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## AGENDA

### Communications and Customer Service Committee Meeting

Board Room  
3707 Old Highway 395  
Fallbrook, CA 92028

Tuesday, February 18, 2025  
1:00 PM

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **ROLL CALL:** Bill Shute (Chair), Bill Stewart (Vice Chair), Lisa Hoffman (or Alternate Hayden Hamilton), James Kozak, Julie Johnson, Alternate Harp, Alternate Cruz
4. **SEATING OF ALTERNATES**
5. **ADDITIONS/DELETIONS/AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**
6. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

*Any person may address the Committee at this time upon any subject not identified on this Agenda, but within the jurisdiction of Rainbow Municipal Water District; however, any matter that requires action will be referred to staff for a report and action at a subsequent meeting. As to matters on the Agenda, an opportunity will be given to address the Committee when the matter is considered.*

*Members of the public may make comments in person by submitting a Speaker Slip to the Board Secretary, virtually through virtual or teleconference options, or by submitting an email to [tquintanar@rainbowmwd.ca.gov](mailto:tquintanar@rainbowmwd.ca.gov) no less than one hour prior to the posted start time of the meeting. Comments shall be made in an orderly manner, and profanity, slander, or abusive language which is disruptive to the meeting will not be tolerated. Individuals have a limit of three (3) minutes to make comments and will have the opportunity when called upon by the presiding officer.*

8. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
  - A. December 17, 2024
9. **COMMENTS & REQUESTS**
  - A. General Manager's Comments
  - B. Committee Member's Comments
10. **APPOINTMENT OR REAPPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON**
11. **REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE DRAFT STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

12. **QUARTERLY CUSTOMER SERVICE CALL METRICS**
13. **CROPSWAP PROGRAM UPDATE**
14. **WATER USE EFFICIENCY UPDATE**
15. **2025 EVENT PLANNING AND COMMUNITY EVENTS UPDATE**
16. **NEWSLETTER CONTENT PLANNING**
17. **PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATED MEDIA STORIES**
18. **SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**
19. **ADJOURNMENT - To Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.**

**ATTEST TO POSTING:**

/s/Terese Quintanar  
 Terese Quintanar  
 Secretary of the Board

2/13/2025 6:51 AM  
 Date and Time of Posting  
 Outside Display Cases

Rainbow Municipal Water District (RMWD) provides remote attendance options solely as a matter of convenience to the public. RMWD will not stop or suspend its in-person public meeting should a technological interruption occur with respect to the Zoom or call-in line listed on the agenda. We encourage members of the public to attend meetings in person at 3707 Old Highway 395, Fallbrook, CA 92028, or remotely utilizing the options below:

**For Online Participation:**

Go to: <https://rainbowmwd.zoom.us/j/82688515149>

*If members of the public attending virtually would like to ask a question or make a comment on any item listed on this agenda, please utilize the "Raise Hand" button, located at the bottom of the screen. We will be alerted that they would like to speak. When called upon, please unmute the microphone and ask the question or make comments in no more than three minutes.*

**For Call-in Only:**

Call: (669) 900-6833, or (669) 444-9171, or  
 (309) 205-3325, or (312) 626-6799, or  
 (564) 217-2000, or (689) 278-1000  
 Meeting ID: 826 8851 5149

*Those who have joined by dialing a number on their telephone, can dial \*9 to alert us of a request to speak, and \*6 to unmute, once called upon by the presiding officer.*

In accordance with the requirements of California Government Code Section 54954.2, this agenda has been posted at the District's Administrative offices not less than 72 hours prior to the meeting date and time above. All public records relating to each agenda item, including any public records distributed less than 72 hours prior to the meeting to all, or a majority of all, of the members of District's Board, are available for public inspection in the office of the District Secretary, 3707 Old Highway 395, Fallbrook, CA 92028

If you have special needs because of a disability which makes it difficult for you to participate in the meeting or you require assistance or auxiliary aids to participate in the meeting, please contact the District Secretary, (760) 728-1178, by at least noon on the Friday preceding the meeting. The District will attempt to make arrangements to accommodate your disability.

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
OF THE RAINBOW MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT  
DECEMBER 17, 2024**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – The Communications and Customer Service Committee Meeting of the Rainbow Municipal Water District on December 1, 2024, was called to order by Chairman Shute at 1:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the District, 3707 Old Highway 395, Fallbrook, CA 92028. Chairman Shute presiding.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

3. **ROLL CALL:** Member Shute, Member Hamilton, Member Kozak, Member Stewart

**Also Present:** General Manager Wiley, Information Technology Manager Khattab, Administrative Analyst Weber, Alternate Harp, District Secretary Quintanar, Customer Service Supervisor Cruz, Operations Manager Gutierrez

**Also Present Via Teleconference Or Video Conference:** Safety and Risk Management Officer Johnson, Construction and Meters Supervisor Lagunas, Management Analyst Lan, Billing Specialist Kilmer

4. **SEATING OF ALTERNATES**

None were seated.

5. **ADDITIONS/DELETIONS/AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

Ms. Weber requested the opportunity to report on CropSWAP, as Item 12a.

6. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Motion:**

**To approve the Agenda as amended.**

**Action: Approve, Moved by Member Stewart, Seconded by Member Hamilton**

**Vote: Motion carried by unanimous vote (summary: Ayes = 4)**

**Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Stewart, Member Shute, Member Kozak**

7. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No members of the public were present.

8. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. November 19, 2024

**Motion:**

**To approve the November 19, 2024, minutes as presented.**

**Action: Approve, Moved by Member Kozak, Seconded by Member Stewart**

***Vote: Motion carried by unanimous vote (summary: Ayes = 4)***

***Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Stewart, Member Shute, Member Kozak***

**9. COMMENTS & REQUESTS**

A. General Manager’s Comments

Mr. Wiley reported on the issue of water fluoridation. There is a lot of discussion currently. RMWD does not add fluoride to the water, but MWD does and has since early in the 2000s. Per California Law, if an agency has over 10,000 services and funding, fluoridation must occur, and the recommended level is .07 parts per million (ppm). It naturally occurs at .1-.4 and the maximum contaminate limit is 2 ppm, half of the Federal limit of 4 ppm. Staff will provide information on this topic for the public on the District’s website, along with the message that Rainbow Municipal Water District does not add fluoride to the water. Eastern Municipal Water District will be posting a similar message.

Last week, MWD approved a \$141M funding request for the Delta Conveyance Project to complete the pre-design, permitting, environmental, and fieldwork. If approved, the current budget will not be adjusted. However, the funding will be incorporated into a future budget with an impact of approximately three percent. MWD will have the option of adding these State Water Project costs to the tax bill. A brief discussion ensued.

MWD has invoiced EMWD for Rainbow’s water purchase of 1,000 acre-feet (AF) for the month of November.

Initial interviews for the Finance Manager position took place yesterday, and the second interviews will be scheduled shortly.

B. Committee Member’s Comments

Member Kozak wished everyone Happy Holidays and relayed gratitude for staff’s accomplishments over the year. Member Stewart mentioned that the detachment process was not as smooth as planned and that the experience and knowledge of Jake Wiley and our staff helped get the District to the finish line.

Chairman Shute commented that his Flume device notified him of a leak that otherwise would have been difficult to detect. For customers with propane tanks, a leak of this kind might result in a much more significant water loss. He informed everyone that many insurance companies now require installing leak-detection devices. He also stated that news sources have relayed predictions of a dry rainy season. Mr. Wiley relayed that predicting demands and weather is challenging when budgeting. However, sales are trending back up, and adjustments can be made mid-year. Water supplies are sufficient to accommodate a dry year or two. Chairman Shute also commented on a lack of confidence that pipes are not contaminating water. Mr. Gutierrez responded that the District can test the water at the meter, but beyond that, the customer’s option is to arrange for testing through an independent vendor.

**10. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Committee members recommended that Julie Johnson be appointed as a member of this Committee.

**Motion:**

**To recommend Board appointment of Julie Johnson as a member of the Communications and Customer Service Committee.**

**Action: Approve, Moved by Member Stewart, Seconded by Member Kozak**

**Vote: Motion carried by unanimous vote (summary: Ayes = 4)**

**Ayes: Member Hamilton, Member Stewart, Member Shute, Member Kozak**

**11. UPDATE ON RECENT USE OF THE HELI-HYDRANT**

Mr. Gutierrez provided background on the collaborative effort to find a location and install the District's Heli-hydrant, which was recently utilized to fight the Garden Fire. The ABC 10 and CBS 8 news segments highlighting of the use of the tank were presented for the Committee. The Gomez Tank site is an option for a second Heli-hydrant. Heli-hydrants provide a public service by providing water to fight fire in an innovative way that can benefit our customers. Discussion followed regarding sources of funding for a second tank and community outreach. Discussion ensued regarding the District's efforts to support local emergency response.

**12.A CROPSWAP UPDATE**

Ms. Weber reported that of the \$5M, \$960,450 in reserved grant funding has been approved the District's ag customers for various CropSWAP programs. The remaining grant funds will have to be utilized by the end of 2025, so staff is hopeful that applications from Rainbow MWD customers that are currently on a waitlist for approval will eventually be approved. Rancho California Water District will be making efforts to secure additional grant funding and will utilize testimonials from our customers to support the success and interest in the program. Ms. Weber also provided a breakdown of the project types being applied for.

