

February 2020

Building Alliances in Northern California

## MISSION

To serve and represent regional water supply interests and assist Regional Water Authority members with protecting and enhancing the reliability, availability, affordability and quality of water resources.



### Temporary Office Change for RWA and SGA

Due to water damage that occurred over the holidays, RWA and SGA offices have temporarily relocated to a nearby space at 5750 Sunrise Blvd., Suite AA in Citrus Heights. During this time, RWA's main phone line will not be available. Other contact information remains the same. RWA expects to occupy this temporary space potentially through the end of February.

## New RWA Leadership Elected for 2020

### 2020 Chair and Vice Chair

**Kerry Schmitz**

Sacramento County Water Agency  
Chair

**Sean Bigley**

City of Roseville  
Vice Chair

### 2020 Executive Committee Members

**Ron Greenwood**

Carmichael Water District

**Marcus Yasutake**

City of Folsom

**Michelle Carrey**

City of Sacramento

**Paul Schubert**

Golden State Water Company

**Brent Smith**

Placer County Water Agency

**Dan York**

Sacramento Suburban Water District

**Marty Hanneman**

San Juan Water District

## RWA Launches Strategic Plan Update Process

RWA is launching a comprehensive process to update its 2013 Strategic Plan to guide the organization through the next five years. The current Strategic Plan outlines the organization's core values, and goals and objectives in the areas of Planning, Implementation, Information/Education, and Advocacy. The RWA Board last adopted minor plan updates in 2017.

Over the next several months, the strategic planning process will guide members in reviewing RWA's mission, vision, and core values for any needed updates; exploring potential new focus areas and programs in the areas of federal affairs, succession planning,

communications, resiliency, and other topics; considering ways to maximize cost efficiencies among member agencies through RWA; and setting specific goals and desired outcomes for the next five years.

The RWA Executive Committee is guiding the plan update, including setting a schedule and a process for gathering input from members and stakeholders, with assistance from facilitator Ellen Cross of Strategy Driver, Inc. The first Strategic Plan Workshop is scheduled for February 21, 2020 starting at 9:30 a.m.

You can register for the workshop by contacting Cecilia Partridge at [cecilia@rwah2o.org](mailto:cecilia@rwah2o.org).

## Groundwater Sustainability Planning Enters New Phase

The Sacramento Groundwater Authority (SGA) and its partners are beginning a new phase in developing a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the North American Subbasin, as required under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

After spending much of the last two years assembling existing information and developing new data for the subbasin, the focus in 2020 will be on engaging stakeholders and interested parties in the GSP's development. Throughout 2020, SGA will use its regular Board meetings as a forum for participants to learn more and provide input on the six sustainability indicators required in a GSP, including

groundwater levels, groundwater in storage, seawater intrusion, groundwater quality, land subsidence, and surface water depletion.

SGA is the designated Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) for its portion of the subbasin, which is developing the plan in partnership with four other GSAs—the West Placer GSA, Reclamation District 1001 GSA, South Sutter Water District GSA, and Sutter County GSA. The final plan is expected to be finished by mid-2021.

You can learn more and request to participate in the GSP development process, by contacting Rob Swartz at [rswartz@rwah2o.org](mailto:rswartz@rwah2o.org).



## RWA Submits \$8.74 Million Grant Request

RWA submitted a final funding proposal to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) for an \$8.74 million grant to fund 11 priority projects, including conjunctive use facilities such as wells and pipelines, water use efficiency measures, and habitat improvements.

Submitted to DWR's Proposition 1 Integrated Regional Water Management Implementation Grant Program, funding is intended to help local water systems adapt to the projected effects of climate change, as well as provide incentives for water providers within a watershed to collaborate in managing resources and setting infrastructure priorities.

DWR is expected to issue final award recommendations by mid-2020.

# Awards and Recognition



From left: Einar Maisch, Paul Schubert, Jim Peifer, and Steve Nugent

## Paul Schubert Receives RWA Water Statesperson of the Year

**Paul Schubert, Golden State Water Company:** For his long-time leadership in the region, including his outstanding service in spearheading the RWA Executive Director recruitment process and helping to guide RWA through a year of transition. At the same time, Schubert served as vice chair of Sacramento Central Groundwater Authority, helping to lead that organization through the challenges related to complying with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.

## Einar Maisch and Steve Nugent Honored with RWA Distinguished Service Award

**Einar Maisch, Placer County Water Agency:** For his 34 years of service to the region and PCWA as Agency Engineer, Director of Strategic Affairs, and General Manager. Maisch served as a leading voice for water supply reliability and the lower American River ecosystem in the Water Forum Agreement and was instrumental in RWA's formation. His achievements at PCWA include the expansion of PCWA's largest water treatment plant in 1991, completing a new diversion on the American River in 2008, and renegotiating a 40-year water supply contract with Pacific Gas & Electric in 2015.

