

Drought Update

After more than three years of drought, California is starting the new year with more snow on the ground than at any start to a year in over a decade. Department of Water Resources (DWR) officials hiked into the Sierra Nevada to conduct the first snow survey of the winter season on Tuesday, January 3, 2023. DWR's team reported 174% of average statewide snowpack for the date at Phillips Station, west of Lake Tahoe. The manual survey recorded 55.5 inches of snow depth and a snow water equivalent of 17.5 inches, which is 177% of average for the location. DWR also takes electronic readings from 130 stations placed throughout the state.

The snow water equivalent measures the amount of water contained in the snowpack and is a key factor of DWR's water supply forecast. Statewide the snowpack is 199% of average.

Last year, the Phillips survey showed the seventh highest January measurements on record for that location. However, those results were followed by three months of extremely dry conditions and by April 1 of last year, the Phillips survey measurements were the third lowest on record.

California saw continued rain, snow and flooding for the start of January. Conditions so far this water year have proven to be similar to last

year when California saw some early rainstorms and strong October snow totals only to have the driest January through March on record.

On average, the Sierra snowpack supplies about 30% of California's water needs and is an important factor in determining how DWR manages the state's water resources.

Snowpack levels crucial to water supplies in the Colorado River basin have been rising in early January as storms also hit the Rocky Mountains. Late December measurements of 102% snowpack in the Upper Colorado River Basin—just above normal—had risen to 142% on the same day as the DWR snow survey in the Sierras.

So, while all this data looks promising, we still need to use water wisely. Thankfully, the San Diego region's investments in water supply reliability means we have sufficient water to sustain our economy and quality of life into 2023 and beyond.

Vallecitos is currently in a Level 2 "Drought Alert" which requires mandatory water conservation efforts. Vallecitos customers can irrigate only two times per week on a schedule of their own choosing through the end of May 2023. For more information visit: <http://www.vwd.org/drought>.

Lake San Marcos HOA Removes 30,000 Square Feet of Thirsty Turf with the County of San Diego's Landscape Optimization Service

Lake San Marcos area homeowners associations (HOAs) are conserving water and helping restore the area's watershed with assistance from the County of San Diego's "Waterscape Rebate Program."

Through a partnership between the program and the San Diego County Water Authority, residences and businesses in unincorporated areas of San Diego County are eligible for enhanced water-use efficiency rebates. The Waterscape Rebate Program saves money for residential, commercial, and agricultural customers who make landscape upgrades to improve the region's climate resilience and reduce the flow of pollutants into waterways.

The Waterscape Rebate Program helps protect local waterways by reducing pollutants that enter storm drains. When irrigation systems overflow from landscaping, runoff may carry pollutants like pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers into the storm drain system. Reducing turf helps reduce irrigation use and runoff.

The Panorama HOA in Lake San Marcos is one of six HOAs in the Vallecitos Water District participating in the program. Panorama HOA removed 30,000 square feet of thirsty turf and replaced it with sustainable landscaping, including 14,000 square feet of native landscape.



Panorama HOA - Before

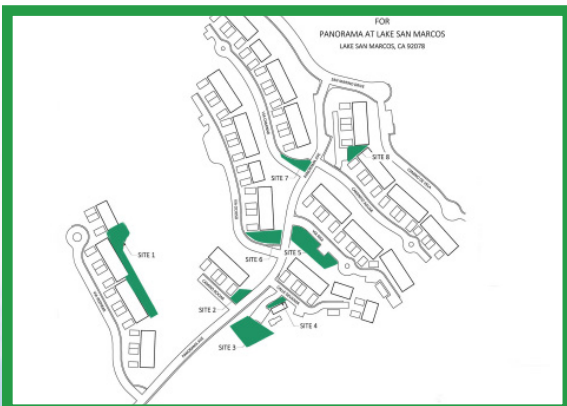


Panorama HOA - After (early stages)

To make applying for rebates easier for large landscapes, the County created the Landscape Optimization Service (LOS), a unique technical assistance program for large-scale landscaping projects.

