

**REPORT OF ULARA WATERMASTER
STATUS CONFERENCE of MARCH 6, 2020
SUPERIOR COURT, DEPARTMENT 52
HONORABLE SUSAN BRYANT-DEASON**

A. Status of Annual reports

1. The Annual Watermaster Report for Water Year (WY) 2016-17 is complete and was submitted to the Court and published on the ULARA Website in October 2019; the document is dated December 2018. The Watermaster has received the vast majority of necessary data for all reporting Parties for the Annual Report for WY 2017-18. A Draft of this WY 2017-18 Annual Report is projected to be available for review by the Parties in April 2020. The Watermaster formally requested data in October 2019 from the Parties and others who provide data for WY 2018-19.
2. The Watermaster will provide a Draft of the required ULARA data for WY 2017-18 to the website for the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) before April 1, 2020.
3. The Parties are currently reviewing a Draft of the Annual Groundwater Pumping and Spreading Plan for WYs 2016-17 through 2020-21. This report is expected to be finalized and sent to the Court in late-March 2020.
4. The Annual Groundwater Pumping and Spreading Plan for WYs 2017-18 through 2021-22 is near completion and will be distributed to the Parties in Draft form for review before April 1, 2020.

B. Ongoing Watermaster Activities

1. The Watermaster continues to submit information to the State Department of Water Resources (DWR) SGMA website to help verify that ULARA maintains its compliance with SGMA. Such data uploads occur on an annual basis. Draft data for the WY 2017-18 will be uploaded before April 1, 2020.
2. 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 fall 2019 water level measurements were uploaded to the CASGEM system in October 2019. Data for Spring 2020 will be uploaded in May 2020.
3. The Watermaster has been working with the Parties on the issue of Hill and Mountain (H&M) pumping in the watershed regions of ULARA. After receiving comments from the Parties, the Watermaster completed and distributed to the Parties on February 14, 2019 a revised version of a Technical Memorandum on H&M pumping (along with attendant tables and figures). Additional review by the Parties revealed that further clarification was needed related to definition of certain groundwater “extractors”. Hence, the Watermaster



distributed a revised version of the document on May 30, 2019. In August 2019, LADWP noted that they needed to further review additional information on groundwater extractions by MTA from tunnel(s) in the south-central portion of ULARA; LADWP review is ongoing.

4. 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 has basically involved an assessment and proposed management of possible changes in concentration trends over time in total dissolved solids, nitrate (as NO₃), and chloride in the ULARA groundwater basins, as a result of the use of recycled water for various projects. 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.

In July 2017, the Watermaster was given the go-ahead by the RWQCB-LA to begin work on the environmental documentation for the SNMP. Preparation of the necessary CEQA environmental documentation process is ongoing, and the Watermaster has been working with RWQCB-LA and ESA, the CEQA subcontractor, to move the documentation forward. As of March 2020, the Watermaster has received comments from the Parties and is working with ESA to finalize the documents. Currently the Parties are compiling water quality data for the Watermaster. A summary of current water quality conditions in the ULARA Basins is the last task necessary for the Watermaster prior to finalizing the document for submittal.

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 preparing an update to the most current “Policies and Procedures” document for ULARA, dated February 1998. Numerous and substantial changes are being provided 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 is still



working on the document in order to eventually provide a complete Draft of the Updated “Policies and Procedures” document to the Parties. The Watermaster’s outside counsel (BB&K) will also be asked to review and provide possible comments to the document once it become available.

E. Sportsman’s Lodge Well Destruction

Over the past few months, the Watermaster and LADWP staff have been in contact with representatives of SL Retail Owner, LLC, the new owner of the Sportsman’s Lodge, located in Studio City at the northeastern corner of the intersection of Coldwater Canyon Ave and Ventura Blvd, with regard to the existing onsite water-supply well. This well, constructed in approximately 1938, had been used by the prior owners of Sportsman’s Lodge to fill several onsite trout ponds. Sportsman’s Lodge was granted the right to use local groundwater for its trout ponds as part of the physical solution described in Section 9.3 of the Judgment.

As part of the re-development of the property by the new owner, there would be no need to use the local groundwater to supply onsite trout ponds, because those ponds were recently destroyed and will not be replaced. Hence, the Watermaster requested the owner to permanently destroy the onsite well, and LADWP requested a letter from the current owner that it would no longer utilize the physical solution associated with the original onsite trout ponds.

As of late-February 2020, the documentation had been received by the Watermaster and LADWP that the onsite well had been properly destroyed, and that the new owner would no longer be utilizing the physical solution for the property.