



# COST OF SERVICE REPORT



*April 7, 2026*



# Water Replenishment District of Southern California

## COST OF SERVICE REPORT

April 7, 2026

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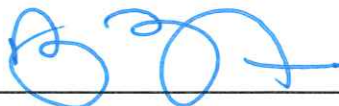
This Cost of Service Report has been prepared under the direct supervision of the individuals listed below. These persons certify that the information contained in the report has been accurately represented based upon the documents reviewed or from personal knowledge and experience, and any conclusions drawn are made in accordance with the generally accepted principles and practices of their profession.



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## 1.0 TABLE OF CONTENTS

|         |   |    |
|---------|---|----|
| 1.0     | TABLE OF CONTENTS.....  | 1  |
| 2.0     | LIST OF ACRONYMS.....   | 6  |
| 3.0     | INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT AND SUMMARY .....                              | 8  |
| 4.0     | ORGANIZATION OF REPORT.....   | 12 |
| 5.0     | WATER REPLENISHMENT DISTRICT FORMATION .....                          | 14 |
| 5.1     | WRD Service Area .....  | 14 |
| 5.2     | Groundwater Conditions .....  | 15 |
| 5.3     | Organizing to Meet Water Supply Challenges .....                      | 17 |
| 5.4     | Separate Replenishment Districts for Each Basin Not Pursued .....     | 17 |
| 5.5     | The Underflow .....   | 19 |
| 5.6     | WRD as an Institutional Alternative to Litigating the Underflow ..... | 21 |
| 5.7     | Metropolitan Water District as a Certain Source of Supply.....        | 23 |
| 5.8     | One Replenishment District for Two Basins .....                       | 23 |
| 5.9     | Proposal to Form One District for Two Basins .....                    | 24 |
| 5.10    | Formation Petition.....   | 25 |
| 5.11    | Department of Water Resources Hearing .....                           | 27 |
| 5.12    | Avoiding the Tragedy of the Commons .....                             | 27 |
| 5.13    | Protecting the Commons .....  | 28 |
| 5.14    | Footnotes to Section 5.....   | 29 |
| 5.15    | References Cited for Section 5.....                                   | 32 |
| 6.0     | HYDROGEOLOGY.....   | 35 |
| 6.1     | Groundwater Basin Boundaries .....                                    | 35 |
| 6.1.1   | Central Basin .....   | 36 |
| 6.1.2   | West Coast Basin.....   | 37 |
| 6.1.3   | The Two Basins Connected .....  | 37 |
| 6.2     | Geology .....   | 40 |
| 6.2.1   | Geologic Formations and Aquifers.....                                 | 40 |
| 6.2.1.1 | Pico Formation .....  | 41 |
| 6.2.1.2 | San Pedro Formation .....   | 41 |
| 6.2.1.3 | Lakewood Formation .....  | 43 |

---

|         |   |    |
|---------|---|----|
| 6.2.1.4 | Older Dune Sand Formation .....   | 44 |
| 6.2.1.5 | Recent Series.....  | 44 |
| 6.2.2   | Geologic Structure .....  | 46 |
| 6.2.2.1 | Whittier Fault Zone .....   | 46 |
| 6.2.2.2 | Newport-Inglewood Uplift .....  | 47 |
| 6.2.2.3 | Palos Verdes Fault Zone.....  | 48 |
| 6.2.2.4 | Charnock Fault .....  | 48 |
| 6.2.2.5 | Other Structural Features .....   | 49 |
| 6.3     | Groundwater Occurrence and Movement .....                                 | 50 |
| 6.3.1   | Sources of Groundwater .....  | 51 |
| 6.3.2   | Overdraft and Recovery .....  | 52 |
| 6.3.3   | Newport-Inglewood Uplift: Barrier Impacts and Groundwater Underflow ..... | 54 |
| 6.4     | Groundwater Pumping.....  | 57 |
| 6.5     | Managed Aquifer Recharge .....  | 59 |
| 6.5.1   | Montebello Forebay Spreading Grounds.....                                 | 60 |
| 6.5.2   | Seawater Barrier Injection Wells .....                                    | 63 |
| 6.5.3   | In-Lieu Replenishment .....   | 64 |
| 6.6     | Groundwater Quality .....   | 65 |
| 6.7     | References Cited for Section 6.....                                       | 67 |
| 7.0     | WRD PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, ADMINISTRATION AND WATER PURCHASES .....          | 72 |
| 7.1     | Water Purchases (WTR) .....   | 72 |
| 7.2     | Leo J. Vander Lans Water Treatment Facility (Program 001) .....           | 75 |
| 7.3     | Robert W. Goldsworthy Desalter (Program 002).....                         | 76 |
| 7.4     | Montebello Forebay Recycled Water (Program 004) .....                     | 77 |
| 7.5     | Groundwater Resources Planning (Program 005) .....                        | 78 |
| 7.6     | Water Quality Master Plan (Program 006) .....                             | 79 |
| 7.7     | Geographic Information System (Program 010).....                          | 82 |
| 7.8     | Groundwater Monitoring (Program 011) .....                                | 83 |
| 7.9     | Safe Drinking Water (Program 012).....                                    | 84 |
| 7.10    | Dominguez Gap Barrier Recycled Water Injection (Program 018) .....        | 85 |
| 7.11    | Replenishment Operations (Program 023).....                               | 87 |
| 7.12    | Hydrogeology Program (Program 025).....                                   | 88 |

|      |   |     |
|------|---|-----|
| 7.13 | Facility Maintenance (Program 032).....   | 90  |
| 7.14 | Robert Whitaker Treatment Facility (Program 033).....                           | 90  |
| 7.15 | Engineering Program (Program 038, ADM 1030, 1060, 1090, 1100).....              | 91  |
| 7.16 | Well Construction and Well Rehabilitation Loan Program (Program 046).....       | 92  |
| 7.17 | PFAS Remediation Program (Program 048).....                                     | 93  |
| 7.18 | Perchlorate Remediation in the Los Angeles Forebay (Program 049).....           | 94  |
| 7.19 | Water Education (Program EAE).....  | 95  |
| 7.20 | Administration (Programs ADM 1000, 1020, 1040, GMR 1005).....                   | 96  |
| 7.21 | Board of Directors (DIR, D09, D11, D13, D14, D15).....                          | 96  |
| 7.22 | Water Conservation (Program EAC).....   | 97  |
| 7.23 | Data Technology Services (ADM 1080).....  | 97  |
| 8.0  | UNIFORM RATE.....   | 100 |
| 8.1  | Reasons for a Uniform Rate.....   | 100 |
| 8.2  | References Cited for Section 8.....   | 104 |
| 9.0  | COST OF SERVICE.....  | 106 |
| 9.1  | Projects, Programs, Administration & Water Costs.....                           | 106 |
| 9.2  | Other Special Programs and Supportive Costs.....                                | 107 |
| 9.3  | Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).....   | 108 |
| 9.4  | Water Purchase Carryover & Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund (Replenishment)..... | 109 |
| 9.5  | Summary of Budgetary Cost Estimates.....  | 109 |
| 9.6  | Income (Sales, Subsidies and Grants).....                                       | 109 |
| 9.7  | Cost of Providing Service.....  | 111 |
| 10.0 | COST ALLOCATION ANALYSIS.....   | 112 |
| 11.0 | DROUGHT.....  | 114 |

**List of Tables**

|           |  |    |
|-----------|--|----|
| Table 6-1 | Central Basin to West Coast Basin Historical Underflow Determinations..... | 56 |
| Table 6-2 | Managed Aquifer Recharge in WRD Service Area 1959 – 2025.....              | 60 |
| Table 6-3 | Montebello Forebay Groundwater Recharge Facilities.....                    | 62 |
| Table 6-4 | Seawater Barrier Injection Well Facilities.....                            | 63 |
| Table 7-1 | Water Purchases.....   | 74 |
| Table 7-2 | Leo J. Vander Lans Water Treatment Facility.....                           | 75 |
| Table 7-3 | Goldsworthy Desalter.....  | 76 |
| Table 7-4 | Montebello Forebay.....  | 78 |
| Table 7-5 | Groundwater Resources Planning.....  | 79 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Table 7-6 Water Quality Master Plan .....  | 82  |
| Table 7-7 Geographic Information Systems.....  | 83  |
| Table 7-8 Groundwater Monitoring Program.....  | 84  |
| Table 7-9 Safe Drinking Water Program .....  | 85  |
| Table 7-10 Dominguez Gap Barrier Recycled Water Injection Program.....                           | 86  |
| Table 7-11 Replenishment Operations .....  | 88  |
| Table 7-12 Hydrogeology Program .....  | 90  |
| Table 9-1 Summary of FY 2026-27 Estimated Projects, Programs and Administration & Water Costs .. | 106 |
| Table 9-2 Summary of FY 2026-27 Other Special Projects and Supportive Costs .....                | 107 |
| Table 9-3 Summary of FY 2026-27 Budgetary Cost Estimates.....                                    | 109 |
| Table 9-4 FY 2026-27 Income (Sales , Subsidies and Grants).....                                  | 111 |
| Table 9-5 Cost of Providing Service.....   | 111 |

**List of Figures (located at the end of the report)**

- Figure 5-1 WRD Service Area
- Figure 6-1 Subbasins of the Coastal Plain of Los Angeles Groundwater Basin
- Figure 6-2 Boundaries of the WRD, Central Basin and West Coast Basin
- Figure 6-3 Generalized Cross Section
- Figure 6-4 Generalized Stratigraphic Column Coastal Plain of Los Angeles County
- Figure 6-5 Geologic Cross Section Locations
- Figure 6-6 Geologic Cross Sections C & E
- Figure 6-7 Geologic Cross Sections J & M
- Figure 6-8 Faults and Hills in WRD Service Area
- Figure 6-9 Charnock Fault Alternatives
- Figure 6-10 Groundwater Elevation Contour Map for 1904
- Figure 6-11 Location of Wells used for Hydrographs
- Figure 6-12 Groundwater Level Hydrographs – 1904-1960
- Figure 6-13 Deep Aquifer Ground Water Contours – November 1960
- Figure 6-14 Groundwater Level Hydrographs – 1904-2025
- Figure 6-15 Groundwater Elevation Contour Map Fall 2025
- Figure 6-16 Water Company Service Areas and Water Wells
- Figure 6-17 Groundwater Recharge Facilities
- Figure 6-18 Rio Hondo and San Gabriel Coastal Spreading Grounds
- Figure 6-19 WRD Priority Contamination Sites
- Figure 6-20 WRD Monitoring Wells

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## 2.0 LIST OF ACRONYMS

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| ABAC    | Audit and Budget Advisory Committee  |
| AF      | Acre-Feet (equivalent to 325,851 gallons)  |
| AFY     | Acre-Feet per Year   |
| ARC     | Albert Robles Center for Water Recycling and Environmental Learning (formerly known as GRIP) |
| AWTF    | Advanced Water Treatment Facility  |
| AY      | Administrative Year (Watermaster Year from July – June)                                      |
| BMP     | Best Management Practice   |
| CASGEM  | California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring  |
| CCR     | Consumer Confidence Report   |
| CDPH    | California Department of Public Health   |
| CDPW    | California Department of Public Works  |
| CDWR    | California Department of Water Resources   |
| CEC     | Constituents of Emerging Concern   |
| CIP     | Capital Improvement Program  |
| CBWA    | Central Basin Water Association  |
| CBWCB   | Central Basin and West Coast Basin   |
| CPR     | Common Pool Resource   |
| CWS     | California Water Service Company   |
| CWSC    | California Water Service Company   |
| DDW     | State Water Resources Control Board – Division of Drinking Water                             |
| DGB     | Dominguez Gap Barrier  |
| DTSC    | California Department of Toxic Substances Control  |
| EPA     | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency   |
| ESR     | Engineering Survey and Report  |
| GASB    | Government Accounting Standards Board  |
| GIS     | Geographic Information System  |
| GRIP    | Groundwater Reliability Improvement Project  |
| GSWC    | Golden State Water Company   |
| GWAM    | Groundwater Augmentation Model   |
| IRWMP   | Integrated Regional Water Management Plan  |
| LACPW   | Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (Flood Control)                                |
| LACFCD  | Los Angeles County Flood Control District  |
| LACSD   | Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts  |
| LADWP   | City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power  |
| LAMS4   | Los Angeles County Municipal Stormwater Permit   |
| LARWQCB | Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board   |
| LBUD    | Long Beach Utilities Department  |
| LRP     | Local Resources Program  |

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| LUST     | Leaking Underground Storage Tank                                      |
| MAR      | Managed Aquifer Recharge  |
| MFI      | Modified Fouling Index  |
| MFSG     | Montebello Forebay Spreading Grounds                                  |
| MGD      | Million Gallons per Day   |
| MODFLOW  | MODular three-dimensional finite-difference ground-water FLOW model   |
| MOU      | Memorandum of Understanding   |
| MWD      | Metropolitan Water District of Southern California                    |
| OCWD     | Orange County Water District  |
| PEIR     | Programmatic Environmental Impact Report                              |
| PPA      | Projects, Programs, Administration                                    |
| RA       | Replenishment Assessment  |
| RHSG     | Rio Hondo Spreading Grounds   |
| RWQCB-LA | California Regional Water Quality Control Board – Los Angeles         |
| RWTF     | Robert Whitaker Treatment Facility                                    |
| SAT      | Soil Aquifer Treatment  |
| SBPAT    | Structural Best Management Practices Prioritization and Analysis Tool |
| SCWC     | Southern California Water Committee                                   |
| SDWP     | Safe Drinking Water Program   |
| SGSG     | San Gabriel Spreading Grounds   |
| SWRCB    | State Water Resources Control Board                                   |
| TAC      | Technical Advisory Committee  |
| TITP     | Terminal Island Treatment Plant                                       |
| TDS      | Total Dissolved Solids  |
| UCMR     | Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule                               |
| USEPA    | United States Environmental Protection Agency                         |
| USGS     | United States Geological Survey                                       |
| VOC      | Volatile Organic Compound   |
| WAS      | Water Augmentation Study  |
| WBMWD    | West Basin Municipal Water District                                   |
| WBWA     | West Basin Water Association  |
| WIN      | Water Independence Now program  |
| WPRSF    | Water Purchase and Rate Stabilization Fund                            |
| WRD      | Water Replenishment District of Southern California                   |
| WRP      | Water Reclamation Plant   |

### 3.0 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT AND SUMMARY

The Water Replenishment District of Southern California (“WRD” or the “District”), originally known as the Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District, was established by a vote of the people in 1959 pursuant to the Water Replenishment District Act of 1955 (Section 60000 *et seq.* of the California Water Code). We are extremely proud to be celebrating over 60 years of providing safe, reliable groundwater to the residents and businesses within the service area for all these decades.

In her seminal work, *Governing the Commons*, Nobel Laureate Elinor Ostrom cites the formation of the District as an example of protecting the common pool resource of the Central Basin and West Coast Basin (the “Basins”) by pumpers voluntarily organizing “to avoid the adverse outcomes of independent action.” The Replenishment District is one of a number of institutions created in the 1950s and 1960s for that purpose.

The purpose of the District is to manage the common pool resource that consists of two interconnecting groundwater subbasins of what the California Department of Water Resources describes as the Coastal Plain of Los Angeles Groundwater Basin. If properly maintained and preserved, the Basins serve as a massive underground water storage and delivery system. Water pumped from the Basins by municipal water utilities, investor-owned water companies, mutual water companies and private companies is used on site by some pumpers and distributed by other pumpers to millions of residents and non-residential water users throughout the District’s service area in southern Los Angeles County. It is far less expensive for these pumpers to pump groundwater from the Basins than to purchase imported surface water originating from the Colorado River or Northern California.

The Basins, though a critical part of the water supply system in southern Los Angeles County, are fragile and require management. Although pumping rights in the Basins were adjudicated decades ago, the pumping permitted under the adjudication exceeds naturally occurring replenishment. In other words, pumpers are allowed to remove more water each year from the Basins than nature adds back to the basins through natural recharge. If the Basins were not artificially replenished, water levels in the Basins would decrease.