**12.B COMMUNITY EVENTS UPDATE**

Ms. Weber announced the Blood Drive scheduled for December 18, 2024, here at the District. The event is open to the public and has been shared with customers through monthly bills and a press release.

**13. NEWSLETTER CONTENT PLANNING**

Two newsletters distributed this month featured information on the financial benefits of Rainbow's detachment from the SDCWA, what to expect on the 2025/26 tax bill, our 2024 significant accomplishments, and news of the District being awarded as a Top Workplace for the fourth year. In addition, a special mailer was distributed, further explaining the long-term cost savings following detachment. In January, online bill pay will be encouraged, educational outreach will be included, and the calendar contest and classroom visits will be highlighted, information on rebates offered by MWD and a customer survey will also be included. In February, we will highlight the value of water, including Water Wise for Life Series irrigation tips and continued educational outreach.

**14. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATED MEDIA STORIES**

Ms. Weber reported that Village News recently published six articles highlighting Board actions and the District's many recent accomplishments.

**15. SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

The draft Strategic Communications Plan may be available for Committee review. Chairman Shute requested discussion of the 2025 communication goals.

**16. ADJOURNMENT - To Tuesday, January 21, at 1:00 p.m.**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Shute at 2:24 p.m.

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**Bill Shute, Committee Chairperson**

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**Terese Quintanar, District Secretary**

## COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Item No. 11

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

January 21, 2025

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### SUBJECT

REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE DRAFT STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

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### BACKGROUND

Rainbow Municipal Water District has maintained a Communications & Customer Service Committee for several years, but 2023 marked the first time a staff member was assigned exclusively to communications. Recognizing the need for a clear vision and a structured approach, staff began work on a Strategic Communications Plan to serve as a guiding document for all District communication activities.

Early in 2024, staff held a discovery workshop with members of the Board, the Communications & Customer Service Committee, and key District personnel. This workshop focused on identifying the District's communication strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) and pinpointing the audiences and key messages most relevant to the District's mission. Over the past year, staff have developed a comprehensive draft plan based on these insights, which will help shape annual content calendars and communication tactics moving forward.

The result is a draft Strategic Communications Plan that outlines a clear vision for the District's communication efforts and prioritizes activities to ensure the greatest impact for the community and stakeholders. This plan aims to elevate the District's ability to connect with the public, bolster trust, and foster ongoing collaboration by providing a framework for effective messaging, audience engagement, and transparent communication.

### DESCRIPTION

The attached Strategic Communications Plan is an initial draft, reflecting the staff's efforts to compile feedback and insights from the discovery workshop held in early 2024. While it establishes a foundational framework for how the District communicates with its various stakeholders, some sections still require additional detail and refinement. At this stage, the staff seeks input from the Communications & Customer Service Committee to strengthen the plan's content, ensure alignment with District priorities, and incorporate new ideas that may enhance its overall effectiveness. Feedback will be integrated into a final draft and presented to the Committee for further review and recommendation.

### POLICY/STRATEGIC PLAN KEY FOCUS AREA

Strategic Focus Area Five: Customer Service  
Strategic Focus Area Six: Communication

**ENVIRONMENTAL**

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In accordance with CEQA guidelines Section 15378, the action before the Board does not constitute a "project" as defined by CEQA, and further environmental review is not required at this time.

**BOARD OPTIONS/FISCAL IMPACTS**

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The plan itself has no direct fiscal impact. However, plan elements will require budgetary and staff resources to implement. These resources will be accounted for and approved separately during the annual budget cycle.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Staff defers to committee recommendations.



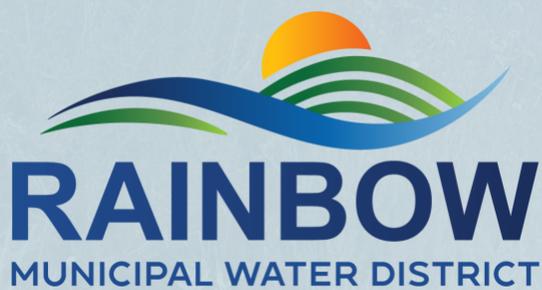
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Karleen Harp  
Administrative Services Manager

February 18, 2025

# Rainbow Municipal Water District

## Strategic Communications Plan



Draft for Communications  
& Customer Service  
Committee Review  
January 21, 2025

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### **To the Board of Directors, District Team, and the Rainbow Community:**

Effective communication is essential—whether we realize it or not, we always send a message. Even when we remain silent or rely on outdated methods, the impression we leave can shape how others perceive us. Recognizing this, Rainbow Municipal Water District has created a new Public Relations Department and, for the first time, developed a formal Strategic Communications Plan.

This plan reflects our shifting communication landscape. As audiences move from print materials to digital channels, we must adapt. Real-time updates, more accessible information, and cost-effective outreach tools allow us to engage customers, community members, and stakeholders swiftly and transparently. By doing so, we strengthen trust, bolster our reputation, and remain responsive to evolving community needs.

At the same time, we recognize the importance of balancing our aspirations with our responsibility to use resources wisely. As a new department operating within a fiscally responsible framework, we will focus on achieving meaningful results by prioritizing the most impactful initiatives. This approach ensures that every investment of time, staff effort, and budget supports our strategic vision, allowing us to advance our communications goals in a measured, sustainable manner.

Communication is not solely the responsibility of one person or team: it's a collective effort. Board members, leadership, and every team member are ambassadors of Rainbow Water's mission and values. Together, we must embody our core values—integrity, professionalism, responsibility, teamwork, and innovation—ensuring that our engagement with the public and each other is aligned with our commitment to reliable, high-quality, and fiscally sustainable services.

This document is a living, evolving resource that will adapt as communication tools change and community expectations shift. By embracing new platforms, refining our approach, and working collaboratively, we can deliver meaningful messages that resonate. In doing so, we will meet today's challenges, anticipate tomorrow's opportunities, and reinforce the bond of trust that underpins all our efforts.

Sincerely,

Karleen Harp

Administrative Services Manager

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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Rooted in our core values, Rainbow Municipal Water District’s communications will embody these guiding principles to ensure clarity, trust, and meaningful engagement:

### **Integrity:**

Be honest, transparent, and fact-based. Provide accurate, reliable information so our community can make informed decisions and have confidence in our actions.

### **Professionalism:**

Maintain a respectful, courteous tone across all channels—present messages clearly and consistently, upholding our reputation as a credible, service-oriented organization.

### **Responsibility:**

Share timely, accessible information and proactively address concerns. Be accountable for our content, ensuring customers and stakeholders can rely on us for prompt, accurate updates.

### **Teamwork:**

Communicate with unity and purpose. Board members, leadership, and staff collaborate as ambassadors for Rainbow Water, strengthening relationships and fostering support through a unified voice.

### **Innovation:**

Embrace evolving communication tools and strategies to reach diverse audiences. Adapt to changing technologies and preferences, ensuring our outreach remains relevant, effective, and accessible.

Following these guiding principles builds trust, encourages participation, and creates lasting connections with our customers and community. Through integrity, professionalism, responsibility, teamwork, and innovation, we will continually refine our communications to support and reflect the community we serve.

## **BRAND STATEMENT AND MISSION**

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### **Brand Statement**

#### **Helping our community grow since 1953**

Since our founding, Rainbow Municipal Water District has helped the communities of Rainbow, Bonsall, and parts of Fallbrook, Oceanside, and Vista grow and adapt to an ever-evolving economic, ecological, and demographic landscape. Building on our agricultural roots, we support farmers, households, and businesses as they embrace efficient, sustainable water-use. Guided by integrity, professionalism, responsibility, teamwork, and innovation, we foster trust through open communication, reliable service, and forward-thinking solutions that strengthen our community now and for future generations.

#### **Rainbow Water Mission**

Rainbow Water's mission is to provide our customers with reliable, high-quality water and water reclamation service in a fiscally sustainable manner.

#### **Communications Mission**

Building on Rainbow Water's mission to provide reliable, high-quality services, this Communications Plan fosters understanding, trust, and collaboration by proactively engaging stakeholders, promoting inclusive dialogue, and sharing information transparently to inspire stewardship and empower a resilient, sustainable community.

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## TARGET AUDIENCES

We identify and understand our audiences to communicate in ways that truly resonate. By tailoring messaging to different audiences, needs, interests, and influences, we build trust, encourage transparency, and strengthen community connections. This approach ensures our efforts are informative, support Rainbow Water’s mission, and foster meaningful engagement.

