January 19, 2023 – SUPPLEMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

BAY AREA WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION AGENCY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

January 19, 2023

Correspondence and media coverage of interest between January 17, 2023 and January 19, 2023

Correspondence

From: Peter Drekmeier and Dave Warner
To: Chair Larsson and Members of the BAWSCA Board
Date: January 17, 2023
Subject: Article to Share

Press Release

From: Office of Governor Newsom
Date: January 19, 2023
Press Release: 5 Ways California is Storing Water from Winter Storms

Media Coverage

Water Supply Conditions:

Date: January 17, 2023
Source: San Francisco Chronicle
Article: Rain finally came to California. We blew our chance to use it

Date: January 17, 2023
Source: Mercury News
Article: Bay Area rainfall chart, December and January: Almost 50 inches at wettest spot

(This page was intentionally left blank)

Lourdes Enriquez

From: bawscaboardofdirectors
To: Peter Drekmeier; bawscaboardofdirectors
Subject: RE: Article to Share

From: Peter Drekmeier <peter@tuolumne.org>
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 5:20 PM
To: bawscaboardofdirectors <bawscaboardofdirectors@bawsca.org>
Subject: Article to Share

Dear Chair Larsson and BAWSCA Directors,

I wanted to share the attached article with you (sorry, it's not online). This will likely be one of the stories of the year — after three dry years, SFPUC storage will fill easily this year. This demonstrates how remarkably generous the SFPUC's water rights are.

Here are a few facts you might find useful:

SFPUC systemwide demand in FY 2021/22 was 182 mgd, or 204 thousand acre feet (TAF). Water demand has been under 200 mgd (224 TAF/y) for the past eight years.

Total SFPUC system storage is 1.46 million acre feet. Hetch Hetchy accounts for 1/4 of total storage.

In an average year, the SFPUC is entitled to 750 TAF (more than three times annual demand).

During the recent drought, the SFPUC never had less than four years-worth of water in storage.

At current demand, the SFPUC could manage a repeat of the six-year drought of record (1987-92), with the Bay Delta Plan flow requirements in place, without requiring any rationing nor developing any new water supplies.

Let's work together to restore the Tuolumne River and Bay-Delta ecosystems, knowing the likelihood of running out of water is close to zero.

Thank you.

-Peter

WEEKEND, Jan. 14-15, 2023

No. 1 in Palo Alto and the Mid-Peninsula

Daily Post

Locally owned, independent

5 years of water in reservoirs

BY BRADEN CARTWRIGHT
Daily Post Staff Writer

Reservoirs that store water for the city of Palo Alto and much of the Peninsula have enough water in them to last for the next five years after capturing a year's worth of rain in a month, according to data from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

The SFPUC system of reservoirs, from which Palo Alto buys its water, had over 1.2 million acre-feet of water in storage as of Tuesday, said Steve Ritchie, SFPUC's assistant general manager of water. In the last eight years, SFPUC's customers have used less than 224,000 acre-feet (72 billion gallons) of water in a year in the last eight years.

The Sierra Nevada snowpack is at levels that are average for April 1, and the Calaveras Dam is overflowing for the first time since its capacity was quadrupled in a 2019 rebuild, Ritchie told the SFPUC on Tuesday.

"Things have obviously changed a lot over the last few weeks," he said.

[See WATER, page 22]

WATER

SFPUC gets most of its water from the Hatch Hetchy system, which collects water from the Tuolomne River basin in the Sierra Nevada, and the remaining 15% comes from runoff in the Bay Area.

SFPUC recorded 17 inches of rain in December at weather stations in the mountains — three times the average — and another five inches in January so far. Local rainfall totals were also well above average, Ritchie said.

Members of the public used the good news to urge commissioners to release more water into the Tuolumne River to support fish when it's dry. The SFPUC is currently negotiating with the state over the amount of water that must be released.

"The SFPUC hoards water and ends up having to spill it, which will end up happening this year," said Peter Drekmeier, a former Palo Alto mayor and policy director for the Tuolumne River Trust.

