



## January 2023

September 2022 Residential Gallons Per Capita  
Water Use: 62.11 Gallons

*Note: Water savings data reflects water use three months in the past. Also, "gallons per capita" is the standard of "measure" for tracking water conservation efforts. The State has determined our water use per person per day is 47 gallons by 2025, and 42 gallons by 2030. Keep saving, Joshua Tree!*

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT:**  
To provide, protect, and maintain  
Joshua Tree's water - our vital  
community resource.

## SPECIAL EDITION: STATE OF THE DISTRICT UPDATE



### SPECIAL EDITION:

- Upcoming Events and Meetings
- January District Holidays
- Your Voice Matters! Join Us!
- January Water Saving Tips
- State of the District Report
- January Farmers' Market Booth
- Curious Minds Want To Know
- Your Leadership in Action
- January Desert Gardening Tips
- Plant of the Month

### JANUARY 2023 DISTRICT HOLIDAYS

#### JANUARY HOLIDAY CLOSURE:

**January 2, 2023 -Monday**

*Please note: in the event of a water emergency, please contact the District Office at (760) 366-8438--our crews are always on standby 24/7!*

### Upcoming Events and Meetings:

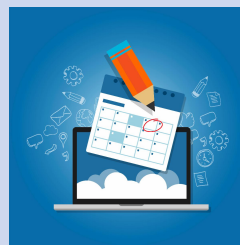
#### Regular Board of Directors meetings:

- Wednesday- January 4, Cancelled
- Wednesday- January 18, 5:30 PM

#### Special Joint Board of Directors & CAC Community Workshop for the proposed rate increase

- Tuesday, January 10, 5 PM
- Note: Held at the Joshua Tree Community Center 6171 Sunburst St., Joshua Tree, CA 92252

