



Water News

WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT

DECEMBER 2017

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

2017: A Productive Year

As the year draws to an end, we take this opportunity to reflect on the many contributions of Westlands' growers and the unique challenges faced in a year of an abundant water supply. Our goal was to seek opportunities to reinforce needed improvements to the current operation of the Central Valley Project by countering inaccurate information by using facts.

In December 2016, Congress successfully passed the **Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act**. Throughout early 2017, opponents of the legislation, as they usually do, attempted to mislead the public about the effects the WIIN Act would have on water supply and the environment. But Westlands and other groups successfully countered those falsehoods as the bill made its way through the legislative process and on to the President's desk for signature. The enactment of the WIIN Act marked the first time in years that the trend of punitive and restrictive water laws was reversed. But, there is more work to do.

In early spring, after the initial CVP water allocation announcement was made over a month late, we **used that opportunity** to demonstrate the need for further reform of the water supply system. Information included the negative ramifications of a late water allocation which limits farmers' ability to make planting, labor, and other operational decisions. Our efforts reminded policymakers of the state's commitment of "**coequal goals**" for water supply reliability and Delta protection. While the initial 65 percent allocation was thankfully increased a month later to 100 percent, it was too late in the planting season to allow farmers to utilize their first full allocation in eleven years. We are hopeful the Bureau of Reclamation's 2018 announcement is timely.

As we moved into summer, we released **The Implications of Agricultural Water for the Central Valley**, detailing the significant contributions made by agriculture and defined the inextricable correlation between the success of agricultural production with the economic well-being of the entire Central Valley. This report by Dr. Michael Shires provided factual data and context that

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IN THE NEWS

DRY SPELL CONTINUES IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA: ARE WE HEADING BACK INTO DROUGHT TERRITORY?

SF Gate: Forecasts continue to project an absence of rain.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

FARM PLANS TO ATTAIN ZERO NET ENERGY IN COMING YEAR

AgAlert: John Diener of Red Rock Ranch and Daniel Hartwig of Woolf Enterprises discuss innovative plans for farm operations.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

STATE WATER BOARD HEARS CONCERNS ABOUT REGULATION


AgAlert: Ag representatives described the proposals as too complicated and costly.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

ACWA CONFERENCE: THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR'S PRIORITIES FOR WATER

Maven's Notebook: Deputy Assistant Secretary Austin Ewell discusses Department of Interior's objectives for the year.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

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CONTACT US

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CALENDAR

JAN
16

WWD Board Meeting

FEB
20

WWD Board Meeting

Holiday Office Closures

Westlands Water District will be closed in the observance of the following holidays:

Monday, January 1, for New Year's Day

Monday, January 15 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Important Notices

Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA)

The District holds its regularly scheduled Board meetings on the third Tuesday of every month. SGMA matters are discussed during these meetings which are open to the public. We also have a GSP Water User Technical Group which meets quarterly. Our last meeting was held December 7, 2017 regarding Sustainable Management Criteria. The presentation is available [here](#). **Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Development Workshops** - Our next workshop will be held in February 2018. Watch for more details to follow. For any additional information regarding the District's GSP development, contact Jose Gutierrez at (559) 241-6215 or sgma@westlandswater.org.

Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program

The Westlands Water Quality Coalition (WWQC) will hold a workshop on Wednesday, January 17th at 9:00 AM at the Fresno County Farm Bureau Office. The workshop will cover information regarding the upcoming submittals and Nitrogen Summary Feedback. For further information and to RSVP for this workshop, contact Nicole Branum at (559) 241-6235 or by email nbranum@westlandswater.org, or Debra Dunn at (559) 241-6242 or by email ddunn@westlandswater.org.

Westlands Farmers Charitable Fund kickoff success

On Monday, December 11th, the Westlands Farmers Charitable Fund and the Central Valley Community Foundation hosted a kick-off luncheon at Harris Ranch. Ashley Swearingin said it best in her remarks, "we're looking forward to finding new and creative ideas that will create super high impact in the Central Valley." Thank you to all who attended and engaged in numerous conversations regarding collaborative ideas to benefit our region. Stay tuned for more news as the Fund continues to grow.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

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supported our claim that there is no viable industry available to replace economic activity from agriculture, another example of the need to evaluate and improve current processes when making water supply decisions.

We reinforced the role of agriculture as an integral part of the California's growing food and tourism culture and developed **educational materials** that emphasized the major contribution of Westlands' agricultural production to the state and the nation, and the necessity of a more reliable water supply.

Our **social media** audience has more than doubled since January, allowing us to reach an expanded audience as we educate the public on issues such as water supply, water availability, agricultural economics and food security. This year, Westlands Water District became the most "Followed" and "Liked" water agency in the State of California.

As 2017 comes to a close, we are excited to cap off the year with the successful launch of the **Westlands Farmers Charitable Fund** in partnership with the Central Valley Community Foundation. We look forward to the success of this collaborative effort and anticipate the Fund will serve as an effective clearinghouse to make measurable improvements to the quality of life for families, students, and organizations right here in our community.

While we have made progress in educating the public and policymakers about farming and water supply challenges, there is more work to be done. We will carry these efforts into 2018 as we remain committed to securing a reliable water supply for the Central Valley.

**Johnny Amaral, Deputy General Manager of External Affairs
Westlands Water District**