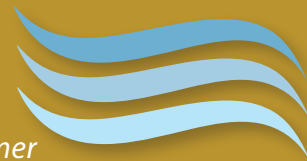


Water Features

Goleta Water District News Volume XII, Issue 2: Spring-Summer



Your Rates at Work

Building a Resilient Water Future

At Goleta Water District, your rates provide safe, high-quality water while preparing for the future needs of the Goleta Valley. Read about how critical projects, strong financial management, and cost-saving strategies help keep service costs low. With strong water supplies and continued conservation, the District remains well positioned for long-term reliability.

PLUS: Lake Cachuma Spills Again!





Investing in a Reliable Water System

At Goleta Water District (District), every dollar customers invest in their water service is put to work with a clear purpose: delivering reliable, high-quality water today while preparing for tomorrow. Like other water agencies across the country, the District faces the ongoing challenge of maintaining aging infrastructure, including groundwater wells, pipelines, valves, pumps, and treatment facilities. This newsletter highlights how prudent financial management and strategic investments have strengthened the District while helping keep costs reasonable.

In this issue, you'll read about key projects and initiatives designed to enhance local water supply reliability and emergency preparedness, from the development of the new Mariposa Well and renewable backup power at the Corona del Mar Water Treatment Plant to innovative energy projects like in-pipe turbines. You'll also see how the District is leveraging grants and alternative funding sources to deliver tangible results in the most cost-effective manner possible.

These efforts are supported by a strong financial foundation. I'm proud to share that the District's careful fiscal management has led to several notable achievements over the past six months. For the second consecutive year, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) recognized the District with both a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting and a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, reflecting its commitment to transparency, accountability, and financial excellence. The District also received a credit rating upgrade and is now in the strongest financial position in its 80-year history. This higher rating enables the District to borrow at lower interest rates; effectively spreading the costs of replacing aging infrastructure over time and lowering costs today while increasing our financial sustainability and operational resiliency for tomorrow.

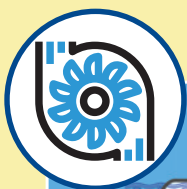
Local water supplies are also strong. Thanks to recent wet winters, Lake Cachuma is full, and the Goleta Groundwater Basin has recovered to levels not seen in over a decade. Even so, the community knows that long-term reliability depends on mindful conservation. Goleta Water District customers have a long history of using water efficiently and are some of the most water-thrifty in the state. As we head into the warmer months, learn about ways to save water and money outdoors, including replacing grass with water-wise alternatives.

All of the District's efforts are focused on one goal, making the most of your rates to deliver a reliable supply of quality water at the most reasonable cost to current and future customers. Thank you for doing your part to use water wisely and help protect this vital resource.

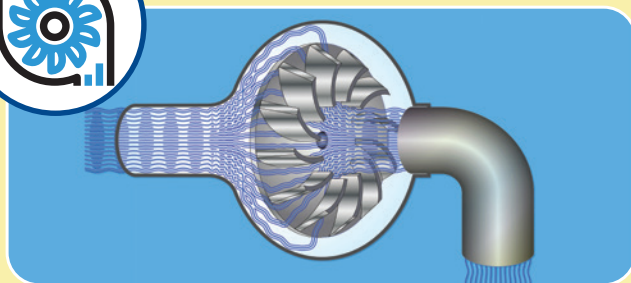
David Matson

General Manager

Installing Smart Energy to Lower Costs



Hydroturbines



New in-pipe turbines will use water flowing through pipelines to generate clean energy to offset electricity usage from the grid. Electricity cost savings from the combined generation at two facilities are estimated to range from approximately \$3.5 million to \$6.7 million over a 30-year period.



Solar Installations



Solar energy systems throughout District facilities will be capable of generating enough clean power to offset nearly 60% of its annual electricity consumption. Projected 25-year electricity savings are estimated to range from \$22.7 million to \$37.1 million.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q&A

Q: How has the Goleta Valley's water use changed over time?

A: Even with a 42% growth in population between 1970 and today, water use in 2025 was 33% lower than in the 1970s. New housing is significantly more water-efficient as a result of modern building codes that require low-water-use fixtures and water-wise landscaping, and new units are often apartments with primarily indoor water use. In addition, retrofitting older homes with efficient plumbing fixtures, along with more water-wise landscaping at existing properties, has further reduced overall water use across the community.

Q: How does the District ensure there is enough water for current and future customers?

A: The District's Water Supply Management Plan evaluates current water supply to ensure that sufficient water is available to serve customers now and in the future. The most recent Water Supply Management Plan determined the District can meet future needs under a range of conditions. Additionally, the voter-approved SAFE Water Supplies Ordinance limits new water allocations to 1% of available water supplies per year as long as certain conditions are met: the District receives 100% of normal deliveries from Lake Cachuma, is not rationing water, complies with all legal obligations under the Wright Judgement, and meets its annual groundwater storage commitment to the Goleta Groundwater Basin.

