

JANUARY 2024

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



SPECIAL EDITION:

State of the District Report for 2023

By Sarah Johnson, General Manager

Monthly Water Use

October 2023 -
82.33 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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Special Articles:

- State of the District Report
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JANUARY MEETINGS

Board of Directors Meetings

- **Regular Meeting**
Wednesday, January 3 -
CANCELLED
- **Regular Meeting**
Wednesday, January 17 - 5:30
PM

Committee Meetings

- **Finance Committee**
Wednesday, January 10, 9:00 AM
- **Water Resources & Ops**
Wednesday, January 10, 11 AM
- **Citizens Advisory Council**
Tuesday, January 9, 5:00 PM

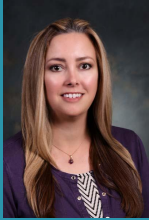
Visit www.jbwd.com for agendas,
Zoom links, and other info.

Happy New Year!

To allow staff time with their family, our office will be closed on Monday, January 1st, and Tuesday, January 2nd. We wish you all the best in 2024!

Even when the office is closed for holidays, our crews are always on standby for emergencies, 24/7. Call 760.366.8438 day or night!

STATE OF THE DISTRICT REPORT



The 2023 Annual Report provided by JBWD's General Manager, Sarah Johnson



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January 1, 2024

RE: 2023 Year in Review

Greetings, Joshua Tree Community, Board Members, and staff,

As we reach the conclusion of my second year as the General Manager for Joshua Basin Water District this December, I am thrilled to highlight the numerous achievements we've accomplished throughout the year. Despite facing unforeseen challenges, our staff's collective effort and commitment, coupled with our Board's guidance, have made this year a resounding success. I take great pride in the fact that our District not only maintained its essential services but also successfully executed several projects aimed at modernizing our infrastructure and administration. Each day we strive to uphold the District's mission statement:

To provide, protect, and maintain Joshua Tree's water – our vital community resource.

2023 Accomplishments

The District is happy to highlight noteworthy achievements of the past year and eagerly looks forward to what lies ahead in 2024 and beyond. While we have completed many projects, some of our most notable accomplishments include:

- **Rate & Water Capacity Charge Studies** – The District conducted a thorough and extensive rate and water capacity charge study to assess and establish appropriate charges. These studies entail the examination of factors like operating costs, capital expenses, revenues, future infrastructure needs, and economic conditions. The primary goal is to establish fair and sustainable rates and charges for the District.
- **Pipeline Replacement Projects** - The District continues to replace infrastructure safely and promptly even while experiencing staffing & supply chain shortages. This year we have completed:
 - **Tilford II Pipeline Project** - A comprehensive pipeline replacement effort has been completed in the Tilford area, involving the replacement of 8.5 miles of pipeline, 101 service lines, 40 fire hydrants, and 7 air release valves.
 - **Saloon Pipeline Project** – A 660-foot section of pipeline between Park Blvd and El Reposo was replaced. The project included the installation of seven new service lines

and the addition of three inline isolation valves. Notably, the system is now connected to two water sources instead of the original single source.

- **Meter Replacement** - Even in the face of supply chain challenges, the District has advanced its meter replacement program. As of the current update, two-thirds of the district's meters have been successfully replaced.
- **New Staff** - In 2023, the District welcomed eight new employees, comprising slightly over 25% of our workforce. These individuals are injecting fresh energy, skills, and ideas into the district. We are enthusiastic about integrating talented individuals who will contribute value to both our organization and the Joshua Tree community!
- **Maintenance & Operational Improvements** – The district's operational shop facility has undergone essential repaving, addressing a longstanding need. Security enhancements have been implemented through the installation of new gates at three specific locations. These projects were accomplished utilizing internal staff, resulting in significant cost savings for the District.

