



**San Bernardino Valley
Water Conservation District**
Helping Nature Store Our Water



STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028

Adopted December 2023





FOREWORD

Partners and Colleagues,

We are delighted to share with you the results of our strategic planning process.

Strategic Plan 2024-2028 (SP28) builds upon the District's 115+ years of stewardship of the Upper Santa Ana River Wash and the aquifer beneath it. It provides a blueprint for the District that allows us to meet the increasing complexities of managing extreme drought and flooding to protect the precious resources that we rely upon.

SP28 will help us reach key milestones while remaining flexible enough for us to leverage new opportunities and manage risks.

Establishing consensus for priorities when there are so many demands upon limited resources can be challenging. But as we have always done, we remain committed to innovative groundwater recharge while revitalizing the threatened habitat on our working lands.

We remain committed to providing a reliable water source to serve our local and regional communities as the backbone of our economy, environment, and culture.

We are committed to the partnerships that span generations and have been crucial in our success to meet our community's needs collaboratively and transparently.

Those commitments will not change. And those commitments provided the lens through which our strategic planning decisions were made.

As with any project of this magnitude, it is the cumulation of many hours of hard work, brainstorming, and research by our board, staff, and strategic partners. We are grateful to all of you who provided your time and expertise. We are most appreciative of our Board who so freely applied their experience and guidance to this initiative. It could not have happened without their wisdom and heart.

Onward,

Melody McDonald

President

Betsy Miller

General Manager

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Blue Gosbeak male

HISTORY

San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District (SBVWCD) is a steward of the San Bernardino Valley groundwater basin and the native species of the Upper Santa Ana River Wash. Our collaborative, forward-thinking approach to protecting high-quality local water for people, agriculture, and the environment is meeting today's needs while storing water for tomorrow's demands. Our co-equal objectives of recharging groundwater and hosting habitat and native species in the Wash have been accomplished by laying the groundwork over the last century while envisioning our future for generations.

The timeline below and on the following pages presents key events in SBVWCD's history that make us who we are today.



First headgates, 1918



Cuttle weir diversion structure, 1930

1909

After years of severe drought, local leaders create the Water Conservation Association (WCA) to spread floodwater from the Santa Ana River and store it underground.

1914

WCA digs first percolation ponds.

1923

Groundwater basin recharged an astonishing 80,065 af this year.

1930s

WCA celebrates permanent weir and gates. (1930)

San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors establish SBVWCD, which acquires the WCA. (1932)

Our **Mission** expresses the District's purpose, our **Vision** envisions where our future is headed, and our collective **Values** provide guideposts in what we hold to be true to guide the District in how we conduct our business. The District developed our Strategic Plan 2024-2028 (SP28) through a collaborative and transparent process where the Board Directors and staff were invited to respond to an independent survey as well as interviews. Through individual staff workshops and joint staff and Board of Directors' public workshops, open dialog was facilitated to establish the Mission, Vision, and Values. We look forward to working together to achieve our shared future for the land, water, and environment in the San Bernardino Valley.

MISSION

As one of California's first sustainable groundwater replenishment agencies, the District proactively recharges water, improving supply for the benefit of water users, local businesses, and native flora and fauna in a financially responsible way.

The District leverages our unparalleled expertise as stewards of the water and land, responsibly innovating in water and habitat conservation, harmonizing and enhancing working landscapes, and enriching open space as a community asset.

VISION

With over a century of storing groundwater beneath our multi-functional lands and protecting diverse habitat and open space, our prescient District will continue to drive water availability, nature-based solutions, and collaborative partnerships to successfully expand our region's water reliability.

The District fosters economic vitality and endangered species to thrive compatibility in the face of competing resources. We advance sustainable climate-conscious practices to create a resilient future for our interconnected people and ecosystems for generations to come.

San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District –
Partnering With Nature To Store Our Water.

1960

Three local women – Ruth Wilson, Martha McLean and Kay Black – successfully block plans by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to pave over the Santa Ana River, preserving the soft-bottomed river channel.

1961

City of Redlands transfers Mill Creek spreading grounds to the District.

1993

Wash Committee formed to reconcile regional conflicts in demands for aggregate mining, groundwater recharge, and habitat preservation.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lists California gnatcatcher as threatened.



Male California gnatcatcher

VALUES

- **We embody integrity** through fiscal responsibility in public service by holding ourselves accountable to our partners and community at large.
- **We continue to build our community** of employees, partners, businesses, and neighbors who drive our mission. Our success depends on responsive collaboration and transparent communication.
- **We are stewards of the water, land, and environment** and are committed to sustainable practices that will ensure a resilient future.
- **We are ethical** and respect both people and the environment to serve our community's diverse values.
- **We balance innovation and time-tested pragmatism** to advance professional excellence, continually improving to meet the evolving priorities of today and a changing world tomorrow.
- **We are resilient.** We adapt to address future climate impacts and ensure the District's next 100 years with our continued humble, flexible, and curious approach to water and the natural world.