Peter Drekmeier
Policy Director
Tuolumne River Trust
peter@tuolumne.org
(415) 882-7252

Office of Governor
GAVIN NEWSOM

Published: January 19, 2023

5 Ways California is Storing Water from Winter Storms

California is prioritizing groundwater recharge, stormwater capture, reservoir storage, water conveyance improvements and ambitious targets to build water resilience

State has committed more than $8.6 billion to build water resilience in the last two budgets and the 2023-24 budget proposal includes an additional $202 million for flood protection

SACRAMENTO – California is taking urgent action to protect communities from climate-driven extremes in weather and expand the state's capacity to capture storm runoff in wet years.

5 Ways California is Storing Water from Winter Storms

"California isn't waiting to act – we're moving aggressively to modernize how we capture and store water to future-proof our state against more extreme cycles of wet and dry," said Governor Gavin Newsom. "We're expediting projects across the state to maximize stormwater capture and storage above and below ground during times like these, reshaping our water systems for the 21st century and beyond."

Leveraging the more than $8.6 billion committed by Governor Newsom and the Legislature in the last two budget cycles to build water resilience, the state is taking aggressive action to prepare for the impacts of climate-driven extremes in weather on the state's water supplies:

- **Advancing clear, ambitious targets** to build drought and flood resilience, including increasing annual groundwater recharge capacity by 500,000 acre-feet
- **Fast-tracking groundwater recharge** efforts by streamlining permits
- **Maximizing stormwater capture** through new projects
- **Supporting reservoir repair and expansion** to boost water storage above and below ground
- **Modernizing water conveyance Infrastructure** across the state, including the Delta Conveyance Project

This budget funding includes $500 million that will be provided in 2025-26 to help ensure strategic water storage projects can be completed. In the 2023-24 state budget, Governor Newsom is proposing an additional $202 million for flood protection and $125 million for drought related actions.

Last week, the Administration announced two developments to streamline permitting for stormwater capture efforts. The Department of Water Resources and the State Water Board announced the first permit approved under a new pilot program to accelerate groundwater recharge, for a project in Merced County, and the State Water Board announced its first five-year temporary groundwater storage permit for a project in Sacramento County.

###

(This page was intentionally left blank)

Rain finally came to California. We blew our chance to use it
San Francisco Chronicle | January 17, 2023 | Richard G. Luthy

After the driest three-year period on record in state history, Pacific storms, known as atmospheric rivers, just deluged California cities. But as much as we needed this water, a large fraction of it was lost by runoff to the ocean.

This largely untapped resource can only be captured and used for water supply by reimagining how we deal with stormwater. This won't be easy because we have more than 100 years of experience with treating urban runoff as flood control and property protection problems rather than a water supply opportunity. Reenvisioning how we use stormwater is important for California and relevant to other water-scarce places.

Climate appears to be changing the state's annual rainfall pattern with longer and more severe droughts punctuated by intense wet years. Since 2000 we've experienced three, multiyear droughts with 2022 being the driest January-March in San Francisco since the Gold Rush.

Historically, California has dealt with drought and urban water needs by importing water from afar, overdrafting groundwater, and depleting rivers and streams. Large-scale water infrastructure to store and move water around the state began early in the 20th century, which brought water from the Sierra Nevada and the Colorado River to the major metropolitan areas. The scale and engineering of this infrastructure became the stuff of legends and Hollywood movies. But now there's no more water to import, and supplies from the Colorado River are in peril due to prolonged drought since 2000.

Unsustainable pumping of groundwater helped the state deal with droughts in the 20th century, but those days are over with new groundwater management regulations. The state is also finally beginning to accept that dewatering rivers and decimating migrating fish populations must stop.

For the Bay Area, this means we'll have even less imported water to feed our aqueducts as more of the spring runoff from the Sierra Nevada will remain in the rivers to support fish.

All this points to the need for new ways of supplying urban water, and for greater reliability and security. Simply stated, we need to reduce dependence on imported water and do a better job with the water we have. We can diversify our water supply through a combination of conservation, desalination, water reuse and stormwater capture.

California cities were engineered to convey stormwater quickly to the ocean by channelizing rivers and streams with concrete-lined straight cuts and steep riverbanks. But, today, stormwater rushing to the ocean is increasingly seen by the public and politicians as a valuable resource that should be used and not discarded. In response, the state set an ambitious goal to increase stormwater use to 1 million acre-feet by 2030, equivalent to double the water Los Angeles uses annually. In the urbanized Bay Area, the potential is about 100,000 acre-feet per year on average, enough to supply about 150,000 households for a year.