Rethink Your Lawn

Traditional grass requires significant watering at regular intervals to stay green – especially during warm summer months. Replace thirsty lawns with water-wise alternatives to save water and money while creating a beautiful landscape!



Replace lawns with water-wise landscaping



Mulch over non-functional and ornamental turf



For questions or assistance with applying for rebates, please contact conservation@goletawater.com or visit www.GoletaWater.com/rebates

A state prohibition on watering non-functional lawn begins in 2028 for commercial, institutional, and landscape irrigation customers, and in 2029 for Homeowners Associations. Single-family residential lawns are excluded from the ban.

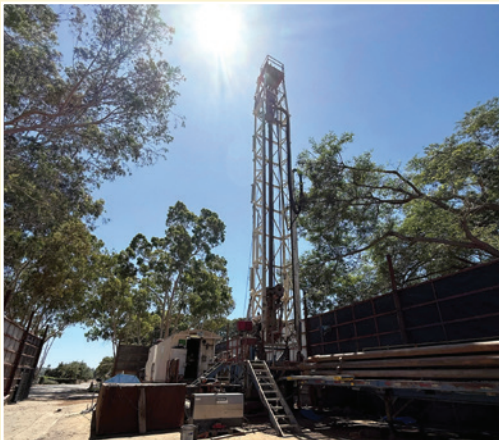
What is Non-functional Lawn? Grass that is used for purely decorative purposes and not for recreation, people, or pets.

Maximizing Resiliency

The District is committed to investing in projects that strengthen emergency preparedness, enhance system resiliency, and support long-term sustainability by controlling costs. From expanding groundwater access to installing backup power systems and generating renewable energy, these efforts reflect a proactive approach to planning for the unexpected and adapting to changing conditions.

Battery Backup Systems

Backup power systems at District reservoirs, the Corona del Mar Water Treatment Plant (CDMWTP), and the District Headquarters help ensure service levels are maintained during and after disasters, power outages, or other emergencies. The recently activated backup battery system at the CDMWTP (pictured here) also helps to lower energy costs by storing electricity for use during peak rate periods.



New Mariposa Well

Construction of the Mariposa Well – the District’s second new well in over 40 years – is nearing completion. Once operational, this will be the District’s deepest well, helping improve access to the District’s stored groundwater while also allowing for additional injection of water into the basin for recharge. Groundwater serves as a critical source of local water supply for the community, particularly during periods of drought. This investment enhances long-term water supply reliability and groundwater supply sustainability.

Investing in Renewable Energy

Rising energy costs are a major driver of expenses for households and businesses alike. The District’s Net Zero Initiative represents a \$6 million investment in renewable energy projects to save a projected \$26.2 million to \$43.8 million over the next 30 years. Approximately 2,555 solar panels will be installed at three facilities, while in-pipe hydroturbines will produce energy as water flows through. Reducing reliance on non-renewable energy will stabilize costs, protect against future price increases, and improve system reliability and energy security. These clean energy projects move the District closer to its goal of becoming a net zero energy user while locking in savings for decades to come.



Minimizing Costs

Unlike cities, counties, and other government agencies that receive tax revenue, the District is funded entirely by rates. This makes it especially important to manage costs carefully and use those funds responsibly to help keep water rates reasonable. By actively pursuing outside funding, the District can invest in essential infrastructure while reducing pressure on rates caused by inflation and other factors beyond our control.

- **Grants to Support Investment in Projects**

Over the past two years, the District has applied for more than \$11 million in grant funding to support critical projects and programs, including the construction of two new groundwater wells. The District continues to submit new grant applications every year.

- **Ultra Low-Interest Rate Loans**

Ultra Low-Interest loans are a cost-effective way to fund essential infrastructure while minimizing the financial burden on the District and its customers. By spreading costs over time, these loans help ensure that both current and future customers who benefit from projects share in the investment in long-term system reliability. The District submitted four applications totalling \$25 million to the competitive California State Revolving Fund program for six projects, and all four applications made the funding list. Loans are currently at 2.1%, which is well below market rates, and final awards are expected in spring of 2027.

- **Revenue-Generating Projects**

The District continues to invest in clean energy producing projects, like solar panels and hydroturbines, that lower electricity costs and generate revenue. Over the next 30 years, the District estimates it will offset between \$26.2 million and \$43.8 million in electricity costs, which will help reduce overall expenses for the District and its customers.

- **Value Engineering**

Every capital project is reviewed to ensure the best value for each dollar spent. Between 2020 and 2025, the District saved approximately \$3.9 million in costs by using existing staff resources instead of contractors, as well as recycled or prefabricated materials, reducing costs for the District and maximizing value for customers.