LOS staff analyzes estimated water and cost savings, including anticipated rebate totals, which helps decision-makers justify the investment with an understanding of how quickly the project will pay for itself. Multiple rebates can be stacked together, including \$3 per square foot for turf replacement, \$60 per smart controller station, \$65 per rain barrel, and up to \$450 per cistern. The County program also offers \$1 per square foot for landscapes planted with California native plants.

More information and eligibility on the Landscape Optimization Service can be found at: <https://bit.ly/SDLOS>



Panorama HOA - turf areas removed

WaterSmart Landscape Makeover Classes



WATERSMART CLASSES



The WaterSmart Landscape Makeover Program is a free educational program designed to give you the skills and knowledge to turn your water-thirsty lawn into a beautiful and sustainable landscape that saves water and will thrive in our region. These FREE, three-hour online workshops will give you the skills and knowledge to create a yard that loves San Diego as much as you do! Each workshop, taught by a local landscape design professional, focuses on specific landscape topics with a “do-it-yourself” approach.



To learn more about the WaterSmart workshops, go to <https://landscapemakeover.watersmart.org/>. All workshops are held online and REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Weekday workshops are held from 5:30 to 8:30 pm.

Vallecitos plans to host in person classes in the Fall of 2023 in partnership with the San Diego County Water Authority.

Awards for Vallecitos

Vallecitos' Information Technology Department recently received the “IT Achievement Award” from MISAC - Municipal Information Systems Association of California for 2022. This award is provided to municipal IT Departments or Special Districts that have met or surpassed local government standards in technology.



IT Department (from left to right): Patrick Drummond, Johnathan Todd, Matias Labarrere, Thomas Beier, and Kevin Morris.

1st Place Winner



Lisa Urabe, Public Information Representative, at right accepts award for Vallecitos.



Vallecitos' Public Information/Conservation Department won 1st place for "Community Service Public Affairs Report in Television/ Online Video" from the San Diego Press Club for its 2021 “Imagine a Day Without Water” video. The video featured Mayor Rebecca Jones informing residents how to save water. A 2nd place award was also won for Television/Online video for “video editing” for the Water Smart Landscape Contest.



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Between the Pipes is a publication of information and interest to Vallecitos water and sewer customers. If you receive water or sewer services from another district, please disregard any information that does not apply to you.

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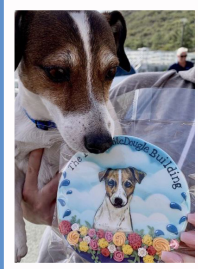
The public is welcome to attend the Vallecitos Board Meetings the first and third Wednesday of each month at 5:00 p.m. in the Administration building—201 Vallecitos de Oro in San Marcos.

To provide public comments prior to the meeting, submit comments via e-mail at PublicComment@VWD.org up to 90 minutes in advance of the meeting. Comments received are handled by the Clerk of the Board of Directors as if submitted in person. All written comments that are received at least 90 minutes before the meeting will be provided to the Board, and a record of the receipt of comment will be noted during the meeting. To watch or listen to the live meeting, go to www.vwd.org/meetings.

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Building Named to Honor Water Industry Pioneer, Dawn McDougle



The Vallecitos Water District honored former staffer and water industry pioneer Dawn McDougle by naming a building in her honor. The McDougle Building, at the Meadowlark Reclamation Facility, celebrates her three decades in the wastewater industry.

McDougle, who retired at the end of 2021, joined district and industry colleagues, friends and family, at a dedication ceremony November 17, 2022. Her dog Farley was also in attendance. Farley was an honorary Vallecitos employee who accompanied her to work each day.

McDougle played a major role in the \$30 million expansion and upgrade of the Meadowlark Reclamation Facility, extending its lifespan beyond 2030. The facility produces recycled water for golf courses at La Costa and the Four Seasons Resort Aviara in Carlsbad, several school sites, and Legoland California. McDougle kept the existing plant operating while implementing innovations allowing the facility to increase capacity while at the same time reducing chemical and energy costs. The plant successfully reached its output goal of five million gallons per day.