## INTERNAL AUDIENCES

### Board of Directors

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely, clear and reliable information to make informed decisions</li> <li>• Alternative options and impacts of each option</li> <li>• Education on legal responsibilities and restrictions to ensure compliance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress updates: strategic plan, CIP projects</li> <li>• Decision impact analysis as related to customers, operations, finances, and public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active leaders with voice in the community</li> <li>• Represent District at industry events</li> <li>• Final decision makers on District policy, budget resources, and rates</li> </ul>

### Rainbow Water Employees

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines for job duties, interactions with public, policy, and procedure</li> <li>• Brand, social media, and photography guidelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer feedback channels to improve performance and goals</li> <li>• Relevant District, strategic plan, and industry information to assist with informative decisions</li> <li>• Cross-functional communication, media training, on-site field trips etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct interaction with customers, public, political leaders, and industry professionals</li> <li>• Board member decisions</li> <li>• Culture, performance, and morale of District team</li> </ul>

## Committee Volunteers

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely, clear and reliable information to advise the board</li> <li>• Alternative options and the impact of each option</li> <li>• Communication guidelines for in person and online interactions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant District, strategic plan, and industry information to assist with informative decisions</li> <li>• Decision impact analysis as related to customers, operations, finances, and public</li> <li>• Opportunities to improve programs and community support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members and leaders</li> <li>• Advisors to the Board and staff</li> </ul>

## EXTERNAL AUDIENCES

### Primary Audiences

#### Residents (ratepayer and metered non-ratepayers)

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidence in water reliability and quality</li> <li>• Timely information about shutdowns and road closures</li> <li>• Identify contacts for repair, accounts, bill payments</li> <li>• Emergency procedures: water shutoff, outages.</li> <li>• Easy website navigation for bill payment, rebates, emergency info</li> <li>• Affordable water rates that deliver great value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality and state regulations</li> <li>• Accurate information to ensure transparency</li> <li>• System maintenance and leak prevention</li> <li>• Rebates for commercial and residential customers</li> <li>• Key information: water sources, delivery, leak prevention, rates, rebate programs, and emergency preparedness</li> <li>• Video tutorials on key information</li> <li>• Water reliability during emergencies and fires</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voters and engagement with the community</li> <li>• Dissemination of news to local community</li> <li>• Build collective trust</li> <li>• Share information or misinformation</li> <li>• Testimonials and reviews</li> <li>• Participation in District events and programs</li> </ul>

#### Agricultural Ratepayers

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliable service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grants and reinvestment programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Farm Bureau</li> <li>• Avocado Growers Association</li> </ul>

- Sustainable rates to ensure long-term operations
- Location of meters, easements
- Water quality and impact on trees/crops
- Pressure and flow issues
- Water-use efficiency, best management practices
- Fixed-to-variable ratio and impact
- Communication and representation
- Alternative and potable water resources
- Neighbors, packing houses, community groups and growers

**Secondary Audiences**

**County of San Diego**

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliable service</li> <li>• Emergency and resource sharing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant partnerships</li> <li>• Internships, volunteer, and job opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public opinion</li> <li>• Program funding, JPA, state funding</li> <li>• Project approvals</li> </ul>

**The Members of the Pala Band: Cupeño and Luiseño Native American Tribes**

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination on projects, land development</li> <li>• Emergency support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career opportunities available</li> <li>• Environmental impact of projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host special events and guest speakers (AGA meetings)</li> <li>• Support and recommendation for grant applications</li> </ul>

**Local Schools**

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplemental water education materials</li> <li>• Scholarships and fundraising partnerships</li> <li>• Guest speakers, assemblies</li> <li>• Donations and volunteers for events and programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTE program development, partnerships, work programs, field trips</li> <li>• District’s environmental and construction impacts</li> <li>• STEM education resources</li> <li>• Bridge gap between in class instruction and water industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future workforce labor</li> <li>• Parental opinions</li> <li>• Community sentiment</li> </ul>

**Local Media**

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newsworthy content</li> <li>• Timely emergency information</li> <li>• Press kit, fact sheets as related to content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage breaking news and emergencies</li> <li>• Pre-packaged stories, onsite b-roll</li> <li>• Human interest stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community opinion</li> <li>• Reliable news source</li> <li>• Supplemental info for RMWD keyword searches</li> </ul>

**Neighboring Agencies**

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mutual aid opportunities</li> <li>• Collaboration on outreach programs, and educational campaigns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCWA Poster Contest support</li> <li>• Sharing reports, projects, and best practices</li> <li>• Meet to review challenges, rebate programs, share ideas</li> <li>• To understand our needs and requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperative partnerships</li> <li>• Media stories, quotes</li> <li>• Water industry reputation</li> </ul>

**Local Elected Officials**

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local water agency challenges and solutions</li> <li>• Water quality report/info</li> <li>• Emergency relief support</li> <li>• Support for community events, PR, grants, CIP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the community’s concerns</li> <li>• Accolades, publicity and impact on constituents</li> <li>• Opportunities for mutual aid collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trusted community leader with platform to amplify messages</li> <li>• Political influence to approve grants, projects</li> <li>• Registered voters</li> </ul>

**Homeowners Association (HOA)**

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely information and advance notice of shutdowns</li> <li>• Billing accuracy</li> <li>• Project info, traffic impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irrigation efficiency, water-use restrictions</li> <li>• Tree and turf rebates</li> <li>• Water quality standards</li> <li>• Ensured water reliability</li> <li>• HOA newsletter content and events</li> <li>• Recycled non-potable water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registered voters in community</li> <li>• Association residents</li> <li>• Online reviews</li> </ul>

## Tertiary

### Potential Job Applicants

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career opportunities</li> <li>• To know how to apply for positions</li> <li>• How to prepare for a career in water</li> <li>• TAPS training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current job openings</li> <li>• Wages, benefits, and organizational culture</li> <li>• Management style and approach</li> <li>• The value of public service</li> <li>• How we support the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Reviews</li> <li>• Job referrals</li> <li>• Water industry workers</li> </ul>

### Local Community Groups

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latest information and updates</li> <li>• Guest speakers, educational materials</li> <li>• Water-use efficiency, drought and restrictions</li> <li>• Partnerships for events and contests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How we can support their mission</li> <li>• Rates and explanation for increase/calculation</li> <li>• CropSWAP program</li> <li>• Rebate information</li> <li>• Water quality (PFAS, fluoride, CRR)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership</li> <li>• Future event promotion, volunteers, and partnerships</li> <li>• Large community spheres</li> </ul>

### Developers

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meter availability and sizing requirements</li> <li>• Water/Sewer connection costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water flow and pressure</li> <li>• Water efficient devices/hardware</li> <li>• Rates overview for future residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revenue sources and capacity fees</li> <li>• Growing the community</li> <li>• Attracting new ratepayers</li> </ul>

### Real Estate Agents

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meter installation costs</li> <li>• Outreach materials on establishing new account, water costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selling the value of living in the community</li> <li>• Rates overview for future residents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New residents</li> <li>• Helping to set realistic expectations</li> </ul>

- Landscape guidelines, indoor/outdoor rebates

**Contractors**

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job specifications and contract requirements</li> <li>• Administrative code related to project</li> <li>• Bid opportunities available</li> <li>• Site signage, traffic impacts</li> <li>• Inform customers, and businesses impacted by site traffic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making a profit</li> <li>• Gaining future business</li> <li>• Good references</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District costs for CIP projects</li> <li>• Future project bids</li> </ul>

**Water Industry Groups**

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member support</li> <li>• Guest speakers</li> <li>• Award entries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulations and introduction of new industry standards</li> <li>• Partnerships on legislative efforts</li> <li>• Job postings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry peers, consultants, and reputation management</li> </ul>

**Parents**

Needs	Interests	Influence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality, sources and reliability</li> <li>• Education and outreach programs</li> <li>• Homeschool resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water quality</li> <li>• Water fluoridation</li> <li>• Field trips</li> <li>• Contests, scholarships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other parents</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Young students</li> </ul>

## RECOGNITION TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PALA BAND

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### The Kuupangaxwicheh, Cupeño, and Luiseño Native American Tribes

Rainbow Municipal Water District proudly acknowledges the Pala Band of Mission Indians, specifically the Cupeño, and Luiseño tribes, as the original caretakers of the land on which we operate. We honor their enduring connection to this region and recognize these lands' profound cultural and spiritual significance for their communities.

Our commitment to serving the district goes hand in hand with our respect for the heritage and traditions of the Cupeño and Luiseño tribes. Their deep understanding of sustainable practices and environmental harmony inspires our efforts to protect the natural resources we depend on. As we manage and develop vital water resources, we are mindful of the responsibility to safeguard the ecological integrity of this area and its cultural landmarks. By fostering mutual understanding and collaboration, we aim to create initiatives that uphold the region's environmental health and the rich cultural legacy of its first stewards.

Together with the Pala Band of Mission Indians, we strive to build a future that balances progress with preservation, ensuring that these lands continue to sustain and inspire all who live here for generations.

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## DISTRICT NARRATIVE

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Since 1953, Rainbow Municipal Water District has helped our community grow and thrive by providing reliable, high-quality water and wastewater services for the communities of Rainbow, Bonsall, and parts of Fallbrook, Oceanside, and Vista. As a small and agile water district rooted in agricultural heritage, Rainbow Water is committed to modern efficiency with the ability to respond swiftly to the community's needs. Rainbow Water balances responsible resource management with forward-thinking innovation to meet the evolving needs of households, businesses, and farmers across our service area.

Our dedication to integrity, professionalism, responsibility, teamwork, and innovation are the cornerstone of District operations. These values guide our commitment to fiscal sustainability, transparent communication, and proactive engagement with the people we serve. Rather than functioning like a large bureaucracy, we operate with a cost-conscious, service-focused mindset, ensuring that processes are efficient and customer-centric. We foster trust and collaboration with households, businesses, and agricultural customers through proactive outreach and transparent communication.