“SBVWCD’s work in the Wash not only strives to protect endangered and rare species, but it also protects the water supply for surrounding communities.”

**Dan Silver, M.D.,
Chief Executive
Officer, Endangered
Habitats League**

1998

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lists San Bernardino kangaroo rat as endangered.



San Bernardino kangaroo rat

2000

Wash Plan Task Force formed to develop consensus among mining, water, habitat preservation, and public access interests.

2005

Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) considers consolidation of SBVWCD.

GOALS

The **Goals** and priority **Objectives** of the District listed below demonstrate both near and long term strategies and tactics that are critical to the District meeting its envisioned future. They are in no order of priority. Some goals will be launched in tandem, and some may not be started for years to come, based on shifting circumstances and priorities. All together, they reflect the District's vision and plan to guide the Board and staff in weighing priorities and measuring them purposefully, while respecting investments made for both short- and long-term goals. Our commitment is to move the District's public service forward and achieve alignment through purposeful communication, informed decision-making, and steady forward progress.

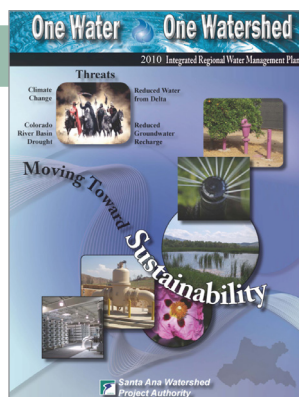
The following goals were developed to consider the District's primary mission to provide water supply reliability through dependable infrastructure delivery and to enhance our relationship to our natural environment and lands, while serving the greater San Bernardino Valley through our community at large, including:

- **Goal 1:** Water Supply Reliability through Groundwater Recharge
- **Goal 2:** Infrastructure Expansion and Operations Optimization
- **Goal 3:** Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Enhancement
- **Goal 4:** Community Engagement and Education
- **Goal 5:** Collaborative Partnerships
- **Goal 6:** Fiscal Commitment and Accountability
- **Goal 7:** Sustainable Organization & Governance

This is intended to be a living document. The District's goals and objectives will be measured, evaluated, and recalibrated bi-annually to adjust for variables in funding and priority as they arise. The overarching objective is to perform our public service in a deliberate, strategic, and effective way.

2008

District supports preparation and approval of the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) *One Water One Watershed* Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP).



2009

SAWPA's One Water One Watershed IRWMP was designed to create opportunities for collaboration to find sustainable watershed-wide solutions among diverse stakeholders from throughout the Watershed.

LAFCO recognizes SBVWCD's unique contributions to the region, and rejects proposed consolidation.

1

Water Supply Reliability through Groundwater Recharge: Maximize all water capture and aquifer recovery for the benefit of our communities' water security and support of a healthy watershed.

1A. Actively manage existing groundwater spreading basins and maximize recharge capacity.

- Evaluate future use of reclaimed aggregate mines to provide recharge capacity and habitat restoration sites.
- Evaluate feasibility of expanded recharge service within the District's LAFCO boundary and sphere of influence.
- Evaluate potential partnership for regional recharge projects on both District and non-District lands.
- Increase capacity to capture and store water during "atmospheric river" storm events to help withstand periods of ongoing drought.
- Support the Enhanced Recharge Project Phase 1B in collaboration with Western Municipal Water District (WMWD) and San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (SBVMWD)



Recharge Basins

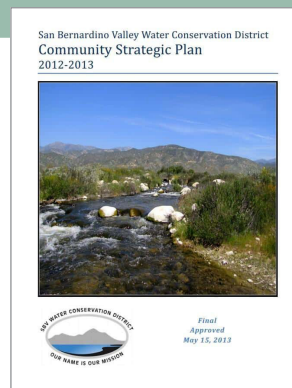
to increase current groundwater recharge capacity by up to 80,000 acre-feet (AF)/year.

- 1B. With our partners, identify and develop new supplemental supply sources to maximize water available for recharge (e.g., recycled water, imported water, stormwater capture), without flooding risks.
- During the tenure of the Groundwater Council, continue integrating the sustainability component of the groundwater charge for supplemental imported water sustainability efforts.
 - Permit the historic diversion of Mill Creek Flows, capitalizing on permit availability before potential legislative changes to the process or priority of perfecting rights.
 - Advance Program for the Expansion of Recharge Capacity (PERC) projects for potential joint use of flood management facilities for recharge.

2010

Financial Reserve Policy adopted by Board to stabilize finances.

Community Strategic Plan completed to transition the District from only a groundwater recharger to a multiple resource manager and preservation agency.



The 2010 Strategic Plan (updated 2012-2013) provided a vision for the District shortly after the efforts to consolidate the District were not upheld by LAFCO.