### YOUR VOICE MATTERS: JOIN US!

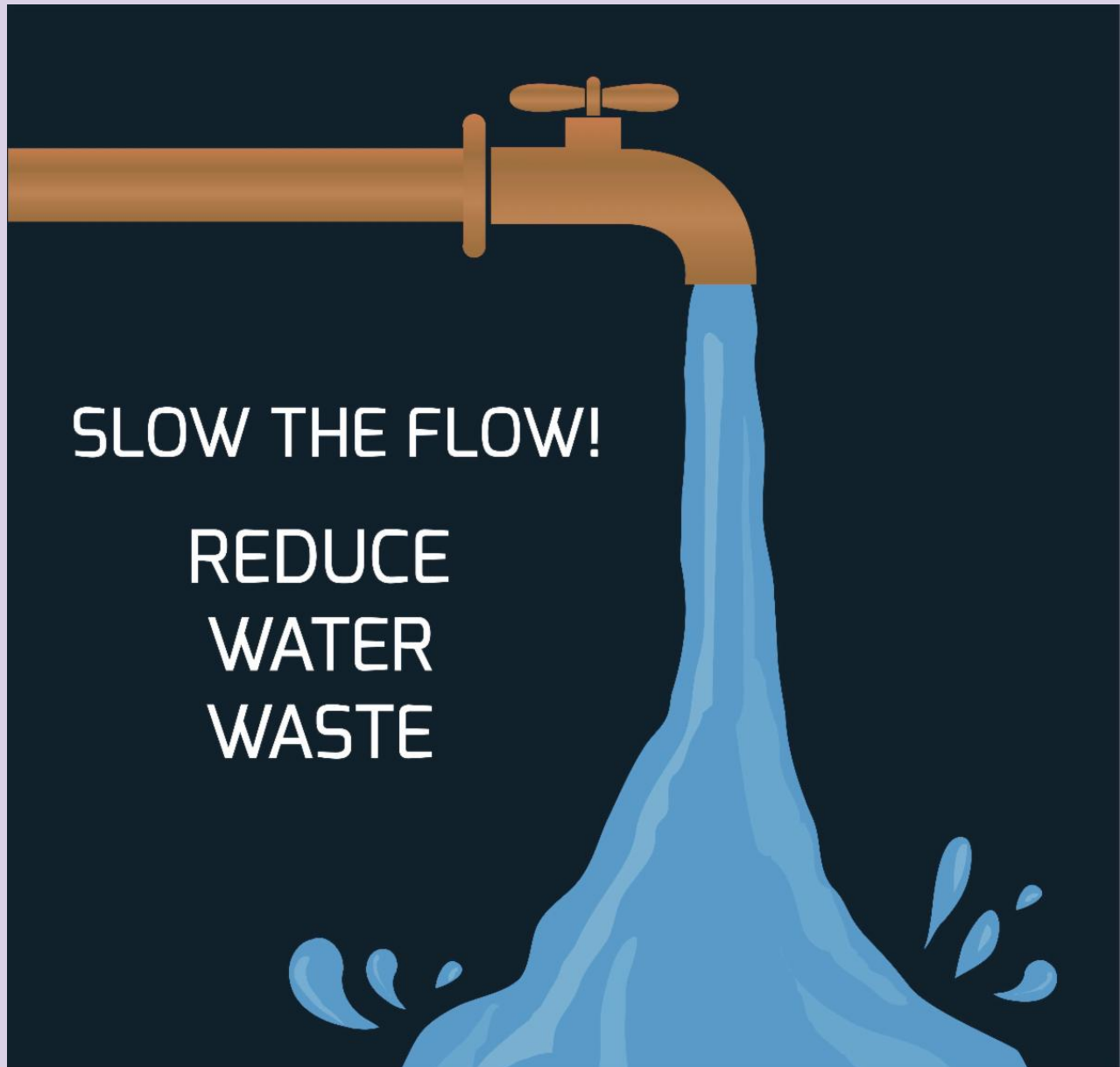


A Special public workshop is planned for January 10, 2023, at 5 PM at the Joshua Tree Community Center

to discuss the proposed water rate increase. All are invited to share their perspectives and to come and learn what the leadership is being

Refer to our website for meeting status related to being in person vs. virtual. For Agendas, Zoom links, and other calendar items visit: [www.jbwd.com](http://www.jbwd.com)

confronted with in making this decision.



### JANUARY WATER SAVING TIPS:

- Many shower heads turned on high will splatter hard against your body onto the shower walls, leaving mineral deposits upon them. While minerals enhance drinking water quality, they aren't the best friend of shower enclosures. By "slowing the flow", less water is wasted splashing onto and coating shower walls, which often takes more water and chemicals to remove the deposits thereafter. Over time, those "deposits" also invite mold to latch onto the dried residue, and grow. So, turn down the water flow, and save water.
- Well functioning faucet aerators create "volume" while using less water. Faucet aerators should be cleaned occasionally by soaking them over night in household vinegar until any mineral deposits found within the mesh screens dissolve. Well maintained faucet aerators also automatically, "slow the flow".
- Your open-ended garden hose is a guaranteed water waster, so put a nozzle on it to "slow the flow".



# ANNUAL STATE OF THE DISTRICT REPORT:

*Sarah Johnson, General Manager*

*January 2023*

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

December marks the end of my first year in the General Manager Role for Joshua Basin Water District, and I am delighted to share the many accomplishments that we have completed this year. I don't think any of us could have predicted the many challenges we have faced this year, but thanks to the hard work and dedication of staff and the leadership of our Board, this year has been a success. I am deeply proud that our District has been able to sustain not only its core services, but also that we have completed many projects modernizing our District's infrastructure and administration. We strive each day to uphold the District's Mission Statement:

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

*Photo caption: Well 14 Reactivated after 5 years.*

## Where We Have Been

Most recently, the District was faced with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In mid-March 2020, the State of California ordered all non-essential businesses to close, and a stay-at-home order was issued. The District's services are considered essential, and the District continues to operate. However, the District office closed to the public, cancelled all public meetings, gatherings, scheduled events, and programs, and continued to operate following state and county guidelines. During this period, the District pivoted quickly to accommodate the new mandates, with limited access in order to adhere to COVID -19 requirements.



