



# Uniting With Purpose

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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WATER COALITION  
2021 ANNUAL REPORT

## Letter from the Executive Director

After a year that taught us resilience in any conditions, 2021 was a homecoming. Emerging from the global pandemic, our coalition members adapted once again and put the momentum of our innovation into even stronger action.

Like many organizations, the SCWC acclimated to the hybrid environment of both in-person and virtual events over the course of the year. The “What Matters” webinar series, which began last year, continued as did virtual panels and workshops. Highlights included the Water Quality webinar and the Stormwater Workshop, which brought industry experts together to examine complex issues and identify multiple solutions to work toward. In November, the “What Matters” series was taken to the next level with the launch of our What Matters Water TV + Podcast episodes, which proved a great success.

We had the pleasure of convening again in-person for the July Quarterly Luncheon as well as the Annual Meeting and Dinner, which provided the opportunity for our members to congregate, celebrate each others’ accomplishments, and empower each other with the exchange of inspiration and ideas. These events also gave us the chance to physically reestablish connections and collaborations, which is the very foundation of our coalition.

One in-person event this year stood out in productivity and innovation, laying the foundation for a more inclusive future. The Equity, Access, and Affordability in Water panel brought industry experts together to discuss issues which had long needed addressing and culminated in the formation of the newest SCWC Task Force. The launch of the Equity, Access, and Affordability Task Force over the summer resulted in a brand-new effort of educators, law professionals, public servants, and water industry professionals working together to identify issues in access and affordability and promote multiple solutions.

The SCWC took the year to make great strides in publishing. In addition to releasing new articles, fact sheets, and blog posts, the coalition launched its partnership with California Water magazine, whose first issue focusing on the Inland Empire was distributed in May. Subsequent issues featured Orange County, Ventura County and north Los Angeles County, Long Beach and south Los Angeles County, and the San Gabriel Valley. The publication focuses on presenting various efforts and ideas in the form of exclusive interviews with industry leaders, updates on water resiliency projects, and local stories of water agencies.

Throughout 2021, we found ourselves able to reunite in more ways than one. It was gratifying to see our members put into action so many of the strategies and innovations that were just ideas the previous year. I look forward to the future assured that the adaptability and resilience of our industry can overcome the challenges faced in any season.



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 regional government, 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



## 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 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.

# Tackling Drought

The statewide drought emergency declared this year underscores the need for an “all-of-the-above” approach to water management that Southern California Water Coalition has advocated for years.

For Californians, normal weather patterns include drought cycles, but experts acknowledge that climate change threatens to make droughts hotter and longer. This means we must persist in our multiple efforts towards achieving water resiliency in California. In April of this year, the SCWC released a fact sheet which was the result of research and collaborations between our members, breaking down the problems facing California water resiliency and presenting effective strategies that will guide us toward a diversified portfolio.

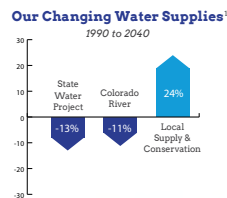
The fact sheet serves to inform policy makers of resources and issues surrounding California water supplies. As we know, there are many factors that will play a role in resource resiliency. Advancing the Delta Conveyance project, continuing to lead the way in recycled water investments, capturing stormwater, and advancing desalination and groundwater decontamination all play a role in achieving conservation success. With the engaging graphs, graphics, and informative text of the fact sheet, regional legislators can better visualize the integrated portfolio that contributes to California’s water supply resiliency.

Although drought conditions have somewhat abated, we will persist in the efforts we have set in motion, using our growing communications channels such as our newsletter, video and podcast series, social media, and such as our Water Supply Resilience Fact Sheet to keep policy makers informed and ready to assist us in continued action.



**FORGING SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S WATER RESILIENCY**  
THREE DECADES AND COUNTING

Through bold action, innovation and significant investment, Southern California has dramatically reduced its dependence on imported water and increased the reliability of its local supplies. By incorporating new strategies, imports from the State Water Project have reduced while local water supplies have increased by way of recycled water, groundwater basin management, groundwater contamination clean-up, desalination, stormwater capture, water use efficiency, and increased water storage. These local supply projects, anchored by a Delta Conveyance solution, ensure resiliency in the years ahead.



**Recycled Water Investments**  
From 1987 to 2015 Southern California increased its recycled water use **4x**. While the rest of California doubled its use<sup>2</sup>.

Southern California will continue to lead the way...