2

Infrastructure Expansion and Operations Optimization: Design, construct, maintain, and optimize facilities to maximize adaptability for a changing climate, to transform and expand our assets for future generations of water supply.

2A. Recharge the aquifer as effectively and efficiently as possible by adaptively managing our operations to capture and recharge the maximum available water.

- Continue to evaluate operations and maintenance for maximum recharge in changing climate and fire scenarios.
- Evaluate emerging technology to improve operations and advance efficiency.
- Leverage drought periods to maintain/construct facilities during dry conditions to be ready for wet years.
- Improve water capacity, storage, and quality by constructing and expanding sedimentation basins within the Mill Creek facility.
- Apply the cost benefit ratio of aggressively recharging Mill Creek with early storm (i.e., sediment-laden) flows to inform operational strategy.

- Pursue opportunities to consolidate land ownership near District facilities as appropriate, to expand our ability to recharge groundwater and provide buffers for conservation of habitat.

2B. Formulate facility-wide maintenance assessments and implement strategies to assure long-term operational readiness.

- Minimize impacting the facilities with poor-quality and sediment-laden water.
- Continue to invest in adaptive management practices and perform maintenance so that the Plunge Creek project continues to meet performance goals.
- Coordinate with upstream operators on headwaters management to protect the District's water supply.

2012

District ushers in an era of joint agency cooperation by entering a Collaborative Agreement with SBVMWD and WMWD to expand recharge facilities.

District reaches milestone of **1,000,000 af total groundwater recharge**.
LAFCO approves expanded sphere of influence for District.

2013

Cooperative Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD) for joint educational programs and conservation efforts.



IERCD provides water education on behalf of the District to students in grades K-5.

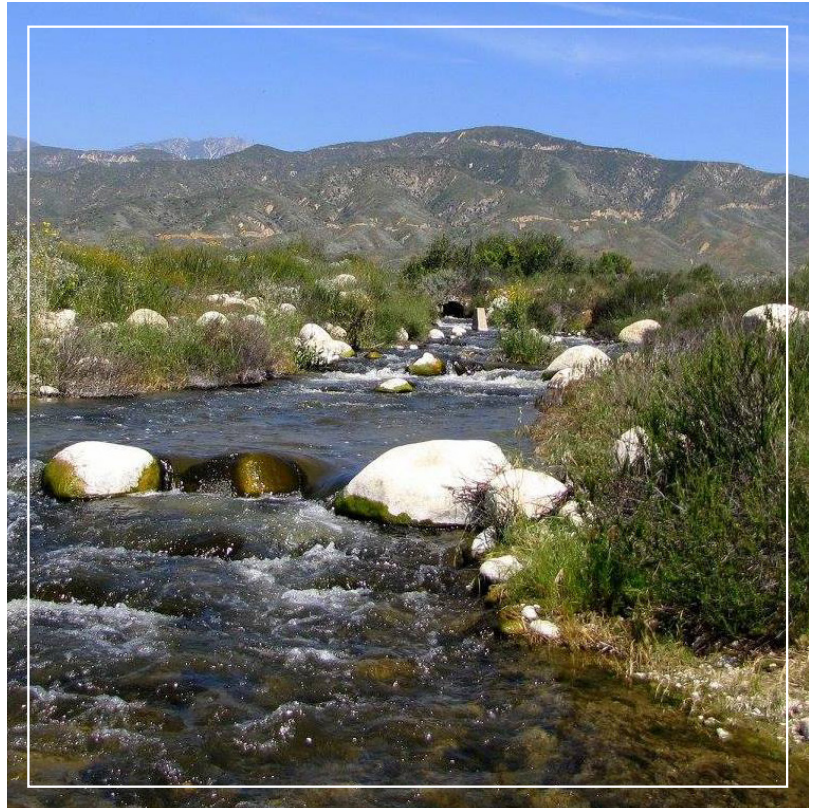
“Working together, our agencies provide an experienced, science-based approach to groundwater management in the Inland Empire and beyond. We look forward to continuing to learn and share best practices with one another for the benefit of the aquifers, the environments, and the communities we serve.”

Elizabeth Willis, General Manager, Chino Basin Water Conservation District

2C. Continue our PERC partnership to increase the ability to recharge the local aquifer to its full potential through state-of-the-art engineering.

- Complete cost-benefit analyses on higher-probability joint flood management/recharge locations and implement priority PERC projects for design, permitting, construction, and operation.
- Integrate PERC projects into the master operations plan to include climate scenario analyses.

2D. Obtain and maintain permits as required. Monitor for compliance through a comprehensive tracking database. Educate public and stakeholders on level of effort and schedule to obtain permits.



Spreading in the Santa Ana Recharge Area

2014

Awarded District of Distinction and Certificate of Transparency from Special District Leadership Academy/California Special Districts Association.