Making Rates Go Further



For a more in-depth look at how the District is putting your rates to work, visit the District Budget webpage at www.GoletaWater.com/district-budget

Wet Winters Strengthen Water Supplies

Due to record winter rainfall, Lake Cachuma spilled over Bradbury Dam for third time in four years!



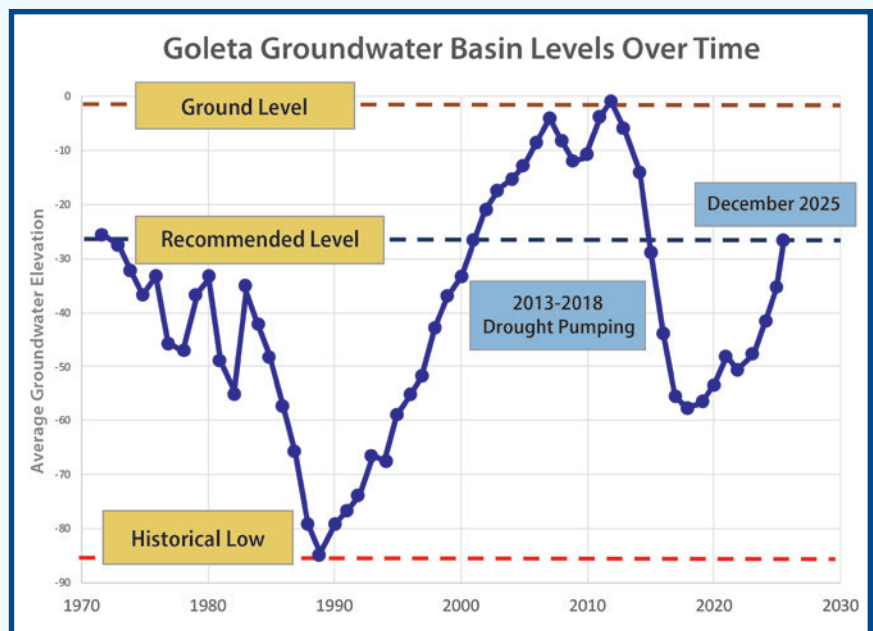
Bradbury Dam at Lake Cachuma

When the lake spills, the District injects treated surface water into its groundwater wells to accelerate recharge of the Goleta Groundwater Basin.

Photo - Lael Wageneck

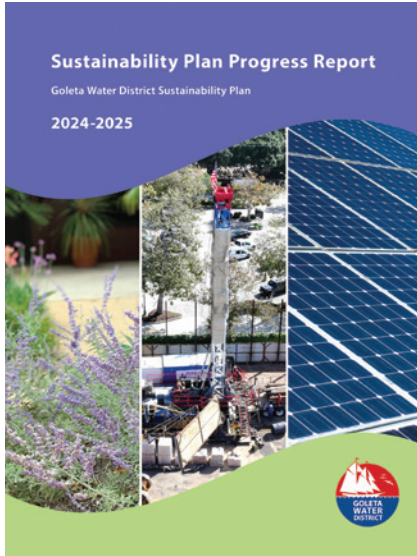
Thanks to a series of strong atmospheric river storms that provided close to double the average rainfall throughout Santa Barbara County in the early winter months, Lake Cachuma spilled again for the third time in four years. Especially unusual is how early in the rainy season these storms occurred. The lake began spilling in December, and continued to spill through the end of March. Lake Cachuma is the District's most energy efficient and cost-effective source of water.

The Goleta Groundwater Basin has also benefited from the recent wet winters: a full lake allowed the District to turn off its wells and inject surface water into the basin under its Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) program, which stores water in the basin during wet years for use during dry years when surface water supplies are limited. The District is one of the few water agencies in California that is permitted to actively recharge its groundwater basin through injection. As a result, this critical drought buffer has recovered to levels not seen in over a decade. The graph on the right shows groundwater level changes dating back to 1972, with a sharp decline in levels during the most recent drought and recovery beginning in 2019.



Conservation remains important to protect local water resources and ensure long-term reliability.

Sustainability Plan Progress Report



Building on Progress: Strengthening Sustainability for the Future

This year's Sustainability Plan Progress Report provides an update on the District's sustainability initiatives with a focus on planning efforts to strengthen the District's financial and operational foundation for long-term stability and sustainability. Additional progress included expanding the electric vehicle fleet with new electric pick-up trucks, vehicles, and heavy equipment, and securing grant funding for various initiatives that offer sustainable benefits. Together, these efforts position the District to continue delivering reliable water service while building resiliency and preparing for future challenges.

