Water Features

Goleta Water District News Volume X, Issue 1: Fall–Winter

Investing in the Future

Sustaining Water Infrastructure & Access to Local Water Supplies

As the District is set to turn 80 next year, continued investment in water infrastructure, supply reliability, and energy independence will ensure sustainable water service delivery for current and future generations of the Goleta Valley. Learn more about some of the forward-thinking projects the District is currently undertaking to invest in the future.

GOLETA WATER DISTRICT

PLUS: Toward Net Zero

[Cover Photo: Example of solar panels that will be installed at District facilities]

Investing in Sustainable Water Service

After a wet winter, local water supply conditions are the best they have been in over a decade. Lake Cachuma is full, State Water Project reservoirs are flush, and recovery of the Goleta Groundwater Basin is underway, with the District having injected 815 AF of surplus surface water while Lake Cachuma was spilling. Given our current supply, a forecasted El Niño, and continuing customer conservation, the District is well positioned to maintain a strong water supply portfolio for several years.

As the District approaches its 80th Anniversary next fall, capital investment has never been more important. While fully replacing the existing system would be cost prohibitive, key projects are being prioritized through a combination of asset management and careful planning to ensure investments are directed to the most pressing needs to maintain the current level of service. The acquisition of grant funding and public-private partnerships make executing so many competing priorities more feasible. Protecting access to water supplies, replacing distribution infrastructure, and investing in alternative energy sources and technology will be high among the District's investment priorities over the coming decades.

This newsletter provides a glimpse into the important work the District is doing to ensure water supply dependability, infrastructure reliability, and disaster preparedness, while also delivering quality water to customer taps every day. Decisions made today to invest in critical projects and forward-thinking initiatives will support sustainable water service at the most reasonable cost to current and future generations and ensure the District can continue to meet its mission to deliver lifeline water service to the Goleta Valley.

David Matson

General Manager

Lake Cachuma Before and After

200%

Santa Barbara County has received 30.5 inches of rain since the fall of 2022, which is **200% of normal rainfall**. This led to **Lake Cachuma** filling from 31% to 100% by February 2023.

2011

For the **first time since 2011**, the significant rainfall and inflow from the Santa Ynez River resulted in Lake Cachuma spilling over **Bradbury Dam**.

Q: *What is the SAFE Water Supplies Ordinance?*

A: In 1991, Goleta Valley voters approved the SAFE Water Supplies Ordinance ("SAFE"). SAFE prohibits the District from releasing potable water for new or additional service connections except when all of the following conditions are met:

- The District is receiving 100% of its deliveries normally allowed from Cachuma
- The District has met legal obligations under the Wright Judgment that governs the Goleta Groundwater Basin
- There is no water rationing
- The District has met its obligation to the Annual Storage Commitment to the Groundwater Drought Buffer

All of the conditions have not been met since October 1, 2014, when the District stopped offering new water allocations. Since then, any new development has occurred on parcels with existing water credits or historic entitlements approved before October 1, 2014.

Q: *When will the District resume issuing new water connections?*

A: Based on current projections and the state of the water supply portfolio, the District will likely be in a position to issue new water allocations in 2024. This review occurs annually. If the District authorizes new water allocations, projects requesting new water would be processed on a first-come, first-serve basis, for up to 1% of its annual total available supply for new water connections that year.

Q: *How much water do new housing developments use?*

A: New housing is not projected to materially increase water use, largely a result of plumbing code changes, improved efficiencies, and the reality that many new units are multi-family developments with mainly indoor water usage and shared low water use outdoor landscaping. The average multi-family residential unit uses approximately 0.15 acre-feet per year per unit, or a quarter of the amount of water a single family residence uses.

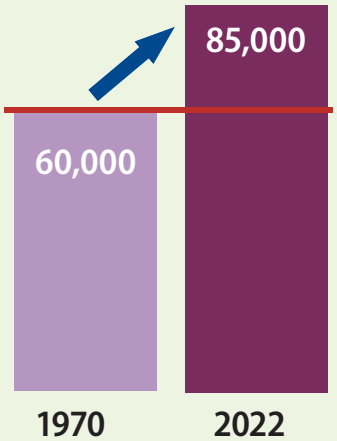
Goleta Valley Water Use Over Time

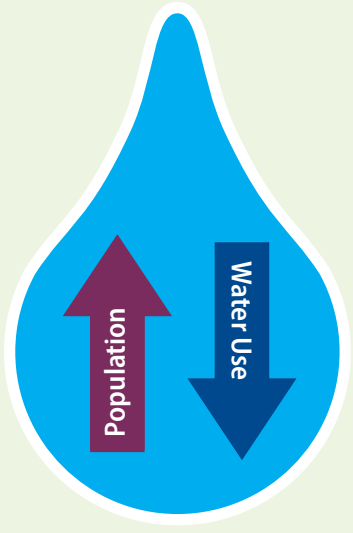
Even with significant population growth between 1970 and 2022, when the population increased by nearly 42%, water use is 28% lower than in 1970.