3

Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Enhancement: Protect, manage, and rewild natural areas to promote the thriving health of our ecosystems and local and regional communities.

3A. Implement the Wash HCP to significantly advance conservation in our region, enhance outcomes for Covered Species and their habitat, and maintain full compliance with our permits.

- Create adaptive management strategies based on high quality data collected through consistent, science-based monitoring efforts.
- Conceptualize, mimic, and restore natural ecological processes to maximize natural rehabilitation of impacted lands (e.g., sand reintegration).
- Continue and expand the invasive plants prevention program using varied mechanisms to prevent damage to habitat and protect the District's investment (e.g., sand, mechanical, herbicides).
- Share monitoring and management results to inform regional and national conservation efforts.

3B. Work with local and regional partners to limit trespass on District owned and managed properties, including illegal dumping of debris, and the establishment of unauthorized encampments to minimize fire and other safety risks to humans and habitat.

- Implement our plan and identify funding to partner with cities, the County, and local non-profit outreach organizations to resolve unauthorized occupancy and provide referrals for temporary and permanent housing and wellness programs.

3C. Collaborate with the San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust to meet our permit requirements and demonstrate our land conservation and stewardship values to elevate conservation science.

- Leverage District expertise and knowledge to lead establishment and implementation of endangered species programs (e.g., San Bernardino kangaroo rat monitoring and habitat quality characterization, slender-horned spinyflower restoration).

2015

Groundwater Council envisioned to coordinate management of groundwater resources throughout the Basin.

2016

San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust established to hold and manage conservation easements on District lands.

Mendoza Trust Land acquired, adding buffer and additional recharge lands.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed with the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians to ensure that the Tribe can maintain connection with ancestral lands and resources.

Wash Plan Wildland Trails Master Plan adopted.



Yucca blossoms at the Yucca Harvest Celebration

3D. Leverage the success of the Plunge Creek Conservation Project to replicate and expand additional coordinated recharge and habitat restoration opportunities. Share successes broadly to advance demonstration of best management practices.

3E. Implement a trails system for hiking and biking to benefit the community at large with appropriate governance and protocols to protect both people and wildlands.

- Develop a public access protocol and partnerships to provide safe access.
- Utilize appropriate access safety controls to ensure District facilities and sensitive habitats are not compromised by trail users.
- Partner with the cities of Redlands & Highland to provide recreational opportunities and implement the trails systems as a community amenity.
- Implement an educational program that will leverage trespass enforcement efforts with community awareness of the uniqueness and fragility of the habitat areas.

3F. Implement the Community Mitigation Program to provide land mitigation and habitat for easements for community benefit.



San Bernardino Mountains

3G. Develop a tracking tool for our environmental mitigation and enhancement efforts to ensure we document our work and establish informative management and reporting protocols that will serve for decades to come.

3H. Coordinate with neighboring landowners and conservation programs for effective regional management and cooperation (e.g., Wash Plan and River HCP actions with Woollystar Preserve Area).

3I. Identify District-owned disturbed lands and retired facilities (e.g., reclaimed mining pits, Lockheed facilities) and assess potential to rewild to natural habitat.

2017

Wet year conditions result in significant recharge of over 45,000 AF.

Updated 5-year Community Strategic Plan approved.

2018

Partnership initiated with Steps 4 Life to provide transitional housing at the District's Mentone house.



The District has proudly partnered with Steps 4 Life since 2018 providing transitional housing and supporting persons experiencing homelessness.

4

Community Engagement and Education: Engage, educate, and partner with our diverse community to promote water security and protect valued habitat and open space as assets critical to our collective vitality.

Create and implement communication, engagement, and education priorities that elevate the District locally, regionally, and beyond.

Activate the District's Strategic Plan with specifics on how we will Communicate, Engage, and Educate on:

- 4A. The value of the District to our community by quantifying our impact on groundwater levels since recharge began in 1912, and share the effects of long-term aquifer recharge with local and state governments and researchers working to promote aquifer recharge.
- 4B. Our recognized thought leadership and insights on groundwater recharge; integration of sustainable land and species management with operations; and regional habitat conservation.
- 4C. The District's multi-beneficial accomplishments as technical and operational best management practices in sustainable groundwater and habitat management through aquifer recharge and recovery and habitat conservation (e.g., PERC, Plunge Creek, Mill Creek Diversion).

- Submit topical papers to technical and academic journals.
- Present the District's accomplishments at conferences and professional and academic associations.
- Present at local community organizations.

4D. Our successful partnerships across the groundwater basin (i.e., PERC, Enhanced Recharge, Groundwater Council, Wash Plan Task Force, Woollystar Preserve Area managers).

4E. Collaboration with our partners to create a cohesive, unified message about the importance of groundwater basins and the status of our basin.