**94.5%** of future recycled water investments will be made in Southern California.

**Supporting a Growing Population and Economy Through Water Conservation**

Year	Population (Millions)	Water Usage (Acre-Feet)
1990	~20	~15
2000	~25	~18
2010	~30	~20
2019	~35	~22

Year	Water Use (Gallons/Day)
1990	~200
2019	~120

**The Unique Problems Facing California**

The state of California faces a unique set of problems in securing safe and reliable water supplies, such as drought, increasing climate variability and limited local supplies. Challenges in maintaining healthy surface and groundwater resources such as legacy contaminants, stormwater pollutants and saltwater intrusion present obstacles in maintaining existing supplies.

▼ Photo courtesy of Ken James, California Department of Water Resources.



Photo courtesy of Andrew Innerarity, California Department of Water Resources.

## Unstoppable Innovation

The SCWC took 2021 to mobilize through publications, broadcasts, and collaborations.

## New Podcast and Video Series Launched



After the success of the “What Matters” webinar series, the SCWC launched a new way to expand its reach, introducing the What Matters Water TV and Podcast. Production plans to release monthly episodes that will tell positive water stories, such as the innovative regional projects that are propelling resource resilience and the tales of industry professionals who bring them to life. Episode 1 featured Adel Hagekhalil, the general manager of the Metropolitan Water District, and Episode 2 featured both E. Joaquin Esquivel, chair of the State Water Resources Control Board, and Karla Nemeth, the director of the California Department of Water Resources.

## New Equity, Access and Affordability Task Force

From the ideas and conversations that were brought to the forefront of the issues at the Equity, Access and Affordability in Water Panel, the SCWC’s newest task force was born. With the mission of exploring how to achieve safe, affordable and reliable water supplies for all, the Equity, Access and Affordability Task Force will work through challenges facing our region through listening, learning, and collaborating.



## California Water Magazine Series



The latest in a lineup of solution-facing water publications, the SCWC released five brand-new issues of California Water Magazine. Inland Empire, Orange County, Ventura, Long Beach, and San Gabriel Valley are the most recent editions in a series that features efforts and solutions being generated by regional water agencies and community groups. Each unique magazine presents exclusive interviews with local industry leaders, regional project updates, and stories of agency efforts.

## WaterReuse Partnership

The Southern California Water Coalition teamed up with WaterReuse California in June to produce a new brief video that describes the short-term funding support needed to increase recycled water use in our state. The aim was to ask state legislators to include a major investment of \$750 million for recycled water in the Drought Package for the 2021-2022 Budget. The video was used in advocacy letters, legislative meetings, and on social media.



## Events

The SCWC brought more than a thousand people together this year over multiple events and webinars to inspire solutions to the issues.

### Stormwater Workshop and White Paper

The workshop “A Strategic Approach to Integrate Stormwater and Sewer Systems” shed a light on the current stormwater projects being implemented throughout Southern California, highlighted the need for these programs to achieve true water supply benefits through purposeful planning, expert guidance, and collaborative efforts. In conjunction with the workshop, the Phase 2 White Paper: Tapping Into Available Capacity in Existing Infrastructure to Create Water Supply and Water Quality Solutions was published and received a substantial readership. A partnership with the Council for Watershed Health help draw a record of more than 500 registrants to the online event.



### July Quarterly Luncheon

The eagerly awaited in-person July Quarterly Luncheon assembled industry professionals to explore regional diversity and identify challenges surrounding inclusivity and access to our most precious resource. The program’s expert panel featured Danielle Coats, Anatole Falagan, Kurt Schwabe, and Mayor Acquanetta Warren.

### Annual Dinner

The SCWC Annual Meeting and Dinner took place on October 21st this year and brought together a network of industry leaders from across Southern California. Featuring keynote speaker Senator Henry Stern, the program highlighted challenges facing California’s water supply resiliency and honored Ronald Gastelum with the Harriett Wieder Award and Christine Compton with the Kathy Cole Award.



### What Matters: Drought Webinar

The prominent What Matters webinar series released an installment about the year’s leading topic: drought. The program garnered terrific attendance and delivered vital feedback between five expert panelists surrounding regional preparedness and how to approach conservation and resiliency projects as conditions worsen.

### What Matters: Water Quality Webinar

Water Quality was the focus of another What Matters webinar this year, featuring a dynamic panel of seven industry experts who discussed the hot-button issues such as PFAS in our nation’s drinking water supplies. With record-breaking attendance, the webinar addressed issues of contamination and explored alternative chemical introductions to save future water supplies between scientists, city officials, and water professionals.

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