Starting in February 2022, the District began renovating the administration building in preparation for re-opening. During this process, the District has made modifications that provide more efficient working space, which is also intended to help comply with potential future COVID-19 concerns. After more than two years, we had our first in-person board meeting in May 2022, and the District now plans to re-open regularly to the public in early 2023.

## Accomplishments

**The District has achieved many milestones in the past year. Some of our most notable accomplishments include:**

- COVID-19 - Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic's ongoing and ever-changing mandates while continuing to provide essential services to the public.
- Community Outreach Efforts – The District continues to reach out at a weekly farmers market, monthly newsletter, conservation garden, and offers many classes to promote understanding and cooperation.
- Meter Replacement - Continuation of the District's meter replacement program even while experiencing supply chain issues.
- Capital Replacement Improvement Program – The District continues to replace infrastructure safely and promptly even while experiencing staffing shortages.
- Improved Customer Service Offerings – The District continues to work with staff to develop more positive customer service experiences, including newer electronic self-service options such as online forms and applications via the District's website.

- Well-14 Rehabilitation Project – The District's largest producing well has been offline for several years, creating a strain on production. After many unsuccessful rebuild attempts, the District installed an innovative 4-log treatment process and is proud to say the well is back online!

## The Future

**The District's most significant issues in the future continue to be unfunded state mandates.**

Some of these *unfunded* state mandates include:

- The emergency order for COVID-19 – The District's services are considered essential, requiring staff to continue operating to provide water and maintain all facilities, including wells, reservoirs, pipeline, booster pumps, etc., while incurring the expenses and complying with ever-changing COVID-19 mandates.
- 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 level lower level, we will be faced with implementing a multi-million-dollar mitigation project.
- Impacts of 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.

Other challenges (not state-mandated) 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.
- Inflation – Like most people are experiencing, the cost of nearly everything has risen significantly, creating challenges, especially when planning for repairs, maintenance, and capital replacement.
- Rising Costs of local housing – As the costs to live locally have increased, the District has found recruitment more challenging, especially for entry to mid-level positions. While there are various reasons behind this concern, we suspect one of the reasons is the high costs or limited housing options in our area.
- Unprecedented development in this small community, bringing additional workloads and higher demand for water and services.

## Summary

As Joshua Basin Water District's General Manager, I work to support and implement the Board of Director's goals and priorities, oversee the operations of the District, strategically and prudently manage the budget, and focus on the long-term strategies of the District. I want to thank the Board, the community, and the staff, for their support and the opportunity to be the District's General Manager! I look forward to an even more successful 2023!

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Johnson  
General Manager



## OUR JANUARY FARMERS' MARKET BOOTH

### "Follow the Pipe"

We get it: no worries as long as water flows from the tap, right? It's that simple, right? Well, truth be known, our water system



is anything *but* simple, yet, who would know because most of the system is underground or behind locked gates and out of view.

Stop by our Market booth in January for a brief peak at what goes into maintaining and replacing our 200+ miles of water pipelines...you'll never take tap water for granted again! Better yet, watch our 9-minute District video that tells it all! Click here to view it:

<https://vimeo.com/672105673/67b6f51e21>



### 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:** *"When a customer has a major leak, why do they get charged for the water loss when the water just goes back down to the aquifer?"*

**A:** Water Districts must track (and report monthly to the State of California) all water pumped vs. all water billed, and have no more than a 10% difference between the two. One must closely equal the other. The 10% permissible difference (or less) is written off as leaks on the District side of the customers' meters (hence the importance of replacing our aged pipes!)

A water difference greater than 10% is

**Photo Caption:** Just another leak from another old pipe that needs replacing in our District's 96 square mile area of underground aging pipes.

an indicator to the State that our District is not managing its water resources, and that can result in "red flags" and other unmentionable repercussions.



