



Community Report

2020-2021



Your Water

For over 75 years, the San Lorenzo Valley Water District has been delivering safe drinking water to approximately 7,900 connections.

www.slvwd.com

SLVWD

2021

State of District Letter



Rick Rogers
District Manager

Our community continues its resiliency and commitment to building a better San Lorenzo Valley Water District. In 2021, we made major strides in improving our water system after the impacts of the 2020 CZU Wildfire Complex. We continued to upgrade aging infrastructure, began to harden critical infrastructure facilities, and moved forward with crucial planning efforts. In 2022, the District will continue to move these efforts full-speed ahead. The "State of the District" details 2021 accomplishments and upcoming projects in 2022.

I'd like to highlight the following District efforts. In the 2020 Fire, the District lost seven of its nine surface water intakes, which in the winter months is the primary water source for a majority of the system. In December 2021, the draft construction feasibility report for rebuilding the raw water supply lines, to bring the damaged surface water intakes back online, was released to the Engineering Committee. In early 2022, the Board will give staff direction on moving the reconstruction of the pipeline forward, increasing water reliability for the District. The District has also made progress on capital improvements; completing three tank upgrades, and 11 pipeline replacements improving fire flow, while also carrying out emergency work throughout the system.

The District is focused on preparing and planning for the future. In 2021, the District received approximately \$600,000 in grant funding for fire resiliency and forest health projects. These grants will harden and reduce fuel loads around critical infrastructure while promoting a healthier forested watershed. We are also looking forward to many construction projects in the coming year and are especially excited to start the reconstruction of the Fall Creek Fish ladder and the replacement of a major pipeline along Quail Hollow Road. We have seen crucial planning documents adopted by the Board of Directors. In 2021, the Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP), Water System Master Plan, Fire Management Plan, Forest Management Plan, and the Emergency Response Plan (ERP) were adopted to guide the District. The District is also focused on improving customer service. In 2022 the District will increase the number of smart meters in its system allowing customers to monitor their water consumption and add online video chat to make connecting with customer service more efficient.

In addition, the District started work on consolidating with three small water mutuals, Forest Springs, Bracken Brae, and Big Basin Water. All three of the mutuals were severely impacted in the CZU Fire. A state grant was awarded to the District in the amount of \$3.2 million to move the consolidation of Forest Springs and Bracken Brae mutuals forward. Further grant funding for the consolidation of the Big Basin Water Company is being explored by District staff.

The District is committed to providing a safe, reliable water supply for everyone we serve. We look forward to continuing progress on infrastructure upgrades and recovery in 2022. Please read on to learn more.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Richard Rogers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end.

Richard Rogers
District Manager

Projects completed in 2021

- 2020 Pipeline (California Dr, Middle Dr, Beverly Dr, Fern Dr & Reynolds Dr)
- Lompico tanks replacement (Kaski, Lewis, & Madrone)
- Riverside Grove booster station re-roofing with fire resistance materials (CZU)
- Little Lyon interior & exterior recoating (CZU)
- Lyon Complex piping - Install new piping underground (CZU, Lyon/Big Steel/Little Lyon tanks)
- Foreman intake rehab & pipe to Lyon Water Treatment Plant (CZU)
- Harmon Creek debris flow mitigation removing stream choke point to mitigate potential debris flows (CZU)
- Hazardous tree removal and mitigation (CZU, multiple locations throughout the District)
- Alta Via temporary pipeline replacement (CZU)

ADMIN/REGULATORY PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2021:

- Emergency Response Plan
- Risk & Resiliency Analysis
- Standard Details
- Urban Water Management Plan
- Master Plan/Capital Improvement Plan



PROJECTS SLATED FOR 2022:

- Fall Creek Fish Ladder reconstruction to diminish inefficiencies and improve salmon passage
- Pipeline replacements to improve fire flow (Orman Rd, Hermosa Ave, Juanita Woods, Zayante Dr)
- 2021 FEMA Pipeline replacement (CZU, Harmon St, Ridge Dr, Alta Via Drive)
- Eckley Booster pump station replacement (CZU)
- Blue Ridge Tank (replace redwood tank to steel fire resilient)
- Quail Hollow water main replacement to provide fire flow and improve distribution system water flow
- Brookdale tank rehabilitation (painting & coating)
- Redwood park tank replacement upgrading redwood tank to bolted steel
- Redwood Park pipeline extension for new tank site (after tank replacement)
- Alta Via permanent pipeline replacement (CZU)
- Glen Arbor Bridge South water main replacement
- Lyon Access Road (CZU)
- Huckleberry Island Main Replacement
- San Lorenzo River Bridge and King's Creek Bridge main replacements
- Brookdale Viaduct pipeline re-routing along Highway 9 in Brookdale
- Foreman Creek Slope stabilization (CZU)
- Foreman Creek electrical construction (CZU)
- Lyon zone pipeline replacement of mainline at Hwy 236, Boulder Brook Drive to Boulder Creek

Fall Creek Fish Ladder



The Fall Creek fish ladder was constructed in the 1970s as part of the Citizens Utilities Company of California's water intake for the Town of Felton. California American Water later purchased the water company and conducted little to no maintenance on the fish ladder during its ownership. In 2008, the Felton community organized and purchased the water system and turned it over to SLVWD to operate and manage.

