



# Westlands Water District

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November 28, 2016

*This notice contains important information about the following:*

- **CVP Water Supply Update**
- **Supplemental Water Update**
- **Revised Water Rates and Charges**
- **Groundwater Sustainability Plan and Westlands Water Quality Coalition Workshop – December 21, 2016**
- **Westlands Water Quality Coalition Members**
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- **Landowner Responsibilities**
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- **2016 Crop Acreage Report**
- **Backflow Prevention**
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## **CVP Water Supply Update**

The Bureau of Reclamation's allocation to Central Valley Project (CVP) south-of-Delta agricultural water service contractors is 5% for the 2016-2017 water contract year. Based on CVP operations to date and projections for the remaining water contract year, the District believes the allocation will remain at 5% and is not anticipated to increase.

The CVP currently has approximately 5.1 million acre-feet of water stored in northern CVP reservoirs; this represents approximately 90% of the 15-year average. Storage in Shasta Reservoir is approximately 2.8 million acre-feet; 125% of normal for this time of year. Federal storage in San Luis Reservoir is approximately 224,000 acre-feet; 56% of the 15-year average. Jones Pumping Plant is currently operating at about 40% of capacity, has pumped approximately 104,000 acre-feet thus far in November, and is scheduled to increase to 100% of capacity by the end of this month.

## **Supplemental Water Update**

The District received adjusted timely applications for 2016-17 Supplemental Water totaling 116,820 acre-feet and late applications totaling 8,863 acre-feet on 256,450 acres. It is estimated that the delivered cost for water users to range from \$700 to \$750 per acre-foot. At this time, the District anticipates it will acquire about 139,900 acre-feet of water supply and fulfill the timely and late requests, and have approximately 14,300 acre-feet remaining. Advance payment for the acquisition costs of the water is required at the time of allocation. Conveyance-related costs will be billed when the water is used. Allocations of Supplemental Water began in May, and the timing and amounts of expected allocations for the year are shown in the table below. This schedule will continue to be updated monthly to reflect additional supplies and/or changes to the timing for delivery.

<b>Allocation Month</b>	<b>AF Amount</b>
April	0
May – Actual	11,039

June – Actual	78,161
July – Actual	8,961
August – Actual	0
September – Actual	10,086
October – Actual	9,882
November – Actual	6,789
December – Estimated	650

The District continues to receive offers to purchase additional Supplemental Water supplies. If water users wish to acquire additional Supplemental Water, they should consider submitting a late request. The District currently forecasts it will have some unsubscribed supplemental water available once timely and late requests are fulfilled.

### **Revised Water Rates and Charges**

On November 21, 2016, the Board of Directors approved the following revisions to the 2016-2017 Water Rates and Charges, retroactively to March 1, 2016:

- The District's Municipal and Industrial Water Rate, \$391.86 per AF.
- Naval Air Station Lemoore Municipal and Industrial Water Rate, \$847.47 per AF.
- Water Delivered Benefit Rate, \$7.46 per AF.
- The District's Overuse Rate, \$904.00 per AF.
- The District's Operations and Maintenance Rate, \$72.50 per AF.

The new rates will be implemented on the November water billing statements that are mailed early in December and due December 27, 2016. The revised rates are available on the District's website at <http://www.wwd.ca.gov>, under the *Water Management* section, or by calling Customer Accounting at (559) 241-6250.

### **Groundwater Sustainability Plan and Westlands Water Quality Coalition Workshop - December 21, 2016**

The District has scheduled a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) development workshop on Wednesday, December 21, 2016, at the District's Five Points Field Office. The GSP workshop will be divided into three workshops that focus on the water users within the western, central and eastern hydrogeologic areas of the Westside Sub basin at 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., respectively. The District's staff will outline the hydrogeologic characteristics of the western, central and eastern areas at their respective workshop, present potential sustainability management measures by area, and provide interested parties a forum to provide comments and ideas on the District's GSP development. Please contact Kiti Campbell at (559) 241-6226 for additional information. In conjunction with the GSP workshop, District staff will summarize the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program for Westlands Water Quality Coalition members to fulfill their required annual workshop attendance. Please contact Charlotte Gallock at (559) 241-6244 for additional information.

