

# *Santa Ynez River*

WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## JULY 2023 NEWSLETTER

### TELEPHONE

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[www.SYRWCD.COM](http://www.SYRWCD.COM)

### Weather Extremes

Questions arise about future water supplies when both the basin is experiencing an extended dry period and when especially wet winters occur. Interest and concern should indeed be at the forefront when these extreme weather swings occur.

When dry periods appear, like the recent 12-year period, it is reasonable to ask; "What ends a 12-year dry cycle?" There is a two-part answer: For surface supplies like rivers and reservoirs, when they are full it may be prudent to say the dry cycle is broken. In our basin, the reservoirs and river are now full. However, the answer is more complex for the underground aquifers. Underground water storage generally takes several years to deplete and may take several years of average or above average rainfall to recover.

This year, since the wet winter occurred over many months, there was quite an extended period of water saturated soils, allowing for an unusually high amount of water percolating down to the lower aquifers for a longer than usual period of time. This is good news.

In wet years, the focus becomes on saving water today for the future. In all types of years, practicing conservation and the efficient use of water is always in order.

### Groundwater Production Statement

Production Period: January 1 – June 30, 2023

**Due by July 31, 2023**

Reference: Water Code Section 75500 et seq.

Enclosed are instructions, semi-annual groundwater production statement(s), and worksheet(s) for reporting your well water production.

- Use the worksheet(s) to calculate water production then statement(s) to calculate cost.
- Return the statement and worksheet(s) with payment to our Post Office box address on or before July 30, 2023.
- Statements without worksheets are deemed incomplete and do not constitute legal submittals.
- All submittals postmarked after July 30, 2023 are debited a 10% penalty and 1% interest per month on any delinquent groundwater charge payment.
- Calculations will be reviewed and correcting adjustments made, if needed. "Prior charges" listed on the statement indicates a penalty, interest, or correcting adjustment for prior statement(s) and is due and payable now.
- Keep the yellow carbon copies for your records.

District staff is available to answer your questions and assist you with your groundwater reporting. Please call us at **805-693-1156 ext. 408** or email [gwdept@syrwcd.com](mailto:gwdept@syrwcd.com).

### New Groundwater Charge Rates (July 1, 2023)

The California Supreme Court ruled that water conservation districts must follow the voter-approved dictates of Proposition 26, which requires fees be assessed according to costs of serving those who pay the fee. The section of the California Water Code relating to setting fees, which Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (SYRWCD) has followed since 1979, is now unconstitutional. Therefore, the SYRWCD now establishes its fees consistent to Proposition 26.

As provided in Resolution No. 722, adopted by the SYRWCD Board of Directors during a public meeting held on June 27, 2023, Groundwater Production Charge rates for all types of water produced **between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024**, were levied per zone consistent with a Rate Study conducted by Raftelis will be:

Zone A: **\$20.42 per acre-foot** of water produced

Zone B: **\$14.24 per acre-foot** of water produced

Zone C: **\$12.41 per acre-foot** of water produced

Zone D: **\$12.41 per acre-foot** of water produced

Zone E: **\$12.41 per acre-foot** of water produced

Zone F: **\$12.41 per acre-foot** of water produced

### Our Purpose

In 1939, the people of the Santa Ynez and Lompoc Valleys joined together to form this water conservation district. The purpose was to prevent the entirety of the upstream Santa Ynez River being diverted out of the watershed to a coastal stretch of populated and agricultural areas extending from El Capitan on the Gaviota Coast to the Ventura County line. Today, the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (SYRWCD) protects water rights and supplies within the Santa Ynez River watershed, manages releases of water from Bradbury Dam to replenish downstream aquifers along the river and on the Lompoc Plain, and monitors, reports, and manages groundwater conditions.