Since SLVWD has taken over the diversion and the fish ladder, significant improvements have been made to the structure. The fish ladder suffered from performance issues related to subsurface piping leaking below the concrete slabs. In 2013, the District completed emergency repairs to correct these issues. However, further work is needed to remedy all performance issues. These improvements include the impediment of fish passage for juvenile and adult salmonids. Under low-flow conditions, the average drop height between existing concrete and timber flashboard ladder steps is approximately 18 inches, which can pose issues to fish making their way upstream.

The District is committed to correcting all performance issues and the limited salmonid fish passage conditions. Since 2013 the District has worked with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the

National Marine Fishery Service (NMFS) to determine the proper jump height for the ladder.

On April 19, 2019, District staff obtained a design variance from CDFW and NMFS, determining jump height for the fish ladder should be 12 inches to accommodate both adult and juvenile coho and steelhead passage. This variance reduces the cost of construction and the amount of future maintenance needed for the ladder. The fish ladder's design and all associated environmental permitting were completed in 2020. Plans to complete the construction are slated for 2022. The District is excited to see these long-awaited improvements to be made in Fall Creek!

Vegetation and Fuel Reduction Around Critical Infrastructure

Over the past year, the District has made strides in preparing its infrastructure and watershed lands for fire hazards. In 2021 alone, the District completed its Post-Fire Recovery, Critical Asset Hardening, Vegetation, and Fuels Management Plan, Forest Management Plan, and implementation of fuel reduction and hardening for critical infrastructure. Since May 2021, the District received \$600,000 in grant funding to complete these projects.

These grants funded CEQA permitting around critical infrastructure, hiring a consulting registered professional forester, reforestation, and vegetation consultants to complete fuel reduction at four well sites, two tanks, one booster site, and within District-owned watershed land.

The District looks forward to continuing this work and securing more grants in the future. Special thanks extended to Panorama Environmental Inc., Powers Forestry, Spatial Informatics Group, Ecological Concerns Inc., HELIX Environmental Construction Group, Inc., and Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County.

Forest Springs Mutual, Bracken Brae Mutual, and Big Basin Water Company Consolidation

On Oct. 26, 2021, owners of the Big Basin Water Company (BBWC) requested that the San Lorenzo Valley Water District (SLVWD) explore possible consolidation. The Company has been under a compliance order from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) since April 9, 2021. The SWRCB has issued citations for failure to comply with its compliance orders. The District has been providing emergency assistance on a limited basis to the Company and its water customers since the 2020 CZU Wildfire seriously damaged the Company's water system. On Nov. 4, 2021, the District's Board of Directors approved District staff to enter into an emergency operating agreement to explore consolidation and grant funding opportunities.

Forest Springs (128 connections) and Bracken Brae mutuals (24 connections) were also severely impacted by the CZU Fire with damage to their distribution system and water storage. In addition, their water supplier Big Basin Water Company was also severely impacted by the fire and drought conditions as described above. Both systems operate and maintain their respective distribution and storage systems. Forest Springs has a supplemental water meter from the District to provide an emergency water supply. However, the fire destroyed the piping for this connection. Forest Springs and Bracken Brae mutuals both have contacted the District to explore the possibility of consolidating their water systems into the District. Both mutuals are located in the District's "Sphere of Influence" and would not require annexation into the District. Considerable distribution upgrades/replacements are needed to facilitate consolidation to ensure reliable potable water and fire flow.

Both Mutuals are looking at substantial individual costs to rebuild their water distribution and storage systems, with estimates in the range of \$4.29 million. The additional consolidation costs would be cost-prohibitive without grants or other source funding. Fortunately, District staff secured a \$3.2 million grant through the Department of Water Resources' Small Community Drought Relief Program Grant program. Additional funding is being sought for the remaining \$1.1 million.

The District prides itself on providing reliable, safe, and high-quality water to its customers at an equitable price, extending service to neighbors, and consolidating smaller water systems. The District appreciates the interest expressed by Big Basin Water Company, Forest Springs Mutual, and Bracken Brae Mutual in possible water system consolidation and looks forward to, providing the communities with much-needed water and system reliability.