Population

Population change from 1970 to 2022

42% Increase

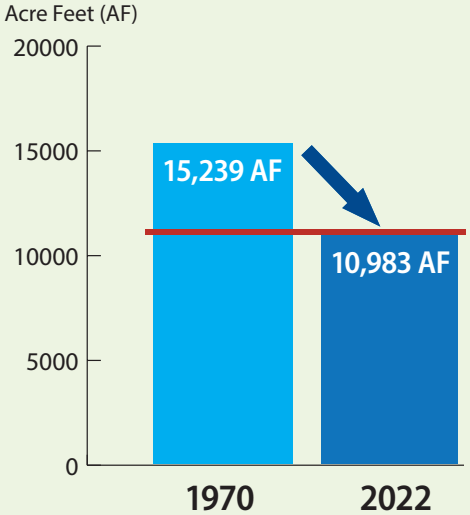




Water Use

Water Use change from 1970 to 2022

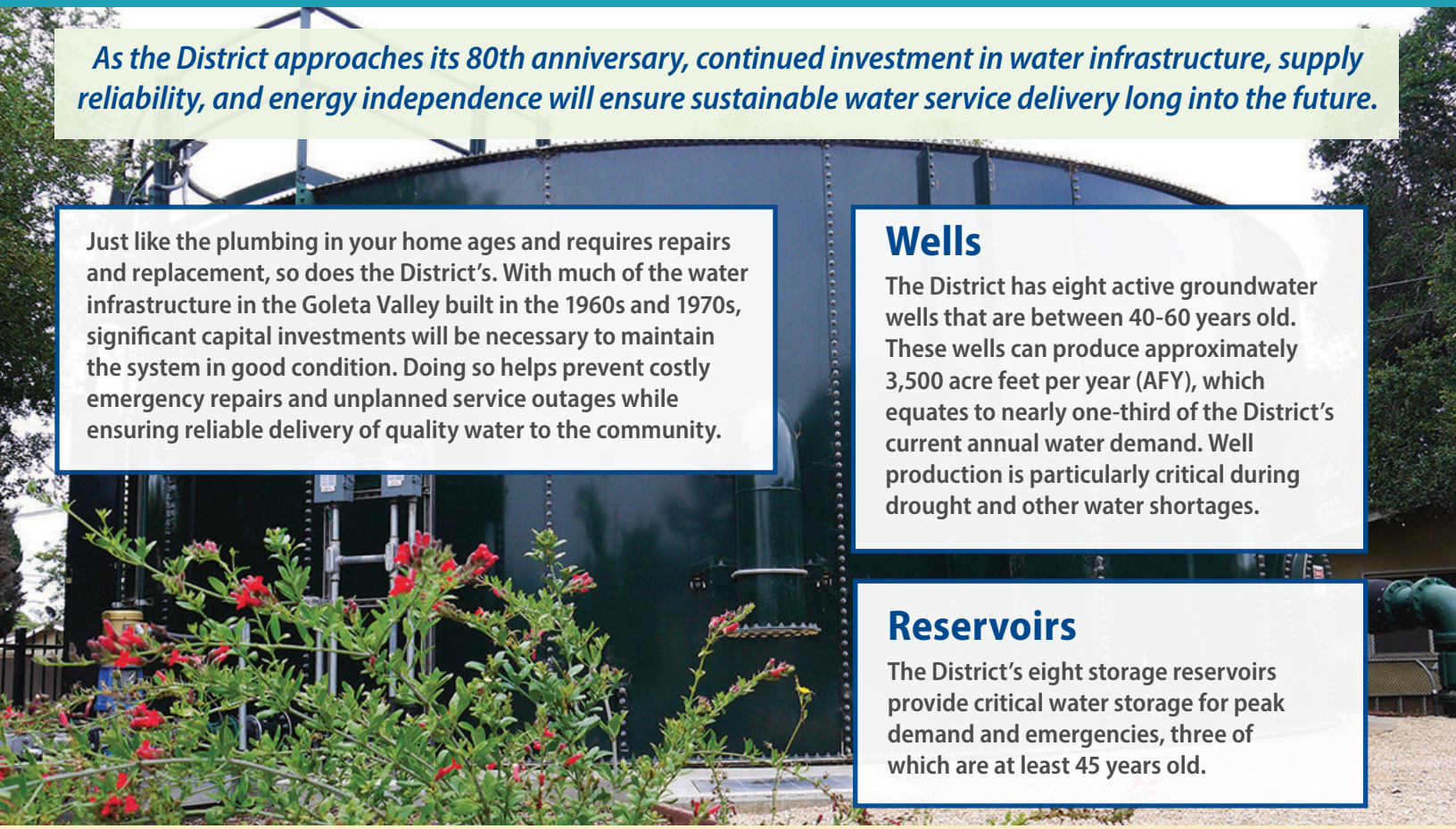
28% Decrease



INVESTING IN RELIABLE WATER SUPPLIES

AND THE INFRASTRUCTURE TO DELIVER IT

As the District approaches its 80th anniversary, continued investment in water infrastructure, supply reliability, and energy independence will ensure sustainable water service delivery long into the future.



Just like the plumbing in your home ages and requires repairs and replacement, so does the District's. With much of the water infrastructure in the Goleta Valley built in the 1960s and 1970s, significant capital investments will be necessary to maintain the system in good condition. Doing so helps prevent costly emergency repairs and unplanned service outages while ensuring reliable delivery of quality water to the community.

Wells

The District has eight active groundwater wells that are between 40-60 years old. These wells can produce approximately 3,500 acre feet per year (AFY), which equates to nearly one-third of the District's current annual water demand. Well production is particularly critical during drought and other water shortages.

Reservoirs

The District's eight storage reservoirs provide critical water storage for peak demand and emergencies, three of which are at least 45 years old.

Infrastructure Investments for Long-term Service Reliability

A complex water system with aging infrastructure worth $1 billion will require significant investment to ensure continued water service reliability. With careful planning and balanced investments, District customers continue to pay less than 2 cents per gallon for drinking water delivered to their taps.

