



UPPER LOS ANGELES RIVER AREA WATERMASTER  
Richard C. Slade – Watermaster

ularawatermaster.com

14051 Burbank Blvd, STE 300  
Sherman Oaks, CA 91401

818-506-0418 PHONE  
818-506-1343 FAX

**UPDATED REPORT OF ULARA WATERMASTER  
STATUS CONFERENCE of MARCH 17, 2017  
SUPERIOR COURT, DEPARTMENT 52  
HONORABLE SUSAN BRYANT-DEASON**

**A. Ongoing Watermaster Activities**

1. The past due Annual Watermaster Report for Water Year 2013-14 has been submitted to the Court and published on the ULARA Website. The Watermaster and the A/C Committee formed a subcommittee to streamline and simplify the text and current appendices in the forthcoming Annual Watermaster Report for Water Year 2014-15, while still retaining the more important information and basic data that have been typically provided in that report. A Draft of this “streamlined” report is currently being reviewed for probable publication in late-March 2017.
2. Preparation of the Annual Groundwater Pumping and Spreading Plan for the ULARA Parties for the 5-year period of Water Years 2014-15 through 2018-19 is in progress.
3. The Watermaster submitted information to the State Department of Water Resources (DWR) Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) website to maintain ULARA compliance with SGMA. Such data uploads are to occur on an annual basis. The Annual Watermaster Report for Water Year 2013-14 has already been submitted to the DWR SGMA website.

The Watermaster and the Assistant Watermaster also attended a DWR conference in January 2017 related to the ongoing development and improvement of DWR’s data collection in regard to data collection from adjudicated groundwater basins (like those in ULARA) for the SGMA program.

4. The Watermaster has provided a Draft of a report for the Parties on the issue of Hill and Mountain pumping in the watershed regions of ULARA. The Watermaster is awaiting review comments from the Parties.
5. The Watermaster continues to maintain compliance with DWR on its California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring program (known as CASGEM) for the four groundwater basins within ULARA. The most recent data upload to the CASGEM website for ULARA occurred in November and December 2016 for water level data collected in Fall 2016. The next scheduled data upload is late-April 2017. The Watermaster is also participating with the USEPA on a basin-wide water level monitoring program for the San Fernando Basin. Water level monitoring will take place in mid-April, 2017, for all available public and private wells and groundwater monitoring wells in this basin. Once the data are collected, an accurate groundwater elevation contour map for April 2017 can be prepared for the San Fernando Basin.



6. The Watermaster has continued to review and either approve or deny, based on site-specific conditions, the Low Impact Development (LID) projects within the City of Los Angeles portions of ULARA (i.e., the San Fernando & Sylmar basins).

#### **B. Salt & Nutrient Management Plan (SNMP)**

The Watermaster continues work on the SNMP for the four groundwater basins within ULARA. This project basically involves looking at possible concentration trends over time in total dissolved solids, nitrate (as NO<sub>3</sub>), and chloride in the ULARA groundwater basins, as a result of the use of recycled water for various projects. Each Party has a 2-member group to serve on the SNMP subcommittee formed by the Watermaster. This subcommittee most recently met on February 22, 2017, and the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 22, 2017. Key representatives from the Regional Water Quality Control Board – Los Angeles region (RWQCB-LA) are invited to these meetings to maintain liaison and to keep them informed of the progress of the study.

Three Technical Memoranda have been distributed to date for public review. Another Technical Memorandum (TM-2) was provided to the ULARA SNMP subcommittee for review on February 27, 2017, whereas the fifth Technical Memorandum is envisioned for submittal in Draft form in March, 2017 for review by the Parties. The three published Technical Memoranda can be accessed by the public by visiting [www.ULARAWatermaster.com/SNMP](http://www.ULARAWatermaster.com/SNMP).

The Watermaster has 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. Mixing model work by Todd Groundwater is still ongoing (which will be described in the forthcoming TM-5 document), in regard to estimating possible trends in the concentrations of chloride, total dissolved solids, and nitrate over time in the four groundwater basins in recognition of the desired increase in use of recycled water in California, consistent with the RWQCB's Recycled Water Policy.

A Draft of the entire SNMP document is to be provided to the RWQCB in mid-2017.

#### **C. The Interim Agreement for the Preservation of the San Fernando Basin Water Supply**

This existing, 2007-dated, Interim Agreement resulted from the "White Paper" (dated March 2007 & prepared by the former Watermaster) which discussed the long-term decline in water levels and groundwater in storage in San Fernando Basin (SFB). According to the former Watermaster, these declines were caused by various factors including: import return credits; over pumping; reduced natural and artificial recharge; groundwater underflow and rising groundwater leaving the basin; and under-accounting of pumping by third parties.

As a result of this "White Paper," the ULARA Parties with rights to pump from the SFB (the Cities of Burbank, Glendale and Los Angeles) entered into a Stipulation in October 2007, the "Interim Agreement for the Preservation of the San Fernando Basin Water Supply." The Agreement has a term of 10 years, at the conclusion of which (i.e., on or about September 30,



2017), “the Parties in coordination with the Watermaster will evaluate the effectiveness” of the Agreement.

Among the key provisions of the existing Stipulated Agreement are:

- a. Reserved Credits. Parties agree not to pump their pro-rata share of the Stored Water Credits (below the 1968 groundwater storage volume) in the SFB, and instead agree to reserve such credits until sufficient groundwater is in storage to allow pumping of those credits without allowing groundwater in storage to fall below that 1968 level.
- b. Projects. The City and County of Los Angeles will initiate projects to restore and enhance artificial recharge of stormwater in SFB. Several such projects were to be undertaken, including ones at Big Tujunga Dam and a few existing spreading grounds in the northeastern portion of SFB.
- c. Basin Losses. Because rising groundwater and groundwater underflow continues to leave SFB at/near Gage F-57C, the Watermaster was authorized to deduct 1% each year from the total Stored Water Credits accumulated over time by each of the Parties, until the basin-loss deduction is re-evaluated.
- d. Conduct Safe Yield Evaluation of SFB. A safe yield study was attempted by a consultant retained by the ULARA Administrative Committee (AC) in 2008, but the effort was not accepted by the AC or the Watermaster, and the draft study was abandoned and never finalized.

The Watermaster and the 3 Parties in the SFB (Burbank, Glendale, and Los Angeles) have met a few times to discuss the above issues. The Watermaster has nearly completed an assessment of the effectiveness of the several items provided for on the Stipulation, and at/before our next Status Conference (but prior to September 30, 2017), the Watermaster and these 3 Parties are expected to have a new, updated Agreement.