Future Challenges

Unfunded Mandates - The District's most significant issues in the future continue to be unfunded state mandates. We acknowledge the importance of adhering to the mandates; however, the difficulty lies in the District's customers shouldering many of the costs. Some of these unfunded state mandates include:

- **Chromium-6** – The state strives to lower the maximum contaminant levels (MCL) of Chromium-6. The District is working proactively to address this issue as it develops. The least costly outcome would be for the state to set the MCL above the trace levels found in the District's water. However, should the MCL be set to a lower level, we will be faced with implementing a multi-million-dollar mitigation project.
- **Lead & Copper Rule Revision** – As part of an effort to decrease lead in drinking water, the EPA has mandated that water systems create detailed service line inventories, encompassing both system-owned and customer-owned segments within the distribution system. This unfunded mandate must be fulfilled by October 16, 2024, with the associated costs to be borne by the District.
- **State-Mandated Water Conservation** – Several measures from the state are on the horizon. The District understands and agrees that water conservation is imperative, especially in the desert. However, the state mandates come with increased expenses, while the conservation measures result in reduced water revenues.
- **Reporting Requirements** – The District is obligated to comply with and complete **over seventy** regulatory reports. This involves fulfilling specific requirements set by regulatory authorities, and the associated efforts and expenses are absorbed by the District.

Other Future Challenges include:

- **Aging Infrastructure** – The District currently has a Capital Improvement Program and Department dedicated to replacing the District's aging infrastructure. It is imperative that the

District continues its efforts to replace and maintain our infrastructure to ensure the delivery of safe water to our customers.

- Supply Chain Issues – Many of our suppliers have struggled with supply chain issues. The District has had a challenging time obtaining vehicles (scheduled for fleet vehicle replacement), heavy equipment in support of our Capital Improvement Program, obtaining meters (for our meter replacement project), and procuring our admin building front door (for ADA compliance), just to name a few.
- Rising Costs – Similar to the experiences of most individuals, the costs of nearly everything have markedly increased, posing challenges, particularly when strategizing for repairs, maintenance, and capital replacement.
- Costs of local housing – The District has encountered greater challenges in recruitment, particularly for entry to mid-level positions, due to the rising local living costs. While multiple factors contribute to this issue, we suspect that our area's high living costs and limited housing options are among some of the reasons.
- There has been unprecedented growth in this small community, leading to increased workloads and a higher demand for water and services.

Summary

As the Joshua Basin Water District's General Manager, I am dedicated to supporting and implementing the goals and priorities set by the Board of Directors. I oversee the District's operations, manage the budget strategically and prudently, and focus on long-term strategies. I extend my gratitude to the Board, the community, and the staff for their support and the opportunity to serve in this role. I eagerly anticipate an even more successful 2024!

