

JOSHUA BASIN WATER DISTRICT

Proudly providing water from an ancient source...well into the future

Tier Drop Newsletter

December 2023

Mission Statement: To provide, protect, and maintain Joshua Tree's water - our vital community resource.

Holiday Greetings!

Wishing you a safe holiday season filled with happiness, good times, and cherished memories!

Monthly Water Use

September 2023 -
78.9 Gallons Per Capita

Gallons per capita is the standard for tracking water conservation. The water savings data reflects usage from three months prior.

Keep saving, Joshua Tree!

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DECEMBER MEETINGS

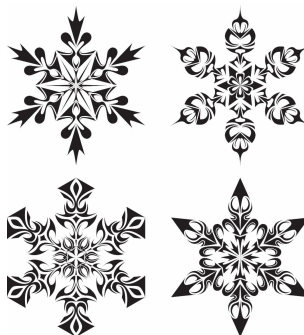
Board of Directors Meetings

- **Regular Meeting**--Wednesday, December 6th at 5:30 PM
- **Regular Meeting**--Wednesday, December 20th at 5:30 PM - [Join us at the last meeting of the year to celebrate our 60th Anniversary!](#)

Committee Meetings

- **Finance Committee** -Wednesday, December 13th at 9:00 AM
- **Water Resources & Ops**- Wednesday, December 13th - [Cancelled](#)

Visit www.jbwd.com for agendas, Zoom links, and other info.



DECEMBER 2023 & JANUARY 2024 DISTRICT HOLIDAYS OBSERVED:

December 25 & 26 (Monday & Tuesday)
January 1 & 2 (Monday & Tuesday)

Our District Office will be closed for upcoming holidays, but our crews are always on standby, 24/7, for emergencies. Call 760.366.8438 day or night!

DECEMBER WATER SAVING TIPS:

The Amazing Water Bucket! Collect water with it for many regular household water uses--the list is endless!

Don't underestimate the water-saving powers of a simple 3-gallon bucket:

- Catch clean cold water from the tub or shower water flow while waiting for it to warm up in our cold winter season
- In freezing temperatures where you let an outdoor faucet temporarily drip, use the bucket to catch the water until you can winterize the faucet
- Initially wash fruits and vegetables in the bucket filled with water instead of washing them under running water--then just do a *quick rinse* for a final wash
- Collect rain from dripping eaves off buildings during precipitation



Reducing the flow of water is as basic as it sounds...a shower spraying on high, for example, over-sprays onto the shower enclosure, causing waste. A running faucet on high creates water waste running down the drain as often a slow flow will accomplish the task just as well. So, "slow the flow" and watch your water use go down!!



NEW STATE WATER LEGISLATION FOR 2024

Did you know that California has recently passed new laws to address future drought concerns? It's true, and it will impact all of us starting in January 2024.

These new bills, labeled, Water Efficiency Legislation, will "Make California More Resilient" to Impacts of Future Droughts, and intend to "make water conservation a California way of life." These Bills—SB 606 (Hertzberg) and AB 1668 (Friedman)—or, SB 606 and AB 1668-- emphasize efficiency and stretching existing water supplies in our cities and on farms.

Some have misinterpreted the immediate impact of this law. It does not impose individual mandates for homeowners or businesses. The mandates will fall on urban water suppliers – not customers. However, one must consider that many desert areas

are comprised of Water Districts, which in essence, are community-owned, therefore directly absorbing the brunt of any punitive actions for non-compliance.

Specifically, the bills call for the creation of new urban efficiency standards for indoor use, outdoor use, and water lost to leaks, as well as any appropriate variances for unique local conditions. Using the adopted standards, each urban retail water agency will annually, beginning January 1, 2024, calculate its own objective, based on the water needed in its service area for efficient indoor residential water use, outdoor residential water use, commercial, industrial, and institutional irrigation with dedicated meters, and reasonable amounts of system water loss, along with consideration of other unique local uses (i.e., variances) and a "bonus incentive," or credit, for potable water reuse--as approved by the State.

Starting in 2024, the State Water Board may issue corrective guidance to help urban water suppliers achieve mandated goals. Starting in 2026, if still out of compliance, water providers may be given "conservation orders" that may result in punitive fines until the State's mandated water

conservation targets are met.

The indoor water use standard will be 55 gallons per person per day (gallons per capita daily, or GPCD) until January 2025; the standard will become stronger over time, decreasing to 42 GPCD in January 2030. To learn more, visit: [Water Conservation and Drought Planning](#)

**The above article link was originally authored by the Mojave Water Agency, and published in the Joshua Tree Voice Magazine.*

HOW TO DESIGN A Drip Irrigation System



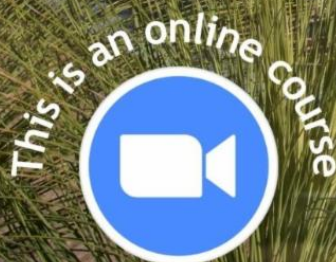
Learn how a drip irrigation system can save water and upgrade your home garden with this series of FREE online courses offered by the Mojave Desert Resource Conservation District.