By uniting respectful collaboration, responsive service, and pioneering solutions, Rainbow Water empowers customers to make informed decisions about water usage and fosters trust as a community partner. Rainbow Water has a history of fostering stewardship and adaptability to remain steadfast in our promise to provide safe, reliable, and resilient water for the community.

## KEY MESSAGES

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### Key Message 1:

#### **We deliver reliable, high-value service.**

Rainbow Water provides dependable, high-quality water and wastewater services at a fair price, ensuring customers receive excellent value.

We do this by:

1. Delivering safe and reliable water imported from hundreds of miles away for less than one penny per gallon
2. Maintaining and upgrading infrastructure to meet or exceed all water quality regulations
3. Sharing clear, transparent information about rates and ongoing investments

### Intended Audiences:

Customers, Sub-Metered Residents, Real Estate Agents

### Core Values:

Integrity, Responsibility

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### Key Message 2:

#### **We Provide Exceptional Customer Experiences**

Rainbow Water is dedicated to delivering friendly, responsive, and customer-focused services that strengthen trust and satisfaction.

We do this by:

1. Maintaining prompt, reliable customer service channels (phone, online, in-person)
2. Offering user-friendly billing systems and helpful tools like Flume
3. Listening to feedback and consistently refining programs to meet changing needs

**Intended Audiences:** Customers, Future Customers, Real Estate Agents

**Core Values:** Professionalism, Innovation

**Key Message 3:** **We Support Local Agriculture.**

Building on our agricultural roots, Rainbow Water strives to help growers succeed in a changing environment.

We do this by:

1. Promoting water-use efficiency initiatives and sharing timely water availability, quality, and pressure updates
2. Collaborating with agricultural customers to balance economic viability with sustainable water practices
3. Providing technical expertise, advisory committee participation, and innovative rate structures where feasible

**Intended Audiences:** Agricultural customers, growers, nurseries

**Core Values:** Responsibility, Innovation

**Key Message 4:** **We Operate with Transparency and Accountability**

Rainbow Water makes decisions guided by thorough data analysis, responsible governance, and clear communication.

We do this by:

1. Delivering timely, accurate updates to the Board of Directors, committees and stakeholders
2. Presenting well-researched options and their impacts for Board consideration
3. Maintaining open channels for public input and feedback

**Intended Audiences:** Board of Directors, committee members, customers

**Core Values:** Integrity, Responsibility

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<b>Key Message 5:</b>	<b>We Value Our Workforce</b>
	Rainbow Water invests in its employees, recognizing that a skilled, motivated workforce is key to providing outstanding service.
	We do this by:
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Offering training, advancement opportunities, and the tools needed for effective work</li> <li>2. Promoting a positive work culture that attracts new talent and retains experienced staff</li> <li>3. Providing diverse communication channels to facilitate team connections and show appreciation to staff</li> </ol>
<b>Intended Audiences:</b>	Staff, applicants, potential future applicants, schools
<b>Core Values:</b>	Teamwork, Professionalism

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<b>Key Message 6:</b>	<b>We care about our community</b>
	Rainbow Water is committed to meeting the diverse needs of the people we serve, fostering trust, and encouraging meaningful connections.
	We do this by:
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Responding quickly to inquiries, service requests, and emergencies</li> <li>2. Informing customers of financial assistance and efficiency programs</li> <li>3. Hosting or attending community events and offering educational resources</li> </ol>
<b>Intended Audiences:</b>	Customers, Community Groups, Local Schools
<b>Core Values:</b>	Responsibility, Integrity

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<b>Key Message 7:</b>	<b>We Build Strong Partnerships</b>
	Rainbow Water collaborates with local agencies, media, and industry groups to enhance water reliability, share information, and innovate solutions for our community.
	We do this by:

1. Exchanging resources, information, and best practices with regional partners and schools to enhance service reliability and community education
2. Providing timely stories, data, and access to the media, reinforcing community awareness
3. Participating in professional associations, collaborating on infrastructure projects, and maintaining culturally respectful engagement to support community well-being and growth

**Intended Audiences:** Nearby agencies, media, industry groups, tribes, schools, developers, contractors

**Core Values:** Teamwork, innovation

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**Key Message 8:** **We Adapt and Innovate for the Future**

Rainbow Water remains agile and open to new ideas, embracing technology and best practices to serve a growing, evolving community.

We do this by:

1. Exploring new water supply solutions and resource-sharing agreements to ensure reliability and cost-effectiveness
2. Embracing modern technologies and communication tools that meet evolving customer and community needs
3. Continuously refining processes, balancing fiscal responsibility with long-term resilience and environmental stewardship

**Intended Audiences:** All Stakeholders

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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### GOAL 1: Provide Reliable, High-Quality Water & Wastewater Services in a Fiscally Sustainable Manner

#### Objectives

##### 1. Exceed Water Quality Standards

- Regularly monitor and assess infrastructure to ensure safe, dependable service.
- Communicate progress on quality assurance efforts.

##### 2. Maintain Cost-Effective Operations

- Implement operational improvements that maximize efficiency without compromising quality.
- Share clear, transparent updates on costs, budgets, and infrastructure investments.

##### 3. Manage Resources Responsibly

- Allocate financial and operational resources prudently, aligning with the District's core values.
- Maintain fiscal transparency through consistent reporting and Board updates.

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### GOAL 2: Strengthen Customer Relationships & Public Trust

#### Objectives

##### 1. Deliver Clear, Consistent Messaging

- Ensure communications are easy to understand across all platforms (website, social media, newsletters).
- Provide frequent updates on key initiatives, projects, and water quality reports.

##### 2. Foster Engagement & Feedback

- Host open committee meetings, community events, and forums to address questions and concerns.
- Collect customer input via surveys and adjust services based on insights.

##### 3. Enhance Accessibility & Self-Service

- Offer user-friendly tools for account management, billing, and rebates.
- Train staff to resolve issues quickly and effectively, promoting a positive customer experience.

## **GOAL 3: Ensure Transparency & Dialogue on Key Issues**

### **Objectives**

#### **1. Encourage Open Conversations**

- Provide accessible channels for stakeholders to offer feedback and ask questions.
- Host proactive discussions around emerging or potentially controversial topics.

#### **2. Provide Factual, Timely Information**

- Present updates on challenges, controversies, or major projects clearly and respectfully.
- Reinforce trust by sharing supporting data, context, and potential impacts.

#### **3. Communicate Consistently Across Channels**

- Ensure the same accurate information is available on all District platforms.
  - Coordinate messaging so stakeholders receive updates promptly and uniformly.
- 

## **GOAL 4: Promote Preparedness, Efficiency & Innovation**

### **Objectives**

#### **1. Bolster Emergency Preparedness**

- Share resources on emergency procedures and water-use best practices across social media, newsletters, and community events.
- Partner with local schools and community groups to integrate water education and preparedness training.

#### **2. Cultivate a Culture of Efficiency**

- Offer workshops and online resources to encourage responsible water use (e.g., sustainable gardening and water use efficiency tools).
- Expand partnerships with external organizations to keep pace with emerging industry practices and technologies.

#### **3. Drive Continuous Improvement**

- Collect and analyze performance data to measure the effectiveness of communication efforts.
- Remain flexible in adopting new tools or strategies that enhance service quality and operational resilience.

## Tactical Recommendations

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The following categories outline recommended tactics for executing Rainbow’s Strategic Communications Plan. They are designed to be scalable, allowing staff to prioritize efforts that deliver the highest impact relative to available resources.

### 1. Measurement & Adjustment

*Gather data on current perceptions and communication outcomes, then refine strategies based on what works.*

- **Regular Feedback Surveys**  
Conduct short surveys (online or via bill inserts) to gauge customer awareness, satisfaction, and interest in programs.
- **Basic Metrics Tracking**  
Monitor website visits, social media engagement, and e-newsletter open rates to spot trends and pivot accordingly.
- **Sharing Findings Internally**  
Present key data to leadership and relevant committees, using insights to adjust communications approaches and resource allocation.

### 2. Content & Branding

*Develop consistent, audience-centered messaging and maintain a recognizable, trusted brand identity.*

- **“Plain Speak” Content Calendar**  
Plan monthly or quarterly topics (e.g., water quality updates, rates explained, efficiency tips) using accessible language.
- **User-Friendly Backgrounders**  
Create concise overviews of important operations (e.g., how rates are set, water shutdowns) for media requests, outreach events, and website FAQs.
- **Brand Consistency**  
To reinforce brand recognition, use the District’s logo, color palette, and style elements across materials—from brochures to social media graphics.

### 3. District-Managed Media

*Leverage the communication platforms that Rainbow directly controls to inform and engage the community.*

- **Website Enhancements**  
Keep project statuses, water quality reports, and meeting agendas current. Ensure the site is mobile-friendly and easy to navigate.
- **Social Media Focus**  
Pick one or two key platforms to share timely updates, event notices, and service alerts, maximizing engagement without overextending staff.
- **E-Newsletters**  
Send short, visually appealing e-blasts highlighting ongoing projects or upcoming events. Include links to the website for deeper details.

