

Goleta Water District: A History of Sustainability



Sustaining the Goleta Valley

Responding to drought conditions at the time, the Goleta Valley Water District, as it was then called, was formed by a vote of the people on November 17, 1944 to represent the water interests of the Goleta Valley. The community had always relied on wells, but now Lake Cachuma, with its efficient gravity fed system would also provide water to the region.



Water Conservation Leaders

Droughts in the 1970s and 1980s prompted some of the District's first-of-their-kind water conservation programs. As a result, Goleta Valley residents became early conservation leaders.



Wright Judgment

In 1989 the Goleta Groundwater Basin became an adjudicated basin when the Court released the Wright Judgment. This legal ruling governs groundwater use and management in the basin. It established a safe yield for how much water can be used in a year and determined who can access that groundwater.

SAFE

In 1991 voters of the Goleta Water District passed the SAFE Water Supplies Ordinance, which sets forth conditions the District must meet in order to approve new or additional water connections.



Low Per Capita Usage

Water thrifty Goleta Water District customers have long led the state in conservation. During the height of the most recent drought residents averaged 47 gallons per person per day, which is among the lowest water use in California and less than half the state's goal of 110.



Electronic Processes

The District continually assesses opportunities to streamline administrative operations and move to paperless processes both as a best practice and as part of its sustainability efforts.



Gravity-Fed Distribution System

Following the Cachuma Project approval, the District began constructing its gravity-fed water distribution system, using mountain slopes and the coastal shelf to energize a complex system, and reduce high energy and power needs naturally.



Harnessing Natural Power

Construction of CDMWTP in 1973 to treat surface water included a basin using the natural power of the sun and air to remove water from sediment left over from the organic filtration process. This process would otherwise require tremendous energy consumption using mechanical equipment.

Aquifer Storage and Recovery

The District was one of the first in the nation to establish an Aquifer Storage & Recovery Program, which enables injection and storage of Lake Cachuma water into the groundwater basin during wet years, for later use during dry years.



Conserving Potable Water

The Recycled Water treatment plant was constructed in 1996 to irrigate Goleta Valley landscapes and golf courses, thereby preserving potable water in preparation for future droughts and water shortages.

Focused Planning for a Sustainable Future

Regularly updated water management plans and comprehensive studies evaluate water and system needs, and help the District plan initiatives to coincide with new water quality regulations, system reliability, operational efficiency, and aging infrastructure.