When water levels in the Basins drop below sea level, seawater intrudes into the Basins – first along the coast and then inland. Historically, seawater intrusion has contaminated significant portions of the groundwater in the Basins. Absent artificial replenishment and active measures to stop seawater intrusion, these plumes of seawater would grow.

Excessive pumping anywhere in the Basins can cause problems throughout the Basins. The boundary between the Central Basin and West Coast Basin approximates the centerline of a geologic structure known as the Newport-Inglewood Uplift. However, the Uplift is not a simple straight-line feature but, rather, a complicated structure of numerous hills and discontinuous fault segments that start and stop over a 20-mile length and over a mile width and follows a non-linear path. Groundwater flows across the

Uplift in a direction and volume that depends on the groundwater slope and tightness of Uplift sediments, which varies both spatially and at depth. In the absence of pumping activities in Central Basin, thousands of acre-feet of water would flow across the Uplift from the Central Basin to the West Coast Basin. This “underflow,” an important natural mechanism for the recharge of the West Coast Basin, is reduced by over pumping in the Central Basin. Under certain underflow conditions, seawater from the West Coast Basin can migrate across the Uplift into the Central Basin. Water levels in the Central Basin impact water levels in the West Coast Basin and water levels in the West Coast Basin impact water quality in the Central Basin.

The District’s programs ensure that the Basins remain viable water resources for the pumping activities that are permitted under the basin adjudications.

In effect, the District maintains the Basins as a complex and interconnected system from which pumpers can obtain safe, high quality, reliable water and for storing water for future extraction by pumpers. The District purchases and produces potable and recycled water that is introduced into the Basins via spreading grounds (increasing water levels in the Basins and restoring the underflow) and via injection wells (increasing water levels in the Basins and directly blocking seawater intrusion). In order to maintain the Basins as effective and economic water resources, the District actively monitors water levels and water quality throughout the Basins. The District also pumps intruded seawater directly from the Basins and desalinates this water in order to reduce the size of existing seawater plumes. These programs, and other activities of the District, are designed to ensure the maintenance and preservation of the Basins, and, thus, the availability of water for pumpers to pump. Due to the interconnected nature of the Basins, all activities of the District are provided for the benefit of pumpers throughout the service area.

The District anticipates that the maximum net cost of its operations for Fiscal Year 2026-27 will be \$82,853,738. WRD proactively reaches out to and surveys the pumping community to better understand the amount of groundwater pumping anticipated for forecasting purposes for the ensuing and future years. A majority of the pumpers who extract the largest percentage of groundwater from the basin responded with their pumping forecast in late 2025. The pumping community forecast along with an average of those that did not respond was then used in the March 2026 ESR. Based on this information, it’s estimated the ensuing WY total pumping will be approximately 211,000 AF (173,000 AF in the CB and 38,000 AF in the WCB) and assessable pumping in both basins for the ensuing WY is estimated at 171,000 AF (133,000 AF in the CB and 38,000 AF in the WCB). The production estimate assumes (1) there will be average rainfall in the ensuing year, (2) the current year original projection established before the exceptional rainfall totals through January 2026 (211,000 AF), and (3) a pumper projected increase of approximately 1%.

The pumping estimates were further reviewed in consultation with the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC), an eleven-member panel tasked with evaluating WRD’s financial and operational information and providing recommendations to the Board of Directors. Following internal evaluation and discussions with both the BAC and WRD staff, it was determined that the projected volume of groundwater pumped is 171,254 acre-feet. Consequently, the cost of service will be \$484 per acre-foot of water withdrawn from

the Basins, representing a 6.6 percent increase, or \$30 more than the current replenishment assessment rate of \$454 per acre-foot. For fiscal year 2026-27, the PFAS assessment has been excluded from the cost structure to partially mitigate the increase in the replenishment assessment; instead, PFAS reserve funds will be utilized during this period. The PFAS assessment will be reinstated for the FY 2027-28 cost-of-service.

**Caveat**

WRD is making this Cost of Service Report available to the public as part of administrative proceedings on the replenishment assessment (“RA”) for 2026-27 and as part of the District’s pumper notification process. The fact that the District is engaging in these proceedings should not be construed as an acknowledgment by the District or its Board that the adoption or continuation of an RA triggers obligations under Article XIII D, Section 6 of the California Constitution (which was added to the California Constitution in 1996 as a part of Proposition 218 and is referred to herein as “Proposition 218”).

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## **4.0 ORGANIZATION OF REPORT**

This Cost of Service report has been prepared by the Water Replenishment District of Southern California (“WRD” or “District”) to describe the services the District anticipates performing in Fiscal Year 2026-27 and to analyze the costs of providing these services. The costs associated with those services are described using the best available information, along with an evaluation of the fair and equitable RA necessary to cover those costs.

Section 5 describes the history of WRD formation. Section 6 describes the unique geology, hydrogeology, and groundwater quality of the interconnected basins underlying the district, and how groundwater recovery, pumping overdraft, and aquifer recharge activities affect this shared resource. Section 7 describes the WRD projects and programs undertaken to manage and protect the groundwater resource. Section 8 describes why the levy of an RA at a uniform rate per acre-foot of water removed from the basins is an equitable method of spreading the District’s costs amongst the pumpers who rely on the District’s services. Section 9 is the Fiscal Year Cost of Service and Section 10 is the proposed maximum RA based on the Cost of Service. Section 11 discusses drought, which is a recurring phenomenon in California and how the District’s activities help to minimize the impact of drought to the groundwater producers in the District’s service area. References utilized in preparing this document are listed at the end of each Section in which they are cited. Tables are included within the text of the report. Figures are included at the end of the report.

While this Cost of Service Report was prepared by WRD professionals, including hydrogeologists, engineers, accountants, and others acting under their direction, Chapter 5 was primarily authored by Mr. Michael Gagan, a consultant to the District, given his research and knowledge of the historical events discussed in the Chapter. That discussion of those historical events is included in this Cost of Service report to provide context for the technical issues and other matters covered in the Report as well as to set forth the relevant information in one complete document.

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## 5.0 WATER REPLENISHMENT DISTRICT FORMATION

Formation of the Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District (later renamed the Water Replenishment District of Southern California) was approved by the electorate on November 17, 1959. 81,719 votes were cast in favor of the proposed district; 20,860 votes were cast against. Five Directors of the District were elected by Division. <sup>(1)</sup> The election was conducted pursuant to the provisions of the Water Replenishment District Act of 1955. <sup>(2)</sup>

### 5.1 WRD Service Area

The WRD Service Area boundary was also established by the election. The boundary was formed as a result of the numerous studies, meetings, negotiations, settlements, and a public hearing that took place in the 1950s as groundwater pumpers in both basins recognized and developed solutions to the increasingly critical water supply and water quality problems they faced. A discussion of these problems and solutions appears in the California Department of Water Resources (“CDWR”) report on the proposed formation of the District (CDWR, 1959) and is also described in detail in the remainder of this Section and in Section 6. The final service area boundary established for WRD does not mention any groundwater basins or the Newport-Inglewood Uplift, or any other internal features, but instead the simple perimeter boundary of the WRD Service Area that follows certain geographic coordinates around the region. Figure 5-1 shows the WRD service area as defined by the election. It encompasses an area of approximately 420 square miles, 43 cities, and a current population of 3.8 million. It overlies most of the Central Groundwater Basin (“Central Basin”) and West Coast Groundwater Basin (“West Basin” or “West Coast Basin”) as well as portions outside of these basins in the Palos Verdes Hills.

As discussed further below, before the election, the parties discussed different approaches to managing the basins, including establishing two separate Replenishment Districts. Ultimately, it was recognized that the Basins are one hydrogeological system that is interconnected. This led to the formation of a single replenishment district with a uniform assessment.

This is discussed further below, and some of the key statements are as follows:

- On February 28, 1957, the Board of Directors of the WBWA adopted a joint resolution “declaring the urgent need to obtain water for replenishment and prevention of saltwater intrusion under the provision of Chapter 1514, California Statutes of 1955, and to develop an acceptable and feasible plan therefore” and instructing the respective Association Executive Committees “to jointly develop and submit such a plan.” On May 2, 1957, the CBWA approved the same resolution. The resolution acknowledges that both injection wells and replenishment are necessary to maintain the integrity of the entire system, and benefit both the Central and West Coast Basins:

“Whereas, the overdraft upon ground waters in the Central and West Basin areas of Los Angeles County has progressively increased to the extent that the entire ground water reservoir could be destroyed because of continuing encroachment of sea water upon the coast; and ...

“Whereas, replenishment of the ground water reservoir through spreading and injection of a supplemental water supply has been tested and proved successful under Zones 1 and 2 of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District and must at the earliest possible time be enlarged to a full scale operation to restore ground water levels and stop the intrusion of sea water....”

- According to Fossette, Central Basin pumpers supported a single replenishment district “to increase the yield of the basin by spreading and operating barriers to repel sea water intrusion. And finally, [to] adjudicate water rights and curtail pumping to the extent necessary to restore water levels and furnish reasonable underflow to West Basin — thus, avoiding another lawsuit.”
- Max Bookman, who was arguably the most knowledgeable expert on the geology of the two groundwater basins, said it succinctly: “Separate replenishment programs for the Central Basin and West Basin, wherein each basin pays their individual costs, is not practical because of the interdependence of the common water supply of the two areas and because the two basins must be conjunctively operated in order to obtain the maximum benefits of the groundwater supply.” (Bookman and Edmonston, 1963).

## 5.2 Groundwater Conditions

The hazards of leaving the Central and West Basins unmanaged had been recognized for some time prior to the formation of the District. The Walter Mendenhall studies on the Development of Underground Waters in the Central and Western Coastal Plains documented the production of groundwater in excess of natural replenishment in the early 1900s. Published by the United States Geological Survey (“USGS”) in 1905, the studies noted the “accelerating development” that had occurred in the area over the previous four decades. Increased stream diversion by constructed ditches and canals reduced the volume of natural replenishment, as did the increased runoff to the ocean caused by housing, businesses and roads. Mendenhall characterized these as “two disturbing elements” that were “destroying” the natural balance between water supply and water demand. As a result, formerly large swaths of artesian land (areas where the groundwater flowed naturally out of wells without pumping due to high pressure) were shrinking and depth to groundwater was increasing. <sup>(3)</sup>

The widespread introduction of the electric pump and deep well turbine to replace windmills and steam generators made it possible to pump more water more quickly and from deeper sources as demand for groundwater continued to grow along with the population in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Groundwater extractions spiked upward with the new industrial demand that resulted from oil drilling in the Signal Hill and Long Beach areas in the 1920s and the Wilmington oil fields in the 1930s. Pre-War preparedness and the jobs resulting from it, including a rapidly growing military mobilization, increased both industrial and domestic demand for water in an area that in 1940 was still the agricultural capital of California.

By 1940, groundwater extractions greatly exceeded natural replenishment. Pumpers in both basins were drawing water at ever-increasing depths and seawater intrusion was well underway in West Basin and was in the early stages of migration in Central Basin. <sup>(4)</sup>

Adverse conditions surfaced earlier in West Basin than in Central Basin and, for that reason, the series of institutional steps that led to the ultimate formation of the Water Replenishment District began on the West Basin side.

“Generally speaking, water shortage problems move upstream,” former water district and association manager Carl Fossette noted. “Those farthest from the source are the first to be hurt, and those closest to the source have first chance at interception and are the last to suffer.

“By 1940, the West Coast Basin, located at the end of the San Gabriel River system, was experiencing serious water shortage problems. Overdraft on the basin was continuous. Replenishment from Central Basin was diminishing. Salt water was intruding into wells located along the coast. Water demands were rising, pumping was uncontrolled and competitive among producers.

“The water shortage had moved upstream by 1950 to the Central Basin, where pumping levels were far below sea level in the North Long Beach area. Sea water was intruding and the accumulated basin overdraft totaled 1,000,000 acre feet, with no controls on pumping.” <sup>(5)</sup>

### **5.3 Organizing to Meet Water Supply Challenges**

As Nobel Laureate Elinor Ostrom described it, the process of institutional development in both basins was incremental and sequential, one step leading to another in a more or less orderly way. While developments in the respective basins occurred at a different pace, both basins ended up in the same place with a common replenishment district and, shortly after that, with final court judgments limiting groundwater extractions and fixing the rights of those parties lawfully empowered to pump.

Organizationally, what ended in 1959 with voter approval of the Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District began in 1942, with formation of the West Basin Water Survey Committee. Viewed chronologically, one step in the institutional development process led logically to the next, with each succeeding step informed by the experience of what went before. Pumpers organized voluntarily to gather and share information. First in the West Basin, they sought court action to curtail groundwater production and establish water rights. The West Basin court experience informed what eventually happened in the Central Basin.

Pumpers sought and successfully obtained formation of municipal water districts to bring an imported supply to the two basins. As events unfolded, it became clear that neither court action nor the introduction of imported water would protect the basins from permanent depletion and seawater intrusion or enable pumpers in either basin to pump beyond their natural safe yields. If imported water were to be used to arrest overdraft and replenish the basins, some mechanism for financing imported water purchases had to be developed. To restore and protect the groundwater basins for perpetual beneficial use, formation of a replenishment district was a logical final step. <sup>(6)</sup>

### **5.4 Separate Replenishment Districts for Each Basin Not Pursued**

As was the case with the formation of the two municipal water districts (Central Basin Municipal Water District and West Basin Municipal Water District), the groundwater community took the steps necessary to create the Water Replenishment District. Groundwater producers representing the Central and West Basin Water Associations were instrumental in crafting the Water Replenishment District Act. The Associations established the purposes, boundaries and financing plan of the District, prepared the petition to place the question of District formation on the ballot, financed and managed the petition campaign, prepared the ballot language to take before the voters and financed and managed the campaign to secure voter approval. <sup>(7)</sup>

Within weeks of passage of the Water Replenishment District Act in 1955, the Associations formed Water Replenishment District Committees.<sup>(8)</sup> Between July 1955 and July 1958, the advantages and disadvantages of two separate replenishment districts or a single district covering both basins were explored and discussed in detail by pumpers in the two basins.

Central Basin pumpers from the outset favored a single district covering both basins. A single district was not such an obvious choice for West Basin pumpers. “At first, West Basin producers presumed that they would go it alone and created a working committee with the association to draft a specific proposal to create a district,” Ostrom notes. <sup>(9)</sup> “The West Basin producers were physically disadvantaged because they were at the end of the groundwater ‘pipeline.’ They were concerned that their physical disadvantage could be exaggerated by the creation of a new public agency in which they would be politically dominated.” <sup>(10)</sup>

In 1955, what pumpers in the West Basin would decide to do was not at all certain. According to the meeting minutes, Thorburn prefaced his presentation this way:

Director Thorburn said the Committee believed that a water replenishment district is needed in West Basin and that such a district should be formed. He said the Committee had considered the problem of whether it was more desirable to form a district in the West Basin alone or with Central Basin. He pointed out that the problem in the Central and West Basins are the same and the natural water supply comes from the same source.

He stated that the West Basin receives its water from the Central Basin and the Central Basin in turn receives its water from (the) San Gabriel Valley Basin. He also stated the Upper San Gabriel Valley Basin was definitely a part of the problem and that perhaps a replenishment district should include all three basins. <sup>(11)</sup>

In a November 17, 1955 report to the West Basin Water Association (“WBWA”), R.R. Thorburn, Chairman of the WBWA Replenishment District Committee, listed some of the reasons for a district covering West Basin only, as well as for a single district covering the two basins <sup>(12)</sup>:

Reasons given at the time for a West Basin Water Replenishment District:

1. The injection of replenishment water would be unique and necessary to West Basin. In a combined district, because of its much larger voting base, Central Basin would control that program in the West Basin and might not want to continue the well-injection method along the coast.
2. Pumping had been curtailed in West Basin but not in Central Basin.
3. The degree of ultimate curtailment might not be the same in the two basins.
4. Control of the local tax rate and amount of pumping assessment would be retained by West Basin.
5. A district limited to West Basin could initiate proceedings to ensure financial replenishment from Central Basin.