These courses will cover:

- ✓ What is Drip Irrigation?
- ✓ Different methods
- ✓ Devices & Pressure Gauges
- ✓ Water Conservation
- ✓ Start your own project!

January 9 & 11
at 6:00 p.m.

Register Now



www.mojavewater.org

760-218-2822

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

❄️ December brings us winter weather wrapped in a host of potential problems if unprepared; namely frozen pipes. If you missed our "Winterizing" article last month, please refer to our November newsletter for basic tips (and more) on how to prevent this costly disaster.

❄️ LIHWAP (Low Income Household Water Assistance Program): JBWD was notified early November that the San Bernardino County program was halted due to all funds being spent. Please review alternative funding resources shared in our November Tier Drop Newsletter should you have a water bill assistance need.



CURIOUS MINDS WANT TO KNOW:

Often, at our Farmers' Market booth or on social media, we get good questions that others may be asking. Here's more of a sample:

Q: *My family visits on weekends and are shopping for property to build on. Realtors tell us we have to look into water and power availability costs ourselves, assuring us that utilities are "near by". How can we check for water if the District Office is closed on weekends?*

A: JBWD's website has a great solution with a guide to determining water availability called: "New Service Estimator Tool". It is found on the Home Page under "Development". You can also find it here: **[JBWD DEVELOPMENT](#)**

This tool is intended as a general guide before purchasing any undeveloped land. It is recommended the buyer contact the District Office during business hours with the official APN# so that the cost to bring water to the parcel of interest can be confirmed before making a purchase.



YOUR LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Recent Board Action Items of Note:

"RESERVE FUNDING TRANSFERS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022/2023"

During the November 15 Board of Directors meeting, Anne Roman, Director of Finance gave a detailed presentation of the District's Reserve Funds and the restrictions set for what the monies can be used for, and under what circumstances. The Board voted 5-0 in favor of the updated proposed Reserve Funding Transfer policy.

Background:

Reserves are not extra money; they are funds designated for specific purposes of the District. For example, capital funds are in a reserve account for our Capital Improvement and Replacement Program (CIRP). We have many projects ongoing, but they may not be ready for funds to be expended on supplies or labor needs--yet. So, the funds remain in an accessible reserve account (similar to a savings account), collecting interest until ready for use. Additionally, we may experience a massive pipe break and need cash flow to expedite purchasing unforeseen repair parts immediately. We must keep the water flowing, so we temporarily will borrow from the reserves and then pay it back. There are different pockets of funds in the reserves, and all have specified purposes for when and how they can be accessed.

To learn more about JBWD's Reserve Funding Transfer Program for Fiscal Year 2022/2023, visit <https://www.youtube.com/@JoshuaBasinWaterDistrict>, and click on the meeting's video.

HOLIDAY WATER GIFT IDEAS

If everything is water, and water is everything, then this could be a never ending list! Keeping this in mind, we'll opt for just the "top" picks that never fail to help save water:

For the family gardener on your list:

- quality water sprayer shut-off nozzle
- bags of decorative rock mulch
- portable raised bed plant container
- garden shade cloth (to slow water evaporation)
- drought tolerant plants
- faux plants!

For the car enthusiast on your list:

- waterless car wash products
- automated car wash gift cards (car wash stations recycle their water use!)
- Extension water spray wand with water flow/shut-off device

For the homeowner on your list:

- water broom (for cleaning/sweeping concrete--uses less water than just hosing it off)
- rain chains
- rain barrels
- new low-flow shower heads or water faucets
- a 3-gallon bucket! *Read about the "Amazing Water Bucket" above!*
- a rain gauge
- a shower timer
- water leak detectors
- water calculators

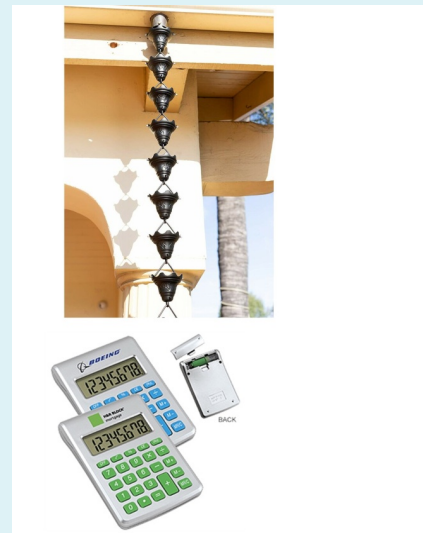
For the Survival Prepper on your list:

- water purification tabs
- water filters (for personal or household users)
- emergency water storage containers (i.e., water barrels, bathtub liners called "Water Bobs", food-grade 5-gallon empty jugs, etc.)
- emergency water (long shelf-life packets, water bricks, or similar) for home, office, and cars

For Everyone!

