

STAFF REPORT

To: Coastside County Water District Board of Directors

From: Mary Rogren, General Manager

Agenda: April 9, 2024

Report Date: April 5, 2024

Agenda Title: General Manager's Report

Recommendation/Motion:

Information Only.

FEMA Funds Received

In March, 2024, the District received a \$59,000 check from CalOES/FEMA for expenses incurred in January 2023 for emergency repairs due to the December 2022/January 2023 winter storm damage. The District still has an open application with FEMA for reimbursement of costs to construct a new permanent pipeline along Highway 92 to replace the pipe damaged in the December 2022/January 2023 storms.

Salary Survey

Pursuant to the terms of the District's MOU with the Teamsters Local 856 dated July 1, 2022, District staff has contracted with Gallagher Benefit Services, Inc. (formerly Koff and Associates) to conduct a salary survey. Proposals from three firms were received, and the Human Resources Committee assisted staff in the selection process. Survey results are anticipated to be available in Summer 2024.

End of LIHWAP (Low Income Household Water Assistance Program) as of March 31, 2024

LIHWAP, a federally funded program (administered through the State of California) expired as of March 31, 2024. Over the last year+, 54 of the District's customers received an average of \$400 each in benefits from the program. The District's customer service staff actively promoted the program to low income customers and to local agencies providing assistance to the low income community.

Department of Water Resources April 2 Snow Survey

On April 2, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) conducted its April snow survey. Given readings from its 130 stations, statewide snowpack is 110% of the April 1 average, a significant improvement from just 28% on January 1. (See the attached DWR article.)

Two in a Row: April Snow Survey Shows Above Average Snowpack for Second Straight Season

Published: Apr 02, 2024

After a dry start to the year, March storms provided boost to snowpack but runoff will be the key to future water supply

Governor Newsom highlights new California Water Plan Update 2023 to chart California's path towards a sustainable, climate-resilient, and equitable water supply

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The Department of Water Resources (DWR) today conducted the all-important April snow survey, the fourth measurement of the season at Phillips Station. The manual survey recorded 64 inches of snow depth and a snow water equivalent of 27.5 inches, which is 113 percent of average for this location. The snow water equivalent measures the amount of water contained in the snowpack and is a key component of DWR's water supply forecast. The April measurement is critical for water managers as it's considered the peak snowpack for the season and marks the transition to spring snowmelt into the state's rivers and reservoirs.

DWR's electronic readings from 130 stations placed throughout the state indicate that the statewide snowpack's snow water equivalent is 28.6 inches, or 110 percent of the April 1 average, a significant improvement from just 28 percent of average on January 1.

The focus now shifts to forecasting spring snowmelt runoff and capturing as much of that water as possible for future use.

"It's great news that the snowpack was able to catch up in March from a dry start this year. This water year shows once again how our climate is shifting, and how we can swing from dry to wet conditions within a season," said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. "These swings make it crucial to maintain conservation while managing the runoff. Variable climate conditions could result in less water runoff into our reservoirs. 100 percent snowpack does not mean 100 percent runoff. Capturing and storing what we can in wetter years for drier times remains a key priority."

California's reservoirs remain in good shape thanks to state efforts to capture and store as much water as possible from record storms in 2023 and again this season. The State Water Project has increased storage by 700,000 acre-feet at Lake Oroville and by 154,000 acre-feet at San Luis Reservoir since January 1. Statewide, reservoir levels currently stand at 116 percent of average.

However, there are challenges ahead as the spring runoff begins. The dry start to the year, soot and ash from burn scars that accelerates snowmelt, and other factors may result in below average spring runoff which can impact water availability.

Recently, the State Water Project increased its forecasted allocation of water supplies for the year to 30 percent, up from an initial 10 percent, due to the storms in February and March. However, uncertainty about the spring runoff and ongoing pumping restrictions to protect threatened and endangered species in the Delta has impacted that allocation forecast.

"California has had two years of relatively positive water conditions, but that is no reason to let our guard down now," said Dr. Michael Anderson, State Climatologist with DWR. "With three record-setting multi-year droughts in the last 15 years and warmer temperatures, a well above average snowpack is needed to reach average runoff. The wild swings from dry to wet that make up today's water years make it important to maintain conservation while managing the runoff we do receive. Our water years moving forward will see more extreme dry times interrupted by very wet periods like we saw this winter."

That need to adapt to a changing climate is why Governor Gavin Newsom joined today's snow survey at Phillips Station to announce the release of the California Water Plan Update 2023. The Water Plan Update sets forth a vision for all Californians to benefit from water resources that are sustainable, resilient to climate change and achieves equity for all communities and benefits the environment. Check out the Water Plan Update to learn more about how the plan focuses on key issues including addressing climate urgency, strengthening watershed resilience, and achieving equity in water management.

As part of the state’s climate adaptation efforts, over the past two years, California has worked with local groundwater agencies and state and federal partners to capture as much water as possible to prepare for the next drought. In 2023, more than 1.2 million acre-feet of groundwater recharge was permitted by state agencies, with nearly 400,000 acre-feet of flood water recharged using the Executive Orders issued by Governor Newsom.

On average, the Sierra snowpack supplies about 30 percent of California’s water needs. Its natural ability to store water is why the Sierra snowpack is often referred to as California's “frozen reservoir.” Data from these snow surveys and forecasts produced by DWR’s Snow Surveys and Water Supply Forecasting Unit are important factors in determining how DWR provides water to 27 million Californians and manages the state’s water resources.

DWR conducts five snow surveys at Phillips Station each winter near the first of each month, January through April and, if necessary, May.

For California’s current hydrological conditions, visit <https://cww.water.ca.gov>.

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