



ULARA

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

**REPORT OF ULARA WATERMASTER
STATUS CONFERENCE of JULY 27, 2018
SUPERIOR COURT, DEPARTMENT 52
HONORABLE SUSAN BRYANT-DEASON**

A. Status of Annual reports

1. A draft of the Annual Watermaster Report for Water Year (WY) 2015-16 has been reviewed by most of the ULARA AC Parties, and is expected to be submitted to the Court and published on the ULARA Website in July 2018; the report will be dated December 2017. The Watermaster has received necessary data for all reporting Parties for the Annual Report for WY 2016-17. The modeling analyses for the report are underway by the Watermaster Support Group at LADWP. A Draft of this Annual Report is projected to be available for review by the Parties in late-July 2018.
2. A Draft of the Annual Groundwater Pumping and Spreading Plan for WYs 2016-17 through 2020-21 is in process. This report is expected to be finalized and sent to the Court by August 2018.

B. Ongoing Watermaster Activities

3. The Watermaster continues to submit information to the State Department of Water Resources (DWR) Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) website to make sure ULARA maintains its compliance with SGMA. Such data uploads occur on an annual basis. Draft data for the WY 2015-16 report were uploaded on April 2, 2018 and will be replaced with “finalized” data once the report is approved for publication by the Parties.
4. 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. Data from the Parties for their spring 2018 water level measurements have been requested by the Watermaster, and will be uploaded to the CASGEM system once the necessary data are received from those ULARA Parties. Most of the necessary data have been received as of May 31, 2018.
5. The Watermaster has been working with the Parties on the issue of Hill and Mountain (H&M) pumping in the watershed regions of ULARA. On June 10, 2018, the Watermaster completed and distributed to the Parties an Updated Draft of a Technical Memorandum on the H&M; the Watermaster is hopeful of receiving any final comments from the Parties in order to complete the project in August 2018.
6. The Watermaster participated with the USEPA on a basin-wide water level monitoring program for the San Fernando Basin. Water level monitoring took place in mid-April, 2017 and mid-April 2018, in all accessible public and private wells and groundwater



monitoring wells in this basin. The Watermaster has recently received the mid-April 2017 data from the EPA's contractor (OTIE). The Watermaster is in the process of preparing an independent groundwater elevation contour map for April 2017 for the San Fernando Basin and expects to update the AC on this issue at the forthcoming AC meeting on July 31.

7. 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).

C. Salt & Nutrient Management Plan (SNMP)

The Watermaster is nearing completion of work on the SNMP for the four groundwater basins within ULARA. This project basically involves assessing possible changes in concentration trends over time in total dissolved solids, nitrate (as NO_3), 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 has been meeting on a monthly basis; these monthly meetings are no longer necessary, and the group will now meet on an "as needed" basis. Key representatives from the Parties routinely attend, and key staff 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.

As part of the SNMP process, five Technical Memoranda have been distributed to date for public review. The published Technical Memoranda can be accessed by the public by visiting www.ULARAwatermaster.com/SNMP. A second public meeting was held on July 13, 2017, to present the findings of SNMP to the public, and to give the public another opportunity to comment.

In July 2017, the Watermaster and two of the subconsultants met with key staff at the RWQCB-LA to present the nearly-complete plan. The plan was very well received by RWQCB-LA staff, and the Watermaster was given the go-ahead by the RWQCB-LA to begin work on the environmental documentation for the SNMP.

On October 17, 2017 a CEQA scoping meeting for the SNMP was held. Following a 10-day public comment period that expired on October 27, 2017, comments were received from interested parties. The ULARA SNMP technical subcommittee recently finalized a response to those comments, and the CEQA documentation process is ongoing. The Watermaster recently received a Draft of 80% of the document, and has reviewed and provided comments on that portion of the document. ESA, the CEQA subcontractor, expects to provide the remainder of the document to the Watermaster by July 23, 2018.



D. ULARA “Policies and Procedures”

The original ULARA Watermaster prepared the first “Policies and Procedures” document in July 1987. Second and Third Updates to the document were subsequently prepared by that Watermaster, and were dated July 1993 and February 1998, respectively.

The basic purposes of the “Policies and Procedures” document are: to provide a summary of the decreed extraction rights of the various parties to the Court-adjudicated ULARA region; to discuss the overall management of groundwater; and to state the basic rules for the activities of the Watermaster and the Administrative Committee.

The Watermaster, in conjunction with the Administrative Committee, is beginning to prepare an update to the most current “Policies and Procedures” document for ULARA, dated February 1998. Numerous and substantial changes are envisioned to bring that document up to date, and to help ensure that it is in conformance with the more current guidelines established by the DWR and other agencies, in regard to programs like CASGEM, SGMA, and SNMP, as well as reflecting the current practices of the Watermaster in relation to report preparation and approval, report distribution, etc.

The Watermaster expects to have several meetings and discussions with the Parties in regard to possible changes, deletions, and additions to the existing document. The Watermaster’s goal is to provide a complete Draft of the Updated “Policies and Procedures” document to the Parties in 2019; this will allow time for the Watermaster’s new outside counsel (BB&K) to also review and provide possible comments to the document.

E. New Outside Watermaster Counsel

Best Best & Krieger (BBK) was selected as new outside Watermaster counsel. Contracts have been signed, and the BBK Attorney(s) will be attending all Court hearings.

The Watermaster and BBK have met in order to bring BBK up to speed on the current Watermaster work.