“In other words,” Ostrom commented with respect to the last item, “if the District comprised only West Basin, then the West Basin producers could sue the Central Basin producers to pressure them into curtailing their production.” <sup>(13)</sup>

Reasons for a replenishment district covering both basins:

1. The purpose would be the same in both basins: replenishment of the groundwater supply.
2. Greater financial resources would be available; the tax rate and amount of pumping assessment could be lower.
3. A large district would have greater political strength and would be more effective in dealing with Upper San Gabriel and various state bodies.
4. The Long Beach harbor area offers a potential route for intrusion of seawater into West Basin and Central Basin and probably would be included in a combined district. It is doubtful that any of Long Beach could be included in a district comprising West Basin only.
5. Extensive recharge of Central Basin might contribute free water to West Basin. <sup>(14)</sup>

A plan for a replenishment district limited to Central Basin did not progress because the leading Central Basin pumpers favored a combined district even before the Water Replenishment District Act took effect. In August 1955, Brennan Thomas appeared before the Executive Committee of the West Basin Water Association. Thomas was General Manager of the Long Beach Water Department, by far the largest pumper in Central Basin. He was a member of the Central Basin Water Association (“CBWA”) Executive Committee and Water Replenishment District Committee.

Thomas said the “Central Basin (Water) Association was giving consideration for possible boundaries for a proposed replenishment district and that such a district should include both the areas of the Central and West Basin.” He explained that a combined district would have substantial financial resources to buy the water necessary for both basins and that he recognized “certain advantages and disadvantages of such a plan.” He believed, however, that “a larger replenishment district would be able to accomplish more in preserving and protecting the underground supply than would be the case if a smaller district were formed.” <sup>(15)</sup>

Central Basin pumpers were aware that a combined district meant a single RA for pumpers in both basins. Under the Water Replenishment District Act, any RA adopted by a replenishment district board had to be uniform and based on groundwater production. <sup>(16)</sup>

## 5.5 The Underflow

Central Basin pumpers supported formation of a single replenishment district with a uniform assessment covering both basins. The reason had to do with the volume of underflow from the Central Basin into West Basin and the prospective obligation Central Basin had to maintain it.

The 1952 *Report of Referee* in connection with the West Basin adjudication documented the hydrologic continuity of the two basins and quantified the historic underflow West Basin received from Central Basin. Excerpts from the *Report*:

- “The West Coast Basin is not a unique, independent hydrologic unit, but is dependent on adjoining areas for practically its entire ground water supply. ... Fresh water is supplied by aquifers extending into the basin across the Newport-Inglewood uplift, which aquifers have their source in remote areas of recharge.”
- “For all practical purposes, the sole source of continuing fresh water replenishment to the basin is the underflow across the Newport-Inglewood uplift. The rate of this replenishment is proportional to the hydrostatic head across the uplift, and during the period 1945–46 through 1949–50 the replenishment has averaged about 30,000 acre-feet per year. ... The volume of fresh water replenishment will also be reduced in proportion to the resulting change in water level differential across the uplift.” <sup>(17)</sup>

The findings of the *Report of Referee* came as a “bombshell” to West Basin pumpers, leading to a recommendation to limit groundwater production to 30,000 acre-feet of underflow per year, roughly one-third of actual production in 1952. <sup>(18)</sup>

Even before publication of the *Report of Referee*, West Basin pumpers eyed with great interest Central Basin developments that might affect underflow. “The success of the effort to form (the Central Basin Municipal Water District) and to have it annexed to Metropolitan is of special importance to the West Basin,” Fossette wrote in a May 1952 edition of *West Basin Water News*. “The Inglewood-Newport fault (sic) separates the Central Basin from the West Basin and virtually all of the groundwater replenishment to West Basin accrues by underflow across the dividing fault line. A recent report of the Division of Water Resources (Bulletin 8) indicates that the Central Basin is now subject to an overdraft of about 100,000 acre-feet per annum. It follows that as long as this overdraft continues, the replenishment to West Basin will be progressively diminished.” <sup>(19)</sup>

Indeed, “the replenishment to West Basin” dropped precipitously in the next few years. In a February 23, 1956 presentation to the WBWA, West Coast Basin Watermaster Max Bookman said that “significant facts were being developed with reference to water levels across the Newport-Inglewood fault in Central Basin. He said water levels on the Central Basin side were still receding rapidly...He stated that when water levels on the Central Basin side were lower than levels on the West Basin side, replenishment to West Basin from Central Basin would be cut off.” <sup>(20)</sup>

In a November 6, 1958 presentation to the CBWA, State Department of Water Resources Director Harvey Banks observed that “water levels in Central Basin are now so low that the ground water flow has been reversed and is now moving from West Basin into Central Basin, contrary to the design of nature.” <sup>(21)</sup>

Bookman subsequently estimated that in order to restore the underflow to anything approaching the historic volumes identified in the *Report of Referee*, pumping in the Central Basin would have to be limited to 170,000 acre-feet. <sup>(22)</sup>

## 5.6 WRD as an Institutional Alternative to Litigating the Underflow

The prospect of adjudicating the underflow was on the minds of West Basin pumpers even as the Water Replenishment District Act was being crafted. Indeed, a provision in the Act authorized a district to pay the costs of adjudicating water rights. “West Basin needed the provision in the act,” WBWA President Ben Haggott said, “to permit adjudication of the upstream system in the Central Basin and in the San Gabriel Valley in order to find some means to stop the cutting off of upstream replenishment to West Basin.” <sup>(23)</sup>

“West Basin threatened to sue Central Basin producers,” Fossette said, “unless they reduced pumping to allow water levels to recover, so replenishment would, again, reach the West Basin by underflow across the Fault dividing the two areas.” <sup>(24)</sup>

In his May 2, 1957 speech to the Central Basin Water Association, Metropolitan Water District (“MWD”) Board Chairman Joe Jensen advocated for the formation of a single replenishment district with a uniform RA covering both basins, stating that “a single replenishment district should be formed to include the area of both Central and West Basins rather than to form a single district in each basin.” Referring to the Orange County Water District litigation against Riverside, San Bernardino, Redlands and Colton, he noted that the judge had ordered the defendant cities to reduce pumping by 30% and to “pay back the excessive amounts of water taken since 1951.” He said that “West Basin was entitled to its fair share of the natural water...and that if a single replenishment district was formed including both West and Central Basins, the entire area could be regulated as a single unit.” <sup>(25)</sup>

In making the case for a single replenishment district to West Basin pumpers six months later, Jensen again referred to the Orange County Water District litigation. “Mr. Jensen referred to the recent court decision rendered in connection with the Orange County suit against San Bernardino, Riverside, Redlands and Colton, providing that those cities reduce pumping by 30% in order to ensure that Orange County would receive its fair share of the ground water supply. He added that the decision further provided that the Upper Basin cities pay back the excessive amounts of water taken since 1951 and he compared the situation involved in that lawsuit with that existing in the West and Central Basin areas.” <sup>(26)</sup>

Two years later, Brennan Thomas solicited the participation of the WBWA in imminent litigation the City of Long Beach intended to file against pumpers in the Upper San Gabriel. He emphasized that “the geological factors were similar in the Upper San Gabriel Valley and the Santa Ana territory...the West Basin was in the same relative position as the Orange County Water District, that Riverside represented the same position as the Central Basin area and that the Upper San Gabriel Valley area occupied a position similar to that of the San Bernardino area.” <sup>(27)</sup>

In litigation over the San Gabriel River watershed, the Central Basin and West Basin were also treated as a single unit – as the “Lower Area” of the San Gabriel River watershed. Through the 1950s, rapid development and population growth in the upper part of the San Gabriel Valley dramatically reduced the surface and subsurface flows across Whittier Narrows. In the late 1950s, water users in the Main San Gabriel Basin were almost completely reliant upon local water supplies and had not gained access to a supplemental supply such as imported water. Water users in the Lower Area of the San Gabriel River watershed (Central and West Basins) tried to get upstream users in the Main San Gabriel Basin to follow the process used twice in the Lower Area: namely, to organize a water association, form a municipal water district, annex to MWD, and contribute to the cost of supplying the region with supplemental water. After early efforts at persuasion failed to yield the desired actions, Lower Area producers warned that litigation to restrain Upper Area water use was likely.

In the spring of 1959, the Lower Area cities of Long Beach and Compton along with the Central Basin Municipal Water District filed a complaint against the Upper Area water producers in *Board of Water Commissioners of the City of Long Beach et al. v. San Gabriel Valley Water Company et al.* The plaintiffs requested a determination of the Upper Area parties’ rights to water in the San Gabriel River watershed and an injunction restraining them from interfering with the rights of the Lower Area users to water from that watershed. Both sides appointed members to a joint negotiating committee and commissioned a joint engineering study to aid in the determination of water flows (both above ground and underground) between the upper and lower areas of the watershed over time. The study and negotiations continued from 1960 through 1963, resulting in a stipulation for judgment accompanied by exhibits from the engineering study. Remaining issues were resolved over the course of 1964, and the stipulated judgment in the case was entered by the Superior Court on May 1965.

The judgment called for monitoring of Upper Area deliveries of “usable water” (defined in the judgment) to the Lower Area of the watershed by a San Gabriel River Watermaster composed of Upper Area and Lower Area representatives. This arrangement between the Upper Area users and Lower Area (Central and West Basins) users of the San Gabriel River watershed has remained in effect for almost 60 years.

From a Central Basin pumper perspective, it was far less expensive to pay more for a common replenishment district than to risk significant reductions in pumping that would likely result from an adjudication of the underflow. According to Fossette, Central Basin pumpers supported a single replenishment district “to increase the yield of the basin by spreading and operating barriers to repel sea water intrusion. And finally, (to) adjudicate water rights and curtail pumping to the extent necessary to restore water levels and furnish reasonable underflow to West Basin --- thus, avoiding another lawsuit.”

(28)

West Basin producers came to see the formation of a single replenishment district as an attractive alternative to litigation. As noted above, West Basin producers had sought court action to curtail groundwater production and establish water rights. “After their costly experience with litigation,” Ostrom wrote, “most West Basin producers hesitated to enter into prolonged adjudication concerning the respective rights of Central Basin producers and West Basin producers to the joint supply. The possibility of creating a management enterprise to include both basins offered the opportunity to negotiate a rationing agreement within the framework of a common public enterprise.” <sup>(29)</sup>

## 5.7 Metropolitan Water District as a Certain Source of Supply

A recurring concern in replenishment district discussions had to do with the fact that the pumpers did not know whether the MWD would guarantee the delivery of sufficient water to meet the replenishment needs in the Basins. Even if there was sufficient water available, there was no Metropolitan connection to either the spreading grounds or the West Coast Basin Barrier and the future barriers planned for the Dominguez Gap and Alamitos Gap.

Pumpers began discussions with Metropolitan officials in March 1956. <sup>(30)</sup> Those discussions led to the appointment by Metropolitan Board President Joseph Jensen of a Subcommittee on Groundwater Replenishment chaired by W.C. Farquhar, President of the West Basin Municipal Water District and member of the Executive Committee of the West Basin Water Association.

The work of that Subcommittee resulted in a Statement of Policy adopted on April 16, 1957 by the Metropolitan Board. <sup>(31)</sup> The policy said that Metropolitan would construct at its own expense a 45-mile distribution line and laterals to serve the coastal barriers, as well as a line and laterals to serve the spreading grounds on two conditions. One was that a future replenishment district or districts execute a contract with Metropolitan “to buy untreated Colorado River Aqueduct water for the replenishment of the local underground basins to the full amount of the revenues made available by charges on pumped water.”

The second condition was that there be organized a water replenishment district or districts in Central and West Basins no later than April 16, 1961. The cost of the distribution pipelines and laterals was estimated at \$19 million (more than \$150 million in 2013 dollars). The money was important, but so was the deadline. For the first time, pumpers had a defined window in which to form a district.

## 5.8 One Replenishment District for Two Basins

As discussions with Metropolitan were in their early stages “members of both associations came to a working agreement that the benefits of a larger district would outweigh the costs. Assurances were given to West Basin producers that they would not be dominated by their eastern neighbors.” <sup>(32)</sup>

On November 15, 1956, the Board of Directors of the WBWA authorized the Association's Executive Committee "to work with representatives of Central Basin Water Association in drafting a joint resolution to be offered to the Board of Directors of both Associations for approval and adoption at their regular meetings to be held in February, 1957, and that such joint resolution provide authority for both Associations to jointly sponsor formation of a water replenishment district to include the areas of both Central and West Basins and such additional territory as may properly be included in such a district." <sup>(33)</sup>

On February 28, 1957, the Board of Directors of the WBWA adopted a joint resolution "declaring the urgent need to obtain water for replenishment and prevention of saltwater intrusion under the provision of Chapter 1514, California Statutes of 1955, and to develop an acceptable and feasible plan therefore" and instructing the respective Association Executive Committees "to jointly develop and submit such a plan." On May 2, 1957, the CBWA approved the same resolution. <sup>(34)</sup>

In Speaking to the WBWA Board of Directors on May 23, 1957, Metropolitan Board President Joseph Jensen remarked that "the West Basin Water Association had voted to approve a single water replenishment district, including the areas of West and Central Basins, and he stated that in his opinion this was a wise decision because both West and Central Basin should be operated as a single unit." <sup>(35)</sup>

## 5.9 Proposal to Form One District for Two Basins

In response to the joint resolution adopted by the two Associations in February and May 1957, the Joint Association Committee to Form the Replenishment District worked for 14 months on the details of what became a Proposal to Form the Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District. On August 7, 1958, the CBWA approved the proposal; on August 28, it was approved by the WBWA. <sup>(36)</sup>

The Proposal provided the reasons for forming the district, described the boundaries for it, outlined the formation procedures and methods for financing the district. It acknowledged that "various public agencies are or will become involved in some phases of the replenishment work," noting the State Department of Water Resources as Watermaster in the West Basin and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District as operator of the spreading grounds and the barrier system.

The Proposal said the new district would have authority to purchase replenishment water but could not use property tax money for such purposes. It was anticipated that the Los Angeles County Flood Control District would continue to buy water to eliminate the estimated 700,000 acre-feet accumulated overdraft and to expand the barrier system.

The Proposal also spoke to the purposes of the proposed district. “The salvaging of the ground water basins requires the formation of a Water Replenishment District to:

- “a. Repel salt water intrusion;
- “b. Recharge the ground water basins, and
- “c. Reduce the pumping therein to safe limits.”

Elsewhere, the Proposal said, “The primary purpose of the Water Replenishment District will be to restore and maintain the depleted ground water basins. To accomplish this, the district will have responsibility for financing the purchase of the water used in halting the intrusion of sea water and in replenishing the ground water supply. To ensure its purpose, the district will be responsible for bringing an action to adjudicate water rights within its area and curtail pumping to safe limits.” <sup>(37)</sup>

Ostrom characterized this Proposal as “a ‘constitution’ for a multi-agency management system to operate a coordinated program designed to make effective use of the opportunities for development of a conjunctive use of the various surface and ground water supplies available to water producers in West and Central Basins.” <sup>(38)</sup>

## 5.10 Formation Petition

One of the steps required to form the new district was a petition signed by 10% of the eligible voters residing within the proposed district. <sup>(39)</sup> The Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters determined that the petition must be signed by 91,950 registered voters. Following an aggressive petition campaign conducted by the two Associations, the Registrar determined that 116,275 valid signatures were submitted by the May 25, 1959 deadline. <sup>(40)</sup>

The Petition included an Explanation of Purpose, detailed district boundary descriptions and reasons for the proposed formation of the district. The Explanation of Purpose read as follows:

You are living in an area under which lie the great Central and West Basins or underground reservoirs which hold the water being pumped daily to keep you and your family alive.

This area which now contains about 2,500,000 people has grown by a million since World War II and will grow a million and a half more in the next ten years.