Underground aquifers offer the best opportunity for new storage because they can hold large volumes of water without the dams and sitting obstacles presented by above-ground reservoirs. Urban stormwater can be infiltrated to recharge aquifers in ways that are protective of groundwater. Urban stormwater capture and recharge are just beginning to catch on as a source of water supply, but challenges remain in working with the seasonality of precipitation, regional geology and contaminants.

Regional geography influences how stormwater can be captured and stored. Many cities in the Bay Area are situated on relatively impervious clay soil. Here, stormwater use would require infrastructure for collecting and pumping to locations that are more favorable for recharge.

Los Angeles, meanwhile, has more favorable geology for infiltration, and stormwater recharge projects are being developed in the San Fernando Valley.

Stormwater picks up contaminants from landscapes, roads, and buildings. Of particular concern are those contaminants that are widely used, persistent and water soluble — such as pesticides. Treatment of captured stormwater, however, can ensure safe potable use and prevent contaminants from polluting nearby water bodies. To make this a reality, more stormwater quality surveys are needed to identify land-pollutant combinations that could pose a risk to groundwater quality and to assess innovative designs that could mitigate those risks. Field projects are also needed to demonstrate best practices to enhance infiltration capacity and protect water quality.

Stormwater capture for water supply is cost-effective relative to other new sources. In the Bay Area, an estimate of treatment and pumping to recharge basins might cost between $1,200 to $1,700 per acre-foot, depending on treatment, which compares favorably with the wholesale price of water from the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency of $2,200 per acre-foot. A coalition in Southern California has already shown that larger-scale and retrofit projects are more cost-efficient.

Yet while the cost of capturing this relatively untapped source of new water can be relatively inexpensive, cities lack experience with basin-wide urban runoff capture, treatment and recharge. An important step forward in overcoming this limitation is to design and evaluate demonstration projects that enhance water supply in ways that are protective of groundwater, provide flood protection, and create urban habitat and green space. Demonstration projects, supported by research efforts and regional collaborations, will help cities confidently invest in stormwater capture as part of a diversified, drought-proof water supply.

# # #

Richard G. Luthy is a professor of civil and environmental engineering at Stanford University.

Bay Area rainfall chart, December and January: Almost 50 inches at wettest spot
Mercury News | January 17, 2023 | Bay Area News Group

January's atmospheric river storms brought rainfall five times the average for the month to date in much of the Bay Area.

For this point in the water year — which starts in October — the totals are around twice the average at many Bay Area spots. November was drier than normal, and December brought about double the average rainfall.

The totals below are from Dec. 1 to Jan. 16 at National Weather Service stations.

The site of the greatest reading, Uvas Canyon, is at 1,100 feet elevation near the Casa Loma fire station, about 2 miles east of Loma Prieta.

To the south, Mining Ridge, at 3,288 feet elevation in Big Sur, has recorded 84.16 inches from Dec. 1 to this week.

Location	Inches
Peninsula & South Bay	
Uvas Reservoir	33.11
Saratoga (Hwy 9/Pierce)	31.13
Foothills Preserve	30.98
Huddart Park	28.6
Windy Hill	28.47
Mount Hamilton	28
Calero Reservoir	24.2
Anderson Dam	22.8
San Francisco (Duboce)	20.69
Vasona Lake	19.95
San Francisco airport	18.71
San Jose (Lynbrook)	16.43
San Jose (Almaden Lake)	16.19
San Jose (Evergreen)	15.11
San Jose (Penitencia)	14.6
San Jose airport	7.46
East Bay	
Skyline/Redwood	27.52
Castro Valley	26.42
Danville	24.39
St. Mary's College	23.94
Dublin/San Ramon	23.8
Marsh Creek	23.55

Location	Inches
East Bay, cont'd.	
Tassajara	22.46
Richmond	19.6
Oakland airport	19.19
Alhambra Valley	18.93
Pittsburg	18.32
Hayward	18.27
Concord	16.88
Livermore	14.33
I-680/Calaveras	14.03
Los Vaqueros	13.89
Santa Cruz Mountains	
Uvas Canyon	49.17
Loma Prieta	44.74
Mount Umunhum	44.02
Boulder Creek	43.9
Ben Lomond landfill	42.78
Hwy. 17 summit	42.43
Lexington Reservoir	37.79
Mount Madonna	32.95
Coast Dairies	31.58

# # #