



JANUARY 2024

THE WATER DROP

Official Newsletter of Ventura River Water District

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General Manager's Message by Alma Quezada

Happy New Year!

As we bid farewell to the challenges and achievements of the past year, we also turned a new page in the leadership of our Water District. It is with great pleasure that I introduce myself as the new General Manager of the District. With a heart full of optimism and dedication, I look forward to serving the District and its customers.

I have had the privilege to serve in various capacities within the region. Previously, I held the role of Public Works Director for the City of Ojai, where I gained valuable insight into project management and working within budgetary constraints. Additionally, my tenure as the General Manager for Zone Mutual Water Company equipped me with an understanding of the intricacies of water distribution and management. Prior to that, I served as a hydrogeologist with the County of Ventura, where I developed a keen understanding of regulatory compliance and the local hydrological landscape. I studied Geology at UCLA and Civil Engineering at Loyola Marymount. I'm also a licensed geologist in the state of California, which further underscores my commitment to upholding the highest professional standards in my field.

I am eager to work collaboratively with our dedicated staff and engage with our customers to address the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Together, we will navigate the evolving landscape of water management, always striving to uphold the highest standards of service and stewardship.

I look forward to the journey ahead as we chart a course for a prosperous future. Here's to a year of growth, resilience, and collective achievement!

Warm Regards,
Alma Quezada, P.G.
General Manager

District Directors

Bruce Kuebler, President

Peggy Wiles, Vice-President

Jack Curtis, Director

Ed Lee, Director

Laurie Lary, Director

New Assistant General
Manager

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Introducing Emily Minter - Assistant General Manager

We are delighted to announce the well-deserved promotion of Emily Minter to the position of Assistant General Manager/Office Manager. Emily joined the District in August 2020 as an Account Administrator and has shown exceptional dedication and talent, rapidly ascending through the ranks. During her tenure, she has acquired a strong understanding of financial planning while simultaneously demonstrating her commitment to professional development by obtaining her Bachelor's degree in Business in December 2022. We are enthusiastic about the fresh perspective and energy that Emily brings to the role and have no doubt that she will continue to drive progress for the betterment of the District.

Make the Switch to a Drought Tolerant Landscape!

Attention all green thumbs and conservation warriors! Are you looking to revamp your garden into a sustainable paradise? The District has partnered with an amazing team of environmental heroes - the Wildlife Conservation Board, Watershed Progressive and the Ventura County Resource Conservation District - to bring our valued customers an offer that is too good to pass up.

We are pleased to offer **FREE design services** to help convert your current landscape to a drought tolerant oasis. Our experts will work with you to design a landscape that can harvest rainwater, set up graywater reuse, plant a pollinator garden and more.

To get started in the program, call us at **805-646-3403** or email us at **office@vrwd.ca.gov**. Our staff is ready to assist.