## YOUR LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

### Recent Board Action Items of Note:

**United Way Low Income Assistance Program:** With the economy touting higher inflation numbers every month, the District, like most residents, is feeling the impact. To keep water flowing, the Board is facing some very hard decisions. However, with a solid vote of 5-0 at their December 7th meeting, the Directors voted to increase the \$50 annual water bill credit to \$100, for eligible applicants for the "Help 2 Others" Assistance Program.

#### **Background:**

*This program is funded solely with non-water rate revenues, such as JBWD's share of Property taxes received from the County. Additionally, the District shall receive public benefits from this program by way of the reduction of bad debt, which is a burden to all ratepayers and has the potential to impact the District's credit rating. This removes the conflict known as a "gift of public funds." To read more about the analysis of this program, visit: [Agenda Item #5, page 3 at: JBWD Agenda Packet 12-14-2022/Low Income Assistance Program](#)*



United Way of the Desert



**Proposed Rate Increase:** The Board voted 5-0 to move forward with a proposed rate increase, referenced as, "Best Management Practice" that would result in a 76% increase in revenues over five years. This vote activates the Prop 218 process, requiring written notices of intent, a public workshop, a period of time for written comments, an official Public Hearing, followed by a vote by the Board of Directors in a public meeting.

#### **Background:**

*To learn more about the rate increase study and three proposals presented, go [to: Rate Study Presentation](#), and watch for an important letter on the Proposition 218 Rate Increase Process.*

**Of special note:** *At the December 21st Regular Board Meeting, the 3rd party Auditing Consulting Firm reported that the JBWD financial audit was "clean"--meaning all was in good order and accountable. Kudos to our amazing Finance Department! The report can be reviewed at: [JBWD 2021-2022 Financial Audit](#).*

**DESERT-SMART GARDENING TIPS FOR JANUARY**

**December Watering Schedule: Between 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM**

If your landscape pipes freeze, warm them GRADUALLY with a hair dryer or space heater. Pipes that warm too fast can break. Also consider: before it is too late, winterize all exposed water pipes to retain the integrity of your entire irrigation system!

**THIS MONTH IN YOUR DESERT-SMART LANDSCAPE:**

Winter begins and plant growth is on hold until February

- Prune to shape evergreens like aborvitae, 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 precious water

**HISTORIC USES OF: Jerusalem Sage**

Historic uses, or "ethnobotany" is a new feature added to the Tier Drop "Plant of the Month" 2023 segment when possible. Did you know...

Jerusalem Sage's genus name Phlomis is Greek and translated means flame. This may be referring to the fact that in ancient times its leaves were used as lamp wicks.

**January 2023  
Plant of the Month**

**Jerusalem Sage**  
*Phlomis fruticosa*

Plant Form: Evergreen Shrub  
Water Use: Low  
Mature Size: 4' tall & wide  
Exposure: Full Sun, Part Shade  
Bloom Time: Spring - Summer  
(April - Aug)  
Native to: Mediterranean, Europe  
Hardiness: Cold hardy to 10°F

Jerusalem Sage forms a large mound of wooly leaves, with whorls of butter-yellow flowers skewered in tiers on long spikes. The velvety leaves have a sage-like appearance, but lack the aroma and taste of true sages. Butterflies and bees are attracted to the flowers, adding good habitat to your yard. Flowering may be extended throughout the growing season if stems are cut back promptly after flowering. The cut flowers make nice bouquets, and after the flowers fall away, the seedpods create interesting dried arrangements. Flowers allowed to go to seed attract songbirds in fall and winter. While this drought-tolerant shrub tolerates some shade, it may get leggy with too much shade. Jerusalem Sage makes a good accent or specimen plant, but it also works well in borders and containers, or massed in the garden.



For more information on low water use gardening, contact your local water provider or go to [www.hdawac.org](http://www.hdawac.org)

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