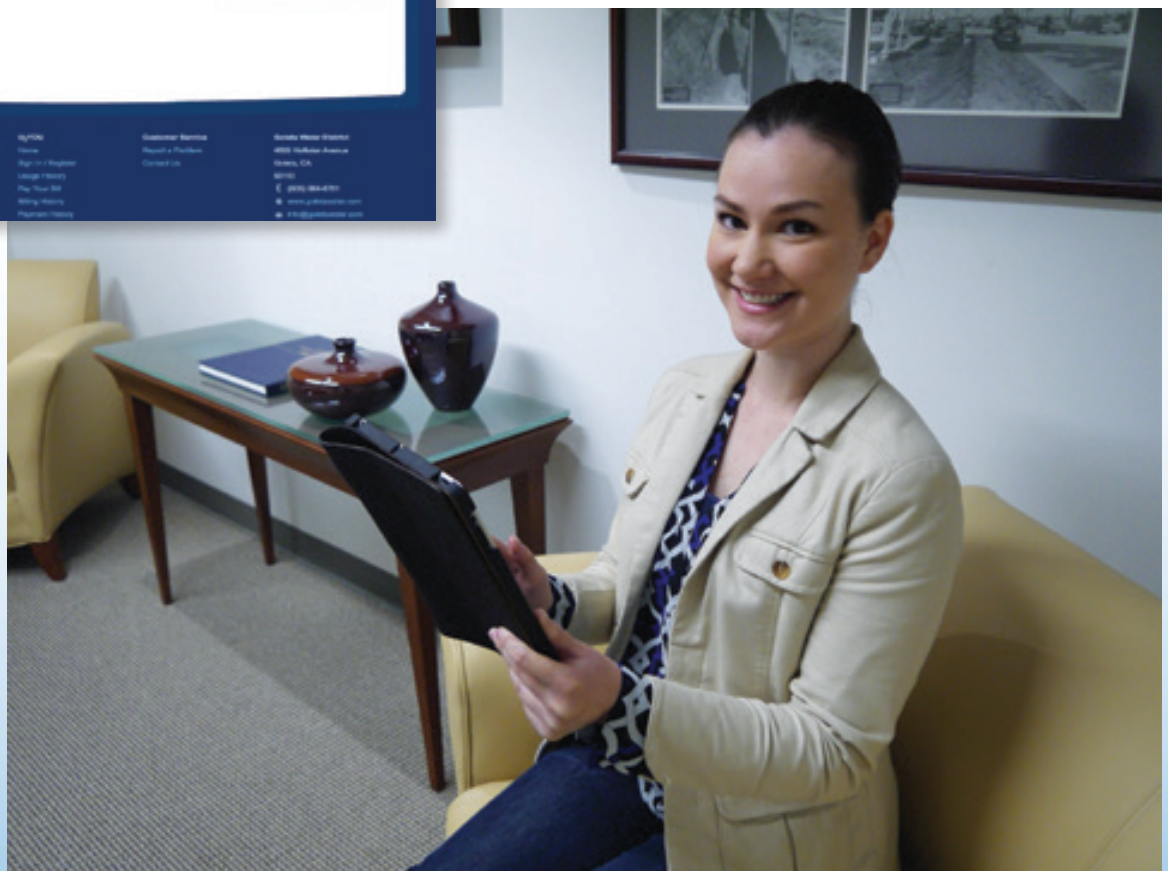
- **SAVE TIME.** You can save an average of two and a half minutes per bill paying electronically as compared to paying traditionally through the mail. If you currently pay your bill in person each month, you will save even more time by paying electronically.
- **SAVE MONEY.** A penny saved is a penny earned. Paying your water bill electronically reduces the costs of postage and replenishing check stocks.
- **STRENGTHEN SECURITY.** Almost 85% of identity theft cases result from off-line transactions as a result of lost checkbooks and stolen bills, statements, and check payments. Paying your water bill electronically reduces this risk.
- **SIMPLIFY.** By receiving your bill and making payments electronically you can save paper and reduce clutter.

The new billing system also supports the District Sustainability Plan by reducing our carbon footprint. To date, approximately 25 percent of District customers have registered for online accounts and are taking advantage of the new online features and 10 percent of all District customers have elected to go completely paperless by receiving and paying their bills electronically every month. This translates to a savings of approximately 108,200 pieces of paper, or thirteen trees, annually. Additionally, customers have reduced trips to our offices to pay bills by 33 percent, resulting in a reduction of approximately 4,800 customer miles traveled each month. Annually, this translates to a savings of approximately 2,436 gallons of gasoline and a reduction of 20.4 tonnes of CO2 released per month.

As the District approaches its 70th anniversary, coupling infrastructure investment with advanced technological resources becomes increasingly critical to delivering efficient, reliable water service to our customers. While the challenges associated with system implementation have been frustrating, the new billing system provides features expected in today's technology driven world.

We remain firmly committed to protecting our customers' interests, keeping costs low, and providing excellent customer service. Should you be interested in following our efforts to resolve the remaining billing system challenges, please visit our website for regular progress updates, including answers to frequently asked questions at: www.goletawater.com. You can also access your online account for payment and water use information.

We appreciate your ongoing patience and understanding during this transition period.



The online customer portal allows for convenient access via desktop and mobile devices.



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REMEMBER, YOU CAN NOW PAY YOUR BILL ONLINE

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Water Conservation Tips for the Winter and Spring Months

Watering your landscape at the optimal times during the cooler winter months will save you water and money. Set your sprinkler and irrigation timers to water during the early morning or early evening hours to maximize efficiency of your watering efforts. For more information and tools to landscape watering, visit www.waterwisesb.org. Check out the landscaping calculator and learn how much water your yard needs in any given week.

Outdoor tips:

- Add a layer of mulch around trees and plants to reduce evaporation and keep soil cool. This can save approximately 30 gallons per 1,000 square feet each time you water.
- A standard garden hose flows at 7-18 gallons per minute. Using a broom instead of a hose to clean off driveways and sidewalks can save a significant amount of water.
- Make sure your sprinkler nozzles are directed to water the lawn and garden only – not walkways, sidewalks, driveways or the street.

Indoor tips:

- Running the dishwasher only when full saves energy and approximately 8 gallons per load.
- Installing low-flow showerheads saves up to 7 gallons per shower.
- Turning off the water when brushing your teeth saves approximately 10 gallons per day.

Paperless News! Sign up to receive our e-newsletter.

The Goleta Water District newsletter is printed with vegetable based inks on recycled paper. As part of our ongoing sustainability efforts, we now offer customers the option of receiving a paperless digital edition of the newsletter. To learn more and sign up, or to download the newsletter please visit our website at:

www.GoletaWater.com/newsletters-and-press.



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