- **270** Miles of Water Pipe
- **6,500** Valves
- **3** Emergency Interconnects
- **8** Reservoirs
- **24 MGD** Water Treatment Plant
- **20** Million Gallons of Reservoir Storage
- **8** Groundwater Production Wells
- **20** Pressure Reducing Stations
- **17,700** Meters
- **8** Pump Stations
- **1,520** Hydrants
- **44** Vehicles

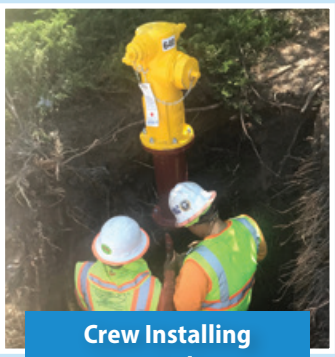
DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

READY FOR ANY CIRCUMSTANCE

The District continuously invests in projects and programs that enhance emergency resiliency and ensure water service levels can be maintained under a variety of circumstances.

Fire Hydrant Replacement

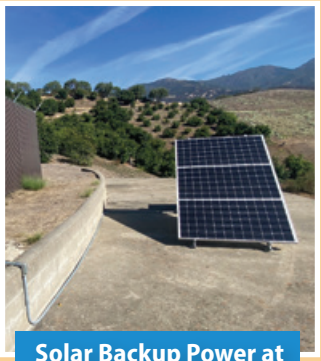
The District owns, maintains, and annually inspects 1,520 fire hydrants in the Goleta Valley, a record number of which (111 hydrants) were replaced last year alone. Looking ahead, the District plans to replace hydrants that are 50+ years old, ensuring emergency services personnel have access to reliable hydrants with sufficient water pressure and flow rates to fight fires.



Crew Installing New Hydrant

Newly Installed Replacement Hydrant

Diesel Generator at District Headquarters



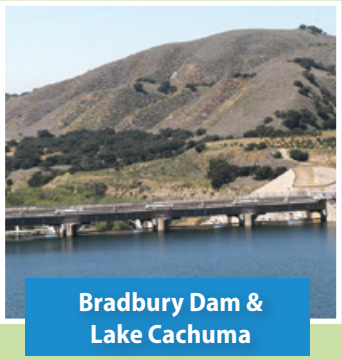
Solar Backup Power at San Marcos Reservoir

Backup Power Systems

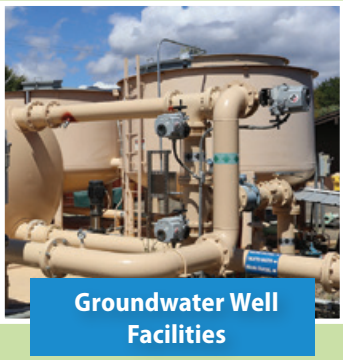
The District has installed backup power systems at its reservoirs, two pump stations, Corona Del Mar Water Treatment Plant, and District Headquarters to ensure service levels are maintained during and after disasters or other emergencies. Backup solar power at reservoirs have reduced District dependence on traditional energy sources, further strengthening emergency readiness and resiliency and improving water service reliability.

