



For Immediate Release

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Milestone Agreement: Local water companies sign agreement for groundwater management in the Yucaipa Basin

Calimesa, California—The presidents of South Mesa and Western Heights water companies announced today they have reached a groundwater management milestone by signing an agreement to participate in a Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) formed by area cities and water agencies to ensure a reliable and resilient water system in the Yucaipa Basin.

“I am gratified that we reached this milestone,” said George Jorritsma, President of South Mesa Water Company. “This means that, together, we can create a water supply plan for the Yucaipa Basin to see us through times of abundance and drought.”

In addition to South Mesa Water Company (Calimesa, CA) and Western Heights Water Company (Yucaipa, CA), the seven other parties that comprise the GSA are: The cities of Yucaipa, Calimesa and Redlands, the Yucaipa Valley Water District, the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, and the San Geronio Pass Water Agency (Beaumont, CA), and the South Mountain Water Company (Redlands, CA).

Together, the water purveyors provide about 70,000 people with water in the Yucaipa Basin, which lies within San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

“I thank the public partners for taking a major step that moves us forward to help stabilize our valuable water resources in the Yucaipa Valley,” said Dr. Robert Zappia, President of Western Heights Water Company.

The GSA is consistent with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), that requires local agencies to form GSAs that will organize plans to bring groundwater aquifers into balanced levels of pumping and recharge. Under the GSA agreement, the parties agree to work in good faith to implement the policy, purposes, and requirements of SGMA in the Basin. These include governance, management, technical, financial, and other matters.

The public agencies and water suppliers in the Yucaipa Basin started meeting in 2014 to develop a groundwater management plan when they realized that the level of extractions from the Basin were not sustainable. Because the local supply of both surface water and groundwater is limited in the semiarid region, water purveyors need an accurate assessment of water resources.

Managing groundwater sustainably is key to the California Water Action Plan, the Brown administration’s five-year roadmap for building resilient, reliable water suppliers and restoring ecosystems.

South Mesa, founded in 1912, serves areas in Yucaipa and Calimesa. Western Heights, founded in 1910, provides water to portions of Yucaipa and Redlands. Both are mutual water companies, owned and governed by their customers who pride themselves on customer service and reasonable water rates.

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Dr. Robert Zappia (right), President of Western Heights Water Company, with Company attorney Michael Davis (left), signs the agreement to participate in the Groundwater Sustainability Agency to protect groundwater resources in the Yucaipa Basin. (Photo courtesy of Western Heights Water Company/OSG)



South Mesa Water Company George Jorritsma (left) signs the agreement to participate in the Yucaipa Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency with Company attorney Michael Davis (right) watching. (Photo courtesy of South Mesa Water Company/OSG)