4F. The District's uniqueness through branding:

- Evaluate branding updates to promote our leadership role in serving the symbiotic relationship between habitat conservation and groundwater recharge.
- Celebrate our history as stewards of our aquifer and wildland.

2019

Wet year conditions result in recharge of 74,983 AF.

President Trump signs Santa Ana River Wash Land Exchange Act into law.

Signed PERC agreement with SBVMWD to evaluate, construct, and operate new and joint-use Flood Control facilities to double Upper Santa Ana River groundwater recharge capacity.

2020

Construction of Plunge Creek Conservation Project, re-establishing intermittent flooding and restoring hundreds of acres of habitat while increasing groundwater recharge.



Plunge Creek

4G. The role of the District in managing our public assets of open space, water security, aggregate and natural resources, and vital habitat that contribute to their lifestyles and livelihoods.

- Continue tours at recharge facilities to demonstrate operations, sponsor a water conservation demonstration garden, and invite new community leaders to participate and promote the District's programs, projects, and initiatives.

4H. The District's approach to supporting persons experiencing homelessness (e.g., District-leased property for transitional housing and support for independent living).

4I. Community invitations to understand our shared treasures and participate in the District's natural resource stewardship activities, and engage support to minimize impact to habitat through outreach and key publications (e.g., educate and remove invasive plants, reduce littering and water consumption to retain sensitive species).

4J. The District's established Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper program to expand outreach to potential conservation practitioners.

4K. Internships and collaborative partnerships with local and regional institutions to expand opportunities for education (e.g., IERCD, San Bernardino County Museum, Chino Basin Water Conservation District, universities).



“The District provides an extraordinary example of groundwater stewardship that could benefit regions around the world. We enjoy partnering with SBVWCD to share the importance of wise water use to educate the next generation of decision-makers through school and neighborhood programs.”

*Mandy Parkes, District Manager
Inland Empire Resource
Conservation District*

2021

Upper Santa Ana River Wash Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) approved by District Board and Incidental Take Permit issued by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Plunge Creek Conservation project named Water Supply Protection and Enhancement Project of the Year by the American Public Works Association (APWA).

Groundwater Council receives the California Special Districts Association Innovation Award.

Wash Plan HCP receives the Southern California Association of Government's Sustainability Award.



Wash Plan HCP

5

Collaborative Partnerships: Create and actively maintain local, regional, state, and national partnerships that are mutually beneficial, accelerate the District's Vision and Goals, and foster the District's Values.

- 5A. Develop stronger connections to City Councils, Tribal Councils, and County Board of Supervisors to recognize benefits of District projects for our shared jurisdictions.
- 5B. Partner with researchers to publish our modeling, recharge, and environmental data to increase District visibility across the state, enhance grant eligibility, and expand public benefit of work conducted with public funds.
- 5C. Encourage continued partnership with the Groundwater Council to ensure sustainability of healthy aquifer levels for water supply.
- 5D. Coordinate with regulatory agencies early in project conceptualization to inform them of key projects and understand opportunities to leverage their mission where possible.
- 5E. Continue engaging with local water agencies on water reliability strategies to benefit the region (e.g., maximize recharge in wet years).
- 5F. Coordinate closely with local aggregate producers to identify mutually beneficial

lands feasible for mining and District-related activities in addition to partnering on mine reclamation, anticipating eventual closures and opportunities to support groundwater recharge and habitat conservation.

- 5G. Continue to provide value as Big Bear Watermaster to sustainably balance water supply.
- 5H. Build upon our existing relationships and long-term partnerships to focus on stewardship initiatives related to the Santa Ana River Wash (e.g., San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, Wildlife Conservation Board).



2022

Plunge Creek Conservation project recognized by the Association of California Water Agencies as an Innovative Program finalist.

Daniel Cozad, General Manager, wins the Association of California Water Agencies' statewide Excellence in Water Leadership Award.

District celebrates its 90th anniversary.



90th Anniversary Celebration

2023

Mill Creek Diversion and Debris Management Improvement Project construction completed.

Total recharge for Water Year 22/23 was 85,302 af: the District's **highest recharge of all time**.

5I. Strengthen our relationship with the Conservation Trust to improve non-governmental organization (NGO) and political leadership alliances to explore opportunities that create joint value (e.g., grants).

5J. Maintain a productive intergovernmental working relationship with San Bernardino County Flood Control District to achieve mutual Goals (e.g., PERC, Woollystar Preserve Area).

5K. Leverage our legislative relationships to educate our state and federal representatives on the District's crucial Mission to minimize barriers and create opportunities.

- Acknowledge the beneficial uses and continue to exercise the District's Water Rights to serve our Mission and protect our assets.



Santa Ana River Wash

- Support operation of dams for water conservation (e.g., Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations).

5L. Partner with contiguous HCPs to maximize the "**Santa Ana Supershed**" for statewide recognition for both conservation and propagation of sensitive species by seeking joint funding, developing monitoring programs, data analysis, sharing lessons learned and innovative technologies, and promoting award-winning achievement.