Respectfully submitted,

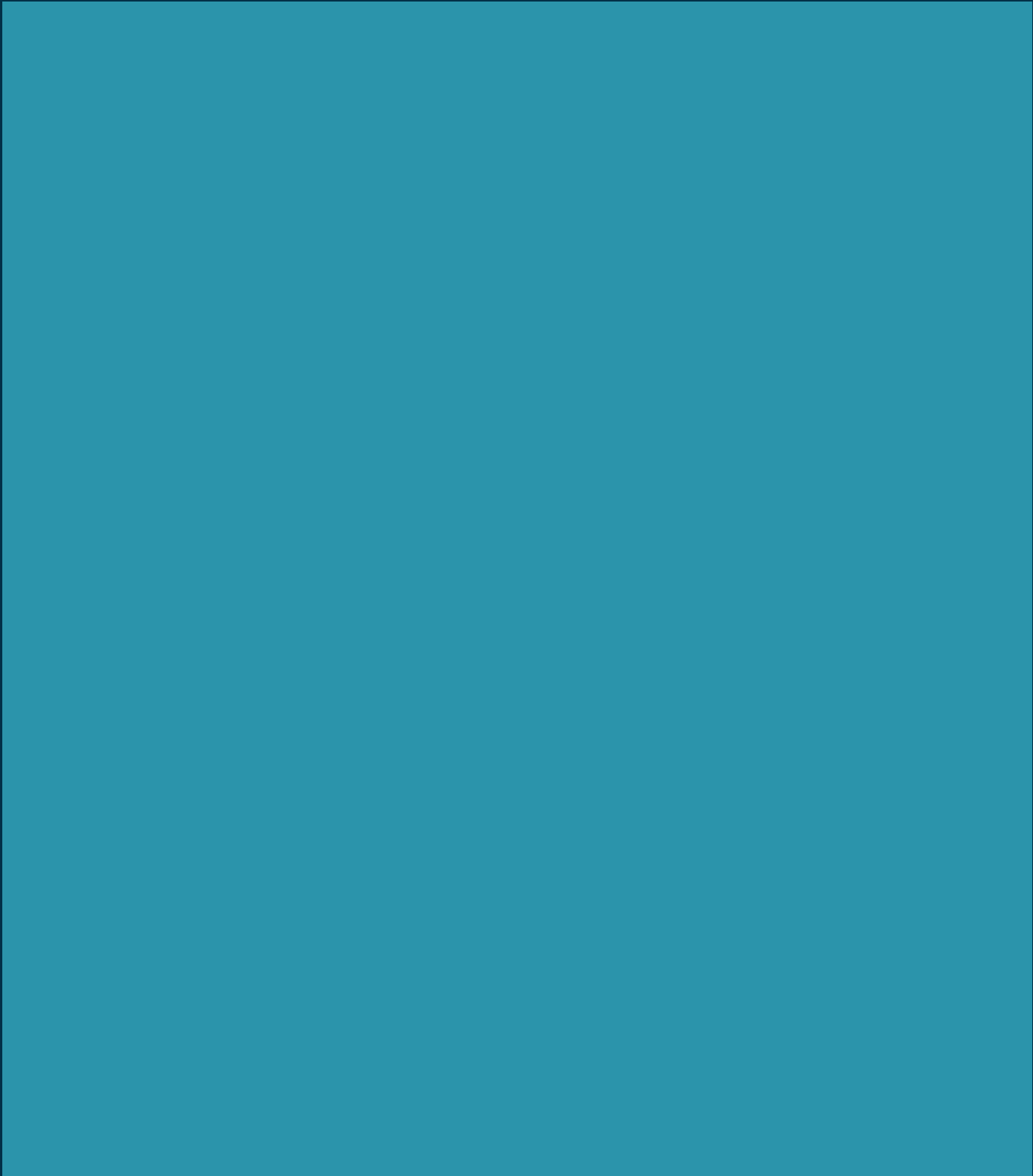


Sarah Johnson
General Manager

January WATER SAVING TIP:

- With an anticipated wetter than usual winter setting upon us, consider mulching around your landscape plants to retain not just water, but to

diminish soil erosion as well.



HOW TO DESIGN A Drip Irrigation System

Mojave
Water
Agency



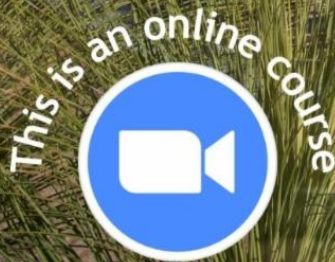
Learn how a drip irrigation system can save water and upgrade your home garden with this series of FREE online courses offered by the Mojave Desert Resource Conservation District.

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 

DISTRICT TOURS ARE BACK!



From Ground Water to Tap Water

District Tours are back--with so much more to share than from our last tours, you don't want to miss this ride!

Two tour opportunities are scheduled:

Thursday, February 22, 8 AM-12:15 PM

Thursday, February 29, 8 AM-12:15 PM



This four-hour+ experience provides insights and up-close encounters loaded with answers to your personal questions regarding the safety and quality of JBWD's tap water.

Space is limited! To reserve your seat *now* by email, send your name, phone number and tour date of interest to: kjradnich@gmail.com



FROM SEED TO SALAD



EDIBLE GARDENING CLASS

Thursdays, January 25 to May 2
6 to 7 p.m.

Learn to grow vegetables in the desert with minimal water usage during this **FREE, on-line, 3-month class** sponsored by the Mojave Water Agency.

Scan the QR code to register today!



For more information contact
Liz Fratt at
efratt@mojavewater.org
or (760) 946-7000



WWW.MOJAVEWATER.ORG



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 an example:

Q: In what situation, or when is it acceptable for JBWD to come onto my property?

A: Accordingly, per the *Rules and Regulations Article 2.10:*

"JBWD shall have the right to ingress and egress upon the customer's premises for any purpose in connection with the furnishing of water service during normal business hours or anytime during an emergency. Failure to give access to JBWD for meter reading may be grounds for discontinuance of service to the parcel. The parcel owner may choose to pay for remote meter reading equipment."