Groundwater charges levied by the SYRWCD are in furtherance of District activities in the protection and augmentation of the water supplies for users within the District or a zone or zones thereof which are necessary for the public health, welfare, and safety of the people of this state (Water Code Section 75521). Such activities include: Planning, scheduling, and managing the release of water from and downstream of the Cachuma Project Bradbury Dam for the satisfaction and benefit of downstream water rights, including the timing, volume, and rate of flows to

## Our Purpose (continued)

- promote recharge in the river alluvium and the Lompoc Plain, as provided in State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Order No. WRO 2019-0148.
- Reporting on Santa Ynez River system conditions, basin surface water use, and water purchased by contract.
- Supporting compliance with agreement(s) and procedures to mitigate downstream flooding because of Cachuma Project storm operations.
- Contributing to the review, preparation, and compliance with applicable biological assessment and opinions, including associated consultations, revisions, and replacements, for the protection of endangered species in the Santa Ynez River, while assuring that downstream water rights and water quality in the basin and downstream of Bradbury Dam are maintained and protected.
- Recording groundwater production within the District.
- Monitoring and reporting on groundwater conditions within the District.
- Levying and collecting charges on groundwater production within the District.
- Making annual groundwater use estimates and forecasting groundwater storage and overdraft amounts within the District.
- Determining water volume for replenishment of the dewatered aquifer storage below Bradbury Dam.
- Participation in the three Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) covering the Santa Ynez River Valley groundwater basin and District. Such participation includes, but is not limited to, coordination, preparation, and implementation activities and provision of administrative support (including arranging GSA committee and citizen advisory group meetings, recordkeeping, and bookkeeping) associated with the GSAs' Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP), annual reports, and associated implementation and other activities. This includes coordinating and contributing to responses to comments made on the GSPs and related technical studies. It also includes participation in discussions of long-term governance and funding for the GSAs.
- The District's administrative support of the GSAs, which requires an expenditure of significant District staff time, has been necessary, in part, because the GSAs have not yet hired their own staff or legal, engineering, or other consultants, and have yet to levy any groundwater fees or charges on landowners or pumpers within the GSAs or otherwise create an independent funding source (aside from grant funding and certain contributions from parties to the Memoranda of Agreement [MOA], as defined below). While it is expected that the District will continue to incur costs to participate in the three GSAs and as the single point of contact with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), the level of District administrative support could change in the future depending on the GSAs' future governance structure, funding sources, and staffing and contracting decisions.
- The District's activities as a party to all three GSAs benefits all pumpers within the District, which depend upon the District to provide local agency Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) coverage within its approximately 180,000 acres within the basin. In the absence of such SGMA coverage by the District, the entire basin may not be covered and in such event would be subject to State Water Resources

Control Board intervention and management of the basin as a probationary basin (Water Code Section 10735.2 (a)(4) (B)). The District's SGMA activities benefit, among other pumpers in the District, the pumpers in Zones A, who pump from the river alluvium and benefit from the District's investigation and efforts supporting the characterization of those zones as not groundwater subject to SGMA management in the GSPs, and the District's anticipated need to defend that characterization against those who disagree with it and contend such pumping must be managed under SGMA. To date, DWR has not decided on the adequacy of the GSPs, which may include an evaluation of that characterization.

- Acting as the single point of contact between the GSAs and the DWR for SGMA compliance, for the benefit of all three GSAs.
- Administering SGMA grant funding for the benefit of all three GSAs.
- Participating in the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan process to promote regional water management strategies to ensure sustainable and reliable water supplies, including the protection of agriculture.

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### Office Location

**Our office is located at 3669 Sagunto Street, Suite 101, Santa Ynez, CA 93460.**

Water users in the Santa Ynez - Solvang - Los Olivos areas should not confuse this District with the Improvement District No. 1 (ID1) by the same name. ID1 is a separate district formed many years ago to acquire and serve water in the aforementioned areas.

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*We appreciate any comments or suggestions you may have. If you have any questions regarding District activities, please contact Kevin Walsh, General Manager, at 805-693-1156.*

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**Notice of Vacancy in Elective Office,  
Division map and description, and  
Statement of Qualifications to complete are  
available at the District Office or online at:**

**[SYRWCD.com/syrwcd-division-4-vacancy](http://SYRWCD.com/syrwcd-division-4-vacancy)**

If you have any questions, please contact Board Secretary, Amber Thompson. **email:** [athompson@syrwcd.com](mailto:athompson@syrwcd.com)  
**Phone:** 805-693-1156, ext. 405

**Deadline to apply is July 31, 2023.**