

Tri-Valley Groundwater Management District

Newsletter

Winter 2024

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TVGMD Core Vision: To preserve the groundwater within the boundaries of the District (Chapter 844 of 1989 California Statutes.)

Mission Statement: To comply with the California Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (2014) and other applicable laws (government code, water code, etc.) as the law pertains to the District.

TVGMD Election Results

In a close race with two highly qualified candidates for this domestic well representative position, Don Moss came out ahead of Curtis Milliron by 32 votes. The TVGMD would like to express our gratitude to these two candidates as well as all those who voted. We encourage you to stay involved as we work together as a community to "preserve the groundwater within the boundaries of the District".

California Farm to School, White Mountain Ranch

White Mountain Ranch has recently entered into an agreement with the Big Pine Schools to provide meat for school lunches. In an innovative program, the state of California is funding Farm to School projects statewide. Big Pine applied for and received a two year \$50,000 grant to bring in local, healthy food and food education to their students. Big Pine Schools reached out to White Mountain Ranch to provide fresh, local, humanely raised bison and beef to serve two to three times per week as part of school lunches. And not only that, students will get to see where their food is coming from!

In December (after the deadline for this newsletter), students will visit White Mountain Ranch to see where some of their food comes from. That's right, food does not start at the grocery store! They will get a tour of the ranch, will see the whole process of what goes into raising cows and bison including focused use of water for electricity generation and for watering fields for grazing. They will then go to the freezer, get the meat the school ordered for the month, and load up the van. Big Pine Schools are also procuring local produce as a part of this grant.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture office of **Farm to Fork** is offering grants to schools to reach out to local farmers and ranchers to provide local, fresh and healthy food and food education to our students. \$60 million will be available for this program this year. [To learn more about this project](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/caf2sgrant/)
<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/caf2sgrant/>

Just a little about White Mountain Ranch and the sustainable strategies they practice: we generate hydro-electric energy from gravity fed mountain water, we operate on a sustainable and regenerative model of farming. We recycle our livestock's manure to fertilize our fields, we rotate grazing pastures and they are alive and abounding with healthy microbiome, we appropriately store and use the rain (Flood :-) water. This not only ensures an all-natural high nutritionally dense product but it protects the sensitive wildlife that surround us. Our hawks and owls are thriving because we use natural methods of rodent prevention and not poison. My point is that we are thoughtful about how every aspect of our operation affects our environment and every family member and friend who we are feeding.

Thanks to Tanya Guacheno for this conversation, information and photo below.



100% irrigated by mountain and rain water, 2023!

Progress on the Groundwater Model Grant

Mono County is contracting with the Inyo County Water Department to manage the Groundwater Model Project. The contract is going to the Inyo County Board of Supervisors for approval on 12/12 and their staff intends to kick off the study in January of 2024. From Wendy Sugimura, Mono County Community Development Director.

Wendy goes on to suggest that Holly Alpert from the Water Department come present to the TVGMD board in January or February.

How Well Is Your Well?

A good resource for your well health is [Water Well Basics](#) from the National Groundwater Association.

And, to get a free Well Owners Guide, [click here](#).

If your well does go dry, the State of California is tracking the state of private wells and can provide you with some resources. [Click here for this resource](#).

Next TVGMD Board Meeting

January 24, 2024

6:30 PM

Benton Community Hall

High Desert Gardening Part 4, Winter Watering Needs *Harold McDonald, Inyo/Mono Master Gardener*

Winter presents some special challenges for gardeners in the Eastern Sierra. When the frosts come, it's easy to see that our plants are no longer actively growing. But as we know oh so well in the Tri Valley area, water is life, so plants still need water for their basic processes during the winter.

You might remember from biology class that photosynthesis is the process by which green plants can create energy-rich molecules from carbon dioxide and water. To capture CO₂ from the air, plants have tiny openings called stomata, mostly on the underside of their leaves. But just as these stomata allow CO₂ to enter, water can evaporate through these same openings. Water absorbed by the roots moves upward through the plant and exits through these openings. This water loss is called transpiration, and the members of the plant kingdom have developed countless strategies for dealing with this water loss*. One we see every year is the shedding of leaves by deciduous trees.

In the Eastern Sierra, we have mostly sunny days and relatively mild daytime temperatures, both of which increase transpiration (though of course the rate is much

lower than in the longer, hotter days of summer). It can be a long time between storms for us, and if we don't provide them with supplemental water, the roots of our plants can dry out. This is especially a problem for evergreens, which, of course, don't lose their leaves. And because they have relatively shallow roots, some of our most common deciduous trees, like willow, ash, alders and maples are also at high risk of desiccation. Because it is the dormant season, plants may look perfectly normal. When the weather warms up, they might even resume growth using stored energy, but the weakened plant may succumb to insect and disease problems later in the spring.

To summarize, the danger to plants in winter is that their roots will dry out. For smaller plants like perennials, grasses and groundcovers, the repeated freezing and thawing of the ground can create cracks that expose roots to greater danger of drying out. This is yet another reason to add mulch or simply let fallen leaves provide a barrier to evaporation. OK, so how often do we need to drag the hose out? Obviously, this depends on a number of factors, but in general you'd like to see your plants get water at least once or twice a month. If nature doesn't provide, we need to give it to them ourselves. This is especially critical for new plantings. If in doubt, dig down 4-5 inches. If there's no trace of moisture, you'll need to add water. Try to water in the middle of a sunny day when the air temperature is at least in the 40s. One general rule of thumb is to provide about 10 gallons of water per month for each inch of tree diameter. For smaller established shrubs, provide 5 gallons per month. Double that volume for newly planted and larger shrubs.

* Transpiration is actually what enables the roots of plants to absorb water in the first place. As drops of water exit the leaves, they basically pull neighboring water molecules along in a chain that extends all the way down to the roots. An analogy might be sucking on a straw.

Links to Previous Newsletters

September 2023

[June 2023](#)

[February 2023](#)

[November 2022](#)

Contacts and Links

[TVGMD Website](#) for more information

For meeting reminders, etc. email: secretary@tvgmd.org

Links

[California Department of Water Resources \(DWR\)](#)

[Sustainable Groundwater Management Act \(SGMA\) Overview](#)

[SGMA Best Practices Website](#)

[CASGEM](#)--site where well monitoring data is input and available

[California Department of Fish and Wildlife](#)

[UC Davis re Alfalfa Production](#) (lots of different articles)

TVGMD Board of Directors

DIRECTOR A—Domestic Well

- Carol Ann Mitchell term expires 11/30/2026
- Andy Puhvel, term expires 11/30/2026
- Geri Bassett term expires 11/30/2024
- Donald Moss, term expires 11/30/2024

DIRECTOR B—Resident/(Agricultural/100 GPM Well)

- Edward Parkinson term expires 11/30/2026
- Phil West term expires 11/30/2024
- Greg Allen term expires 11/30/2024

DIRECTOR EX-OFFICIO

- Mono County District 2 Supervisor Rhonda Duggan

Advisory Board Members

Chalfant

Gina Barsi

Betsy McDonald

Amy Saladin

Benton

Janet Barth

Hammil

Dennis Murphy

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