- Permanent water bottles (you always need more than one!) They come in all sizes, all colors, all styles and all prices!

Note: Just google anyone of the above for countless sources and product options!



DECEMBER FARMERS' MARKET BOOTH:

Holiday Water Gift Ideas

With water becoming a state-wide premium value, there's no better time than now to give a gift that keeps on giving. Stop by our JBWD Market Booth any of the first three Saturdays in December for water-inspired gift ideas--for everyone on your list!

NOTE: We will be "home for the holidays" the last two Market Saturdays in December: (12/23 & 12/30); returning on January 6, 2024.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND REPLACEMENT PROGRAM (C.I.R.P.) *and more...*

The new "Belmont" Pipeline Project!

With the massive Saddleback and Tilford pipeline projects behind us, the CIRP crew is ramping up for the next big improvement to our extremely aged water delivery system. The newly named, "Belmont Pipeline Project" is so large that it had to be divided into three phases!

The entire project will increase our new pipe-in-the-ground infrastructure by 42,550 feet. If funding and supply chain is not an issue, our CIRP crews could complete the project in 14 months. However, there are so many variables outside of JBWD's control (like material supply and demand and inflationary costs.) Also, there are other capital improvement projects on the table that could suddenly present themselves as more essential, which would change the project's completion estimation time frames.

Staff is currently gearing up for all the preliminary surveys, utility demarcations, and more, with the bulk of this preparation occurring by the spring, of 2024, and the groundbreaking occurring by the summer of 2024.

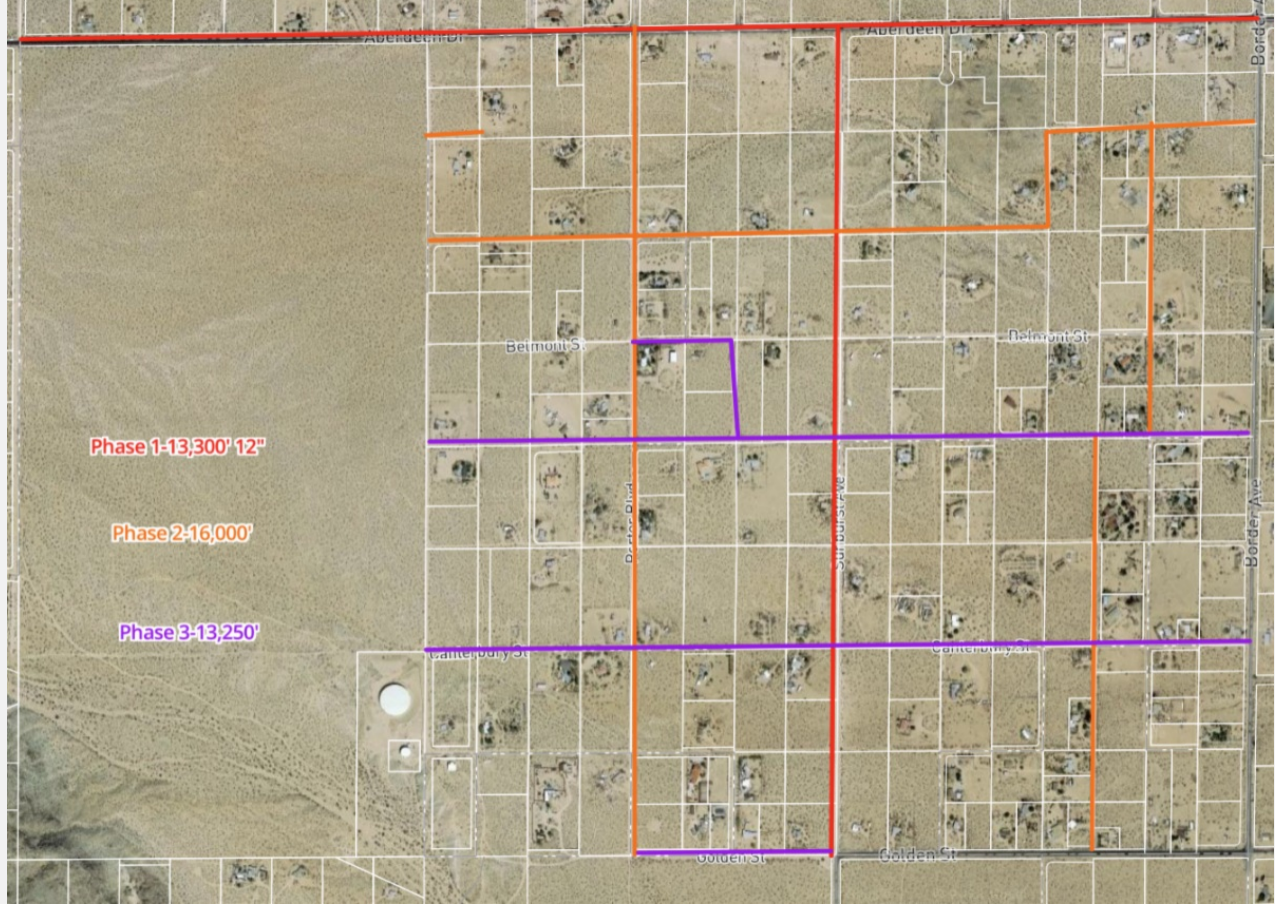
Within the three phases, plans are to replace the pipe in the Phase 2 portion of the project first. The estimated total cost to complete Phase 2 is approximately \$900,000 (covering 16,000 linear feet of newly laid pipeline).