#### **4. Partnerships & Public Engagement**

*Build trust and two-way dialogue with local media, community groups, schools, and other agencies.*

- **Earned Media Outreach**  
Issue periodic press releases or media advisories on significant developments (infrastructure improvements, new programs). Maintain rapport with local outlets for coverage.
- **Community Presentations & Events**  
Attend or host open houses, school visits, and community group meetings. Bring fact sheets and visuals to explain District operations and collect feedback.
- **Neighboring & Regional Collaborations**  
Coordinate with other agencies, Native American tribes, and industry groups to share resources, align projects, and foster innovative solutions that benefit the region.

#### **5. Selective Advertising (as budget allows)**

*Use minimal, targeted ad placements to amplify critical or time-sensitive messages.*

- **Local or Regional Spots**  
Consider cost-effective print or digital ads in community newsletters, small local websites, or specialized bulletins to announce essential updates (e.g., service disruptions).
- **Seasonal Campaigns**  
If necessary, run short-term ads promoting drought awareness or rebate programs, ensuring the spend is proportionate to expected reach and impact.

#### **6. Additional Tools & Initiatives**

*Maintain transparency, celebrate successes, and stay flexible for future opportunities.*

- Annual “State of the District” Summary  
Post an online report or hold a small-scale event highlighting the year’s milestones, financial updates, and upcoming initiatives.
- Recognition & Awards  
Watch for relevant industry awards or community recognition that can bolster the District’s reputation.
- Continuous Improvement  
Periodically revisit these tactics to determine effectiveness, modifying or scaling them based on community feedback, changing technology, or budget realities.

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## COMMUNICATION TOOLBOX

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### Engagement Resources

#### Online and Social Media:

- Website improvements for navigation, reorganized content, photography, and digital forms with accessibility compliance
- YouTube channel: live meetings, catalog of meetings, tutorials, project highlights,
- Event and community updates
- Social media reels or carousels with key information
- Job listings via Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.
- K-12 Student art competition: video, photography, art, digital art
- Community spotlight videos, news: businesses, growers, partners, events
- Translate print and digital materials to Spanish
- Emergency response to support the community

#### Community Events:

- High school field trip to Headquarters
- Elementary school presentations
- Annual Fallbrook Avocado Festival
- Speakers Bureau
- North County Fire Open House
- North County Water Agencies Poster Contest
- Cal State San Marcos Job and Internship Fair
- Vallecitos Elementary School Rainbow Run
- Farm Bureau/Avocado Growers Association/Fallbrook Garden Club meetings
- Fallbrook Christmas Parade
- San Diego Blood Bank Drive

#### Educational Materials

- Community Newsletter, non-ratepayer Quarterly Newsletter
- Rebate program flyers, one-pagers (English/Spanish)
- Rack cards (English/Spanish)
- Website resource catalog: K-8 education, landscape, videos, tips
- Informative social media posts, videos/reels, infographics
- Brochures and activity/coloring book (English/Spanish)
- Water education and How to Video series

#### Community Feedback:

- Customer service survey
- Calls, comments, online reviews
- Post-event survey
- Social media comments, sharing information

## PERFORMANCE METRICS

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### Overview:

Rainbow Water will measure the success of its programs through targeted metrics to enhance outreach and stakeholder engagement, ensuring sustainable water management and community value. We aim to optimize our efforts, increase community engagement, and enhance resource management.

### Framework:

The key performance indicators focus on activity tracking to provide insight for the scale and reach of Rainbow Water's outreach programs and communications.

- **Customer Engagement:**
  - Website traffic, click-through rate, time spent on each page, traffic sources
  - Email list subscribes, unsubscribe, bounce, click-to-open, click-through rate
  - Social Media traffic, follow/subscribe rate, and impressions
  - YouTube video: views, subscribe rate, online meeting views, link sources
  - Online and in-person attendance at BOD and Committee meetings
  - Click rates for QR codes
  - Download and/or view rate for digital brochures
  - Customer service call log with topics related to newsletter or web content
- **Program Outputs:**
  - Submission data for rebate programs, applications, grants awarded, water surveys, and Met programs
  - Educational outreach programs scheduled and completed.
  - Art contest submissions and awardee feedback.
  - Press releases and news stories published by media.
- **Digital Impact:**
  - Growth in social media followers and engagement rates.
  - Increase in organic website traffic driven by newsletter content, direct mail, email subscribes, SEO audit, and social media.
- **Educational Impact:**
  - Post-program survey results to measure learning outcomes for students.
  - Feedback from educators on content usefulness and alignment with curriculum.

- School sites implementing new water-use efficiency programs and waste solutions.
- **Continuous Improvement**  
Rainbow Water will work to continuously improve and review the metrics to identify trends, gaps, and effective initiatives. Campaign and program data will be reviewed to assist with enhancement and adjustment of outreach, programs, and stakeholder engagement.

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## CONCLUSION

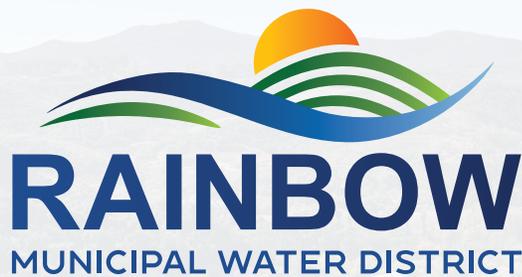
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Rainbow Municipal Water District developed this plan to build better relationships with our stakeholders to increase transparency and visibility of programs, projects, and services within the community. The goal is to enhance Rainbow Water's prominence and ensure the community is well-informed on key issues related to water and sewer.

A key element of this plan is the improvement of water literacy in the service area. While implementing this strategy will require resources and commitment, Rainbow Water understands the long-term benefits will far outweigh the costs. As the media landscape has progressed from print to online, it is paramount for the District to provide our shareholders with more frequent and trustworthy information using a diverse selection of platforms. The District aims to build upon the current communication channels to be more effective and reach a larger target audience.

Rainbow Water's role in providing essential water and sewer services impacts every resident, and clear messaging is essential to maintaining trust and credibility. Misinformation, often spread through social media, poses a significant challenge, and responding with accurate, consistent information will help counteract any harm caused by false narratives. By adopting a proactive and transparent communication approach, Rainbow Water can ensure the delivery of accurate to the intended audience.

As Rainbow Water continues to deliver reliable water services to our community, this communications plan will lay the foundation for the District's efforts to effectively connect and serve our community.



**RAINBOW**  
MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

**COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER**  
FEBRUARY 2025 . ISSUE 243

## Rainbow Water Provides Critical Aid to Support the Eaton, Lilac and Pala Fires

Rainbow Water supported firefighting efforts in January by sending crews to assist local fire agencies with emergency response to the Lilac and Pala Fires, and mutual aid for water agencies impacted by the Eaton Fire in Altadena.

Rainbow Water responded to a mutual aid request on Jan. 16 through the California Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (CalWARN) on behalf of the Rubio Canon Water Association for a team to dewater several reservoir sites destroyed by the Eaton Fire in Los Angeles County. Four of Rainbow Water's operations team members traveled over 100 miles from Fallbrook to Altadena for the three-day mutual aid assignment. Team members worked night and day to remove water quickly from the Meridian Pump Station and Calavera Water Tanks to enable Contractors to remove debris from the reservoir sites to restore water service. Rainbow Water was among several water districts in Southern California to provide critical mutual aid following the Los Angeles Fires.

"We were proud to aid another small water district and work alongside numerous utility agencies who responded to restore the communities devastated by the Eaton Fire," said Robert Gutierrez, Rainbow Water Chief Operations Officer.

After returning from the Eaton Fire, Rainbow Water crews were working on a main break in the early hours of Jan. 21 when the Pala and Lilac Fires started. Rainbow Water emergency response protocols were activated, team members arrived at the command post to assist firefighters with water for fire suppression, emergency alerts were posted to the website with office closures due to Rainbow's headquarters being within the mandatory evacuation area, and text messages were sent to staff with evacuation information. North County Fire and CalFire coordinated with Rainbow Water to relocate the incident command post from the Park and Ride lot at SR 76 to Rainbow Water headquarters' lower yard off Highway 395. Rainbow Water sent additional support through a water truck that stopped the progress of a spot fire behind Sullivan Elementary School in Bonsall.



Rainbow Water General Manager, Jake Wiley assesses the Lilac Fire damage around Hutton Tank in Bonsall.

Preparation was key to Rainbow Water's swift response, as proactive measures were taken during the active SDG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff alert, which preempted the fires, to fill water tanks and fuel backup generators at pump stations. In addition, a \$160,000 grant awarded to Rainbow through CalOES has aided with funding the removal of dry brush around all infrastructure to create defensible space. This move was key to protecting the 4.0 million gallon capacity Hutton Water Storage Tank from the Lilac Fire that burned around and downhill from the tank.

"Fire is a reality in our district, and at Rainbow Water, we are very forward-thinking in our preparation that has come out of our past wildfire experience," said Gutierrez. "We are constantly improving emergency response by regularly checking systems, including fire hydrants, and continue fuel management to mitigate risk around tanks, pump stations, and lift stations."

Water agencies have been at the epicenter of the recent firefighting efforts. The Rainbow Water team does not take any emergency lightly after experiencing the 2017 Lilac Fire, which burned 4,100 acres and 157 structures in Bonsall and Oceanside. Rainbow Water is home to San Diego County's first Rapid Aerial Water Supply (RAWS) site, which allows helicopter pilots access to a quick-fill water station to aid in aerial fire support. The RAWS system was instrumental in rapidly suppressing the recent Garden Fire when it was used for more than 36 aerial water drops, aiding in protecting nearby homes.