Diagram Acronyms:

ACWA	Association of California Water Agencies
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
CSU	California State University
IERCD	Inland Empire Resource Conservation District
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USBLM	U.S. Bureau of Land Management
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

NGOs
(e.g., Endangered Habitats League, Steps4Life)

Public Agencies
(e.g., city, county, IERCD, water agencies)

Professional Organizations
(e.g., ACWA, The Wildlife Society)

Academia
(e.g., University of Redlands, CSU San Bernardino, CalPoly Pomona)

WCD Partnerships Success



Mill Creek Diversion and Debris Management Improvement Project

District honors Cynthia McGuigan, Founder of Steps 4 Life Community Services, with Board Resolution No. 615 recognizing her role supporting people experiencing homelessness.



Board President McDonald congratulates Cynthia McGuigan, founder of Steps 4 Life.

District hosts Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland on a tour of the Wash.

Board and staff adopt Strategic Plan 2024-2028 to set the District's approach to **Helping Nature Store Our Water.**

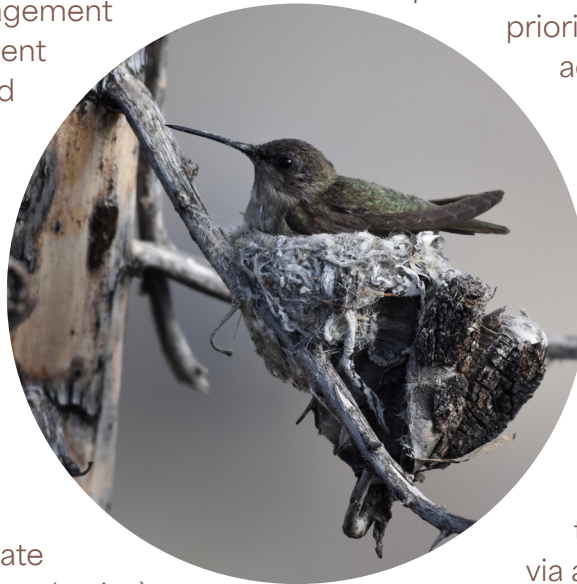
6

Fiscal Commitment and Accountability: Ensure the District's stability and longevity through sound financial strategy, planning, transparency, and execution.

6A. Keep groundwater charges as among the lowest in the state, establishing yearly rates with clear transparency on the benefits to the public from the use of the revenues.

6B. Maintain and expand diversified income streams to enable financial stability.

- Continue Land Management Enterprise (i.e., augment buffer properties) and explore potential evolving use of District-owned lands to optimize return on investment.
- Continue, and expand where appropriate, creative strategies to lower costs of operations (e.g., reuse of aggregate removed from recharge basins).
- Utilize the Community Mitigation Program to support local economic growth while providing funds for District land management.
- Expand value to partners and the community by contracting our staff expertise for land management, groundwater engineering, and mitigation services to leverage our successes throughout the region (e.g., San Bernardino Flood Control District, San Bernardino County Transportation Authority, San Bernardino Valley Conservation Trust, local developers).



*Costas hummingbird
on nest*

6C. Manage our financial, operational, and legal risks by assessing hazards and vulnerabilities (i.e., floods, landslides, and public safety), and develop strategies and schedules for rehabilitation and replacement of assets.

6D. Update our Financial Strategy to prioritize key objectives that accomplish the District's Mission and Vision and promote an efficient and effective organization.

- Target and retain sufficient reserves to sustain revenue fluctuations and invest in long-term maintenance and technology upgrades via a consistent cost recovery mechanism.
- Continue to prioritize investments on a pay-as-you-go basis and minimize debt by fully funding future liabilities.
- Maintain contract terms and update regularly to ensure value and financial benefit to the District.
- Align Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives into the annual budget document, including performance measures.

- 6E. Continue leveraging grant strategies and dedicate resources to manage and respond to state and federal grant opportunities (e.g., habitat conservation, new facilities).
- 6F. Maintain the District's value to our partners and customers through reasonable costs for our services, while ensuring our future re-investments through financial forecasting:
- Evaluate the costs and benefits of continued commercial rentals at Redlands Plaza.
 - Analyze both short and long-term projected funding and staffing needs with changes such as additional facilities and/or boundary modification.
- 6G. Develop a cost benefit ratio process to balance maximum recharge against basin maintenance cost to inform decision-making.

“Through my work at the District, I have gained invaluable skills and experiences that have aided in my growth as a more effective and prepared wildlife scientist, communicator, and leader for habitat management and conservation efforts.”