*Rain Gardens &
Stormwater Management*



*Greywater Reuse &
Summer Shade Enhancement*



*Rainwater Harvesting
...and more!*

FREE INITIAL CONSULTATION + ASSESSMENT



Funding Support



Innovative & Resilient Design



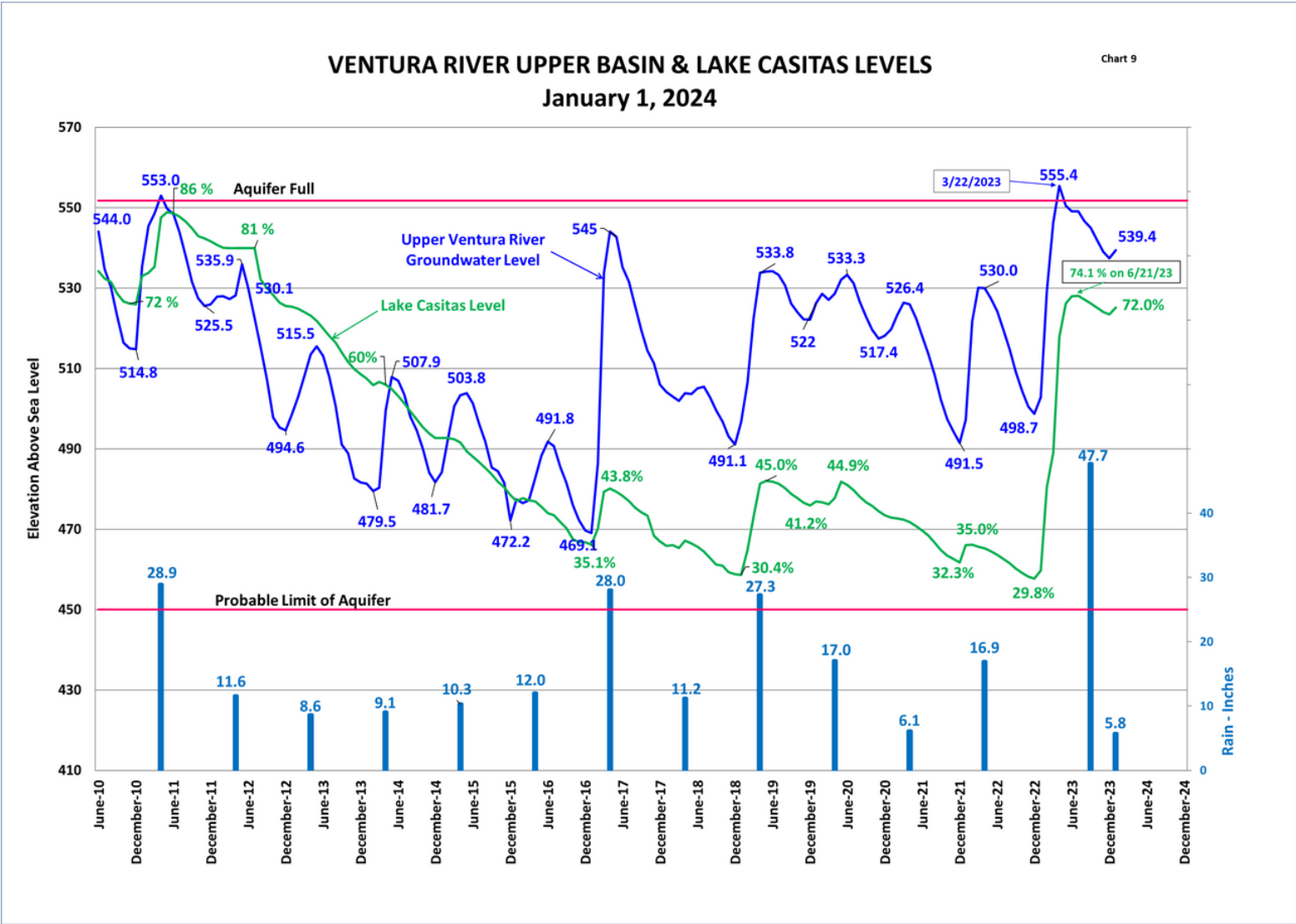
Construction Assistance or DIY

Water Supply Status

Our aquifer level remains steady at 539.4 feet in elevation as of January 1 and down 2.0 ft since last month and currently 24.0 feet above the 35-year average for the same time this year. The new water year began on October 1 and has delivered 5.8 inches of rain in the Ojai Valley. We anticipate a wet water year to keep our aquifer healthy!

The District is currently in a Stage 1 drought declaration with 20% voluntary conservation. We thank our customers for being conscientious water users!

The Lake Casitas level was at 72% and increasing with every rain event. Last year, the lake topped out at 74%. The Robles Diversion has diverted 1,293.7 acre-feet since January 1.



Important Notice: Upcoming Changes to Water Rates

Effective **January 15, 2024** as shown below. Customers will see the new rates on their February water bill.

The rate increase will support daily operations and maintenance along with several planned capital improvement projects. These projects will help us ensure the continued delivery of clean and safe water to our customers. The new rates will reflect an increase of 9%, along with a Casitas pass-through rate of 1.8%, for a total rate increase of 10.8%.

We understand that any increase in cost can be a concern, and we want to assure our customers that we are committed to maintaining reliable water services and making necessary improvements to our infrastructure. To understand how these rates will impact your individual bill, we encourage you to call our customer service team. They are prepared to answer any questions you may have and guide you through the changes.

In addition to our ongoing efforts to keep costs as low as possible, the District is proud to be part of the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). This program provides financial assistance to economically disadvantaged customers to help them manage their water bills. If you or someone you know could benefit from the LIHWAP program, please visit <https://www.csd.ca.gov/lihwap> for more information.

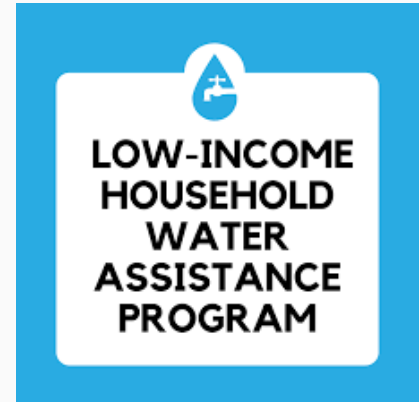
We understand that change can be challenging, but we firmly believe this adjustment will allow us to continue providing high-quality service to our customers.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us by phone or email with any questions.

Tier	Current	\$ Increase on 1/15/24	1.8% Casitas pass-through	Total Increase with pass- through
Single-Family Residential				
1	\$5.59	\$0.53	\$0.10	\$6.22
2	\$7.25	\$0.64	\$0.13	\$8.02
3	\$9.64	\$0.85	\$0.17	\$10.66
4	\$13.44	\$1.18	\$0.24	\$14.86
Multi Family Residential				
1	\$6.98	\$0.62	\$0.13	\$7.73
Commercial				
1	\$6.81	\$0.60	\$0.12	\$7.53
<i>*HCF = Hundred Cubic Feet of water = one unit = 748 gallons.</i>				

Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)

California's Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) provides critical financial assistance to households struggling to make ends meet. Through LIHWAP, eligible low-income households can receive one-time financial help to pay current or past due water or sewer bills and keep their water on. If your household income is below 60% of the state median income for California families—or if you are a recipient of CalFresh, CalWORKs or the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)—you are already income-qualified for LIHWAP. Hurry before the program expires at the end of March.



APPLY TODAY: To find out if you qualify for help paying your current or past-due water or sewer bill, go to **csd.ca.gov/waterbill** to learn more.

Water Trivia Questions

1. What percentage of the Earth's surface is covered by water?
2. What is the name of the largest ocean on Earth?
3. What is the chemical formula for water?
4. What is the process called where water cycles from the Earth's surface to the atmosphere and back?
5. What is the term for the amount of salt dissolved in water?
6. What percentage of the human body is composed of water?
7. What is the only natural substance found in all three physical states—solid, liquid, and gas—at the temperatures naturally occurring on Earth?
8. What is the term for the amount of water vapor present in air expressed as a percentage of the amount needed for saturation at the same temperature?

Answers

1. Approximately 71%.
2. The Pacific Ocean.
3. H₂O (two hydrogen atoms bonded to one oxygen atom).
4. The Water Cycle or Hydrologic Cycle.
5. Salinity.
6. The human body is made up of approximately 60% water.
7. Water.
8. Relative Humidity.