"The loss from the recent fires has reinforced the urgent need to fund future RAWS heli-hydrant sites, redundant power and source of supply projects, and ensure adequate reserves are available for emergency response," said Jake Wiley, Rainbow Water General Manager.



Read more about how Rainbow Water prepares for emergency events by scanning the code or visit: [rainbowmwd.ca.gov/emergency-info](https://rainbowmwd.ca.gov/emergency-info)





Lake Oroville, Butte County

# Making Conservation a California Way of Life

In an ongoing effort to enhance water storage and supply in California, the State Water Resources Control Board (CA SWRCB) has adopted a new urban water use plan, Making Conservation a California Way of Life. The new state-mandated water-use efficiency standard changed its indoor water use goal from 55 to 47 gallons per capita per day (GPCD) for every urban water supplier in the state, effective Jan. 1, 2025. The water use efficiency standards apply to urban water suppliers, including Rainbow Water, and are used as a guide to create water budgets. The standard does not impact Rainbow Water customers, as it applies to the water providers, not individual consumers. Rainbow Water's usage is well below the new per capita standard due to many years of conservation and falling water demands in the service area. The standard also excludes agricultural water demands, a key reason the standard does not impact Rainbow Water customers. The regulation requires Rainbow Water to report bi-annually on its measures to monitor water conservation practices.

The result of the standard is long-term best practices to prepare communities for water shortages and reduce the need for emergency water reductions. Read more about conservation efforts and how the new standard assists water districts in developing customer water budgets:

[rainbowmwd.ca.gov/conservation](https://rainbowmwd.ca.gov/conservation)

## Water Supply Conditions Update

Southern California has experienced an unusually dry start to 2025 due to the effects of a La Niña weather pattern that held storms to the northern part of the state and decreased precipitation in the South to start the water year, which is tracked by State officials from Oct 1 - Sept 30. Effective water management from two straight above-average precipitation and Sierra snowpacks in the 2023 and 2024 periods kept large storage reservoirs in California well above average to start the 2025 water year. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) snowpack survey from 130 stations throughout the Sierra Nevada reported snow water content at 81 percent of average as of Feb. 7 and 116% of average in the critical northern part of the State. The Sierra Nevada snowpack supplies 30% of Southern California's imported water. The State Water Project's largest reservoir at Lake Oroville in Butte County (pictured above) reported 137 percent of the average capacity for this time of year. The snowpack survey report is issued from January to April of each year, and the data is key to DWR managing the California State Water Project Supply. Over the past two years, DWR has prepared for the dramatic changes in weather conditions to increase its ability to capture water during flood conditions with a focus on climate resilience with flood capture, reviving groundwater, and reservoir recharge efforts.

### Local Water Reservoirs

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California reported that reservoirs were above historical averages as of Jan. 28. Local storage facilities that feed into the Rainbow Water service area include Lake Skinner in Temecula and Diamond Valley Lake in Hemet, reported above 90 percent of the average. Diamond Valley Lake was constructed to provide emergency storage to the region and currently has 786,300 acre-feet of storage, which is enough to serve water to approximately two million homes for a year. The imported water supply through local water reservoirs and the State Water Project both report a positive start for 2025.

## Flow Monitor Device Rebates for Customers

Track your home water usage with flow monitor devices to receive real-time data on water usage and leak notifications. For a limited time, Metropolitan Water District has launched a flow monitor pilot program for customers to select from five different devices at numerous price points that pair with most water meter types. Some devices require professional installation by a licensed plumber and the rebate amount varies per device.



Metropolitan Water District programs include **Flo by Moen**, **Phyn Plus** and **Streamlabs Control** devices that detect indoor water use through a free app with remote and automatic shut off capability, and require professional installation. **Flume** and **Streamlabs Monitor** are self-installed devices with free app subscription.

Rainbow Water offers **Flume**, a self-installed device that monitor indoor and outdoor water use through a free mobile app. Rainbow Water customers receive an instant rebate with purchase price of \$49 at [flumewater.com/rainbow](https://flumewater.com/rainbow)

Visit the Be Water Wise website to identify device compatibility, receive rebate eligibility, find a contractor and submit an online application at: <https://tinyurl.com/3p5vwb7k>

## Student Programs

### ACWA Scholarships for Future Water Leaders

As a member of the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), Rainbow Water is proud to share several ACWA scholarship opportunities for high-achieving graduate or undergraduate students majoring in a water resources-related field. Five scholarship opportunities of up to \$10,000 are available for college students in the Rainbow Water service area. All scholarship applications must be submitted online by March 1. For a complete list of qualification and eligibility requirements, please scan the code or visit ACWA's scholarships page at: [acwa.com/scholarships](https://acwa.com/scholarships)



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# Municipal Water Leader

Volume 12 Issue 1

January 2025



**Andrea Huizar Beymer of  
the San Antonio Water System:  
Water Service Reliability From  
San Antonio's World-Leading Utility**

# Avocados and Affluence: The Rainbow Municipal Water District Accommodates Change



This view of the Rainbow Water service area illustrates its low-density land use.

**A**s farm fields give way to fast-growing bedroom communities, the Rainbow Municipal Water District, located north of San Diego, California, is selling less water to agricultural customers. To respond, the district must boost water use efficiency and secure funding. In this interview, Municipal Water Leader talks with General Manager Jake Wiley about how the district switched to a lower-cost water source and has partnered with other districts on the new, popular CropSWAP program, which in its first year distributed nearly \$900,000 in grant funding to agricultural customers to replace their crops with more drought-tolerant choices. The district has also built a new sewer lift station that can accommodate the area's growth and handle the increased flows triggered by increasing climate change-caused wet weather events.

**Municipal Water Leader:** Please tell us about your background and how you came to be in your current position.

**Jake Wiley:** I am the general manager of the Rainbow Municipal Water District. I have been in the water industry for about 25 years. I was in the private sector for a decade as an engineering consultant. Over the last 15 years, I have worked for two public agencies. I worked for around 12 years at Rancho California Water District in Temecula. Then, just over a year ago, I came to Rainbow Water after the former general manager retired.

**Municipal Water Leader:** Please introduce Rainbow Water.

**Jake Wiley:** The district was formed in 1953 to import supplemental water to San Diego's North County area from

the Colorado River, which was first made available to the region in the 1940s. The groundwater resources couldn't keep up with the local agricultural demand, so imported water, which was inexpensive at the time, was a necessity. Today, our 57 employees provide water and wastewater services to about 9,000 water accounts over a relatively large service area of about 85 square miles. Our water system consists of 350 miles of pipeline, 14 storage tanks, 3 large reservoirs, and 10 pump stations. The district also owns and operates a sewer collection system that services approximately 3,400 accounts and consists of 70 miles of pipelines and 8 lift stations. We contract with our neighbor, the City of Oceanside, for wastewater treatment services.

**Municipal Water Leader:** Would you tell us about the landscape, hydrology, and land use in your service area?

**Jake Wiley:** We have beautiful topography that makes for picturesque rural living. Our service area extends from 100 feet above sea level to elevations of more than 2,200 feet, which makes moving and delivering water energy intensive and requires high operating pressures in certain locations. The district is mostly rural and arid. We are in Southern California, so we get, on average, about 14 inches of rain a year. The primary land use in our service area has historically been agricultural and rural residential. We have many larger-lot properties across our expansive service area, which also creates a financial challenge because there are fewer customers to fund the required infrastructure than in more densely populated areas.

Although we still primarily serve rural communities and agricultural customers, we have seen the land use start to



shift over the last 10–15 years toward higher-density single-family housing. About 25 percent of our accounts remain agricultural; those accounts still make up approximately 60 percent of our water sales. The other 75 percent of our customers are residential and commercial; they make up the other 40 percent of water sales.

**Municipal Water Leader:** Where does your district source its water?

**Jake Wiley:** One hundred percent of our water is imported. It is a blend of Colorado River water and water from California’s State Water Project. Those sources terminate at Lake Skinner, which is a Metropolitan Water District of Southern California storage and treatment facility about 15 miles north of us. Metropolitan’s Skinner Treatment Plant delivers water to Rainbow Water through large aqueducts and pipelines that run through our service area. From the district’s inception in 1953, we were a member of the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), which is a Metropolitan member agency. However, on November 1, 2024, after many years of planning, we made a switch in our wholesale supplier and reorganized our entire district boundary. We deannexed from SDCWA and annexed into Eastern Municipal Water District. Eastern is a large wholesaler just north of us that serves large portions of Riverside County. We will still get our water from Lake Skinner but at a lower wholesale rate.

We made the switch because we were dealing with high water costs coupled with drastic reductions in demand in our service area. That is due partly to water conservation efforts, which we fully support, but also in large part because we were

losing our avocado and citrus farms. The high water cost, in concert with other pressures, was driving many of our farmers to cut down trees and halt production, which reduced our water sales by nearly two-thirds over the past 20 years. This switch is an effort to secure less expensive water to preserve agriculture and benefit all the district’s customers.

**Municipal Water Leader:** Does Rainbow Water purify its imported water, and are there any concerns in the district about per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) or other contaminants of emerging concern?