### **Westlands Water Quality Coalition Members**

The Westlands Water Quality Coalition (WWQC) serves as a third-party to carry out the waste discharge requirements of the Western Tulare Lake Basin General Order R5-2014-0001 (GO). The GO requires that each member submit an annual Farm Evaluation to the WWQC. In addition, each member must complete and keep on-farm, an annual Nitrogen Management Plan. The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) initiated compliance inspections in WWQC. Upon inspection, you will be required to produce your 2015 Farm Evaluation, 2015 Nitrogen Management Plan and 2016 Nitrogen Management Plan. WWQC will notify you if the RWQCB chooses your farming operation for an inspection. Please contact Charlotte Gallock at (559) 241-6244 for additional information.

### **2017-2018 Agricultural Water Allocation Applications Due January 17, 2017**

Water users will receive their 2017-2018 Agricultural Water Allocation Application packets during the first part of December. Landowners will not receive packets unless they are also water users or have requested them previously. Applications are due at either the Fresno or Five Points Offices by 5:00 p.m. on or before January 17, 2017.

Typically, the landowners' tenant farmers will submit the allocation applications. However, landowners may apply for allocations, especially if more direct control of the allocation to their land is desired or tenants have not been selected. In these situations, landowners are reminded that the costs associated with water applied for and allocated must be paid, even if the water is not used.

If more than one application is received for the same parcel of land, priority will be given to the landowner in accordance with the District's rules and regulations. If no applicants own the land, priority will be given to the water user who provides evidence of the right to occupy the land and receive the allocation.

The District is also requesting an estimate of the number of acres you expect to fallow in the 2017-2018 water contract year. Providing this information will not affect your request for a water supply allocation; it will only be used to educate the public on how the continued lack of water supply is impacting our water users.

### **Landowner Responsibilities**

As a courtesy each year, the District reminds landowners of their responsibilities as property owners in Westlands. Landowners are ultimately responsible for the payment of all District assessments, land-based charges and water charges attributable to their property. Any private agreement with tenants for use of the land does not relieve landowners of their responsibility for paying these costs. Landowners must enforce leases between lessors and lessees. Landowners should be aware of the following obligations regarding their property:

Assessments: Westlands uses a "benefit valuation" method in establishing assessments. Lands are assessed annually based on the relative benefits that they receive from the District. Assessment statement billings are mailed to District landowners and normally become delinquent in mid-November of each year. If an assessment becomes delinquent, the following actions are taken:

- A 5% penalty is assessed.
- Agricultural water service is discontinued.
- Any remaining water allocation applicable to the water user is not available for transfer, but the cost for such water must still be paid.
- A lien is recorded against each delinquent parcel.
- A \$17 or \$12 recording fee is imposed against each delinquent parcel.
- A publication fee is imposed against each delinquent amount (in the past this amount has varied from \$30 to \$300).
- Interest charges accrue against the delinquent amount at 9% per annum.
- Neither contract water nor any other water will be allocated to any land for which assessments have been delinquent for 30 days or more at the time the water is allocated.

Land-Based Charges: Land-based charges may be imposed by the Board of Directors, after a hearing is held and absent written protest from a majority of affected landowners. The hearing is typically held in February, although additional hearings may be held if new charges are implemented or if warranted by other circumstances. Land-based charges anticipated for next year are for costs related to a portion of the District's operations and maintenance activities, District water supply, long-term water, extraordinary repairs of pipe and certain litigation. Land-based charges are normally due March 25 and September 25, and if they become delinquent the following actions are taken:

- A penalty ranging from 2% to 10% is assessed and interest charges of 1.5% per month are applied.

- Agricultural water service is discontinued.
- Any remaining water allocation applicable to the water user is not available for transfer, but the cost for such water must still be paid.
- If left unpaid, charges are transferred to the District's assessment roll and become a lien against the land.
- Neither contract water nor any other water will be allocated to any land for which charges have been delinquent for 30 days or more at the time the water is allocated.

Water Charges: Landowners are financially responsible if their tenants do not pay their water bills. Water users have approximately 25 days to pay for water charges billed for the previous month. Bills not paid by the due date are considered delinquent. Landowners are notified of the delinquent account by mail. These bills may include charges for:

- CVP water, District water supply or long-term water allocated to the land, and any other water transferred into the water user's account. Other water may come from a variety of sources with costs substantially higher than CVP water.
- Water delivered to the land.
- Reduction in future year's water supplies for overused water, unless the water user purchases additional water to replace the overused amount.
- Unused water, if the water user does not reschedule it or does not find a buyer for the unused amount.
- Miscellaneous charges for M&I water costs, CVP Improvement Act Restoration Fund Costs, or other service charges.