We are pumping out of these Basin reservoirs billions of gallons more than nature puts back. If the level gets much lower, salt water will creep in and fill our wells, as is now the case in some localities. We must immediately restore this underground supply of fresh water which is our 'bank account' on which to draw if earthquake or bombing destroyed the surface supply.

Public officials, water companies and industry leaders are sponsoring a Water Replenishment District which would obtain money for restoring water needed by taxing the pumpers of water, not you, the average citizen. All it would cost you is about 25 cents a year to administer the District office.

The final section of the petition gave the following reasons for the formation of a Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District:

The continuing long-term overdraft on the ground waters within the boundaries of said proposed district has lowered the ground water levels therein many feet below sea level, resulting in the progressive encroachment of salt water from the ocean into areas of said proposed district adjacent to the ocean, which, if continued, will destroy the basins and the waters thereof for beneficial use. Such continuing overdraft from, and the resultant depletion of, said ground waters, deprive the users within the area comprising said district of an indispensable carryover water supply that would be required to meet its needs in the event of a catastrophe caused by nature or by enemy action. The preservation of ground water storage in said proposed district to provide a reserve supply of water to meet peak demands and water requirements during dry years is vital to the health, safety and general welfare of inhabitants therein. The formation of the proposed Water Replenishment District is required in order to:

- a) Recharge the ground waters in said district,
- b) Repel the intrusion of salt water therein,
- c) Reduce the pumping therein by all possible means, including necessary legal proceedings to adjudicate the rights of the users thereof. <sup>(41)</sup>

## 5.11 Department of Water Resources Hearing

As a final step before an election could be called on the question of district formation, the Water Replenishment Act required the Director of the Department of Water Resources to conduct a hearing to determine “whether or not lands that are not included in the proposed Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District should be included, whether or not some lands that are included should be excluded, and whether the proposed district, as modified by inclusions and exclusions, will be of benefit generally to all persons or property which rely directly or indirectly upon the use of or right to use the ground water supplies within such proposed district.” <sup>(42)</sup>

The hearing was conducted by Department Director Harvey O. Banks on July 6, 1959. Four individuals requested that their properties be excluded from the proposed district. The Director denied their requests and in his July 17, 1959 determination found that all persons and property within the boundaries of the proposed district will benefit directly or indirectly by the district. The Director adopted, without modification, the boundaries described in the formation petition. <sup>(43)</sup>

Five months later, voters approved formation of the Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District. The first meeting of the newly elected Board was held on December 28, 1959. <sup>(44)</sup>

## 5.12 Avoiding the Tragedy of the Commons

The Legislature found that the Water Replenishment District Act was “necessary to the solution of a problem arising out of the following unique circumstances: The water supplies in the arid southern part of this State to which the provisions of this Division are applicable are insufficient to meet the water demands of the areas, and, because of the geological conditions peculiar to this area, further excessive pumping without replenishment is certain to destroy the usefulness of these basins.” <sup>(45)</sup>

To destroy “the usefulness of these basins” would be to bring about the “tragedy of the commons,” an expression Elinor Ostrom used to characterize the degradation or destruction of a natural “common pool resource” when individuals using the resource act independently from others who use the same resource. <sup>(46)</sup>

In *Governing the Commons*, Ostrom examined “how a group of principals who are in an interdependent situation can organize and govern themselves to obtain continuing joint benefits when all face temptations to free-ride, shirk, or otherwise act opportunistically.” She then examined “the general problem of individuals in CPR (Common Pool Resource) situations: how to organize to avoid the adverse outcomes of independent action.” <sup>(47)</sup>

The formation of the Water Replenishment District is one of the case studies she used as an example of “how to organize to avoid the adverse outcomes of independent action” and “to obtain continuing joint benefits” in the face of “temptations to free-ride, shirk, or otherwise act opportunistically.”

By crafting the Water Replenishment District Act and ultimately taking to the voters a “constitution” that would guide a new district, the pumpers in the Central and West Basins turned an inevitable tragedy of the commons into a protected and perpetually sustainable resource.

“As a result of five years of intensive planning and negotiation,” Ostrom wrote 25 years before publication of *Governing the Commons*, “it appeared that public entrepreneurs in West and Central Basin had been able to design and create a management system with the appropriate boundaries and range of powers to undertake an extensive ground water basin management program. The Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District would function as the key management enterprise in shaping the program for the mixed public and private enterprise system with responsibility for the operation of an agreed upon program. The difficult task of constituting the management system was completed. Now they faced the risks and opportunities of evolving a specific program and placing it into operation. And, at the same time, they would be testing the capabilities of a decentralized political decision-making system to operate an efficient ground water basin management program in conjunction with a highly developed water industry having access to several alternative sources of water supply.” <sup>(48)</sup>

### 5.13 Protecting the Commons

The 1958 Proposal for a Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District Formation of the District and its operation as a “single unit” covering both basins resulted in the relatively quick implementation of what the pumpers had in mind.

Salt water intrusion into Central Basin was mitigated with the completion of the Alamitos Barrier in 1964. Intrusion in West Basin was mitigated with the completion of the Dominguez Gap Barrier in 1969. Begun as an experimental project in 1952, the West Coast Basin Barrier was substantially completed in 1964. Except for the first experimental West Coast Basin Barrier, which was funded by the state, most of the construction costs for the three barriers were paid by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District through a special replenishment-related tax it assessed on property owners in both basins. The capital costs totaled \$9,581,973. <sup>(49)</sup>

An aggressive program of water purchases for spreading was implemented in the district’s first full year of operation. Within two years, 355,922 acre-feet of imported was purchased for spreading, the district buying 235,622 acre-feet of that amount, the Los Angeles County Flood Control District through its special replenishment-related tax purchasing the remainder. The Flood Control District would continue to share the costs of spreading water purchases until 1971. <sup>(50)</sup>

On January 2, 1962, the Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District filed an adjudication action to fix extraction rights in the Central Basin. On October 20, 1965, judgment was entered. Filed in 1945, judgment in the West Basin case was entered on August 22, 1961 and upheld by the State Supreme Court on August 10, 1965. <sup>(51)</sup>

The court did not fix “the natural safe yield” in either Judgment. The allocation of pumping rights in both Judgments presupposed a replenishment program that would make up the difference between natural replenishment and actual pumping under the respective Judgments. The allocation of extraction rights greatly exceeded any plausible determination of natural safe yield.

A 1962 California Department of Water Resources report estimated the natural safe yield of Central Basin at 137,300 acre-feet. The allowed pumping allocation under the Central Basin Judgment is 217,637 acre-feet. The same report estimated the natural safe yield in the West Basin at 36,100 acre-feet. Adjudicated rights under the West Basin Judgment total 64,468.25 acre-feet. <sup>(52)</sup> Thus, pumping of the allowed pumping allocations in both basins is dependent upon the continuation of an aggressive replenishment program.

## 5.14 Footnotes to Section 5

- (1) Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters, “Results of the Official Canvass,” November 27, 1959. The Board of Supervisors certified the election and declared the District duly organized on December 1, 1959. The California Secretary of State certified that “a Water Replenishment District in the County of Los Angeles has been duly incorporated according to the laws of this State and is in legal existence under the name CENTRAL AND WEST BASIN REPLENISHMENT DISTRICT.” The name of the District was subsequently changed to Water Replenishment District of Southern California (Water Replenishment District of Southern California, Board Minutes, November 7, 1991)
- (2) Chapter 1514, Statutes of California, 1955. Sections 60080 – 60125 of the Act specified the steps required to form a replenishment district. Petitions supporting the formation of a proposed district must be signed by 10% of the registered voters residing within the district. Assuming that requirement is satisfied, the Department of Public Works must conduct a hearing to determine whether the proposed district “will be of benefit generally to all persons or property which rely directly or indirectly upon the use of or right to use the groundwater supplies within such proposed district.” If that finding is made, the Board of Supervisors must schedule an election to put the question of formation before the voters.  
  
In 1956, the Water Resources Division of the Department of Public Works was combined with the State Engineer’s Office, the Water Project Authority, and the State Water Resources Board to become the Department of Water Resources. (Chapter 52, Statutes of California, 1<sup>st</sup> Extraordinary Session, 1956) The history of the Department of Public Works and the rationale for creating the Department of Water Resources was the subject of a May 24, 1956 presentation to the WBWA by Max Bookman, Engineer in Charge, Division of Water Resources. (WBWA, Minutes, May 24, 1956)
- (3) Walter C. Mendenhall, *Development of Underground Waters in the Central Coastal Plain Region of Southern California*. United States Geological Survey Water Supply and Irrigation Paper No. 138. 1905, p. 25.
- (4) Information on historical groundwater conditions and the overdraft can be found in California Department of Water Resources, *Planned Utilization of Groundwater Basins of the Coastal Plain of Los Angeles County*: Bulletin 104, Appendix B, Safe Yield Determinations, 1962, p. 71. Historical accounts of the period may be found in Bulletin 104, pp. 40 – 46; William Blomquist, *Dividing the Waters: Governing Groundwater in Southern California* (San Francisco: ICS Press, 1992), pp. 97 -158; California State Department of Public Works, *Report of Referee, West Basin Adjudication*, June 1952, pp. 26 - 78; Carl and Ruth Fossette, *The Story of Water Development in Los Angeles County*, (Downey, CA: Central Basin Municipal Water District, 1986), pp. 6 – 85.

- (5) Fossette (1986) pp. 4 and 5. For increasingly urgent pumper accounts of deteriorating conditions, see Fossette, "Central Basin News," (1951 – 1956); "West Basin Water News," (1946 – 1954). For information about Fossette, see Water Replenishment District of Southern California Ad Hoc History Committee, "Essays on District Formation: Pioneers of Groundwater Replenishment," June 2009.
- (6) Elinor Ostrom, *Public Entrepreneurship: a Case Study in Groundwater Basin Management* (Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1965), pp. 414 - 460; Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: the Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 103 – 142. Also see Blomquist (1992) pp. 97 – 158 and Fossette (1986) pp. 151 – 170). See Water Replenishment District of Southern California Ad Hoc History Committee, "Essays on District Formation: Sequence of Events Leading to the Formation of the Water Replenishment District," March 2009.
- Ostrom received the 2009 Nobel Prize in Economics for developing the theory of polycentric governance of complex economic systems as an alternative to conventional theories of the market and the state. Her theory was used to explain "how a group of principals who are in an interdependent situation can organize and govern themselves to obtain continuing joint benefits when all face temptations to free-ride, shirk, or otherwise act opportunistically." She cites the formation of the Water Replenishment District and other institutions as an example of protecting the Common Pool Resource of the Central and West groundwater basins by pumpers voluntarily organizing "to avoid the adverse outcomes of independent action." Ostrom (1990), p. 29.
- In her December 8, 2009 Nobel Prize Lecture, Ostrom traced the origin of her "intellectual journey" to the study of "the efforts of a large group of private and public water producers facing the problem of an overdrafted groundwater basin on the coast and watching the saltwater intrusion threaten the possibility of long-term use." (Elinor Ostrom, "Beyond Markets and States: Polycentric Governance of Complex Economic Systems," Nobel Prize.org, 2009). She was referring to her 1965 doctoral dissertation, *Public Entrepreneurship: a Case Study in Ground Water Basin Management*, which focused on West Basin but therefore necessarily included the management arrangements that had been developed in Central Basin as well.
- (7) The role of the West Basin Water Association and the Central Basin Water Association in crafting the Water Replenishment District Act and in the formation of the Water Replenishment District is discussed in Blomquist (1992), pp. 97 – 158; Fossette (1986) pp. 151 – 170; Ostrom (1965) pp. 414 – 460 and Ostrom (1990) pp. 103 – 142.
- (8) L.J. Alexander, "Notes on Formation of Replenishment District in West Basin and Central Basin," (Undated but based on the text, it was likely prepared in late 1955 or early 1956.); For information about Alexander, see Water Replenishment District of Southern California Ad Hoc History Committee, "Essays on District Formation: Pioneers of Groundwater Replenishment," June 2009. Also see WBWA, Minutes, August 25, 1955.
- (9) Ostrom (1990) p. 129.
- (10) *Ibid.* p. 131.
- (11) WBWA, Minutes, November 17, 1955.
- (12) WBWA, Minutes, November 17, 1955. For information about Thorburn, see Water Replenishment District of Southern California Ad Hoc History Committee, "Essays on District Formation: Pioneers of Groundwater Replenishment," June 2009.
- (13) Ostrom, *op. cit.*, p. 236.
- (14) Numerous references elsewhere in Association minutes suggest that by "free water," Thorburn was referring to increased underflow across the Newport-Inglewood fault by virtue of increased replenishment in Central Basin.

WRD Cost of Service Report  
for Fiscal Year 2026-27

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- (15) WBWA Executive Committee, Minutes, August 18, 1955. For information about Thomas, see Water Replenishment District of Southern California Ad Hoc History Committee, “Essays on District Formation: Pioneers of Groundwater Replenishment,” June 2009.
- (16) *California Water Code*, Sec. 60317. Except for stylistic language changes made in 1990 (Chapter 389, California Statutes of 1990) that revised “ground water” to “groundwater,” for example, the language has remained the same since the Act was adopted in 1955.
- (17) California State Department of Public Works, Division of Water Resources, *Report of Referee, West Basin Adjudication*. June 1952, pp 126 - 129.
- (18) Ostrom, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
- (19) Carl Fossette, *West Basin Water News*, May 3, 1952.
- (20) WBWA, Minutes, February 23, 1956.
- (21) CBWA, Minutes, November 6, 1958.
- (22) Max Bookman, Letter to Carl Fossette, January 15, 1963.
- (23) WBWA, Minutes, April 12, 1955.
- (24) Fossette (1990), p. 126.
- (25) CBWA, Minutes, May 2, 1957. The appellate reference to the case Jensen was referring to is *Orange County Water District v. City of Riverside, et al*, 173 Cal. App. 2<sup>nd</sup> 137 (August 20, 1959).
- (26) WBWA, Minutes, November 15, 1956.
- (27) WBWA, Minutes, November 20, 1958.
- (28) Fossette (1990), p. 222.
- (29) Ostrom (1965), pp 440 - 441. West Basin pumpers had been engaged in the adjudication of their prescriptive rights since 1945. In addition to litigation fatigue, they were aware of just how costly an adjudication action can be. One participant estimated the total cost of the West Basin adjudication at \$5 million. See Albert J. Lipson, “Efficient Water Use in California: the Evolution of Groundwater Management in Southern California,” (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1978), p. 11.
- (30) WBWA Executive Committee, Minutes, April 18, 1956. For information about Farquhar, see Water Replenishment District of Southern California Ad Hoc History Committee, “Essays on District Formation: Pioneers of Groundwater Replenishment,” June 2009.
- (31) Reprinted in CBWA, Minutes, May 2, 1957.
- (32) Ostrom (1990), pp. 131 – 132.
- (33) WBWA, Minutes, November 15, 1956.
- (34) WBWA, Minutes, February 28, 1957; CBWA, Minutes, May 2, 1957.
- (35) WBWA, Minutes, May 23, 1957.
- (36) CBWA, Minutes, August 7, 1958; WBWA, Minutes, August 28, 1958.
- (37) CBWA and WBWA Joint Committee to Form Replenishment District, “Proposal of Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District,” July 30, 1958. The Proposal is included as Appendix D in State of California Department of Water Resources, “Report on Proposed Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District,” July 1959.
- (38) Ostrom (1965), p. 455. Ostrom colleague William Blomquist describes “the historical basis for a uniform assessment administered by a single management district managing the two basins as an interrelated groundwater system” in his 2014 “Report of William Blomquist on replenishment district and assessment for Central and West Basins, Los Angeles County, California, 10/24/2014.”
- (39) Chapter 1514, Statutes of California, 1955. Procedures required for district formation are in Sections 60080 – 60125.