Anna Frey, District Biologist



Cactus wren nest in cholla

7

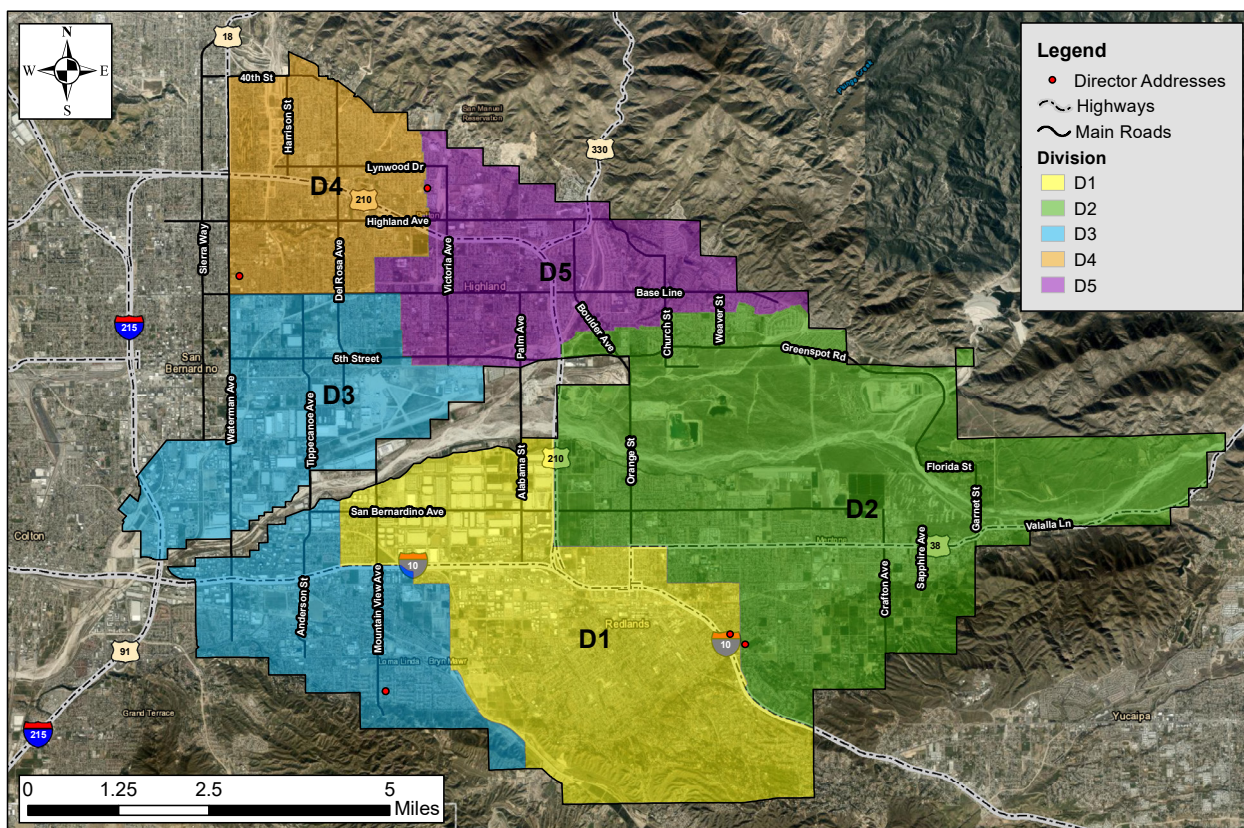
Sustainable Organization & Governance: Invest in our most valued assets, our team and the communities we serve, through exceptional leadership.

- 7A. Evaluate employee benefits and develop a Rewards and Recognition Program that prioritizes our highly effective workforce and recognizes contributions through competitive compensation, achievement awards, commitment to professional development, a collaborative team environment, and rewarding projects.
- Informally review salaries annually and conduct formal salary surveys as needed to retain staff and avoid losing priceless institutional training and knowledge.
 - Continue to support flexible work schedules and provide technology to allow for maximum productivity.
 - Reinforce positive, respectful relationships that activate our shared Mission, Vision, and Values.
 - Create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive team and encourage thought leadership to develop highly effective and collaborative implementors.
 - Review employee benefits and evaluate inclusion of additional affordable and value-added items such as addition of a 401(k) plan, partial matching of 401(k), and life insurance.
 - Survey staff to understand individual reward preferences, update the Personnel Manual to include additional rewards and recognition options (e.g., discretionary leave), and budget funds annually to support this program.
- 7B. Annually update the Staffing and Succession Plan and emerging Organization Chart to anticipate workload balancing, staff assignments, staff succession, professional growth, evolving business lines, and consultant expertise.
- 7C. Develop a protocol for onboarding new Board Directors and transferring institutional context from those leaving the Board, to foster uninterrupted governance.
- 7D. Increase cybersecurity to protect our intellectual properties, facilities, productivity, and assets.
- 7E. Continue to prioritize facility and land security to reduce damage and protect the organization.
- 7F. Optimize both Staff and Board through identifying professional development and training to advance our leading-edge Vision.
- Communication, team, and leadership training to elevate highly collaborative relationships.
 - Specialized technical training for emerging programs and projects to build staff capacity.
- 7G. Develop a Facilities and Property Management strategy to address staff space and technology upgrades, both in the office and in the field, to support operations.
- Evaluate costs and benefits of current headquarters and ability to sell if the area is rezoned and reinvest in one location for staff integration.