**Jake Wiley:** The downside of importing 100 percent of our water is that we are subject to increases in the cost of the commodity, which are largely outside our control. However, the benefit is that we have not had to deal with contaminants, such as PFAS, that are found primarily in groundwater. Those have not materialized in the large imported supplies. The water comes to us fully treated and does not require additional purification. However, we do augment disinfection residuals within our distribution system to ensure that the water we deliver is safe and of the highest quality.

**Municipal Water Leader:** Please tell us about the sewer lift station you recently completed.

**Jake Wiley:** Over the last 5 years, an area of our district added about 2,500 single-family homes, equating to a 35 percent increase in our service connections. We built a new sewer lift station to handle the growth in the sewer flows. Those facilities, which took 2 years to build, provide capacity for both current and future connections. We see residential development continuing, especially in corridors that are next to major thoroughfares. The lift station also gives us operational flexibility, as it has a large amount of emergency storage for wet weather flows. We have seen increases in wintertime flows caused by wet weather. Climate change seems to be causing more intense storms and extreme wet winters, which heavily affect our sewer collection system. This project improves our ability to handle those changes.

**Municipal Water Leader:** What other capital improvement projects have you undertaken?

**Jake Wiley:** We are finishing up three new pump stations related to the wholesale water switch, which have made it a big undertaking. We needed to replace several connections to SDCWA facilities at the south end of our district.

Beyond that, the majority of our projects consist of the rehabilitation and replacement of aging infrastructure. Much of our buried pipelines are steel, constructed 50–70 years ago, so infrastructure repair and replacement are desperately needed. Those types of projects, mainly pipeline replacements, have become very expensive, so the ability to plan and execute is going to be a heavy focus of our capital improvement program.

**Municipal Water Leader:** Would you tell us about the district's backflow testing program?

**Jake Wiley:** About 4,000 of our water accounts have a backflow device. Our staff tests each device annually. We have one employee who does much of the testing and follow-up when a device fails or needs repair. We charge a small fee to each customer that has a backflow on their service to cover the cost of that testing.



The Pala Mesa Heli-Hydrant was built to assist with fighting local wildfires.

**Municipal Water Leader:** Would you tell us about the water conservation programs you offer to your customers?

**Jake Wiley:** We participate in various regional residential programs for water conservation, which include rebates for low-flow plumbing fixtures and turf replacement. Those programs have been successful here, as they have been throughout the state. But we get the most bang for our buck by targeting conservation programs to the 25 percent of our customers who are agricultural, since they account for the majority of our water sales. We partner with many organizations, including our local Farm Bureau and other local agricultural groups, to offer grant funding for irrigation upgrades that help our ag customers save water, including weather-based controllers and ground cover.

We recently partnered with six local agencies to launch a new program called CropSWAP. The program was started by Rancho Water, my previous employer, and extended regionally to all agricultural customers in the North County region and southwestern Riverside County. It provides funds to help farmers implement sustainability projects. This includes root stock upgrades for avocados to encourage the use of more drought- and salt-tolerant varieties and incentives to switch from higher-water-use crops, such as avocados and citrus, to a lower-water-use crops, such as wine grapes. Grants from the California Department of Water Resources fund a majority of the CropSWAP program.

CropSWAP has been incredibly popular. We have distributed funds to our agricultural customers for about

70 projects, with nearly \$900,000 in grant funding allocated in our service area alone. The program not only brings water savings but helps ensure the long-term sustainability of agriculture in our community. We are heavily invested in that. We continue to promote the program and are looking to potentially secure more funding, as we may exhaust our current funds in the first year.

**Municipal Water Leader:** Would you tell us about Rainbow Water's educational outreach programs?

**Jake Wiley:** We have strong partnerships with our local schools, from the elementary to the high school level. We also partner with our local community colleges. One program that we are particularly proud of is a STEM day we host for our local high school students. They visit our facility twice per school year for a 1-day program that shows students what the water and wastewater business is all about. We show them the innovative technology we are using for metering and system operations. We felt that people in general do not have a great understanding of that technology, so educating our students has been a huge focus for us.

I think it's also important that young people coming out of high school and college understand that there are great careers available in water and wastewater. Finding good-quality talent and people who are interested in the industry has been a challenge over my whole career, but especially over the last 4–5 years. We take every opportunity to partner locally to spread the word to students and let them know of the fantastic opportunities available in this sector.

**Municipal Water Leader:** What is your vision for the future?

**Jake Wiley:** The future is bright for our district. Securing a lower-cost water supply source has given us the ability to tackle some capital improvements that have been long deferred. We are aiming to continue to provide relief to the agricultural sector so we can maintain that part of our community, which has been in serious decline.

Beyond that, our vision for the future is to continue to find ways to innovate and operate more efficiently. Like many of the water districts around us, we are feeling the pressures of reduced water sales and revenues while having the same amount or even more infrastructure to maintain and replace at a very high cost. As a special district, and as servants of the community, we must meet the challenges we face to ensure the continued success of the region. [M](#)



*Jake Wiley is the general manager of the Rainbow Municipal Water District. For more on Rainbow Water, visit [rainbowmwd.ca.gov](http://rainbowmwd.ca.gov).*

# FALLBROOK & BONSALE VILLAGE NEWS

## Rainbow MWD approves purchase order for odor control chemicals

Joe Naiman, Village News Reporter  
January 2, 2025

An odor control product called Bioxide will be used in the Rainbow Municipal Water District's wastewater collection system.

Rainbow's board voted 5-0 Dec. 10 to approve a purchase order with Evoqua for the chemical. Rainbow will pay \$3.92 per gallon in minimum 2,400-gallon loads for the Bioxide.

"It's really to sequester odors or eliminate odors in our wastewater collection system," said Rainbow General Manager Jake Wiley.

The benefits will be to more than just residents within smelling distance of the sewer system. "It also protects our pipelines," Wiley said. "It also protects our infrastructure from corrosion."

Rainbow has not had an active odor control program for the district's wastewater system. The construction of the Horse Creek Ridge and Citro developments and the new Thoroughbred Lift Station has increased wastewater flows in the system, so some members of the public have contacted Rainbow staff about odors. Rainbow staff conducted three odor control studies which evaluated different chemicals and their effectiveness in eliminating odors.

The products of the three companies were evaluated for their effectiveness in eliminating odors along the Highway 76 corridor to the last lift station at Old River Road and Little Gopher Canyon, and the evaluation also involved the cost per gallon of each company's chemicals.

USP, Suez, and Evoqua participated in the trial of their products. The chemicals were injected at the Rancho Viejo and Horse Creek lift stations. Monitoring stations were established at Highway 76 and Old Highway 395, the Thoroughbred Lift Station, and the Golf Club Lift Station. The odors had to be mitigated below 25 parts per million, which is the level detectable by humans.

The first study was for the USP product SuFeLox, which was effective in eliminating odors. However, the chemical negatively impacted the sensor on a flow meter at Horse Creek Lift Station; an excessive amount of iron build-up caused the flow meter to

malfunction. Use of SuFeLox would require Rainbow staff to disassemble the flow meter and clean the inside with vinegar regularly to resolve the issue.

The second study utilized the Suez product ProSweat. The odor treatment took longer than expected to be effective in reducing odors. The reduction was most noticeable near the injection area but less effective downstream.

Bioxide is the Evoqua chemical used for odor control. That trial lasted 60 days. Evoqua delivered a 2,000-gallon tank, installed injection lines to the wet well at Horse Creek, and provided a cloud-based platform to monitor and adjust chemical flows.

The City of Oceanside also uses Bioxide to control odors in its downstream system. The Rainbow test indicated that Bioxide was the most effective product at reducing odors within the system and had little impact on existing infrastructure.

Rainbow staff will be in full control of monitoring the dosing information and will work with Evoqua on appropriate dosing solutions.

Based on an average daily flow of 290,000 million gallons per day from the Horse Creek Lift Station, an estimated 60 to 100 gallons per day of Bioxide (the variance is due to higher discharges on weekends than on weekdays) will be required at the feed site to remove all existing hydrogen sulfide and prevent the generation of hydrogen sulfide along the force main, although the actual dose rates will depend on the system's flow rates and Rainbow's specific treatment goals.

The Evoqua product is also the most cost-effective solution. The \$3.92 per gallon including applicable taxes was less than half of the SuFeLox or ProSweat cost.

# Everything Fallbrook .org

*News and events in Fallbrook, California*

## **FPUD, Rainbow Water, and North County Fire District Remain Ready for Wildfire Emergencies**

January 16, 2025

With another round of Santa Ana winds whipping through the region, your local water and fire districts are working closely together in case of emergency.

Fallbrook Public Utility District, Rainbow Municipal Water District, and North County Fire Protection District service areas remain at elevated risk for wildfires, and in response, they are taking proactive measures to ensure the safety of the North San Diego County communities they serve.

Together, these agencies have developed comprehensive emergency preventive measures to ensure swift response to wildfire emergencies. This includes sharing staff, increasing crews, and sharing all available information, vehicles, and resources to support each agency.

“During red flag warnings, NC Fire has deployed additional crews and our command team is ready to act swiftly,” said Keith McReynolds, NC fire chief. “Prepositioned firefighting resources continue to be staged in the region, prepared to aggressively engage.”

