



# Water News

WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT

JUNE 2018

## The Rest of the Story about Groundwater

When it comes to groundwater in the Central Valley, there have been many articles lately telling part of the story but very few telling the whole story. Those articles criticize communities and farmers for pumping groundwater to supply water to their residents and to irrigate their farms. Most of the articles place the blame for groundwater pumping squarely on the shoulders of farmers and urban water users.

This is only part of the story. Urban and rural communities have increased their pumping of groundwater due to 25+ years of federal and state policies that have curtailed surface water deliveries. The management of the water system has caused water users to turn more often to groundwater to compensate for the surface water shortages. And, the government is failing to operate the system as it was originally intended.

Predictably, Westlands has a challenge to get the media to tell the whole story, but we will continue our efforts. We will tell the whole story about groundwater and the failure of government to develop policies that meet the water supply and environmental objectives. When we explain the current problem, we will talk about the history of the Central Valley Project (CVP), the failure of government policies, and the ramifications of those failed policies.

Here's the rest of the story. Back in the 1930's, both Congress and California State government recognized the need to develop the CVP to increase surface water supply to serve a "multitude" of purposes, including to remediate groundwater overdraft. "Initial features of the project were built primarily to protect the Central Valley from crippling water shortages and menacing floods, but the CVP also improves Sacramento River navigation, supplies domestic and industrial water, generates electric power, conserves fish and wildlife, creates opportunities for recreation, and enhances water quality." <https://www.usbr.gov/mp/cvp/about-cvp.html>

Despite the original purposes, regulatory decisions along the way have systematically curtailed surface water deliveries and harmed those who built their farms and businesses around the assurances provided by the government through the

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## IN THE NEWS

### SHASTA DAM RAISING PLAN, THE PRO VIEW

**Jefferson Public Radio:** Westlands Water District General Manager Tom Birmingham sat down with Jefferson Public Radio to make the case for enlarging the Shasta Dam.

[LISTEN HERE](#)

### RECLAMATION UPDATES 2018 CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT WATER ALLOCATIONS SOUTH-OF-DELTA

**United States Bureau of Reclamation:** The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation issued an updated allocation increase for south-of-Delta Central Valley Project contractors from 45 percent to 50 percent for the 2018 contract year.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

### THESE FISH ARE AT THE HEART OF CALIFORNIA'S WATER DEBATE. BUT EXTINCTION COULD BE CLOSE

**Sacramento Bee:** Over the past two years, state biologists have found so few Delta smelt in their sampling nets and in late April, no smelt at all.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

### RECYCLED WASTEWATER NOW FLOWING TO SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY FARMS, WILDLIFE

**Water Deeply:** One year after construction began, the North Valley Regional Recycled Water Project has begun delivering recycled urban wastewater to farms and wildlife refuges in California's San Joaquin Valley.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

### WHY MUST WE DEFEND NEED FOR FOOD AND WATER?

**Western Farm Press:** Sustaining American agriculture through deliberate public policy should be a no-brainer; except it's not.

[READ FULL ARTICLE](#)

## CONTACT US

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## CALENDAR

JUL 4 WWD Offices Closed

JUL 16 SGMA Workshop

JUL 17 WWD Board Meeting



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today.



Click here to view the  
Water Supply Update for the  
Month of May

## Important Notices

### Independence Day Office Closure

Westlands Water District will be closed on Wednesday, July 4, 2018, in observance of Independence Day.



### Westlands Announces 2018 Scholarship Recipients

Six outstanding high school seniors from communities on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley have been selected to receive scholarships offered by the Westlands Water District. Congratulations to:

Jack Foote, Lemoore High School  
Laila Rollin, Riverdale High School  
Jelissa Medina, Coalinga High School  
Lorena Lopez, Tranquillity High School  
Maricruz Guillen, Mendota High School  
Wendy Moya, Firebaugh High School

The 2018 scholarships are offered annually by Westlands under a program to recognize and reward exceptional academic achievement and leadership by graduating seniors at six area high schools. Each scholarship recipient receives \$1,000 to be used for community college or university expenses. Applicants were judged on their academic performance, school activities, community leadership and an essay on an agricultural-related topic. [Read the Full Release](#)

