



2023
ANNUAL REPORT
**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
WATER COALITION**

**Partnerships
for Progress**

Letter from the Executive Director



As we reflect on the past year and look towards the future, I am inspired by the resilience and dedication shown by our water management community. The beginning of 2023 brought unprecedented rain and snowfall, marking the end of an extreme drought that had challenged our state for years. This sudden shift presented a complex scenario for our water managers, who adeptly balanced the extremes of managing abundant water supplies while addressing dramatic flooding in several areas.

This year has underscored the vital importance of partnerships. Collaborations with organizations such as Bay Area Council, Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley, Groundswell for Water Justice, BizFed, and Rebuild SoCal have been instrumental in our efforts. A notable success we participated in was the signing of Governor Gavin Newsom's infrastructure permitting and project review reforms in July. This legislative package helped streamline the permitting process for hundreds of water projects across California and unlock federal funding opportunities for critical infrastructure, including safe drinking water and clean energy projects.

A cornerstone of our mission, the Delta Conveyance Project, remains at the forefront of our advocacy. The recent poll results from Californians for Water Security are heartening, showing overwhelming support for the critical infrastructure upgrade across all regions, parties, and demographics. This support reaffirms our belief in the project's significance for California's water future.

This year also marked a new chapter in our leadership. In January 2023, Fontana Mayor Acquanetta Warren took on the role of board chair. Under her guidance, we have amplified our focus on equitable access to clean and safe water for all communities in Southern California. Mayor Warren's leadership has been pivotal in addressing disparities in water quality and availability, a critical issue for our region.

Looking ahead to 2024, we remain optimistic and driven. Our focus will be on educating the public about the Delta Conveyance final environmental impact report. This is a significant milestone, not just for SCWC but for all Californians who depend on sustainable and reliable water resources.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we are making strides towards a future where every Southern Californian has access to clean, safe, and reliable water.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles Wilson'.

Charles Wilson
Executive Director



About Southern California Water Coalition

Founded in 1984, the SCWC is an alliance of leaders from local and regional governments, businesses, water agencies, and organizations who lend their voices to water resource advocacy. As a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization using tools such as public education and partnership, we drive advocacy and action to ensure reliable and resilient water supplies in Southern California.

Membership by the Numbers



Task Forces

The SCWC contributes to topical education by offering multiple task forces to provide ideas, offer resources, and propose strategies for regional water issues.



Join Us

Everyone in Southern California has a stake in the future of California's water supply. By joining the conversation and offering your support, you're ensuring that your voice is heard and is among the full range of perspectives represented when critical water infrastructure decisions are being made locally and statewide.

Membership also confers great benefits:

- Share insights, gain knowledge, and shape solutions on issues like stormwater, the water-energy nexus, recycled water and more by joining our task forces.
- Learn and collaborate with experts and stakeholders at our workshops and events.
- Network with water industry leaders at premier regionwide events.
- Tap into policy analysis, outreach, and advocacy on issues you care about.

Task Force Triumphs

In 2023, SCWC's Task Forces achieved remarkable milestones:

- **Stormwater Task Force:** Providing invaluable regional perspective and coordination in shaping effective stormwater policies.
- **Water Quality Task Force:** Vigilantly monitoring and championing science-based research and standards to influence state and federal regulations.
- **Recycled Water Task Force:** Pioneering the transformation of wastewater into a sustainable resource and advocating for certified water reclamation facilities to inject purified water directly into our drinking water systems, advancing water sustainability.

Pooled Resources

The Collected Power of Partnerships for Water

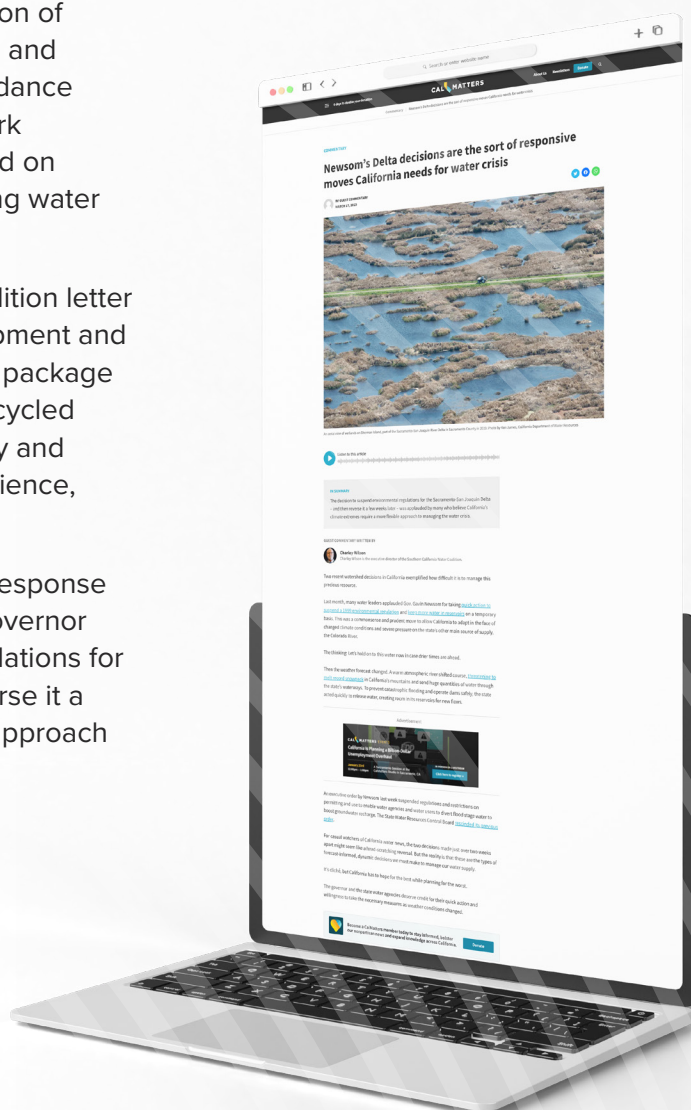
This year, partnerships have been crucial in advancing California's water security and management. Governor Gavin Newsom initiated an infrastructure reform proposal in May that targeted vital water-related projects. The Southern California Water Coalition, alongside over 50 partners including the Bay Area Council, BizFed, and the CalChamber, championed these reforms through various outreach efforts. In July, Newsom's reforms were enacted, streamlining the permitting process for numerous water projects and unlocking federal funds for essential infrastructure.