- (40) Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters, “Certificate...as to the Sufficiency of a Petition to Incorporate a Water Replenishment District, to Be Designated ‘Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District’, Under and Pursuant to the Provisions of the Municipal Water Replenishment Act” (sic), June 2, 1959.
- (41) *Ibid.* For a discussion of the petition campaign, see Water Replenishment District of Southern California Ad Hoc History Committee, “Essays on District Formation: Petition Campaign for Replenishment District Formation,” February 2009.
- (42) California State Department of Water Resources, “In the Matter of Formation of Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District,” July 17, 1959.
- (43) *Ibid.*
- (44) Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District, Minutes, December 28, 1959.
- (45) *California Water Code*, Sec. 60047. The Act references the “arid southern part of this State” because it was applicable “only to the replenishment of groundwater within that area in this State defined by the exterior boundaries of the Counties of Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Orange,” except for the areas of Orange included within the Orange County Water District.
- (46) Ostrom (1990), p. 2.
- (47) *Ibid.* p. 29.
- (48) Ostrom (1965), p. 461.
- (49) Bookman-Edmonston Engineering, Inc., “Comprehensive Review and Evaluation of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works Seawater Barriers,” 1996, pp. 2-1 through 2-23. Some of the costs of the Dominguez Gap Barrier were paid with County general funds. The Flood Control District would continue to share in water purchase costs until 1971.
- (50) Water Replenishment District of Southern California, “Engineering Survey and Report 2012,” p. A – 1.
- (51) *California Water Service Co., et al v. City of Compton, et al*, LASC Case No. 506,806; *Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District v. Charles Adams, et al*, LASC Case No. C786656.
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**LEGISLATION / LITIGATION**

Chapter 1514, Statutes of California, 1955

*California Water Service Co., et al v. City of Compton, et al*, LASC Case No. 506,806

*Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District v. Charles Adams, et al*, LASC Case No. C786656

## **6.0 HYDROGEOLOGY**

Hydrogeology is the science that encompasses the occurrence, distribution, movement and properties of groundwater – the water beneath the earth’s surface – and its interaction and relationship with the surrounding environment. It combines the elements of hydrology with geology, geochemistry, geophysics, paleontology and geomorphology to gain an understanding of groundwater occurrence, movement, and quality. In this Section, the hydrogeology of the WRD Service Area is discussed. The information presented represents over a hundred years of scientific and engineering research and analysis on the geologic and groundwater conditions in the greater Los Angeles area that were undertaken as the region’s population grew and strong interests developed in the area’s groundwater and petroleum resources, and in the seismic (earthquake) hazard potentials.

### **6.1 Groundwater Basin Boundaries**

A “groundwater basin,” as that term is used in this report, is an area below the earth’s surface that holds and transports substantial amounts of groundwater that can be tapped by wells to provide the overlying population with a significant percentage of its water supply needs. Groundwater basins are comprised of aquifers, which are layers of permeable rock or sediment.

Groundwater basins have definitive boundaries on the earth’s surface that can be drawn on maps. These boundaries can be based on actual geologic features such as mountains or hills or faults, or on hydrogeologic features such as groundwater divides or ocean boundaries, or on arbitrary lines based on political or judicial boundaries. Sometimes judicial or political boundaries for a basin may be drawn differently from the geologic boundary, leading to different boundaries for the same groundwater basin. Such is the case for the Central Basin and West Coast Basin in the WRD Service Area, which will be discussed in more detail below.

The CDWR performed several major investigations of the groundwater resources of the Coastal Plain of Los Angeles County (“Coastal Plain”) in the 1960s (CDWR 1961, 1962, 1966b, 1968). These reports built on earlier investigations going back as far as 1905 (Mendenhall, 1905a, 1905b) and developed the geologic and hydrogeologic framework which is still in use today. They defined the Coastal Plain as the gently sloping land between the mountains and the sea in southern Los Angeles County, bounded on the north by the Santa Monica Mountains, on the northeast by the Elysian, Repetto, Merced, and Puente Hills, on the east by the political border line between Orange County and Los Angeles County, and on the south and west by the Pacific Ocean.

CDWR subdivided the Coastal Plain into four areas based on geologic or hydrogeologic characteristics, including the Central Basin, West Coast Basin, Santa Monica Basin, and Hollywood Basin. The CDWR later defined these four areas as “subbasins” to the larger Coastal Plain of Los Angeles Groundwater Basin (CDWR, 2003). CDWR defines subbasins as a smaller unit than a groundwater basin divided using geologic and hydrogeologic barriers or, more commonly, institutional boundaries. The subbasins are created “for the purpose of collecting and analyzing data, managing water resources, and managing adjudicated basins.” (CDWR, 2003, pg. 90). **Figure 6-1** shows a map of the Coastal Plain and subbasins as defined by the CDWR.

The two subbasins that lie wholly or partially within the WRD Service Area include the Central and the West Coast. Although CDWR considers them subbasins, the remainder of this report will refer to them as basins to be consistent with the majority of the literature and with the official names given in the Central Basin Adjudication and West Coast Basin Adjudication. When described together, the Central Basin and West Coast Basin will be referred to as the “Basins.”

### 6.1.1 Central Basin

The CDWR (2003) lists the Central Basin as Groundwater Subbasin Number 4-11.04, with a surface area of 177,000 acres (277 square miles). The geologic boundary of the Central Basin was defined using hydrogeologic features as follows: On the north is a surface feature called the La Brea High, which in the late 1950s was the rough approximation of a groundwater divide separating pumping in the Hollywood Basin from the Central Basin (CDWR, 1961, pg. 116); on the northeast and east by the less permeable Tertiary rocks of the Elysian, Repetto, Merced, and Puente Hills; on the southeast by the Central Basin / Orange County Groundwater Basin (and County line) which roughly follows Coyote Creek which is a regional drainage province boundary; and on the southwest by the Newport-Inglewood fault system and associated folded rocks of the Newport-Inglewood uplift.

Within the Central Basin, four subareas have been defined for descriptive purposes (CDWR, 1961), including the Los Angeles Forebay, the Montebello Forebay, the Central Basin Pressure Area, and the Whittier Area (**Figure 6-1**). The Los Angeles and Montebello Forebay areas were historically described as regions where surface water such as rain, rivers, irrigation water, and intentionally applied recharge water at spreading grounds have the potential to readily infiltrate into the subsurface and directly recharge multiple unconfined aquifers — not only to the forebays but also to the other parts of the Central Basin and West Coast Basin as groundwater moves away from the forebays and into the pressure areas. During the CDWR investigation (1961), it was discovered that the actual areas where unrestricted infiltration of surface waters to the underlying groundwater was limited to much smaller areas than previously mapped and were limited to the vicinity of the Los Angeles Narrows and the Whittier Narrows. CDWR kept the boundaries of the forebays unchanged, however, as the department deemed remapping of the forebay and pressure areas would be arbitrary and that the older delineations were still useful for historical significance and descriptive purposes (CDWR, 1961, pg. 149). The Central Basin Pressure Area was defined based on the aquifers having overlying confining beds (confined aquifers) so that the groundwater was under pressure and could not be readily recharged through infiltration of surface water. The Whittier

Area was first defined in CDWR (1961) as having formerly been named the La Habra Basin, and due to a lack of production wells in the area groundwater information is generally sparse.

Another boundary was ascribed to the Central Basin when the basin was adjudicated in 1965 (Central Basin Amended Judgment, 1991). The adjudicated boundary matched the geologic boundary on the east, south, and west, but the northern boundary was drawn shorter than the geologic boundary based on an irregular line through the City of Angeles along Santa Barbara Avenue (now Martin Luther King Blvd), Stocker Street, Alameda Street, Olympic Blvd, and the base of the foot of the Merced and Puente Hills (CDWR, 2012a, pg. 1). The adjudicated Central Basin boundary is approximately 227 square miles versus the geologic boundary which is 277 square miles. **Figure 6-2** illustrates the geologic boundary and the adjudicated boundary of the Central Basin, along with the subareas Montebello Forebay, Los Angeles Forebay, Whittier Area, and Pressure Area, and the WRD Service Area boundary.

### 6.1.2 West Coast Basin

The CDWR (2003) lists the West Coast Basin as Groundwater Subbasin Number 4-11.03, with a surface area of 91,300 acres (142 square miles). The geologic boundary of the West Coast Basin was defined using hydrogeologic features by CDWR (2003) as follows: On the north by the Ballona Escarpment which is an abandoned erosional channel from a historic path of the Los Angeles River, on the east by the Newport-Inglewood fault zone, on the south and west by the Pacific Ocean and consolidated rocks of the Palos Verdes Hills. Unlike the Central Basin, which was subdivided into the Montebello Forebay, Los Angeles Forebay, Central Basin Pressure Area, and Whittier Area, the West Coast Basin has not been divided into descriptive subareas by CDWR.

Another boundary was ascribed to the West Coast Basin when the basin was adjudicated in 1961 (West Coast Basin Amended Judgment, 1980). The adjudicated boundary roughly matched the geologic boundary on the north, east, south, and west, but in the Palos Verdes Hills to the southwest, the adjudicated boundary was drawn on the top ridgeline of the hills to include the full watershed boundary, whereas the geologic boundary was at the base of the Palos Verdes Hills. The adjudicated West Coast Basin boundary is approximately 160 square miles (CDWR, 2012b) versus the geologic boundary which is 142 square miles. **Figure 6-2** illustrates the geologic boundary and the adjudicated boundary of the West Coast Basin, along with the WRD Service Area.

### 6.1.3 The Two Basins Connected

The Central Basin and West Coast Basin share a common boundary, which is the Newport-Inglewood Uplift (**Figure 6-2**). The boundary is based upon a line approximating the centerline of the Uplift. However, as will be discussed in more detail in the Section 6.2.2, the Uplift is not a simple straight line feature, but a complicated structure of numerous hills and discontinuous fault segments that start and stop over a 20-mile length and over and a mile width and follows a non-linear path. The Uplift formed over geologic time as the tectonic forces in the region caused deformation of the strata. The Uplift has

created structural traps for hydrocarbon resources, and drilling for oil has been extensive in parts of the Uplift including Signal Hill, Dominguez Hill, and the Baldwin Hills.

The interconnectivities of the two basins across the Uplift is well known to those studying such matters as is documented in numerous technical documents, including California Division of Public Works (1952), Poland and Others (1959), California Department of Water Resources (1959, 1961, 1962, 2003, 2012b), and U.S. Geological Survey (2003). Groundwater flows across the Uplift depending on the slope of the water table or potentiometric (pressure) surface on either side of the Uplift and the tightness (hydraulic conductivity) of the sediments that cross the Uplift at any given point along its length. A graphic prepared by CDWR (1959) depicts a generalized cross-sectional view through the Central Basin, the Newport-Inglewood Uplift, and the West Coast Basin (**Figure 6-3**).

Groundwater professionals working in the area are aware of the interconnectivities of the Central Basin and West Coast Basin. In 2001, Mr. Desi Alvarez, Director of Public Works for the City of Downey, which is in the Central Basin, filed a declaration in a legal matter to support intervening in a desalination project being contemplated in the West Coast Basin (Declaration of Desi Alvarez, 2001). The City of Downey believed that pumping of groundwater for the desalination project in the West Coast Basin would negatively impact the City in the Central Basin due to the connection of the two groundwater basins across the Newport-Inglewood Uplift. Citing that connection, the City filed a motion to intervene in the process, even though it was not a party to the West Basin adjudication. In his Declaration, Mr. Alvarez said (Declaration of Desi Alvarez, 2001, Pg. 2, Paragraph 4):

The Central Basin is east of the West Coast Basin and they are hydrologically connected underground water basins. The extraction of additional volumes of water annually from the West Coast Basin will have a significant impact on the adjudicated rights of the other pumping in the basin, as well as on pumpers in the Central Basin.

Mr. Alvarez went on to say (Declaration of Desi Alvarez, 2001, Pg. 3, Paragraph 6, starting on line 14) that:

Replenishment water purchased by WRD, for example, is spread in the Montebello Spreading Grounds and in the bed of the San Gabriel River at the eastern end of the Central Basin. The spread water percolates or sinks into the ground and flows in a general direction from the Central Basin aquifers into the West Coast Basin aquifers, so that groundwater elevations in both basins are maintained.

The interconnectivity of the two basins is also acknowledged by the Watermaster for the West Coast Basin. In one of its annual reports, Watermaster states the following (CDWR, 2012b, pg. 5):

Replenishment of groundwater in the West Coast Basin occurs primarily by underflow from the Central Basin, which bounds the West Coast Basin on the east. Water spread in the Central Basin percolates into aquifers there, and eventually some groundwater crosses the Newport-Inglewood Uplift to replenish the groundwater in the West Coast Basin. Although the recharge water is not directly applied to the West Coast Basin, this recharge process returns large quantities of water to the Basin by substantially increasing the natural subsurface flow from the Central Basin to the West Coast Basin.

The interconnectivity of the two basins is also confirmed by groundwater expert Dr. Peter Shanahan, founder of HydroAnalysis, Inc. In his 2014 report, Dr. Shanahan extensively analyzes and models the two groundwater basins and reaches the following five conclusions (Shanahan, 2014):”:

1. “The West Coast Basin and Central Basin are a single system from the standpoint of their hydrology and hydrogeology. Any attempts to consider this system as two separate or isolated basins would be fundamentally flawed.
2. “Because the West Coast Basin and Central Basin are a single system, pumping in either basin puts a hydrogeologic stress on both basins.
3. “Ground-water replenishment by injection along coastal saltwater barriers and by spreading in the basin forebays is essential to sustaining pumping withdrawals and providing protection from saltwater intrusion in both the West Coast and Central Basins.
4. “The findings reported here confirm the wisdom of the community of ground-water users in creating a single entity for managing water replenishment in the West Coast and Central Basins.
5. “The findings reported here demonstrate the appropriateness of a single assessment rate within the Water Replenishment District. There are no similarly appropriate or fair alternatives to a single rate.”

## 6.2 Geology

The geology of the WRD Service Area, which is part of the larger Coastal Plain of Los Angeles Groundwater Basin (also known as the Los Angeles Basin in geologic research papers), has been extensively documented. Considerable detail on the geology can be found in reports by the California Department of Public Works (1934, 1952), Poland, Piper and others (1956), Poland and Others (1959) Poland (1959), California Department of Water Resources (1961), Yerkes and others (1965), Wright (1991), and Reichard and others (2003). The following is a brief summary of the details that can be found in those documents. Focused attention is placed on the Pliocene and younger rocks (5.3 million years ago and younger, USGS, 2007) as this is where the groundwater used in the WRD Service Area is typically found, although it should be recognized that it is the deeper, older rocks and the structural deformation of these that helped shape the shallower and younger geologic units.

The Los Angeles Basin has a complex history of sediment deposition and accumulation on top of sedimentary, igneous and metamorphic basement rocks that have been folded and faulted, uplifted and eroded over geologic time as movements occurred along the Pacific Plate and North American Plate. The marine and non-marine sediment was (and is) derived from the erosion of the surrounding highlands, particularly to the north in the Santa Monica and San Gabriel Mountains, from numerous sea level rises and falls that covered the entire coastal plain with seawater over various times, from wind-blown sand dune deposits near the coast, and from erosional and backfilled canyons that were carved into the valleys from rivers that flowed from the mountains to the various sea levels as the oceans transgressed and regressed over geologic time.

### 6.2.1 Geologic Formations and Aquifers

A geologic formation is a series of consolidated or unconsolidated strata that have comparable lithologies that are distinctive enough to be mapped separately from other formations. An aquifer is a geologic formation, or a part of a formation, that can readily store and transmit groundwater. The major geologic formations containing the water-bearing aquifers in the Basins include, from deepest and oldest to shallowest and youngest, the Pico Formation, the San Pedro Formation, the Lakewood Formation, the Older Dune Sand Formation, and the Recent Series (which contains the Active Dune Sand and Alluvium Formations) (CDWR, 1961). **Figure 6-4** depicts the stratigraphic order of these formations and the named aquifers within them. **Figure 6-5** is a map showing the general geology and location of geologic cross sections prepared across the Central Basin and West Coast Basin by CDWR (1961) that show the various aquifers traversing across the coastal plain. **Figure 6-6** represents east-west trending cross section lines C-C" and E-E" from CDWR (1961) and **Figure 6-7** represents north-south trending cross section lines J-J" and M-M". The reader is referred to CDWR (1961) to view the other cross sections. A description of the pertinent formations follows, from the deepest to the shallowest, as they were originally deposited.

