



SAN GORGONIO PASS
WATER AGENCY
A California State Water Project Contractor

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Regional Agencies Gather to Create 50-Year Plan for Water Resiliency

Comprehensive Session Examines Water Portfolio, Agency Collaboration, State Representation and Lessons Learned

BEAUMONT, CA (August 9, 2024) – San Gorgonio Pass Agency (SGPWA) hosted a Board of Directors workshop on July 8 reviewing its “Water Portfolio Strategic Program,” a continuous planning assessment to maintain water supply reliability over the next 50 years. More than 25 representatives from SGPWA’s sister agencies and local stakeholders engaged in critical water supply conversations focused on the potential acquisition of future supplies and Agency and retailer activities.

SGPWA started the program in 2020, projecting water supply needs over a 50-year horizon when state regulations only require a 20-year planning period. Currently, the water supply in the Pass area is robust — the Agency ended 2023 with a water portfolio of 24,733 acre-feet. This program ensures the region leverages existing water resources and maximizes their value for future resiliency.

Fundamentally, the program relies on regional collaboration. The workshop gathered attendees from Beaumont-Cherry Valley Water District, Yucaipa Valley Water District, South Mesa Water Company, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, and more to discuss a joint water future.

“We are a system of systems aligned in a common objective,” SGPWA Board President Mickey Valdivia said. “We are stronger together, breaking large, long-term goals into manageable pieces through collective effort. Our sister agencies and partners are indispensable to achieving sustainability over the next 50 years.”

SGPWA envisions leveraging conjunctive use projects, joint-use facilities, inter-regional planning studies, resource coordination, flexible operations agreements, and the local Watermaster and groundwater sustainability agencies.

The workshop presentation highlighted how water supply projects are more than procuring water; they require representation. SGPWA is an active regional liaison to California through organizations like the Sites Reservoir Committee, Delta Conveyance Finance Authority, State Water Contractors Inc. and more.

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SGPWA engages in generational projects such as the Sites Reservoir Project and the Delta Conveyance Project (DCP) to create long-lasting water security in the Pass area and statewide. The Sites Reservoir Project will provide storage opportunities in an off-stream reservoir that captures and stores water during storm events to be used during dry spells. The DCP modernizes the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta's critical State Water Project (SWP) infrastructure. Using a tunnel system, the DCP improves how the SWP captures and moves water during wet years to use during dry years.

Workshop attendees learned about ongoing supply reliability activities, including Urban Water Management Plans, Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) activities, the related San Geronio Pass Groundwater Sustainability Agency and Verbenia Groundwater Sustainability Agency, and local groundwater recharge. The Agency outlined future challenges in the 50-year plan, including the SWP's hydrologic variability, aging infrastructure, and regulatory uncertainty. The Agency is prepared to examine additional supplies to prepare for an unpredictable future.

"In its 63 years as an Agency, SGPWA has learned key lessons," SGPWA General Manager Lance Eckhart said. "An asset portfolio is always flexible and there are many opportunities to leverage it. External banking and local recharge are essential. Short-term water deals turn into long-term supply reliability. Most importantly, we take advantage of wet years to bolster water needs in dry years."

Learn more at www.sgpwa.com.

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About San Geronio Pass Water Agency

Formed in 1961, SGPWA is a State Water Contractor that serves a 225-square-mile area of western Riverside County. The service area includes the cities of Calimesa, Beaumont, and Banning, and the communities of Cherry Valley, Cabazon, and the Banning Bench. In addition to importing State Water Project (SWP) water from Northern California to augment local groundwater sources, the Agency builds local system infrastructure, participates in water transfers, partners in statewide water projects and collaborates on regional water reliability and conservation efforts.