- With expanding recharge operations, assess the need for expanded or relocated field support facilities.
 - Conduct a one-year evaluation of hiring a professional property management firm to keep the staff's focus on our core mission.
- 7H. Ensure project contracts are updated and in place to avoid disruption to implementation schedules by monitoring contracts, project milestones, schedules, and budgets.
- 7I. Empower professional partnerships between the District Board and Staff through clear roles and responsibilities and guiding principles to successfully implement the Strategic Plan.
- 7J. Regularly review and measure implementation success of Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives. Align and recalibrate based on emerging priorities to leverage opportunities and manage risks in real-time.

“Working here at the District has given me a strong sense of unity and teamwork in a very professional environment.”

Mike Guizar, Field Operations Specialist



District Division boundaries

IN APPRECIATION

The District would like to acknowledge the direct input into the Strategic Plan from both Staff and the Board of Directors who together envisioned the next generation of San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District.

Our team represents the District's service providers who span from less than one year to more than 40 years with the District. It is with this wide aperture that we commit our collective energy to build on the strength of our reputation and good work. We recognize that the people of the District and our close partnerships are the foundation to our success—we are stewards of the land, water, and habitat and it is with great dedication that we have set a clear path forward.

Board of Directors

Melody McDonald, President, District 5
Robert Stewart, Vice President, District 3
Richard Corneille, District 1
David Raley, District 2
John Longville, District 4

Executive Facilitators

Ellen Cross, Strategy Driver, Inc.
Maria Pascoal, Minds Illustrated

District Staff

Betsy Miller, General Manager
David Cosgrove, District Counsel
Zachary Blum, Intern
Manuel Colunga, Field Supervisor
Erwin Fogerson, PERC Engineer
Anna Frey, Assistant Biologist
Michael Guizar, Field Operations Specialist
Caryn Iwanaga, Intern
Athena Laroche, Administrative Specialist
Rebecca Martin, Administrative Assistant
Milan Mitrovich, Land Resources Manager
Tommy Purvis, Field Operations Specialist II
Angie Quiroga, Sr. Administrative Analyst
Katelyn Scholte, Principal Engineer
Laura Torres, Assistant Engineer

The San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District and the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians cooperatively steward the cultural native flora of the Wash through a mutual agreement that reflects a shared alliance to preserve the natural environment and traditional uses. Yucca is harvested in spring, and other plants, such as white sage, dog bane, acorn, cactus, pinyon, and juniper berry are also cultivated at various times and locations to celebrate and continue the tribe's culture, tradition and harmony with the Earth.

Land Acknowledgment Statement

The San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District recognizes and respects Indigenous peoples as traditional stewards of the land. We acknowledge the land upon which we currently serve as the custodian is the ancestral and unceded territory of the Maara'yam, commonly referred to as the Serrano people.

We extend our respect and gratitude to the Serrano people who have lived on and cared for this land since time immemorial. We honor the continued legacy of these original conservationists, and their heritage of understanding, caretaking, and upholding the pillars of plant and animal life and respect for natural processes. Our histories and stories are intertwined in this space, and by sharing them in culturally appropriate ways, we hope to honor and celebrate our Indigenous neighbors and partners.

We recognize Indigenous knowledge and seek to provide opportunities for mutual consultation, collaboration, and cooperation in the stewardship of the land. Specifically, through working with the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, one of two federally-recognized Tribes which represent the Serrano people in the contemporary era, we seek to identify, restore, and enhance traditionally important plant resources in the Upper Santa Ana River Wash, provide access to plant materials for cultural and educational purposes, and ensure the land is managed in a manner that promotes ecosystem health, groundwater sustainability, and creates opportunity for incorporation of traditional tribal management practices.





**San Bernardino Valley
Water Conservation District**

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OUR VALUES

We embody integrity through fiscal responsibility in public service by holding ourselves accountable to our partners and community at large.

We continue to build our community of employees, partners, businesses, and neighbors who drive our mission. Our success depends on responsive collaboration and transparent communication.

We are stewards of the water, land, and environment and are committed to sustainable practices that will ensure a resilient future.

We are ethical and respect both people and the environment to serve our community's diverse values.

We balance innovation and time-tested pragmatism to advance professional excellence, continually improving to meet the evolving priorities of today and a changing world tomorrow.

We are resilient. We adapt to address future climate impacts and ensure the District's next 100 years with our continued humble, flexible, and curious approach to water and the natural world.