Diverse Water Supplies

A diverse mix of surface water, groundwater, imported state water, and recycled water allows the District to successfully navigate and overcome various challenges, including fires, severe water shortages, and changing water quality at Lake Cachuma. If one source of supply becomes unavailable, an alternative source can be utilized.



Bradbury Dam & Lake Cachuma



Groundwater Well Facilities

Investing in the Goleta Groundwater Basin

ONGOING INVESTMENT IN THE GOLETA GROUNDWATER BASIN

Maintaining access to a local and sustainable source of water supply for the community.

Goleta Water District is drilling a new groundwater well at its headquarters on Hollister Avenue. The new well is the first in over 40 years.

Groundwater is a critical, local source of drinking water supply for the community, particularly during periods of drought or other emergencies that affect the availability of surface water.

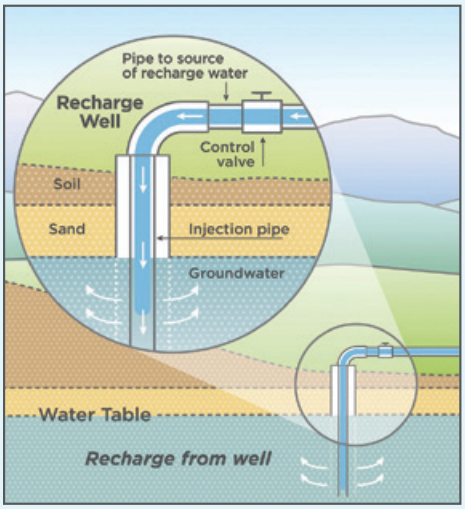
Maintaining long-term groundwater production capacity in an aging well field remains a top priority. The new well will provide water production of up to 1,000 gallons per minute (GPM) while also increasing injection capacity, supporting the District's Aquifer Storage and Recovery Program and the long term health of the Goleta Groundwater Basin.

Additional information and progress updates are available at **www.GoletaWater.com/NewWell**

AQUIFER STORAGE AND RECOVERY PROGRAM

STORING WATER IN THE GROUND FOR FUTURE USE

The Goleta Water District has one of the oldest Aquifer Storage and Recovery programs in the state. During the February-June 2023 Cachuma spill event, the District used its wells to inject 815 acre-feet of water (228 million gallons) into the Goleta Groundwater Basin, helping to replenish underground water supplies for future use.



What is Groundwater Recharge?

Groundwater basins are naturally recharged through rainfall, surface water infiltration, and seepage from adjacent soils and rock formations. Groundwater injection enhances natural recharge while maximizing use of available supplies.

The new well will support the District's continued ability to pump groundwater to serve the community and inject excess surface water during wet periods to help recharge the groundwater basin.

Toward Net Zero

In late 2023 and early 2024, the District will install solar energy systems, such as those pictured on the cover of this newsletter, throughout its facilities that will be capable of generating enough clean power to offset its baseline energy use.

Solar panel installations will include carport and rooftop solar systems at the District Headquarters and ground-mounted solar panels at the Corona Del Mar Water Treatment Plant and the Ellwood Reservoir.

Offsetting traditional energy use through the production of renewable energy is the natural next step in the District's long history of sustainability. Ultimately, net zero energy use will reduce reliance on traditional non-renewable energy, thereby improving energy independence and reliability, enhancing emergency resiliency, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