#### *6.2.1.1 Pico Formation*

The Pliocene age Pico Formation is generally considered the basement of the Basins' groundwater system and typically non-water bearing for the purposes of significant groundwater resources. Most of the formation is characterized by silts and clays of marine origin with low electrical resistivities (high salinities and/or fine-grained materials), although some permeable layers of sand and gravel do occasionally occur in the Pico Formation and some wells tap into it near the basin margins where the deeper layers become shallower. The USGS has characterized the Pico as a non-transmissive zone and did not include it in its groundwater flow model of the Basins (Reichard, et al, 2003) – limiting the model to the overlying main aquifer systems. WRD has several monitoring wells constructed in the Pico Formation to measure water levels and water quality changes in the formation over time, and for potential uses as future groundwater resources.

#### *6.2.1.2 San Pedro Formation*

The Lower Pleistocene San Pedro Formation underlies all of the WRD Service area with the exception of the Palos Verdes Hills, Merced Hills, and Puente Hills, where the underlying bedrock was uplifted through faulting and folding into hills and the San Pedro was eroded to expose the older rocks and/or may have prevented deposition of the San Pedro Formation sediments on these topographically high areas. The formation contains many of the more significant aquifers in the Basins including, from bottom to top, the Sunnyside (aka Lower San Pedro), Silverado, Lynwood (aka 400-Foot Gravel), Jefferson, and Hollydale – **Figure 6-4.**

The Sunnyside Aquifer is the name given to the thick water-bearing sand and gravel situated between the overlying Silverado Aquifer and underlying Pico Formation. It is of marine origin with little weathering and consists of blue and grey coarse-grained sand and gravel separated by fine-grained interbeds of sandy clay and clay. It has a maximum thickness over 500 feet (CDWR, 1961). The Sunnyside Aquifer is a major source of groundwater for many wells in the Basins, although due to its depth is not the most utilized aquifer.

The CDWR (1961) did not extend the Sunnyside Aquifer into the West Coast Basin except between the Charnock Fault and the Newport-Inglewood Uplift (CDWR, 1961 – Section C-C") although it did acknowledge the presence of coarse deposits beneath the Silverado Aquifer near the coast that resembles the Sunnyside Aquifer in the West Coast Basin (pg. 77). The Los Angeles County Flood Control District, when investigating for the eventual West Coast Basin Barrier Project, named this sandy unit beneath the Silverado Aquifer the Lower San Pedro Aquifer (Solari and others, 1967). The USGS named the aquifer system beneath the Silverado Aquifer and above the Pico Formation as the Lower San Pedro Aquifer System (USGS, 2003). WRD has adopted the convention of Sunnyside Aquifer for the thick aquifer beneath the Silverado and above the Pico in the West Coast Basin to be consistent with the description in the Central Basin. For the purposes of this report, the Sunnyside Aquifer and Lower San Pedro Aquifer are considered the same aquifer system.

The Silverado Aquifer is the water-bearing sand and gravel situated between the Sunnyside Aquifer and the Lynwood Aquifer. The Silverado Aquifer has been mapped by CDWR (1961) across the entire Basins and it is one of the most heavily pumped aquifers in the WRD Service area because of its areal distribution, thickness, accessible depth to drilling, high transmissivity, high well yield, high specific capacity, and typical good water quality. Sediments of the Silverado are derived from both marine and continental deposits and can be 500 feet thick or more. The continental deposits are typically yellow to brown, coarse to fine sand and gravel, whereas the marine deposits are blue to grey sand and gravel separated by interbeds of silt, and clay. Some black sand, marine shells, peat and wood fragments are also encountered in the Silverado Aquifer where marine deposition was the origin.

The Lynwood Aquifer is the water-bearing sand and gravel above the Silverado Aquifer and the overlying aquifers which vary based on location. The Lynwood Aquifer is formerly known as the 400-Foot Gravel Aquifer in the West Coast Basin, but common nomenclature excludes this former name and is now only referred to as the Lynwood Aquifer. It has been found to exist throughout the Basins and into the Hollywood Basin but not Santa Monica Basin (CDWR, 1961). The Lynwood sediments are both marine and continental in origin, with the yellow, brown, and red coarse gravel, sand, silt and clay mostly found in the Montebello Forebay area with the marine deposits of blue and grey sand and gravel with black silt and clay found throughout the rest of the area. It ranges in thickness from 50 feet to around 200 feet. In the West Coast Basin, it merges with the underlying Silverado Aquifer into one thick aquifer – of which the top of the Silverado and base of the Lynwood cannot be distinguished (see western portion of cross section E-E” on **Figure 6-6**). In the Montebello Forebay area, the Lynwood Aquifer is in contact with overlying permeable sediments and recharge water from the spreading grounds readily enters the Lynwood Aquifer (CDWR, 1961), where it transmits groundwater downgradient to the rest of the Basins in addition to the underlying Silverado Aquifer in places where they merge. The Lynwood Aquifer is a major source of groundwater to wells due to the same properties as described for the Silverado Aquifer.

The Jefferson Aquifer is separated from the underlying Lynwood Aquifer by fine grained materials and has been mapped by CDWR in the Central Basin but not the West Coast Basin. The Jefferson Aquifer sediments are finer grained and thinner than the previous aquifers described, ranging from a few feet thick to 140 feet thick (CDWR, 1961). Therefore, it is less transmissive and although it does provide some groundwater to wells, it is not a primary aquifer in the WRD service area.

The Hollydale Aquifer is the uppermost defined aquifer of the San Pedro Formation. It is discontinuous in extent and is limited to the Central Basin. The Hollydale Aquifer sediments are variable in size, from yellow sand and gravel in the northern portion of the Central Basin to grey, blue and black sands with mud, clay and marine shells towards the south of the Central Basin, with thickness ranging from 10 feet to 100 feet. CDWR (1961) presumes a stream deposition (northern part) into shallow seas (southern part) caused the meandering and lithologic nature of the Hollydale Aquifer. It is less transmissive than the Lynwood, Silverado, and Sunnyside aquifers and therefore wells perforated in this aquifer are usually perforated in other aquifers in order to get sufficient water yields (CDWR, 1961).

### 6.2.1.3 Lakewood Formation

The Lakewood Formation overlies the San Pedro Formation and contains all Upper Pleistocene deposits other than the Older Dune Sand. The boundary between the Lakewood Formation and the San Pedro Formation is an angular unconformity that is identified on most borehole geophysical logs by a shift in the SP log and a change in the character of the gamma log and electrical resistivity log (USGS, 2003). Deposition of the Lakewood Formation was formed from sea level rises and falls during the Upper Pleistocene.

The Lakewood Formation underlies all of the WRD Service area with the exception of the Palos Verdes Hills, Merced Hills, and Puente Hills, where these sediments have been eroded to expose the older rocks and/or the high topography of the hills may have prevented deposition of the Lakewood Formation sediments on these topographically high areas. Four aquifers have been named in the Lakewood Formation including, from bottom to top, the Gage, Gardena, Exposition, and Artesia.

The Gage Aquifer (formerly known as the 200-Foot Sand Aquifer in the West Coast Basin) is the basal aquifer of the Lakewood Formation. It has sediments of both marine and continental origin, with the continental deposits comprised of fine to coarse yellow sand and minor gravel occurring in the north near the source rock of the various hills, and mixed continental and marine to purely marine in the south-southwestern part (CDWR, 1961). The marine deposits in the south are fine to medium sand with variable amounts of gravel, sandy silt, and clay. It has a thickness ranging from 10 feet to 160 feet. CDWR (1961) reports that this aquifer is unimportant as a producing aquifer outside of the vicinity of the City of Gardena, presumably due to its thin nature and predominantly fine grained sediments.

The Gardena Aquifer was formed through the ancestral San Gabriel, Rio Hondo, and possibly Los Angeles rivers cutting through the Gage Aquifer and then depositing coarse sand and gravel during sea level rises and falls (CDWR, 1961). It is situated adjacent to and connected with the Gage Aquifer, and the two are differentiated between coarse sediments (Gardena Aquifer) and finer sediments (Gage Aquifer). It has a long, narrow orientation leading from the Whittier Narrows and Los Angeles Narrows southwesterly through the Central Basin (although disappearing briefly between Downey and Lynwood) into the West Coast Basin through Gardena and Redondo Beach to the ocean. Its thickness ranges from 40 feet to 160 feet, and the Gardena Aquifer has yielded large quantities of groundwater to wells due to its coarse sediments and continuity.

The Artesia and Exposition Aquifers are of the same age but found in different locations, which is why they are discussed in the same section. They are found above the Gage-Gardena Aquifers and below the Gaspur Aquifer of the Recent Series, although in some areas they merge with the Gaspur or have been uplifted through faulting and folding above the Gaspur. Where merged, the shallow water in the Gaspur can move vertically downward to the Exposition and Artesia, and even deeper where these two are merged with the Gage-Gardena aquifers. **Figure 6-3** illustrates shallow groundwater migrating deeper where aquifers are merged. The Exposition Aquifer has been mapped in the Hollywood and Central Basins whereas the Artesia Aquifer has only been mapped in the Central Basin but likely extends into the Orange County Basin to the east (CDWR, 1961).

The Artesia Aquifer is comprised of coarse sand and gravel which appears to have originated from deposits of the San Gabriel, Coyote Creek, and Santa Ana rivers. Maximum thickness is 140 feet in the Long Beach area. The Exposition Aquifer is comprised of a wide range of sediment sizes, from clay to coarse gravel, with fine sediments separating lenses of sand and gravel. The source for the Exposition Aquifer has been attributed to the Los Angeles River drainage system. The maximum thickness of the Exposition Aquifer is 100 feet.

#### *6.2.1.4 Older Dune Sand Formation*

The Older Dune Sand Formation extends in a narrow band three to four miles wide from the Santa Monica Basin south into the West Coast Basin. It consists of fine to medium windblown sand that were former beach deposits exposed to the wind when the sea level retreated in late Pleistocene and the wind blew the exposed sand into hills and dunes. Time has caused some deep weathering and oxidation of iron minerals to cause red/brown discolorations, and cementation of the grains has reduced some permeability. However, deep percolation of surface water occurs in most of the Older Dune Sand until either a low permeability aquitard is encountered or until the Lakewood Formation is reached.

#### *6.2.1.5 Recent Series*

The Recent Series has been characterized as deposition over the past 15,000 years, since the beginning of the last major global rise in sea level (CDWR, 1961). Recent Series sediments were deposited on the erosional surface left behind during the last glacial stage and are generally on top of the Lakewood Formation and Older Dune Sand Formation deposits. They are relatively coarse, unconsolidated, and uncemented in nature due to their relatively young age, and were deposited by streams over most of the coastal plain except near the present day seashore where they are tidal, marine, and windblown deposits. Two formations have been defined in the Recent Series, including the Alluvium Formation and the Active Dune Sand Formation.

The Alluvium Formation contains the Semiperched Aquifer, Bellflower Aquiclude, Gaspur Aquifer, and Ballona Aquifer. The Ballona Aquifer does not exist within the WRD Service Area and therefore will not be discussed. The Semiperched Aquifer is the shallowest unit and is found at or near the ground surface in the Coastal Plain. Coarse sand and gravel make up the Semiperched Aquifer and they range in thickness from 0 to 60 feet. Where they exist in the Los Angeles and Montebello Forebays, they allow surface water to infiltrate into this unit, and then the water can move to deeper units where there is aquifer connection. Where there are fine-grained silt and clay below the Semiperched Aquifer, the water cannot move down deeper and stays shallow. Sediments comprising the Semiperched Aquifer are mostly continental deposits from stream channels although there are some marine deposits near the coast.

The Bellflower Aquiclude is situated directly beneath the Semiperched Aquifer and has sediments of low permeability (mostly silts and clays) that somewhat impede the downward flow of groundwater. It exists throughout much of the Coastal Plain up to a thickness of 200 feet, except for much of the Los Angeles and Montebello Forebay areas where it is absent and surface water has direct access to the deeper aquifers. Although the Bellflower Aquiclude is generally fine grained, there are many areas of sandy or gravelly pockets or lenses that allow vertical movement of groundwater either up or down, depending on the hydraulic gradients. CDWR (1961) gave the name of this unit as “aquiclude,” which in modern hydrogeologic definition is a relatively impervious layer such as a tight clay or shale formation. But because the unit has sandy layers, is leaky and allows groundwater flow, the term “aquitard” would be more appropriate than aquiclude. An aquitard is a confining unit that retards but does not prevent the flow of water to or from an adjacent aquifer (Poehls and Smith, 2009). However, for consistency, this report will retain the name Bellflower Aquiclude as given by CDWR (1961).

The Gaspur Aquifer is a very coarse grained (cobbles, gravel, sand) unit at the base of the Recent Series originating from stream deposits by the Los Angeles, Rio Hondo, and San Gabriel rivers carrying sediment from the San Gabriel Mountains, San Fernando Valley and San Gabriel Valley. It follows a narrow path of recent river flows from the Central Basin, through Dominguez Gap, into the West Coast Basin and to the ocean about 23 miles long but only one to five miles wide. Thickness of the Gaspur Aquifer reaches 120 feet. It merges with surface deposits in the Montebello Forebay, allowing surface waters to readily infiltrate into this unit and move downward where aquifers are merged. The aquifer is also merged with other aquifers in the Los Angeles Forebay near the Los Angeles Narrows, but urbanization has paved over the permeable areas and there is no longer significant direct infiltration of precipitation or river water from the lined Los Angeles River (CDWR, 1961).

The Active Dune Sand Formation is wind-blown sand formed in a narrow strip up to a half mile wide running south along the coast from the West Coast Basin / Santa Monica Basin line down about nine miles to Redondo Beach. It consists of fine to medium sand ranging in thickness up to 70 feet. It is typically unsaturated, being above the groundwater table, but will allow any surface water to infiltrate downward and laterally.

## 6.2.2 Geologic Structure

The current shape of the land surface and underground water-bearing sediments in the WRD Service Area is a result of the depositional history of the sediments, erosional forces, and the geologic structure acting upon those deposits. **Figures 6-6 and 6-7** are geologic cross sections showing the currently defined aquifer architecture. The Los Angeles Basin, of which the WRD Service Area is a part, is located at the center of three major physiographic provinces in Southern California including the Transverse Ranges to the north, the Peninsular Ranges to the east and southeast, and the continental borderland to the south and west (Wright, 1991). The structural geologic history of the Los Angeles Basin began to take its present day shape in late Miocene time (7 million years ago) as movement occurred on the bounding structures of the Santa Monica and Whittier faults to the north and Palos Verdes Fault and Hills to the southwest, causing subsidence and a deep basin to form which allowed accumulation of thousands of feet of marine sediments as the ocean covered the Coastal Plain (Yerkes and others, 1965).

The Peninsular Range province is characterized by northwest trending faults, including major faults outside of the WRD Service Area such as the San Andreas Fault, Elsinore Fault, San Jacinto Fault, and faults bordering or within the WRD Service Area including the Whittier Fault Zone, the Palos Verdes Fault Zone, and the Newport-Inglewood series of faults and hills (referred to as Newport-Inglewood Uplift in this report). Because the Whittier Fault Zone, Newport-Inglewood Uplift, and Palos Verdes Fault Zone help shape the geologic boundaries of the Basins, a brief discussion of these features follows in the next section, as does a discussion of the Charnock Fault in the West Coast Basin which has implications on groundwater flow. **Figure 6-8** shows the locations of these faults. However, for a full description of these faults and the numerous other structural features and geologic history of the Los Angeles Basin, the reader is referred to Wright (1991), Yerkes and others (1965), and CDWR (1961).