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



❄️ JBWD celebrated its 60th Anniversary at the December 20th, 2023 Board Meeting. *Pictured above: President Floen cuts the first slice of the celebration cake.*



❄️ Guest speaker Supervisor Dawn Rowe (accompanied by Field Representative Glen Harris-- *not shown*) read a Resolution on behalf of San Bernardino County's Board of Supervisors addressing JBWD's 60 years of accomplishments.



❄️ Mojave Water Agency's Director Marina West presented a Letter of Recognition acknowledging JBWD's active and successful partnership with them over the past years.

❄️ Public Outreach Consultant, Kathleen Radnich, gave an historic presentation of JBWD's past 60 years.



JANUARY 2024 FARMERS MARKET BOOTH

Joshua Basin Water District's "Capital Improvement and Replacement Program" is a testament to where your water dollars are being spent! Stop by our Farmers Market Booth on Saturdays in January, 8 AM - 1 PM, and check out where the new pipe is going in the ground next!

We'll also have the beautiful new 2024 Water Wise Gardening Calendars (free) while supplies last. So come say "Happy New Year!"



YOUR LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Recent Board Action Items of Note:

During the December 20th, 2023 Board of Directors meeting, the Board elected their new officers for the 2024 calendar year with Tom Floen being re-elected for his second term as President, and Stacy Doolittle remaining as Vice President for another term. Both received unanimous votes.

Additionally, during the December 6th Board meeting, the Board voted 5-0 in

favor of renewing an upgraded contract for Consultant Kathleen Radnich for an additional two years.*

**Background:*

Radnich has been contracted with JBWD since 2009, providing services in Public Outreach and Education, Emergency Management (as a Public Information spokesperson for JBWD during water disasters), Legislation and Government Liaison, and later as a Conservation Consultant).

DESERT-SMART GARDENING TIPS FOR JANUARY

January Watering Schedule: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

To prevent ice forming on driveways and sidewalks, water only during the warm time of day

THIS MONTH IN YOUR DESERT-SMART LANDSCAPE:

Frost is likely on dry, windless, clear nights this month

- Keep plants watered to help prevent frost damage (but do not overwater)
- Wrap irrigation valves and pipes to protect them from freezing
- Turn off irrigation timers if it rains
- Apply mulch around plants to retain water and soil, and to feed nutrients into soil with each rain
- Prune roses and summer-blooming, deciduous fruit trees
- Don't prune frost-damaged plants until spring growth appears
- Plant bare-root trees and shrubs now through early March
- Mulch around plants and under downspouts with bark, compost, or gravel

HISTORIC USES OF: Apache Plume *aka: Fallugia paradoxa*

Due to its high soil tolerance, the Apache Plume can be used for erosion control in most all landscapes.

Bundles of twigs from Apache Plume were used by Native Americans as brooms and older stems for arrow shafts. A decoction from leaves was used as a growth stimulant for hair.

Because Apache Plume is considered a semi-evergreen plant, it is well established in the animal ecosystem as a source of winter forage and habitat for wildlife.

In some references, it suggests that Apache-plume may be a possible source of seed oil and protein for industrial raw material since the protein % is 30.6 and oil % is 36.8.

Apache Plume

Fallugia paradoxa

Plant Form: Semi-evergreen shrub
Water Use: Very low
Mature Size: 4-6 ft. tall x 5 ft. wide
Exposure: Full sun
Bloom Time: Spring (April – June),
Summer (July)
Native to: So. Calif, SW U.S.
Hardiness: Cold hardy to 10°

Apache Plume is one of our showiest native desert shrubs. Rose-like, white flowers in spring produce eye-catching, silky pink seed plumes that cling to the stems into winter, adding months of interest. These feather-like seed heads are said to resemble an Apache headdress. This fast-growing, semi-deciduous shrub with small dark green leaves is extremely tolerant of heat and drought, and is an important erosion control plant. Apache Plume likes full sun but accepts part shade, and needs only occasional if any irrigation after it becomes established. Cut the oldest woody stems to the ground to revitalize the plant. Beautiful on banks, in rock gardens and raised planters, as a background or accent plant, or in open spaces. Give this plant ample room—it doesn't stay small for long.



January 2024 Plant of the Month

awac
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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