Read the latest report at www.GoletaWater.com/Sustainability

Kids Corner

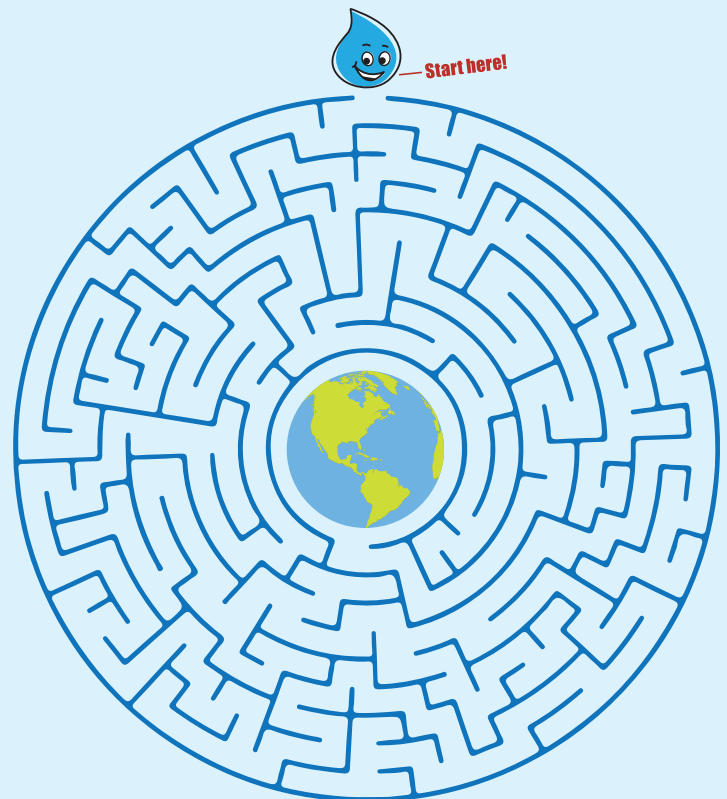
Our Sustainable Future!

Sustainability means using things like water and energy wisely so there is enough for us and for people in the future.

These are some of the ways we are working to be as sustainable as possible:

- ◆ **Save Water:** Using less water helps protect rivers, lakes, and groundwater.
- ◆ **Use Less Energy:** Better equipment that uses less power and clean energy lowers costs and pollution.
- ◆ **Protect Nature:** Healthy habitats help keep local ecosystems and water sources strong.
- ◆ **Plan Ahead:** Smart choices help us get ready for droughts, climate change, and growing communities.

Find Your Path Through the Water Maze to the Earth



The District has many educational resources for teachers, parents and kids interested in learning more about where their water comes from and how to conserve.

Visit: www.GoletaWater.com/Conservation/Educational-Resources



GOLETA WATER DISTRICT
4699 Hollister Avenue
Goleta, California 93110
(805) 964-6761
info@goletawater.com

REMEMBER, YOU CAN PAY YOUR BILL ONLINE

Visit our website for more information

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Resources | Board Meeting Agendas and
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and more...

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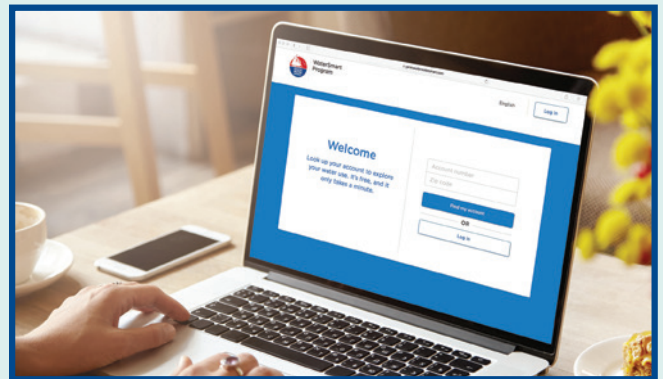
Watering % Adjust



The Watering Percent Adjust feature helps save water by matching irrigation to the weather. As temperatures change, plants need more or less water. This feature – usually a button or dial on the irrigation controller – can alter watering times for all zones at once to avoid overwatering during cooler months or underwatering during hotter periods.

To learn more, visit www.waterwisesb.org

WaterSmart Portal



The District's WaterSmart portal allows customers to view usage history, pay a bill, get money saving tips, sign up for usage and payment alerts, and much more! Over half of District customers are already taking charge of their water use with the tools provided by the WaterSmart portal.

To learn more about WaterSmart, go to: www.GoletaWater.com/WaterSmart

Contact

Call us: (805) 964-6761

Office hours: 4699 Hollister Ave.
9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Mon. – Fri.

Send us an email:
info@GoletaWater.com

Visit our website:
www.GoletaWater.com

The **District Board of Directors** meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. The public is always welcome. For more information on how to participate visit www.GoletaWater.com/Agendas-and-Minutes