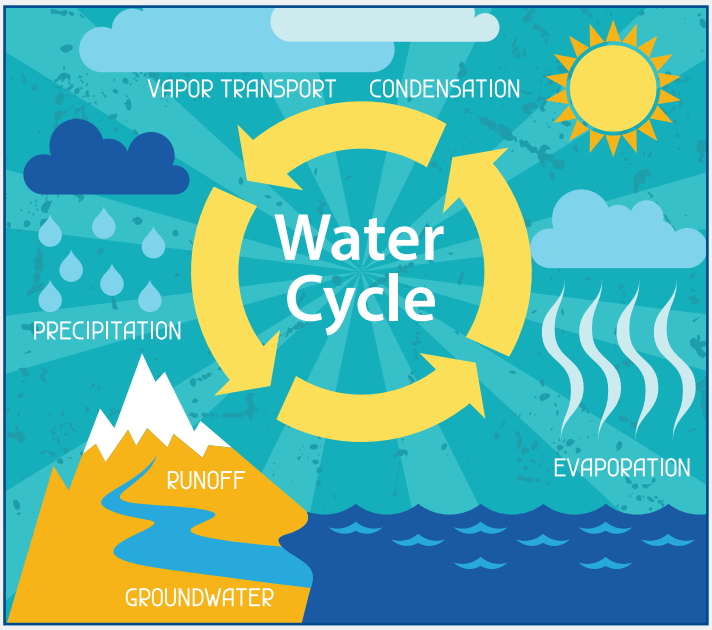
Example of the carport solar panels that will be installed at District Headquarters

Public-private partnership: The District is collaborating with a private company through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) financial arrangement that will allow the solar power system to be designed, constructed, owned and operated at minimal cost to the District.

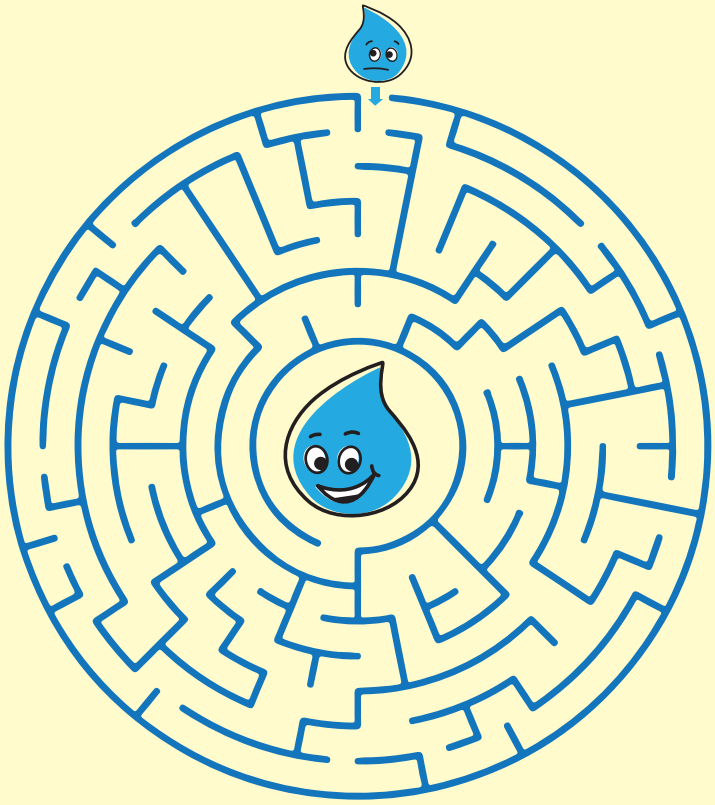
Kids Corner

WaterSense for Kids

The water cycle describes how Earth's water is not only always changing forms, between liquid (rain), solid (ice), and gas (vapor), but also moving on, above, and in the Earth. This process is always happening everywhere! Kids can explore the water cycle through an interactive diagram at **https://water.usgs.gov/edu/watercycle-kids-beg.html**



Find your path through the water maze



The District has many educational resources for teachers, parents and kids interested in learning more about where their water comes from and how to conserve.
Visit: **www.GoletaWater.com/Conservation/Educational-Resources**

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REMEMBER, YOU CAN PAY YOUR BILL ONLINE

Visit our website for more information

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Water-Wise Landscaping Tips and Planting Resources | Board Meeting Agendas and Minutes | Information About Rates | Water Quality and more…

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Let's Save Together waterwise Goleta Water District

District receives $2M grant award for groundwater supply project

The District has been awarded a $2 million federal grant award from the **U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART** program for its new well project. This critical project will improve reliability of local groundwater supplies through high capacity pumping and injection of water into the groundwater basin, ensuring long term sustainability of this critical supply source to serve the community, consistent with WaterSMART program goals. The total cost of the new well project is $6.5 million. This award will help offset District costs, and allow funding saved to be redirected to other pressing capital project needs to support aging water infrastructure.

For more information visit **www.GoletaWater.com/AutoPay**

Contact

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Send us an email:
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Visit our website:
www.GoletaWater.com

The **District Board of Directors** meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. The public is always welcome. For more information on how to participate visit **www.GoletaWater.com/Agendas-and-Minutes**