



UPPER LOS ANGELES RIVER AREA WATERMASTER
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REPORT OF ULARA WATERMASTER

STATUS CONFERENCE of NOVEMBER 14, 2014 SUPERIOR COURT, DEPARTMENT 52 HONORABLE SUSAN BRYANT-DEASON

A. Ongoing Watermaster Activities

1. The Annual Groundwater Pumping and Spreading Plan for Water Years 2013 – 2017, which normally would have been provided to the Court in July of 2013, was late for various reasons, but was finally filed with the Court on September 4, 2014. The Watermaster will soon begin work on the update of the report for the forthcoming 5-year period of 2014-2018 and hopes to complete the document by the end of the year.
2. Work is still ongoing to complete the Annual Watermaster Report for 2012-2013; the Watermaster expects the final report is expected to be filed with the Court within the next 30 days.
3. The Watermaster continued to perform work with DWR on its California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring program (known as CASGEM) for the four groundwater basins within ULARA. The Draft Monitoring Plan for the ULARA groundwater basins was submitted for final review by CASGEM staff on February 17, and the Watermaster received notification of acceptance from DWR on April 2, 2014. Upload of historic water level data is complete, and the next data upload event is scheduled to occur on October 23, 2014.
4. The Watermaster continued to attend meetings with various agencies with regard to: possible uses of runoff within the Los Angeles River; the possibility of using recycled water for artificial recharge in the San Fernando Basin via spreading basins and injection wells; stormwater conservation and capture; and groundwater contamination including ongoing negotiations with EPA and consultants for certain PRPs regarding the Second Interim Remedy for the North Hollywood Operable Unit (NHOU).
5. The Watermaster reviewed and either approved or denied, based on site-specific conditions, the Low Impact Development (LID) projects within the City of Los Angeles portions of ULARA (i.e., San Fernando & Sylmar basins). These LIDs are for new developments and/or redevelopments in L.A. County, and are based on NPDES regulations promulgated by the RWQCB in 1990 to help minimize the impacts on the Los Angeles River, and ultimately the Pacific Ocean, by reducing the volume and improving the quality of storm water runoff from storm events.

From a hydrogeologic perspective, and in the opinion of the ULARA Watermaster, whenever and wherever (with certain exceptions) deep percolation (infiltration) of

stormwater can be appropriately enhanced, then recharge to the groundwater basins can be beneficially increased.

B. New Database for ULARA, & Liaison with EPA and its Consultants

To help better manage the ULARA groundwater basins on an active basis, and to obtain sufficient types and amounts of surface and subsurface data for a possible future safe yield study of the San Fernando Basin, the Watermaster continues to obtain various types of data. These data continue to be input into an electronic database that will eventually include driller's logs, geologic logs, and electric logs as available from water-supply wells, wildcat oil wells, and groundwater monitoring wells in the four ULARA groundwater basins. Ideally, this database will eventually compile all available data in the ULARA. This database, when completed, will complement EPA's existing database for monitoring wells, groundwater levels and groundwater quality.

These data collection efforts are part of an ongoing Watermaster program to generate a viable, useable and up-to-date database on subsurface conditions for use by all Parties, future investigators and researchers. The database has been distributed on more than one occasion to parties who requested it, and we have received positive comments from those parties. The database will continue to be updated over time as new data is provided to the Watermaster.

The Watermaster has attended two recent meetings between EPA, DTSC, RWQCB, groundwater consultants to the EPA, and LADWP to discuss the basic progress of computer modeling of the SFB by others and of the proposed cleanup of groundwater contamination in this major groundwater basin. The Watermaster described his long-term involvement in local groundwater conditions and recommended that EPA consultants and consultants for various PRPs should get together to agree on a basic conceptual model of subsurface conditions BEFORE proceeding any further on their individual modeling efforts.

On November 3 and 4, 2014, meetings were held at the Watermaster's office between EPA and their groundwater consultants to begin a dialog on how to develop a unified conceptual model of subsurface conditions in the eastern portion of the SFB. Efforts are now underway to: combine the EPA and Watermaster databases; share scanned copies of all available geophysical electric logs; prepare common maps on a topographic basemap for the 3 key Operable Units (the BOU, the NHOU and the GOU); share the names/locations/number identifications for all known water wells, groundwater monitoring wells and wildcat oil wells with electric logs; share and perform QA/QC for the geologic logs and construction records (casing depths and perforation intervals) for the groundwater monitoring wells with electric logs; share, in electronic format, all depth-discrete water level data and depth-discrete water quality data over the long-term from key groundwater monitoring wells.

C. Salt & Nutrient Management Plan (SNMP)

The Watermaster continues work for the SNMP for the 4 groundwater basins within ULARA. Each Party has a 2-member group to serve on the SNMP subcommittee formed by the Watermaster. This subcommittee held the initial kick-off meeting open to the public on November 19, 2013; a second meeting was held with this SNMP Technical Subcommittee

on March 5, 2014, and a third meeting is tentatively being scheduled for the next month or two. A RWQCB staff person is routinely invited to these meetings to maintain liaison and to keep them informed of the progress of the study.

The Watermaster has also subcontracted with 4 outside consultants for assistance with certain issues regarding the CEQA, public participation/outreach, recycled water elements, and spreadsheet modeling, all of which also need to be included in the SNMP. Currently the focus of the SNMP work is compiling the historic data necessary to begin the analytical modeling process. The Watermaster has had multiple meetings with the subcontractors during the data compilation effort.

A Draft of the entire SNMP document for ULARA is to be prepared for review and comment by the RWQCB in 2016.

D. The Watermaster Website

The Watermaster website, which went “live” in August, 2013, continues to be regularly updated and refreshed, as needed, by the Watermaster to make it more user-friendly and to increase the amount of information available to the public (<http://ULARAWatermaster.com>). This “refresh” also allows for faster and easier editing/changing of the page and also for addition of newly-generated data by the Watermaster. For instance, there is a page dedicated to the SNMP process (<http://ULARAWatermaster.com/SNMP>), through which the public can access public documents generated during the development of the ULARA SNMP. Also, reports prepared by the Watermaster (such as the Annual Watermaster Report and the Pumping & spreading Plan) are available for download from the site by the general public.

Additional Watermaster Activities

1. Gage F-57C, an important surface water gage that is routinely monitored by LA County Department of Public Works, was visited by the Watermaster, and by representatives from LADWP and LACDPW, on February 25th. A special hearing was held with the Court on April 25, 2014, to discuss ongoing difficulties in gage monitoring by the County. These monitoring difficulties have been due to: safety concerns for staff; vandalism; and problems related to major construction involving the required replacement of an adjacent overpass over the I-5 Freeway. Even though concrete K-rails were placed by the contractor within the river channel itself, thereby directing low stream flows away from the gage, County staff continues to successfully monitor surface water flows and to report them to LADWP. Recent discussions between LADWP and the general contractor indicate that the K-rails are to all be removed from the concrete floor of the river channel by mid-October. The estimated completion of all work is still on track for Fall 2016.

These monitoring efforts are aimed at increasing the accuracy and reliability of surface water data being collected within ULARA, and will therefore help LADWP with its groundwater modeling for the Watermaster and also with the development of a future safe yield study.

2. A “Basin-Wide Water Level Monitoring Event” took place in April, 2014 within accessible water wells and groundwater monitoring wells in the ULARA groundwater basins. The goals of these basin-wide events are to collect a “snapshot” of the water levels in wells throughout the ULARA groundwater basins within a one-week period, and to provide additional “hard data” for model calibration by various parties who conduct modeling work in the San Fernando Valley.