When a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) event warning is received from San Diego Gas and Electric, water crews proactively fill water tanks to increase storage and prepare backup generators at pump stations. Both Fallbrook and Rainbow Water work tirelessly 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to provide water services. They also collaborate with the North County Fire Protection District, San Diego County Sheriff's Department, and other neighboring water agencies to reduce the risk of emergencies that impact the water supply.

This includes participation in SDG&E daily briefings leading up to and during a PSPS event to ensure a full understanding of the start and end of areas impacted by a power shutoff event. Fallbrook has a command center in its boardroom—a central hub for coordinating and carrying out orders, assessing roads, risks, and conditions, and supervising tasks. The centralized headquarters was created with NC Fire to develop the centralized command location in case of a fire or natural disaster.

“We can't control when or where a fire sparks, but what we can do is be proactive and strategically prepare,” said Jack Bebee, general manager of FPUD.

Fallbrook and Rainbow Water have large water storage facilities designed to exceed the current demands of the system. As a result, water is readily available to increase system reliability during these forecasted higher-risk weather events. In addition, the two water districts operate large storage reservoirs: Fallbrook's Red Mountain Reservoir, with a capacity of 440 million gallons, and Rainbow Water's Morro Reservoir holds a capacity of 150 million gallons. The reservoirs are essential to the everyday operations of each water district and are kept in service to bolster system reliability.

“Our crews have supported firefighting efforts during major events in the past, and as a result, we have developed a proactive approach when high-danger fire weather events are noticed to ensure we are as prepared as possible to serve and assist the fire protection agencies that protect our community,” said Jake Wiley, Rainbow Water's general manager. “The heli-hydrant connected to our Pala Mesa tank was key to combating the recent Garden Fire with 30 aerial water drops from North County Fire and Cal Fire to increase effectiveness and protect homes in the fire path.”

The Rapid Aerial Water Supply or heli-hydrant was established in 2021 as a joint project with North County Fire Protection District and Cal Fire and was installed as a proactive measure following the Lilac Fire in 2017. The heli-hydrant is readily available for helicopter pilots to access up to 5,000 gallons of water in minutes through an automatic open-top tank supplied by Rainbow Water's 6.0 million gallon capacity Pala Mesa tank.

As residents, you can play a vital role:

- Update your emergency contact information with your utility provider to receive notifications for outages and emergency events.
- Follow Cal Fire's Ready, Set, Go wildfire action plan to prepare for an emergency.
- Heed fire and evacuation notices amid an emergency event.
- Clear brush and debris from your structures to create defensible space.
- Download the Genasys and Watch Duty emergency alert apps for real-time updates.

# FALLBROOK & BONSTALL VILLAGE NEWS

## Collaborative effort puts out fires

Lucette Moramarco, Editor

January 30, 2025

Three fires started burning in the Fallbrook/Bonsall area in the early morning hours of Jan. 21 but were kept from growing out of control by the joint efforts of more than 40 fire departments.

No cause has been revealed yet for any of the three as investigations continue, but arson is one possibility.

The smallest of the three, the Riverview fire in the north part of Fallbrook was contained to one acre within three hours with only one outbuilding destroyed. The Pala fire burned 17 acres but no structures were damaged and the fire was at 100% containment before noon.

The biggest one, the Lilac fire consumed 85 acres, damaging three residential structures and destroying one outbuilding. Containment was listed at 100% the next day, Wednesday, Jan. 22 at 7:51 p.m.

There were no injuries reported from any of the fires and the hydrant was not used due to the darkness of the hour when the fires started.

North county Fire Chief Keith McReynolds said, "During the red flag conditions that night, we experienced three fires. Each fire broke out within the footprint of our region's three most historically devastating wildfires: the Gavilan Fire in 2002, the Rice Fire in 2007, and the Lilac Fire in 2017.

"These fires were kept relatively small thanks to the grit, determination, and exceptional efforts of our firefighters," McReynolds continued, "Because of the preparation and collaboration of local, county, and state officials, we achieved a successful outcome despite the challenging circumstances."

Besides North County Fire, San Diego County Fire and Cal Fire, the fires were fought by personnel from all over the state as well as Oregon,

Area firefighter came from Escondido, Oceanside, Rancho Santa Fe, Vista, Pala, Pauma, Camp Pendleton, San Marcos,

Other California firefighters were from Cameron Park, OES, Tulare, Bakersfield, Orange Cove, Fresno City, Clovis, Hayward, Fremont, Oakland Alameda County, Clements Rural FD,



North County Fire Protection District and CAL FIRE/San Diego County Fire remain in Unified Command on the Lilac Fire as Chief McReynolds leads a briefing at 0700 hours, Jan. 22 on Rainbow Municipal Water District's site, to discuss the Incident Commands' action plan with incoming crews for the next operational period. NCFPD Photo

Liberty Rural County, Waterloo-Morada, Lodi, Stockton, South San Joaquin County, Porterville, Kings County, CA Dept of Corrections, Ventura County, Cleveland National Forest and Lassen National Forest.

Oregon fire departments that came to help include Halsey, Harrisburg, Sweet Home, Scio, Oregon EMAC, Canby, Molalla, Estacada, Hoodland, and Clackamas.

### By the numbers

#### **The Pala fire was contained by –**

Type III Engines: 18

Type I Engines: 6

Type VI Engines: 2

Water Tenders: 4

Chiefs: 6

Firefighters: 90

#### **The Lilac fire saw even more action with –**

Type III Engines: 39

Type I Engines: 15

Water Tenders: 10

Dozers: 8

Chiefs: 15

Firefighters: 214

# FALLBROOK & BONSTALL VILLAGE NEWS

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January 25, 2025

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# FALLBROOK & BONSTALL VILLAGE NEWS

## Rainbow Water supports local agencies in Eaton, Lilac and Pala fires

February 6, 2025

Rainbow Municipal Water District supported firefighting efforts in January by sending crews to assist local fire agencies with emergency response to the Lilac and Pala fires, and fire recovery for water agencies impacted by the Eaton Fire in Altadena.

Rainbow Water responded to a mutual aid request on Jan. 16 from California Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (CalWARN) on behalf of the Rubio Canon Water Association, for a team to dewater several reservoir sites destroyed by the Eaton Fire.

Four of Rainbow Water's operations team members traveled over 100 miles from Fallbrook to the Rubio Canon Land and Water Association in Altadena for the three-day mutual aid assignment. Team members worked night and day to remove water quickly from the Meridian Pump Station and Calavera Water Tanks to then allow additional mutual aid crews to remove debris from the reservoir sites.

Rubio Canon Land and Water Association was founded in 1886 and provides water to approximately 9,600 people on more than 3,140 service connections in Altadena. Approximately 35% of Rubio Canon Land and Water Association's service connections and three reservoirs were destroyed by the Eaton Fire, including wood-covered reservoirs in operation since 1934.

Rainbow Water was among several water districts in Southern California to provide critical mutual aid for the Eaton and Palisades fires.

"We were proud to aid another small water district and work alongside numerous utility agencies who responded to restore the communities devastated by the Eaton Fire," said Robert Gutierrez, Rainbow Water Chief Operations Officer.

After returning from the Eaton Fire, Rainbow Water crews were working on a main break in the early hours of Jan. 21 when the Pala and Lilac Fires started. Rainbow Water District emergency response protocols were activated, team members arrived onsite to assist firefighters with water to aid in fire suppression, emergency alerts were posted to the website with office closures, and text messages were sent to staff with evacuation information. North County Fire and CalFIRE coordinated with Rainbow Water to relocate the incident command post from the Park and Ride lot



Members of Rainbow Water's Operations Department, Bernie Nunez, Brandon Hebron, Chris Hand, and COO Robert Gutierrez, assisted an Altadena water district with the cleanup of sites destroyed by the Eaton Fire.

at SR 76 to Rainbow Water headquarters lower yard parking lot near Highway 395. Rainbow Water sent additional support by way of a water truck that stopped progress of a spot fire behind Sullivan Elementary School.

Preparation was key to Rainbow Water's swift response, as proactive measures were taken during the active SDG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff alert to fill water tanks and place backup generators at pump stations. A \$160,000 grant has aided with funding the removal of dry brush around all infrastructure to create defensible space, a move that was key to saving Hutton Tank from the Lilac Fire that burned around and downhill from the tank.

"Fire is a reality in our district, and at Rainbow Water, we are very forward-thinking in our preparation that has come out of our past wildfire experience," said Gutierrez. "We are constantly improving emergency response by regularly checking systems, including fire hydrants, and continue fuel management to mitigate risk around tanks, pump stations, and lift stations."

Water agencies have been at the epicenter of the recent firefighting efforts. The Rainbow Water team does not take any emergency lightly after experiencing the 2017 Lilac Fire, which burned 4,100 acres and 157 structures in Bonsall and Oceanside. Rainbow Water is among the most proactive water agencies in the region and is home to San Diego County's first Rapid Aerial

# FALLBROOK & BONSAILL VILLAGE NEWS

Water Supply (RAWS) site, which allows helicopter pilots access to a quick-fill water station to aid in aerial fire support.

“The loss from the recent fires has reinforced the urgent need to fund future RAWS heli-hydrant sites, redundant power and source of supply projects, and ensure adequate reserves are available for emergency response,” said Jake Wiley, Rainbow Water General Manager.



Rainbow Water General Manager, Jake Wiley assesses the Lilac Fire damage around Hutton Tank in Bonsall.