If water charges become delinquent, the following actions are taken:

- A penalty ranging from 2% to 10% is assessed and interest charges of 1.5% per month are applied.
- Agricultural water service is discontinued.
- Any remaining water allocation applicable to the water user is not available for transfer, but the cost for such water must still be paid.
- If left unpaid, a Certificate to Secure Delinquent Water charges is filed against the water user on all lands owned within Westlands Water District.
- If the account remains unpaid, charges will be transferred to the District's assessment roll in May of each year and a Certificate of Sale will be filed against the land where the water was used if delivered or allocated if unused.
- Neither contract water nor any other water will be allocated to any land for which charges have been delinquent for 30 days or more at the time the water is allocated.

The information listed above summarizes the financial obligations landowners and water users have to the District. If you have any questions regarding this information, please do not hesitate to contact the Customer Accounting Department at (559) 241-6250. We look forward to working with you in the upcoming water year.

### **2016 Assessments and Land-Based Charges**

The 2016 Repayment Contract Assessments were delinquent after November 17, 2016. Land-based charges were due March 25, 2016 for the first installment, and September 26, 2016 for the second installment. Unpaid assessments and land-based charges will result in the interruption of water service to the water user until payment is received. Contact Deborah Tuggle at (559) 241-6212 for payoff amounts.

### **2016 Crop Acreage Report**

The 2016 Crop Acreage Report is now available on the District's website. This is a comprehensive list of crops grown in the District and the number of acres dedicated to each. Data is updated on an annual basis: <http://wwd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/crop-report-2016.pdf>

### **Backflow Prevention**

The District reminds all water users that they are to configure their on-farm distribution system and install appropriate equipment to prevent water from reverse-flowing into the District's deliveries and distribution system. Water users that are found to be out of compliance will be contacted and asked to re-configure their system(s) or install appropriate equipment. Failure to comply could result in termination of water service at the affected deliveries.

### **Storm Water Runoff and Water Quality Sampling of Creeks**

As a reminder, all landowners and farm operators adjacent to the Panoche-Silver Creek, Cantua Creek and Arroyo Pasajero Creek should allow District staff and laboratory personnel access to creeks for water quality sampling. Please utilize Best Management Practices (BMP) during the application of chemicals, along with adherence to the EPA's requirements listed on labels. It is extremely important you verify that everyone involved in the chemical application process is aware of the BMP's used for mixing, applying and disposing of the chemicals. Please contact Charlotte Gallock (559) 241-6244 if water is flowing in the aforementioned creeks or if you have any questions regarding the Westlands Water Quality Coalition requirements or the Regional Board's General Order.

### **Surplus Vehicles and Equipment for Sale**

The District is offering for sale, by sealed bid, thirteen used vehicles and miscellaneous equipment. The vehicles and equipment will be available for inspection for one day only on Wednesday, December 7, 2016, between 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. at the District's Five Points Shop and Field Office located at 23050 W. Mt. Whitney, Five Points, CA 93624. **All Bids shall be enclosed in a sealed envelope and marked "Vehicle/Equipment Bid" on the face of the envelope and received in the District's Procurement and Fleet Services Department at 3130 N. Fresno Street, P.O. Box 6056, Fresno, CA 93703-6056, no later than 3:00 p.m. on December 9, 2016.** Facsimile offers will NOT be accepted. Anyone interested in submitting a bid or wanting additional information, contact Gilbert Cano at (559) 241-6209 or Jonathan Pierce at (559) 884-2523 ext. 123 or to obtain bidding instructions, or visit the District's website at: <http://wwd.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/surplus-vehicle-sale-2016.pdf>.

### **Lease of District Owned Land**

The District currently has approximately 20,000 acres of land available for lease. For a detailed list of available land, please contact Cork McIsaac of Agriculture Industries, Inc. at (916) 372-5595 or (800) 822-1415.

### **Holiday Office Closures and Water Ordering Procedures**

District offices will be closed on Friday, December 23, and Monday, December 26, for the Christmas holiday; and Monday, January 2, for New Year's Day. The affected water ordering deadlines are as follows:

<b>For Water Use On</b>	<b>Place Water Order By</b>
Friday or Saturday - December 23 or 24	Thursday, December 22, 9:30 a.m.
Sunday, Monday or Tuesday - December 25 or 26 and 27	Thursday, December 22, noon
Saturday - December 31	Friday, December 30, 9:30 a.m.
Sunday, Monday or Tuesday - January 1 or 2 and 3	Friday, December 30, noon

The emergency telephone number for after hours and holidays is (559) 224-1523.