5-Mile Constructability Study Objectives & Project Description

The San Lorenzo Valley Water District (SLVWD) is making progress on the reconstruction of the seven intakes and associated raw water lines lost in the 2020 CZU Complex Fires. The pipeline previously consisted of 6-inch and 8-inch High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE) pipelines installed at grade along a narrow (approx. 2-foot wide) shelf cut into the steep hillside. Certain reaches of the pipeline were installed on free-standing wooden trestles to clear watercourses or maintain consistent slopes. The pipeline as a whole was referred to as the "5-Mile Pipeline." Before the fire destroyed the 5-mile pipeline, District staff proactively shut down the treatment plant, preventing contamination (Volatile Organic Compounds) from entering the system. The District is now completing a feasibility study on reconstruction to harden and protect the pipeline against future hazards.

The study, when completed, will include a thorough review of strategies, along with a recommendation as to preferred reconstruction methodology and suggested contracting strategy.

Freyer & Laureta, Inc. (F&L) was selected to conduct the Constructability Study. In December 2021, F&L presented an overview of the results of the Study to the Engineering Committee. F&L will take feedback from the Committee and incorporate this feedback into a draft study. District Staff will review the draft, after which the Board will give staff direction on moving the reconstruction of the pipeline forward, improving water reliability for the District. The District is also considering the incorporation of hydroelectric power generation into the new pipeline design, to reduce carbon emissions and increase efficiencies. F&L will provide feasibility, a range of projected costs, and the scale of power production possible.



San Lorenzo Valley Water District
13060 Highway 9
Boulder Creek, CA 95006

Customer Service

The SLVWD's mission is to maintain outstanding customer service, even during unprecedented times. In 2020 and 2021 the front office saw many changes, switching to new hours and moving away from in-person payment. Even through these hurdles, our Customer Service staff continued their excellent service and the District found more efficient ways to meet its community needs. The District applied for COVID relief funding through the State to help out customers who were facing hardships due to the pandemic and continue to offer extended payment plans to customers needing more time to pay. In 2021, the District increased the Rate Assistance Program discount, from \$10 to \$15 per month bill credit to qualifying customers. The District's website is a great resource to learn more about other income assistance programs. To further efficiencies the District plans to incorporate video chat to its website to allow customers to connect with customer service staff in real-time. The District is also working to install smart meters throughout its system, allowing customers to access their water consumption and quickly identify leaks.

The District highly encourages customers to switch to online and auto payment. Online billing is safe, convenient, and easy to use. Learn more below!

PAY Online

Online Bill Pay is free and easy for you to manage your SLVWD account(s) 24/7 from home or work. No more check writing, no more stamps! Benefits of using Online Bill Pay include:

- Go green! Online accounts can sign up for paperless bills, therefore, customers no longer receive a mailed bill.
- Pay online with a credit card (Visa/MasterCard/Discover) or checking account.
- View your bill and newsletter online, anytime, anywhere.
- It's free!
- Log-in or sign up for Online Bill Pay Today!

Log-in online to pay your bill or to register your account go to:
<https://slvwd.merchanttransact.com/Login>.

PAY Automatically

The District offers two programs that allow your bill to be paid automatically on the billing due date. Auto Pay Online and Auto Pay ACH. Here's how they work:

Auto Pay Online — Once you register your account online, you can manage your own auto pay that allows you to have your monthly water bill paid automatically on the due date from your checking account or credit card (Visa/MasterCard/Discover).

Auto Pay ACH — Similar to the online auto pay, you can fill out the ACH form (Click Here) and send in a voided check and we can process the auto payment from your checking account. This is a good option for people that don't want to manage their account online.

SANTA MARGARITA Groundwater Agency

In 2021 the District reached a milestone in partnership with the Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency (SMGWA), submitting the first Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to the state Department of Water Resources for their review and approval. SMGWA member agency staff, with support from technical experts and input from Santa Margarita Groundwater Basin (Basin) stakeholders, prepared the draft GSP, which was first presented at the SMGWA's Board of Directors meeting in July and subsequently opened for a two-month public comment period to solicit feedback from Basin stakeholders and the general public. The GSP describes how the SMGWA intends to manage groundwater to achieve groundwater sustainability and meet the requirements of Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The plan provides the basis for ongoing management of the Basin by SMGWA to both achieve sustainability in the 20-year planning horizon and maintain sustainability over the 50-year implementation horizon specified by SGMA.

The Basin forms a roughly triangular area between Felton, Ben Lomond, and Scotts Valley. This Basin is a source of drinking water for Scotts Valley Water District, San Lorenzo Valley Water District, over a dozen small water systems, and approximately 1,100 parcels served by private wells. Additionally, the groundwater table influences the surface water in the San Lorenzo River, a primary drinking water source for the city of Santa Cruz and home to endangered species.

The SLVWD is proud of this achievement and looks forward to continuing to work with partner agencies to implement the GSP and protect the basin.

Learn more at <https://www.smgwa.org/>



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