**Steve Nugent, Carmichael Water District:** For his 37 years of service in the water industry, 30 of those at Carmichael Water District. Nugent's accomplishments include spearheading several regional partnerships to solve water supply and water quality issues, including the award-winning American River Pipeline Conveyance Project and several groundwater extraction and treatment facilities with Aerojet Rocketdyne. Other achievements include modernizing and upgrading CWD's facilities and operating systems, including their 22 MGD Membrane Microfiltration Water Treatment Plant.



## Meteorologist Monica Woods Offers Thoughts on Climate Communication

ABC 10's Chief Meteorologist Monica Woods, a longtime judge in RWA's Water Spots Video Contest, offered her thoughts on how to communicate the complexities of climate change to a layperson during RWA's holiday event in December. She advised the audience to keep it simple, create a visual understanding, and get to the heart of the story—the expected real impacts of climate change on every-day life.

## San Juan Water District's Pam Tobin Elected ACWA Vice President



San Juan Water District Director Pam Tobin was elected Vice President of the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) in December, marking only the second time in ACWA's 110-year history that a vice president was elected from the Sacramento region. Tobin is also the fourth woman to hold this post. Tobin will serve a two-year term as ACWA vice president from 2020-21. In this role, Tobin will help lead ACWA and serve as a spokesperson on statewide water issues.

Additional local representatives on the 2020-21 ACWA Board of Directors includes:

- Brian Poulsen, El Dorado Irrigation District General Counsel, State Legislative Committee Chair
- Joshua Alpine, Placer County Water Agency Board Member, Region 3 Chair
- Mark Emmerson, Carmichael Water District Board Member, Region 4 Vice Chair
- Jennifer Buckman, Bartkiewicz, Kronick & Shanahan, Legal Affairs Committee Chair

## PCWA Appoints Andy Fecko as Next General Manager



Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) Director of Strategic Affairs Andy Fecko has been appointed as the agency's next General Manager, the PCWA Board of Directors announced in January. He will succeed Einar Maisch who is retiring after 34 years with the agency.

Fecko has worked in the water and energy field for two decades, specializing in resource management and water rights issues. During that time, he has led a number of high-priority projects for the agency including the relicensing of PCWA's Middle Fork American River Project. In his current position, Fecko manages PCWA's strategic business partnerships, and regulatory and government affairs. He recently served as a representative for the Sacramento region in statewide Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan negotiations. In 2017, RWA recognized Fecko as the region's Water Statesperson of the Year for leadership and work on legislative and regulatory issues that impact the Sacramento region.

"As California's water paradigm grows more complex, Andrew's skills and experience uniquely prepare him to lead PCWA into the future," said PCWA Board Chairman Robert Dugan. "During his time with the agency, he has shown himself to be a passionate defender of PCWA's interests and is a highly-capable and respected leader at the local, state, and national levels."

## RWA Welcomes Finance and Administrative Services Manager

In October, RWA welcomed Josette Reina-Luken as the new Finance and Administrative Services Manager. Josette succeeds Nancy Marrier, who recently retired as RWA's longest-ever tenured employee with 18 years of service.

Josette has 15 years of experience in municipal administration most recently working with Citrus Heights Water District as an Analyst on special projects, including the Water Meter Replacement Program Study. Additionally, she has served as Chief Fiscal Administrative Officer with Nevada County and Administrative Services Manager for the City of Sacramento Parks and Recreation Department and City of West Sacramento Public Works Department.

Josette holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science/Public Administration from the University of South Florida and a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Phoenix.



# Legislative Update

## Governor Issues Draft Water Resilience Portfolio

The 2020 advocacy season got off to an early start with the much-anticipated release of Governor Gavin Newsom's draft Water Resilience Portfolio on January 3rd. The draft portfolio includes a suite of more than 100 recommended actions to help California cope with more extreme droughts and floods, rising temperatures, declining fish populations, aging infrastructure, and other challenges.

The portfolio includes several statements and recommendations that align with RWA's priorities. These include an affirmation that effective response and resiliency to climate change in California will

come from local efforts that are appropriate to a region's unique challenges and opportunities. Of particular interest are several recommendations to further streamline groundwater recharge and banking efforts, make funding available for groundwater recharge projects, and create flexibility for agencies to trade water within basins.