SCWC aligned with partners including the Association of California Water Agencies, State Water Contractors, and others to provide input through support for and guidance on key regulations, such as the regulatory framework called Making Water Conservation a Way of Life, and on the importance of voluntary agreements in managing water resources in Northern California.

The Legislative Task Force also spearheaded a coalition letter to state leaders outlining its priorities in the development and shaping of a resources and climate resilience bond package for the 2024 ballot. Among these priorities were recycled water projects, regional water resilience, dam safety and reservoir operations, water quality, urban flood resilience, and more.

Executive Director Charley Wilson penned a rapid-response commentary for CalMatters in March applauding Governor Newsom's decision to suspend environmental regulations for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta – and then reverse it a few weeks later – as demonstration of the flexible approach needed to manage California's climate extremes.





Delta Conveyance

SCWC Supports Critical Upgrade to California's Water Delivery System

A recent statewide poll shows robust, bipartisan support for the Governor's Delta Conveyance Project, with 76% of voters endorsing the initiative after learning about its benefits. This includes a significant 40% who are strongly in favor. Across the board, support is substantial, with 81% of Democrats, 65% of Republicans, and 76% of independent voters in agreement.

Charles Wilson, Executive Director & CEO of SCWC, emphasizes, "The infrastructure that delivers water to two-thirds of California is outdated and increasingly at risk due to severe weather and climate change. Californians recognize the urgency and necessity of the Delta Conveyance Project for securing the State Water Project's reliability into the future."

With the release and approval of the finalized Environmental Impact Report by the California Department of Water Resources, SCWC is committed to informing Californians about the project's critical role in advancing our state's water resilience.



Speaking Out

SCWC informs and empowers Southern Californians about water issues

What Matters Water TV + Podcast

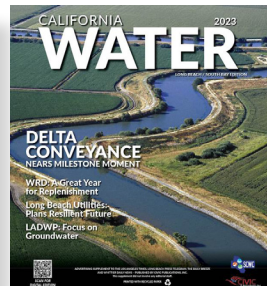
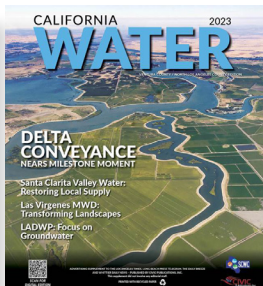
In its third year, the What Matters Water TV and Podcast continued to find and grow its audience of concerned community members interested in hearing from Southern California water leaders. In 2023, SCWC added seven new episodes to the line-up, garnering about 35,000 views and listens on YouTube, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, iHeartRadio, and more.



Episodes 13 and 10 were the most watched and listened to during 2023.

California Water Magazine Series

SCWC and its partner Civic Publications released five brand-new issues of *California Water Magazine*. Inland Empire, Orange County, Ventura, Long Beach, and San Gabriel Valley presented exclusive interviews with local industry leaders and project updates.



Our printed editions boast a circulation totalling 1.2 million copies. Digital content is distributed to an extensive email network of 250,000 subscribers.

Events

SCWC informs and empowers Southern Californians about water issues

Innovative Energy Use in Water Webinar

The September 21 workshop “Innovation Matters: Charting a Path in Energy Advancements at the Water-Energy Nexus” shed light on innovative ways to reduce energy use by water and wastewater utilities. Under the guidance of Scott Houston and Kris Murray, co-chairs of SCWC’s Water-Energy Efficiency Task Force, the webinar attracted over 150 participants and viewers, both in real-time and via streaming, who eagerly gathered insights from experts representing organizations such as Southern California Gas, Metropolitan Water District, and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts.

Annual Dinner

On November 2, water, business, labor, agriculture, and nonprofit leaders gathered for our annual meeting, a dinner with award presentations, and a keynote by Speaker Emeritus Anthony Rendon, representing the 62nd Assembly District in Southeast Los Angeles. State Senator Dave Min addressed the Board at the meeting prior. Marty Adams, general manager of Los Angeles Dept. of Water and Power, and Mike Markus, general manager of Orange County Water District, received the Harriett M. Wieder Award for their water leadership. SCWC Vice Chair Steve Elie was recognized with the Kathy Cole Award.



July Quarterly Luncheon

Attendees of SCWC’s July 28 luncheon at the Crossings at Carlsbad learned the latest about Colorado River water supply management. A panel of experts discussed “Watershed Moments: Insights into Colorado River Water Management.”



April Quarterly Luncheon

The keynote speaker at SCWC’s Quarterly Luncheon on April 28 at Wilson Creek Winery in Temecula was Susan Kennedy, Executive Chair of Cadiz Inc. and the former Chief of Staff for California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. She spoke about climate resiliency and how challenges and innovation in energy will impact water systems and provide opportunities for partnership. SCWC Board members took a tour of the vineyards to learn more about their water use before the luncheon.



January Quarterly Luncheon

The first Quarterly Luncheon of the year took place on January 27, focused on “Climate Action for Water: Emphasis on Action.” The afternoon of critical discussion was held at the Sheraton Fairplex Hotel and Conference Center in Pomona.



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