### 8th Annual Westside Boys & Girls Clubs Fundraiser Luncheon



The 8th Annual Fundraiser Luncheon for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Fresno County was another huge success. Through the generosity of our growers and westside community leaders, funds were raised for local area clubhouses. These funds will be used to help students create aspirations for their future, provide them with opportunities for career exploration and enhance their education

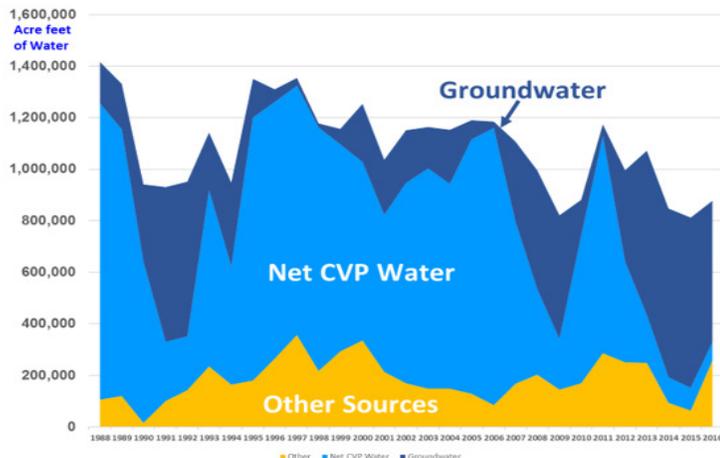
experience. Westlands is grateful for the hard work the Boys & Girls Clubs do to invest in our region's children and provide educational opportunities for our youth.

## THE REST OF THE STORY ABOUT GROUNDWATER

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construction of the CVP. The graph below clearly illustrates the correlation between the curtailment of surface water supplies and the inevitable increased reliance on groundwater.

### More Groundwater Has Been Used in Recent Years to Offset Lost Surface Water Supplies



The story doesn't end with government failing to deliver adequate quantities of surface water. Another part of the story that is often left out of news articles is the government's rationale for withholding water supply. For decades, government policies focused on CVP pumping as the primary cause of the decline of fish populations. Now the rest of the story is being told. Federal and state officials, as well as academic experts, now recognize the many factors that are causing the decline in the fish population. With that major admission, Westlands and others are requesting that government fulfill its CVP obligations by restoring the delivery of surface water to the farms and communities that depend on CVP water.

There is a tremendous amount of fresh water that could be delivered to communities, without causing the decline of fish populations, but instead is left to flow to the ocean. Our [Water Supply Update](#) shows that California sent almost 260 billion gallons of water out to the ocean in May – some of which could have been pumped for people, cities, and farms and other areas to replenish the state's aquifers.

As the debate over groundwater continues, Westlands will continue to tell the rest of the story and confront misinformation and incomplete explanations of water supply issues that currently serve as the basis for failed federal and state policies.

Please contact us with your questions and comments.

## Escape from Alcatraz

Westlands is appreciative of everyone that took the time to stop by our information booth at the [2018 Escape from Alcatraz](#) triathlon event in San Francisco. Over the course of the two-day event, staff had the opportunity to educate attendees and exhibitors on the importance of agricultural water allocation, provide awareness of how much water is needed for farmers to farm and people to eat, irrigation efficiencies, and the current water supply challenges we face.



## Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Update

Westlands Water District's next planned workshop is July 16, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. The purpose of the workshop is to present Westlands SGMA Groundwater Pumping Management Strategies and provide a status of the District's work. This workshop is the thirteenth workshop held by the District. All meetings are open to the public. Presentation materials are available at the District's website at: <https://wwd.ca.gov/resource-management/sustainable-groundwater-management-act/>. For additional information, contact Kiti Campbell at (559) 241-6226 or [sgma@westlandswater.org](mailto:sgma@westlandswater.org).

## Westlands Water Quality Coalition (WWQC) – Member Submittals

Crop year 2017 Farm Evaluation Surveys and Nitrogen Summary Reports were due March 1, 2018; both reports are required to be submitted using the WWQC web-based system: <https://wwqc.ilrpd.com/>. Members who have not submitted the reports are considered non-complaint and could be subject to fine assessed by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Notices will be mailed to all non-complaint members. If you have questions or comments, please contact Debra Dunn at (559) 241-6242, [ddunn@westlandswater.org](mailto:ddunn@westlandswater.org) or Nicole Branum at (559) 241-6235, [nbranum@westlandswater.org](mailto:nbranum@westlandswater.org).