Shortly following the portfolio's release, the Governor included in his state budget a \$4.75 billion bond for the November 2020 ballot to support the recommendations in the portfolio. In addition, two other proposed funding vehicles are

currently in the legislative process, including Senate Bill 45 (SB 45, Allen) a \$5.5 billion bond, and Assembly Bill 352 (AB 352, E. Garcia) a \$3.9 billion bond to address Wildfire Prevention, Safe Drinking Water, Drought Preparation, and Flood Protection.

In the coming months, RWA will be working to position the region to successfully secure language in the bond measure to support the Sacramento Regional Water Bank and other projects that would build climate resiliency in the Sacramento region and are in line with the Governor's portfolio.

## Joint Media Statement Praises Governor's Resilience Portfolio

RWA and SGA partnered with the Water Forum and Sacramento Area Flood Control District (SAFCA) to issue a media statement in support of the Governor's Draft Water Resilience Portfolio, praising the document for its emphasis on regional collaboration and need for investment in multi-benefit solutions.

"Our region has long been preparing to address the impacts from climate change on our water resources at a watershed scale. We believe the water resilience portfolio findings are fully aligned with the solutions we have been developing," RWA and SGA Executive Director Jim Peifer is quoted in the statement. "The region's climate adaptation portfolio re-imagines how water should be managed in the face of a less reliable water supply and a greater flood threat that is expected from reduced snowpack and flashier rainstorms in a

narrower wet season. While these challenges are real and daunting, we know our holistic approach will solve them."

The statement also highlights regional initiatives that that will further build climate resiliency in the American River watershed by enhancing flood protection, diversifying water supplies, allowing for adaptive management practices, and promoting species health on the lower American River. These included the Sacramento Regional Water Bank, River Arc, Ecosystem Restoration, Sacramento Area Flood Risk Reduction and Managed Aquifer Recharge, Yolo Bypass Integrated Multi-Benefit Program, and Upper Watershed and Forestry Management.

You can find the full statement at [rwah2o.org](http://rwah2o.org).

### 2019 Advocacy Program Recap Now Available

The 2019 Advocacy Program Report is now available for downloading. The report reviews the year's advocacy priorities, legislative highlights and outcomes. You can find it on RWA's website at [rwah2o.org/programs/advocacy-program/](http://rwah2o.org/programs/advocacy-program/)

# Water Efficiency Program News

## RWA Focus Groups Provide Insights on Landscape Watering and Household Leaks

### *Findings to be Presented During February 25 Briefing*

In January, the RWA Regional Water Efficiency Program hosted two focus groups with residential water customers to uncover knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to landscape watering and household leaks.

Focus groups explored:

- How customers know when and how much to water their yard
- Whether they are willing to change their sprinkler timer with the season
- Perceived benefits and barriers to installing efficient rotator sprinklers
- What motivates people to fix household leaks quickly



Focus group findings and a preview of the 2020 regional public outreach campaign and tools available for “Fix a Leak Week” in March and throughout the spring and summer watering season will be presented during a special briefing on **Tuesday, February 25, 2020, 2-3 p.m.** at the Fair Oaks Water District office at 10326 Fair Oaks Blvd in Fair Oaks and via Webinar. The briefing is open to water provider communicators, conservation managers, and general managers who are WEP participants. Please RSVP your attendance at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZTS2DJK>



## New Regional Rebate Program for Smart Sprinkler Controllers

RWA's Regional Water Efficiency Program is planning a new regional rebate program designed to get 1,200 weather-based smart sprinkler controllers into the homes of local residents within a year.

In the Sacramento region, most household water use occurs outdoors. Replacing a standard controller with a WaterSense-labeled smart controller can save an average home about 13,500 gallons of water per year.

After a competitive bidding process, RWA contracted with Rachio to provide Rachio 3 Smart Controllers, a website for customers to sign up to receive a controller, and technical support for customers to help with installation. Rachio timers offer a “smart” (Wi-Fi enabled) component that will allow customers to operate their sprinkler system remotely from their smartphone, tablet, or laptop.

The controllers typically retail for about \$220 for an eight-zone system, but are being offered to RWA at a reduced rate. RWA will cover about 60 percent of the timer's cost and will market the rebate program through its existing outreach and advertising channels. Customers will be responsible for covering remaining costs (\$75 plus tax) and installing the timers. Controllers will be mailed directly to customers.

The rebate program is funded by a \$150,000 grant from the California Department of Water Resources and is offered in partnership with the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA) and its 26 member agencies for economies-of-scale pricing, coordinated program management, and marketing benefits.

The program's public launch is planned for April 2020 on a first-come, first-served basis until funding is exhausted. Additional information and the rebate website will become available in the next several months.