By using JBWD's in-house CIRP crews, it is estimated that more of the project will be accomplished for less, saving our District \$337,500.00 to \$1,575,000.00 for Phase 2, alone!

Interesting fact:

The national average cost to lay pipe, if outsourced, is approximately \$75 to \$150 per linear foot. The overall approximate cost for all three phases done in-house is set at 2.2 million dollars. Had JBWD outsourced this project, it could cost \$3,191,250 (low at \$75 LF) to \$6,382,500 (high at \$150 LF). That's a savings to JBWD's customers of two to four million dollars!

BELMONT PIPELINE PROJECT AREA



DESERT-SMART GARDENING TIPS FOR DECEMBER

December Watering Schedule: 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM
 Routinely inspect irrigation lines if in use for breaks when temperatures drop to freezing

THIS MONTH IN YOUR DESERT-SMART LANDSCAPE:
 Winter begins and plant growth is on hold until February

- Prune to shape evergreens like arborvitae, juniper, pines, and cypress--and save trimmings for holiday decorations
- Prune dense trees to avoid wind damage; make sure young trees are well staked
- For overnight protection when frost threatens, cover delicate plants with large cardboard boxes, old sheets, or tarps
- Consider setting irrigation timers to off, and manually water in response to our irregular winter weather, based on winds, rain, or snow (using the manual mode on your controller in winter can save water)

HISTORIC USES OF:

Firecracker Plant / Coral Fountain
aka: *Russelia equisetiformis*

The Firecracker Plant is reported to have antibacterial, analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties (*Ojurongbe et al., 2015*).

It is used to treat kidney diseases, inflammation, pain, malaria, leukemia, diabetes and to promote hair growth (*Awe et al., 2008, 2010; PROTA, 2016*).

Extracts of the species have shown central nervous system depressant activities (*Kolawole et al., 2007*).

December 2023 Plant of the Month

Firecracker Plant Coral Fountain

Russelia equisetiformis

Plant Form: Perennial shrub
Water Use: Low, moderate
Mature Size: 3-4 ft. tall x 4-6 ft. wide
Exposure: Full sun, part sun, filtered sun
Bloom Time: Spring (Mar – May),
Summer (June – Aug), Fall (Sept – Oct)
Native to: Mexico
Hardiness: Cold hardy to 25-30°F

Firecracker Plant turns heads with its showy, 1-inch-long red flowers on arching stems throughout all warmer months of the year. Hummingbirds and butterflies can't resist it. Also known as Coral Fountain, its fine-textured, nearly leafless stems appear to flow like a fountain carrying flowers from a central point to the tips of its weeping branches. This long-lived, dramatic plant has excellent heat and sun tolerance, as well as moderate drought-resistance once well-established. Dead-heading spent flower stems helps with continuous blooming. Although they thrive in full sun, they do best with morning sun and afternoon shade in our hottest months, and prefer protection from drying winds. A fast-growing, easy-care shrub, Firecracker Plant has only one drawback: it can freeze in our Zone 8b Cold Hardiness Zone if not protected during hard frosts. Place this frost-sensitive plant in warm, sheltered areas, or containers that can be moved. Looks great spilling from containers, window boxes, raised beds, over walls, on a trellis, or as an informal groundcover.



Water—Conserve Today for Tomorrow

Alliance for Water
Awareness and Conservation

For more information on low-water-use gardening,
contact your local water provider or go to

www.mojavewater.org/conservation/awac/

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