



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District Breaks 30-Year Record for Groundwater Storage, at 20 Billion Gallons and Counting**

*Heavy rainfall, the collective use of imported water for storage, and improvements in flow capture have filled basins with enough groundwater to serve 180,000 families for one year.*

REDLANDS, Calif. (July 24, 2019) — Like money in the bank, local groundwater aquifers have seen record-breaking deposits this year with a staggering 20 billion gallons saved so far and another two months still left in the water year, the [San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District](#) announced today.

More than 61,000 acre-feet of snowmelt and rainfall has been diverted from Mill Creek and the Santa Ana River by the District and recharged into the groundwater basin for future use by those who pump water from the basin. Imported water was also used to help supplement the amount of water stored.

SBVWCD General Manager Daniel Cozad attributes this year's high recharge figures to a wet winter and the 2017 establishment of the [San Bernardino Basin Groundwater Council](#): a group of local cities and water agencies helping to purchase imported State Project water for groundwater storage.

The water stored so far this year is enough to serve 180,000 families in Southern California for an entire year, Cozad said. It helps to replenish the water used during the prior drought periods and will help provide resiliency for future dry times.

“Our region is blessed with large underground aquifers that can store substantial amounts of water for use in times of severe drought,” Cozad said. “Thanks to our partner agencies on the Groundwater Council, we have been able to capture the rain that fell in the winter and spring and saw unprecedented collaboration to store as much water as our facilities can handle.”

The last time the region stored this much groundwater was in 1987, coming down from a period of successive wet winters. Prior to that, 20 billion gallons of storage had not been achieved since the late 1940s.

“We are excited and encouraged to see the large amount of storage achieved in such a short amount of time,” said [San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District](#) General Manager Douglas D. Headrick, whose agency imports the State Project Water used to supplement recharge. Valley District is one of more than a dozen members of the Groundwater Council.

The Groundwater Council is a 21<sup>st</sup> century model for cooperation, where member agencies pitch in their fair share for the purchase of imported water to achieve optimum levels of water storage in the San Bernardino and Bunker Hill groundwater basins.

Participation in the Council is open to all groundwater producers in the San Bernardino Basin area. Current members include East Valley Water District; the cities of Colton, Loma Linda and Rialto; San Bernardino Municipal Water Department; Fontana Water Company; West Valley Water District; San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District; San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, Bear Valley Mutual Water Company and Yucaipa Valley Water District.

This year’s record-breaking water storage comes on the heels of two other years of significant recharge.

The 2017-18 water year, which runs annually from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30, reflected the highest streamflow recharge levels in five years at 16 billion gallons — the 16<sup>th</sup> highest recharge amount since the District started recording measurements 106 years ago.

The 2016-17 water year’s total recharge was 236 percent above average.

Previous years of substantial streamflow recharge include: 2011 (53,986 acre feet); 2010 (30,565 a/f); 2005 (56,980 a/f); 1998 (55,576 a/f); and 1995 (35,876 a/f). The record year for water recharge in the district was in 1922, when 104,545 acre feet of water was captured in retention ponds where it was allowed to seep underground to recharge the basins.

Since 1912, the SBVWCD has conserved more than one million acre feet or 326 billion gallons of water by diverting the natural flow of the Santa Ana River and Mill Creek into 71 percolation basins that allow the water to collect and seep naturally into the ground, where it can be pumped out for future use. For more information, visit [www.sbvwcd.org](http://www.sbvwcd.org).

#### **About the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District**

The SBVWCD serves an area totaling 50,000 acres within unincorporated San Bernardino County as well as portions of the cities of San Bernardino, Loma Linda, Redlands, and Highland. The water recharged by the District serves more than 227,580 people in the District who use well water through partner water agencies. In addition, cities and agriculture in Riverside County pump and use water recharged by the District. SBVWCD recharges native river, creek, and State Project water on behalf of producers and water partners. Visit [www.sbvwcd.org](http://www.sbvwcd.org).