### 6.2.2.1 Whittier Fault Zone

The Whittier Fault Zone is located in the northeast portion of the WRD Service Area. Movement on the fault zone helped form the Puente Hills, which is the northeastern extent of the Central Basin. The Puente Hills were formed from vertical displacement along the Whittier Fault as well as movement along other less prominent faults. The Whittier Fault is a major structural feature running 25 miles from Whittier to the southeast where it merges with the Elsinore Fault in the canyon of the Santa Ana River (Wright, 1991). Northeast of the City of Whittier, the fault separates into a complex series of smaller faults with varying orientations and probably diminishes as it approaches the Whittier Narrows (CDWR, 1961).

### 6.2.2.2 Newport-Inglewood Uplift

The Newport-Inglewood Uplift is a major geologic structure trending northwest through the WRD Service Area from the City of Seal Beach through the City of Inglewood. It extends beyond the WRD Service area to the northwest to Culver City and to the southeast to Newport Beach. It is an active earthquake fault zone, with major temblors occurring at least in 1933, 1855, 1812, and 1769 (California Geological Survey, 2007). The March 10, 1933, magnitude 6.4 earthquake is known as the Long Beach Earthquake, although the epicenter was 3 miles south of Huntington Beach and about 8 miles deep. The ground shaking reportedly lasted 10 seconds and caused significant damage in Long Beach, Huntington Park, Compton, and other areas. Seventy schools were destroyed which led to the passage of the Field Act to improve design and building standards for California Schools (California Geological Survey, 2007).

Within the WRD Service Area, the Newport-Inglewood Uplift is not a single, continuous fault line but instead a series of separated hills and discontinuous, segmented faults known as en-echelon faults that together form a recognizable and mappable linear feature over a mile wide and 40 miles long (**Figure 6-8**). Because it is not a single fault line but instead a series of hills that have been formed due to movement of the various en-echelon faults and anticlinal folding of the thick sedimentary strata, many authors researching its groundwater or petroleum effects have named it the Newport-Inglewood Uplift (e.g., CDWR, 1961; USGS 2003, CDWR, 2003, CDWR, 2012b). Other authors generally studying the geologic structure of the Newport-Inglewood have referred to the feature as the Newport-Inglewood Fault Zone (e.g., Wright, 1991; Hauksson, 1987). Other authors reporting on the earthquake history and some groundwater studies have called it the “Newport-Inglewood Structural Zone” (Barrows, 1974; Garcia, 1995). For this report, it will be referred to as the Newport-Inglewood Uplift or simply Uplift to be consistent with the major groundwater investigations and publications by government agencies.

On the land surface, the Uplift is represented by a discontinuous range of low hills. In the WRD service area, these include, from northwest to southeast, the Baldwin Hills, Rosecrans Hills, Dominguez Hills, Signal Hill, Bixby Ranch Hill, and Landing Hill (**Figure 6-8**). The named primary faults of the uplift include, from northwest to southeast, the Inglewood Fault, Portrero Fault, Avalon-Compton Fault, Cherry Hill Fault, Reservoir Hill Fault, and Seal Beach Fault (USGS, 2003). Numerous other minor faults, both named and unnamed, have been identified along the Uplift primarily from oil field investigations which further characterized the Uplift as a highly complicated geologic structure (Wright, 1991).

In the subsurface, the Newport-Inglewood Uplift bends but does not offset the various aquifers in some areas, but where faults are present and significant vertical movement has occurred, the Uplift has displaced aquifers. Refer to cross-sections C, E, J, and M on **Figures 6-6** and **6-7**. As shown on Section C-C” (**Figure 6-6**), the Uplift is on the Rosecrans Anticline which forms the Rosecrans Hills and the aquifers continue bent but otherwise unaltered from the Central Basin to the West Coast Basin. It is in areas like this where groundwater can flow unimpeded from one basin to the other. In contrast, Section E-E” (**Figure 6-6**) shows the Cherry Hill Fault offsetting the deeper Lynwood and Silverado Aquifers but not the younger Gage or Gaspar aquifers. In the areas of offset, if the grinding of the sediments by faulting has caused a significant lowering of the aquifers’ hydraulic conductivity, then the fault will be a full or partial barrier to

groundwater flow, causing groundwater to find another direction of flow. In the upper part of the formation, where faulting did not offset the aquifers or if the hydraulic conductivity was not reduced, groundwater will continue to flow from one basin to the other.

This pattern is also reflected in cross sections J-J" and M-M" (**Figure 6-7**), where on J-J" the Uplift is shown to not have any faults or offset of the aquifers, allowing groundwater to move freely, whereas on M-M" the Uplift shows the Reservoir Hill Fault has cut off the aquifers. CDWR (1961) did not try to differentiate the formations and aquifers on the West Coast Basin side of the Uplift. Section 6.3 will discuss in more detail the impact of the Newport-Inglewood Uplift on groundwater flow, but in general the structure is a partial barrier to flow – stronger in some areas than others, allowing groundwater to move between the Central Basin and West Coast Basin depending on the hydraulic gradients and aquifer hydraulic conductivities across the Uplift.

### *6.2.2.3 Palos Verdes Fault Zone*

The Palos Verdes Fault Zone is a major tectonic structure that extends about 62 miles from offshore Santa Monica Bay in a southeasterly direction onto land and through the northeastern base of the Palos Verdes Hills and then offshore through the Port of Los Angeles and terminates in an area known as Lasuen Knoll about 13 miles offshore from Newport Beach (McNeilan and others, 1996). Vertical movement on the Palos Verdes Fault Zone has been estimated at the rate of 0.3 to 0.4 mm/yr which caused uplift and formation of the Palos Verdes Hills. Primary horizontal strike-slip movement has been determined offshore on the order of 2.7 to 3 mm/yr (McNeilan and Others, 1996). The fault zone marks the southwestern geologic boundary for the West Coast Basin, whereas the adjudicated boundary of the West Coast Basin is higher up on the ridgeline of the Palos Verdes Hills. CDWR (1961) does not consider the hills an important source of groundwater, although groundwater does exist in the fractures of the bedrock as evidenced by dewatering activities in the Malaga Cove area and the Abalone Cove landslide area.

### *6.2.2.4 Charnock Fault*

The Charnock Fault in the West Coast Basin has been mapped as a structural feature and a groundwater flow barrier for decades. Poland and Others (1959) reports that the Los Angeles County Flood Control District has included the Charnock Fault on its water-level contour maps since 1938. Although its surface presence cannot be detected, the presence of the fault was speculated due to apparent groundwater level differences across the fault. Apparent offset of the lower Pleistocene aquifers has been documented (CDWR, 1961) but not the shallower aquifers, implying that the groundwater barrier effect only impacts deeper groundwater (see Cross-Section C-C" on **Figure 6-6**).

Poland and others (1959) gave the name to the fault because it passed immediately west of the Charnock well field in the City of Santa Monica. The fault was mapped in a southeasterly direction from the Santa Monica Basin across the Ballona Gap and about a half mile into the West Coast Basin (**Figure 6-9**). The California Department of Public Works, in its investigations of the West Coast Basin as Referee in connection with the West Coast Basin adjudication (CDPW, 1952) extended the Charnock Fault into the

Gardena area based on observed water level differences in wells across the fault. The Report acknowledged that the offset was greater in the Ballona Gap area than the Inglewood and Gardena areas (pg. 93).

This longer Charnock Fault orientation of CDPW (1952) has been carried through in most hydrogeologic investigations since that time, including CDWR (1961, 2012b), USGS (2003), and WRD (2023a). However, the State of California Geological Survey has mapped the Charnock Fault with a slightly different and shorter trend than CDPW and others, putting it more in a southerly direction than southeasterly and ending near the 105 freeway (CGS, 2010). This new orientation (**Figure 6-9**) is based on seismic data, some of which place active earthquake faulting (within the last 700,000 years) along this new trace (USGS, 2012).

And Wright (1991), in his detailed structural analysis of the Los Angeles Basin, questions the existence of the Charnock fault at all. He discusses it in his section on Questionable Structures, and notes that the fault is inferred based on reported water level differences in wells, but that intense seismic reflection surveying and exploratory drilling in the area of this postulated fault in the 1960s found no evidence of any significant displacements that might coincide with the Charnock Fault (Wright, 1991, pg. 90). He hypothesizes that the groundwater level offsets may be due instead to upper Pleistocene river channels formed by streams flowing south-southeast from the uplifted Santa Monica Mountains. This is supported by an analysis by Legg Geophysical (2016) who reviewed proprietary seismic reflection profiles for WRD to conclude that, although the resolution of the shallow seismic data are difficult to fully interpret, the shallower (Quaternary) sedimentary structure in the vicinity of the suspected Charnock fault trace more strongly resembles southeast-trending channel and levee complexes. These complexes are often associated with fine-grained deposits on top of the levees, overbank areas or estuaries and might cause the observed water level offsets across these features. And further work by the USGS (Paulinski, et al, 2021) supports channel causes for the water level offsets and not Charnock faulting. Additional work would need to be done to resolve this question of fault barrier versus ancient channel sediment causes for the apparent groundwater barrier. **Figure 6-9** shows all 4 alternative locations for potential Charnock Fault orientations. For the purposes of this report, the Charnock Fault of CDWR (1961) will be utilized.

#### *6.2.2.5 Other Structural Features*

The active faults and structural folding of the strata have caused the underlying aquifers to have anticlines (domes) and synclines (troughs), to be offset or continuous, and to have pinchouts and mergence zones. Some of these are illustrated on **Figures 6-6** and **6-7**. Where these structures are apparent from the ground surface in the form of hills, they are often given names. The more prominent hills in the WRD Service Area include the Puente, Merced, and Repetto hills bounding the District to the northeast, the Coyote Hills in the east, the Palos Verdes Hills bounding the District to the southwest, and the interior hills of the Newport Inglewood Uplift which include, from northwest to southeast, the Baldwin, Rosecrans, Dominguez, Signal, Bixby Ranch, and Landing hills (CDWR, 1961). **Figure 6-8** shows the various hills and faults in or bordering the WRD Service Area.

### 6.3 Groundwater Occurrence and Movement

Groundwater in the aquifers of the WRD Service Area occurs in the open pore spaces (voids) between the grains of gravel, sand, silt, and clay. Groundwater exists everywhere in these aquifers like a massive underground reservoir filled with soil and water – it is not confined to narrow subterranean streams or lakes, but instead occupies vast areas of saturated gravel, sand, silt, and clay. Wells can be drilled anywhere in the aquifers of the WRD Service area and groundwater will typically be found, although at varying depths depending on where the wells are drilled.

Groundwater is found in both the saturated zone and unsaturated zone. Below the saturated zone, all pore spaces are filled with groundwater. The uppermost surface of the saturated zone is the water table. Above the water table is the unsaturated zone, also known as the vadose zone, which extends from the ground surface to the water table and is the pathway that infiltrating surface water takes to replenish the saturated zone. There is a mix of air and water in the vadose zone and this zone is not a target for water supply wells due to insufficient supply. In this report, groundwater is typically meant to include only water in the saturated zone unless otherwise specified.

When there is a difference in height in the water table between two or more points, creating a slope, gradient or plane, or there is a difference in pressure levels in a confined aquifer, groundwater will move from the high areas towards the lower areas. The steepness of the slope is known as the hydraulic gradient. Groundwater will move at a rate of the hydraulic gradient multiplied by the hydraulic conductivity of the material it is moving through divided by the effective porosity of the same material. Groundwater will move more slowly in an aquifer with a gentle hydraulic gradient and low hydraulic conductivity (e.g., silty fine sand) compared to an aquifer with a steep hydraulic gradient and a high hydraulic conductivity (e.g., coarse sand and gravel). Average groundwater velocities in the WRD Service Area have been derived from the computer modeling performed by the USGS (2003, p. 129 and 132). In the Central Basin, groundwater moving away from the Montebello Forebay spreading grounds in a southwesterly direction averaged approximately 960 feet per year (2.6 feet per day). In the West Coast Basin, groundwater moving away from the West Coast Basin Seawater Barriers in an easterly direction averaged 560 feet per year (1.5 feet per day).

Pumping of wells can create steeper hydraulic gradients near the wells and influence the direction and velocity of groundwater flowing near the well. Many wells pumping in close proximity to each other can have a major impact on the natural gradients. Excessive pumping beyond recharge in the Basins can lower groundwater levels below sea level, reversing the natural hydraulic gradient that would normally flow towards the ocean. The reversal of the gradient from the ocean toward the land causes the ocean water to move inland and invade the freshwater aquifers in a process known as seawater intrusion. **Figure 6-3** is a generalized cross section through the WRD Service Area prepared by the California Department of Water Resources showing the general direction of groundwater flow through the Basins' aquifers, the effect of pumping wells on the hydraulic gradient, and the concept of seawater intrusion (CDWR, 1959).

### 6.3.1 Sources of Groundwater

Historically, the sources of the native fresh groundwater that filled the water-bearing sediments of the WRD Service Area were derived from surface and groundwater inflows from the San Gabriel Valley and the San Fernando Valley to the north, infiltration of precipitation falling directly on the interior of the WRD Service Area, and from precipitation runoff from the bordering Palos Verdes, Puente, Merced, and Repetto hills. Mendenhall (1905c) noted that the saturated sands and gravels in the area owed their source primarily to the large streams that flow across the coastal plain which derive their water from the higher mountains where precipitation is greater than in the lowlands. He also noted that it took long periods of time for groundwater stored in the aquifers to accumulate. Today, natural recharge of groundwater has diminished due to the lining of the Los Angeles River and portions of the San Gabriel River and Rio Hondo, paving the land surface with impervious surfaces (streets, parking lots, buildings), declining downstream river flows due to upstream users of river and storm water, and sewerage the cities instead of allowing septic tank / leach field water to return to the aquifers as in the past. Natural recharge must be augmented through the managed aquifer recharge activities of WRD to bring additional replenishment to the aquifers and make up the annual pumping overdraft. These activities will be discussed in more detail in Section 6.5.

The State of California has estimated that 35 million acre-feet (“AF”) of groundwater was stored in the Coastal Plain of Los Angeles County (CDWR, 1968), although the report recognized that the extractable amounts were limited based on physical and economic conditions. For example, between the period of 1934-35 through 1956-57, when the Coastal Plain was experiencing serious overdraft, falling groundwater levels, and seawater intrusion, the CDWR estimated that a total of 50,300 acre-feet per year (“AFY”) over the 23-year period had been lost from storage, or 1,158,600 AF total (CDWR, 1962, pg. 97-99). This represents only 3% of the 35 million AF reportedly stored in the Coastal Plain. If only 3% of the water was tapped and serious overdraft and seawater intrusion occurred, this is further evidence that the majority of the underground water supplies are not retrievable without considerable additional managed aquifer recharge activities or other mitigation measures. Modeling and analysis of potential land subsidence and the negative impacts on the Coastal Plain if groundwater levels are drawn down below previous historic lows has been reported (Reichard and others, 2010), emphasizing the need to maintain adequate groundwater levels through managed aquifer recharge.

The aquifers of the Coastal Plain contain plentiful groundwater, although not as much as 100 years ago. In 1904, Walter Mendenhall of the U.S. Geological Survey performed an extensive survey of the groundwater resources of the southern California coastal plain, including areas later to be known as the Central Basin and the West Coast Basin (Mendenhall, 1905a, b). In those investigations, he catalogued water wells, drew groundwater elevation contour maps, described the surface and groundwater and land conditions, reported rainfall data, mapped irrigated lands, and showed areas of flowing artesian wells, which covered roughly a third of the later named WRD service area.

