



## Historical Background

### **Intro**

For over 20 years the Network of Santa Barbara County Water Providers have worked together to promote water conservation regionally. Joining efforts presents many benefits including streamlining our water conservation message to the public as well as extending our outreach dollars. We continually strive to find the best ways to promote conservation regionally in order to benefit residents, businesses, HOA's, and institutions countywide.

### **About**

During the drought from 1988-1991, the providers worked together to share water conservation ideas. The efforts were successful and the Regional Water Efficiency Program was born. The network consists of water providers across the County, including Carpinteria Valley Water District, City of Buellton, City of Guadalupe, City of Lompoc, City of Santa Barbara, City of Santa Maria, City of Solvang, Cuyama CSD, Golden State Water Company - Santa Maria/Orcutt, Goleta Water District, La Cumbre Mutual Water Company, Los Alamos CSD, Mission Hills CSD, Montecito Water District, Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District ID #1, and Vandenberg Village CSD.

### **History**

Over the last 20 years, water providers have joined forces to share ideas, work on regional projects, and implement innovative water conservation and education programs. The network of water providers has also succeeded in receiving grant funding for regional projects including a commercial toilet retrofit program and the Smart Landscape Rebate Program. Most recently the network worked together on the "WaterWise in Santa Barbara County" branding effort, which serves to unite the conservation message countywide. This re-branding will reduce confusion and direct people to the [WaterWiseSB.org](http://WaterWiseSB.org) website where they will find a wealth of information about conserving water in the home, landscape, and workplace.

### **Why must we increase savings?**

- We live in a semi-arid climate and the next drought may be just around the corner. Any water we save today will help get us through dry times in the future.
- Ongoing conservation from our residents helps to maintain adequate water supplies; there is never enough water to waste.
- There are increasing demands on water supplies.
  - Environmental - adequate river flow must be maintained for riparian species such as steelhead.
  - Population - Our state's population continues to grow, with 60 million Californians expected by 2050. That means more people, farms, and businesses will rely on our rivers, reservoirs, and groundwater basins for their daily needs.
- Climate change is already affecting California's water resources and is projected to continue well into the foreseeable future.
  - Temperatures are projected to continue to increase, increasing evaporation and plants demand for water and leading to more extreme weather events such as heat waves.
  - Precipitation will likely be affected by climate change, including:
    - Droughts are expected to increase in frequency and/or duration.
    - Continued reduction in snowpack in the Sierra Nevada - the source of much of our imported water and California's largest "natural" reservoir - could shrink by as much as 25% by 2050.
- Water providers have minimum conservation requirements that must be met, including California's [20% by 2020 goal](#).
- Water is California's most precious natural resource. How we manage it today will affect nearly every aspect of our future.
- Our water supply can no longer be taken for granted. While state and local leaders continue to work on long-term solutions to our water challenges, we can all save water on a daily basis to help stretch supplies and keep water in reservoirs for the inevitable dry years to come.

## **Aren't we already doing enough?**

- Current water usage:
  - Even in normal years, some areas of the state find it difficult to meet all demands for water. Water deliveries from some key water projects have been permanently reduced due to environmental concerns and legal rulings, while other systems struggle with aging infrastructure and other challenges.
  - Average county water use per person is 130 gallons per person per day; there is still a lot of conservation to be done.
- Many benefits to conserving water:
  - Saving money and time
  - Keeping your landscape beautiful and protecting the environment
  - Doing the right thing for Santa Barbara and ensuring water is available for our children's children
- Each one of us makes a difference. It's easy for every Californian—young and old—to save water every day.
- How? Go to [WaterWiseSB.org](http://WaterWiseSB.org) to learn specific indoor & outdoor water conservation actions.

## **Water Sources**

Water in Santa Barbara County comes from four different sources. These sources include:

- Groundwater
- Local streams and reservoirs
- The State Water Project
- Recycled water

The type of water that flows from the tap depends on the local supply. Each water provider has a different portfolio of water supplies to use based on local conditions.

## **Rainfall**

The average annual rainfall ranges from a low of 8 inches in Cuyama to 32 inches in the Santa Ynez Mountain range, with an overall average of about 18 inches.