In the Central Basin area, Mendenhall identified at least 3,300 water wells in operation, of which nearly half were flowing artesian wells (Mendenhall, 1905a, pg. 22). These wells mostly flowed unchecked throughout the year. In the West Coast Basin, he identified nearly 1,100 wells, of which only 12 were artesian (Mendenhall, 1905b, pg. 17). The developing region and increased water use in the area was having a negative impact on the groundwater supplies even at that time, with the artesian areas reducing in size by 30 percent in 1904 from their original levels (Mendenhall, 1905a, pg. 21). Even with the declines, water levels in 1904 were still above sea level everywhere in the Central Basin and West Coast Basin, and groundwater flowed naturally from the highs in the northeast to the lows in the southwest and out to the sea. Mendenhall reported, “This continuous movement seaward checks any tendency of the sea water to move inland. It is indeed so completely paramount that it is probable that wells sunk into the sea floor, at short distances off the coast, would at many points yield fresh water, and probably fresh-water springs discharge into the sea at numerous localities.” (Mendenhall, 1905a, pg. 25). **Figure 6-10** was taken from a Mendenhall map (1905b, Plate 1) showing artesian conditions in 1904, along with groundwater elevation contours. WRD has added its service area and groundwater flow direction arrows to the map to help indicate geographic boundaries and the movement of groundwater.

### 6.3.2 Overdraft and Recovery

Between 1900 and 1960, the population of Los Angeles County grew 3,446%, from 170,298 to 6,038,771 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). As the population grew, so did the use of groundwater resources for agricultural and urban use. Whereas in 1904 Mendenhall showed that all groundwater elevations were above sea level and water was flowing naturally towards the ocean with many flowing artesian wells, by 1960 due to excessive pumping that exceeded the natural replenishment (a condition known as “overdraft”) the groundwater levels throughout the Los Angeles Coastal Plain had dropped nearly 250 feet in some areas. **Figure 6-11** shows the locations of wells used for groundwater level hydrographs in the Montebello Forebay, Los Angeles Forebay, Central Basin Pressure Area, and West Coast Basin from 1904 through 1960, and **Figure 6-12** presents the hydrographs. This figure clearly shows the declining groundwater levels in the basins resulting from the severe overdraft.

The continued extraction of groundwater from the Basins in amounts that exceeded the natural supply not only caused water levels to fall, but to fall below sea level, allowing the ocean to migrate inland and contaminate the fresh groundwater with salt water near the coast. The seaward hydraulic gradient demonstrated by Mendenhall had been reversed so that the gradient along the coast was now landward, moving the seawater into the Central Basin near Alamitos Gap and in the West Coast Basin in the Dominguez Gap area and the western basin areas (Zielbauer et al., 1958, 1959, 1961, 1962). Intrusion of seawater into the freshwater aquifers contaminated the supply, making it unusable for most beneficial purposes (CDWR, 1959, pg. 1). **Figure 6-13** is a 1960 map of the WRD Service Area showing the large extent of below sea-level groundwater elevations in the WRD Service Area (Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District, 1961). The figure also shows the complicated and non-uniform groundwater flow directions caused by large pumping centers in the Los Angeles Forebay, Long Beach, Compton, Gardena, and Carson areas (flow direction on arrows added by WRD for this study).

As knowledge of the severe overdraft conditions and groundwater problems spread in the 1930s through 1960s, groundwater producers through their Associations in the Central Basin and West Coast Basin organized to take steps to overcome the problems. Access to imported water was secured to augment the local supply; the two groundwater basins were adjudicated to limit the amount of allowable groundwater pumping; seawater barrier wells were constructed by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District along the coast in both basins to halt further intrusion of seawater and to provide a replenishment source, and supplemental replenishment water was put into the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel River spreading grounds to augment the natural recharge.

Although implementation of these steps was effective in averting more serious groundwater problems in the Basins, they were limited in scope. The responsible water agencies at the time recognized that a large overdraft still remained, and they organized to create an area-wide agency to perform remedial measures to alleviate the problems. Formation of the Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District was sponsored by the Associations to implement these remedial measures (CDWR, 1959, pg. 2). Section 5 describes the events leading to the creation of the WRD.

WRD purchases supplemental recharge water (reclaimed (recycled) water and when needed imported water) to enhance natural recharge and overcome the annual overdraft. This process of performing intentional acts to supplement natural recharge with additional recharge is known as “artificial replenishment” or “managed aquifer recharge.” As will be discussed in more detail in Section 6.5, between 1959 and 2025 WRD and other agencies added over 11.5 million AF (3.75 trillion gallons) of imported, recycled water and make-up water to the groundwater basins through managed aquifer recharge at the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel spreading grounds, the seawater barrier wells, and In-Lieu replenishment to augment the natural supply.

The results of managed aquifer recharge, along with the reduction in pumping and the seawater barrier wells, have worked to not only halt the declining water level trends and saltwater intrusion, but to cause groundwater levels to rebound from their 1960s low. **Figure 6-14** is the groundwater level hydrograph shown earlier as **Figure 6-12**, but with the period from 1960 through December 2025 added to show the water level recovery. **Figure 6-15** is a groundwater elevation contour map for fall 2025 which can be compared to the 1960 map and the 1904 map to see current conditions and the success that managed aquifer recharge accomplished throughout the WRD Service Area. Groundwater elevations have recovered from 1960 levels but are still below sea level in many parts of the basins. The seawater barrier wells allow the intentional continued operation of the Basins below sea level without allowing seawater to intrude. The continued operation of the seawater barrier wells is necessary to maintain current pumping amounts in both basins and to prevent further degradation of water quality from invading seawater.

### 6.3.3 Newport-Inglewood Uplift: Barrier Impacts and Groundwater Underflow

The Basins share a common boundary known as the Newport-Inglewood Uplift, which in the WRD Service Area is a geological structure of discontinuous faults and hills trending in a northwest direction from the City of Seal Beach to the City of Inglewood (**Figure 6-8**). The boundary between the Basins is a simplified line drawn on the approximate centerline of the Newport Inglewood Uplift (CDWR, 1962, pg. 38), as the actual structure is a complicated geologic zone over a mile wide in places with varying hill shapes and heights and numerous short-length faults.

Overall, the Newport-Inglewood Uplift can be considered a partial barrier to ground water flow. Depending on the geology in a given reach of the Uplift, it can act as a complete barrier in some areas, a partial barrier in other areas, and no barrier in other areas. The degree to which the Uplift acts as a barrier depends on the fault or aquifer properties in the path of the groundwater at the boundary between the two groundwater basins. Barrier effects can be caused by a reduction in the transmissivity of the aquifer or hydraulic conductivity of the fault zone at the Uplift; where thinning or offsetting of the aquifers can reduce or eliminate flow, or cementation of the fault zone from grinding of sediments over time. When the groundwater hits a barrier, such as a zone of low hydraulic conductivity, it will attempt to find another path in the down-gradient direction.

The effects of the Uplift as a partial barrier were documented as far back as Mendenhall's report when he attributed the flowing artesian wells observed mostly in the Central Basin to an underground ridge that was restricting flow. According to Mendenhall (1905b, pg. 15), "The ridge which separates these two sections is not a surface feature merely. It seems to be the surface expression of a broad fold in the sands and clays of the coastal plain – a fold that acts as a dam to waters seeking a way seaward beneath the surface, checking their course and tending to force them toward the surface in order to pass the obstruction."

The Report of Referee for the West Coast Basin (CDPW, 1952, pages 91-93) took a detailed look at potential barrier segments and effects along the Newport-Inglewood Uplift. The Report concluded that "Its component faults and folds constitute barriers with varying degrees of effectiveness, separated by gaps which apparently allow relatively free passage of ground waters." Poland (1959) performed a detailed analysis of the water tightness of the Newport-Inglewood Uplift to determine the effectiveness of the Uplift as a barrier against intruding seawater. He compared water level elevations and patterns in wells on opposite sides of the structural zone. He found that in the shallower aquifers in the Dominguez Gap area there is no barrier to groundwater flow but in the deeper Silverado zone a barrier does exist but is not wholly watertight. In the Signal Hill area, a reasonably effective barrier to water movement was identified but not completely watertight as groundwater elevation differences of several tens of feet was enough to induce flow. In the Alamosos Gap area, the shallow aquifers had no barrier effect but the deeper aquifers in the San Pedro Formation appeared to be completely watertight.

Garcia (1995) for her Master of Science Degree in Geology at California State University, Long Beach, evaluated the impact of the Newport-Inglewood Uplift as a groundwater barrier in the Signal Hill area. She performed a detailed stratigraphic displacement of aquifers analysis along with statistical analysis of groundwater levels and groundwater geochemistry from available data. She concluded that the geochemical data did not provide robust evidence that the Newport-Inglewood structural zone is a hydrologic barrier. She also identified areas where groundwater was flowing from the West Coast Basin into the Central Basin in the Dominguez Gap area (pg. 83), which illustrates the fact that groundwater will move across the Uplift in either direction based on the relative elevations of groundwater. Reichard, et al (2003) performed detailed data collection to construct a groundwater flow model of the Coastal Plain, and included the Newport-Inglewood Uplift as a partial barrier to groundwater flow, slowing but not preventing movement of groundwater.

Because of the interest in water resources in the Basins and the effect of the Newport-Inglewood Uplift on these resources, numerous studies have been done on the amount of groundwater flowing from Central Basin into the West Coast Basin for different time periods. Underflow varies based on the hydraulic gradient across the uplift and the hydraulic conductivity of the sediments or fault zones at the contact of the Basins. **Table 6-1** lists the underflow values determined from previous technical studies.

The amount of underflow going from Central Basin into the West Coast Basin has generally declined over time as pumping in the Central Basin drew groundwater levels down closer to the West Coast Basin elevations so that there was a reduction in the hydraulic gradient between the two, thereby reducing underflow. This is supported by statements from CDWR (2003), "Historically, groundwater flow in the Central Basin has been from recharge areas in the northeast part of the subbasin, toward the Pacific Ocean on the southwest. However, pumping has lowered the water level in the Central Basin and water levels in some aquifers are about equal on both sides of the Newport-Inglewood uplift, decreasing subsurface outflow to the West Coast Subbasin."

In 1959, CDWR recognized the impact that both pumping reduction in the West Coast Basin and continued heavy pumping in the Central Basin had on underflow. Their report (CDWR, 1959 – pg. 36) states the following "In recent years, the rate of decline of water level elevations at wells in the West Coast Basin has been slower than at wells on the east side of the Newport-Inglewood uplift. This is due primarily to the voluntary curtailment of extractions by certain of the heavy pumpers in the West Coast Basin as a result of the previously mentioned 'Interim Agreement and Petition and Order'. The effect of this curtailment, in combination with continued depression of water levels in the Central Basin has had the result of bringing ground water levels in the Central Basin increasingly nearer to levels in the West Coast Basin. This probably has affected a reduction in the quantity of groundwater moving across the Newport-Inglewood uplift from the Central Basin to the West Coast Basin."

**Table 6-1  
Central Basin to West Coast Basin Historical Underflow Determinations**

| <b>Data Source</b>                        | <b>Yeas of Analysis</b> | <b>Average Underflow (AFY)</b> | <b>Notes</b>                                       |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Poland and Others (1959)                  | 1904                    | 17,500 – 23,500                | Assumed 1945 values were 85% of 1904 values.       |
| West Basin Report of Referee (CDPW, 1952) | 1932/33 – 1949/50       | 42,876 <sup>1</sup>            | “Transmissibility” Method of Analysis <sup>2</sup> |
|   | 1932/33 – 1949/50       | 24,355                         | “Trough” Method of Analysis <sup>2</sup>           |
| Poland and Others (1959)                  | 1945                    | 15,000 – 20,000                |  |
| California Water Rights Board (1961)      | 1950/51                 | 23,250                         | Combination of Trough and Transmissibility Methods |
| CDWR (1962)                               | 1934/35 – 1956/57       | 15,600                         |  |
|   | 1957                    | 10,500                         |  |
| Montgomery Watson (1993)                  | 1964/65 – 1984/85       | 25,000                         | Citing a 1989 report by CDM and JMM                |
| Bookman Edmonston Engineering (1993)      | 1983/84                 | 17,000                         | Citing a 1989 CDM and JMM report                   |
| Montgomery Watson (1993)                  | 1985/86 – 1991/92       | 21,300                         | Citing a 1992 report by JMM and CDM                |
| Bookman Edmonston Engineering (1993)      | 1979/80 – 1991/92       | 20,500                         |  |
| Reichard and others (2003)                | 1970/71 – 1999/00       | 3,200                          | Average computer model results – 30 yr average     |
|   | 1995/96 – 1999/00       | 5,900                          | 5-year average from computer model                 |

This information shows that the basins are connected, and that underflow between the two relies on water levels on either side of the Uplift. The West Coast Basin relies on underflow as part of its water balance, and water replenished in the Central Basin helps to maintain flow into the West Coast Basin. Conversely, over pumping without additional recharge in the Central Basin causes groundwater levels to drop and underflow to the West Coast Basin to decline. According to CDWR (1962, pg. 125), “it was found that a large portion of the safe yield of West Coast Basin was dependent upon the amount of subsurface flow into it from Central Basin.”

<sup>1</sup> From Table 9, pg. 99 and includes Silverado Zone underflow across Uplift, plus Gardena and Gage.

<sup>2</sup> Although CDPW recognized both methods had limitations, the department settled on the trough method on grounds that it was subject to errors of a lesser magnitude than that of the transmissibility method (CDPW, 1952, pg. 102).

## 6.4 Groundwater Pumping

Groundwater pumping has been occurring in the Basins for over 120 years. As the population grew and water demands increased, pumping of groundwater also increased. The effect of pumping in the basins was known as far back as 1905, when Mendenhall (1905a,b,c) catalogued over 4,400 water wells in the areas later to be known as the Central Basin and West Coast Basin and reported “In general each well in the coastal plain, whether flowing or pumped, affects every other well in the same region...All drain from a common source, the body of saturated sands and gravels which underlie the wide plain between the Puente Hills and the sea and whatever reduces the amount of water in that body of alluvium affects all wells which draw from it.” (Mendenhall, 1905c, pg. 30).

As populations grew and demand for groundwater for agriculture and urban use increased, extractions exceeded natural supply and the groundwater basins were in severe overdraft. For example, the CDWR (1962, pg. 121) found that in 1957, groundwater extractions in the Central Basin were 240,500 AF yet the department determined the natural safe yield to be 137,300 AF, creating an excessive pumping overdraft for that year of 103,200 AF. In the West Coast Basin, 1957 pumping was 67,700 AF whereas the natural safe yield was determined to be 36,100 AF, creating an overdraft of 31,600 AF. And pumping between 1934/35 and 1956/57 reached a maximum of 259,400 AF in the Central Basin and 94,100 AF in the West Coast Basin (CDWR, 1962, pg. 71) likely creating greater overdraft in those years.

The results of this severe overdraft are described in Section 6.3.2 and generally included large reductions in groundwater levels and induced seawater intrusion. Solutions to the problem included collaboration of Central Basin and West Coast Basin groundwater producers to sponsor formation of the Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District to perform managed aquifer recharge, urge the construction of seawater barrier wells along the coast of both Central Basin and West Coast Basin by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, and the reduction of pumping through adjudication of the two groundwater basins.

To solve the over pumping problems, legal action was initiated. Both groundwater basins were adjudicated to limit groundwater extractions. The West Coast Basin adjudication was started in 1945 when the California Water Service Company, City of Torrance, and others filed a complaint to quiet title to the ground water rights of 151 named defendants, and to regulate and reduce ground water extractions from the West Coast Basin so that the supply would not be further depleted or degraded (CDWR, 1958). An interim agreement was reached effective March 1, 1955, and the final Judgment completed in 1961 (West Coast Basin Amended Judgment, 1980). The pumping rights in the basin were set at 64,468.25 AF. The court appointed CDWR as Watermaster to assist the court to administer and enforce the provisions of the Judgment.

In December 2014, the West Coast Basin Judgment was amended to create a new West Coast Basin Watermaster comprised of three parts; the first arm is the Administrative Body which administers the Watermaster accounting and reporting functions. The WRD was appointed by the court to fulfill this role. The second arm is the Water Rights Panel, which enforces issues related to the pumping rights within the adjudication. The Water Rights Panel is made up of five water rights holders who are selected through election and appointment. The third arm is the Storage Panel, which is comprised of the Water Rights Panel and the WRD Board of Directors, which together approve certain groundwater storage efforts. Watermaster prepares an annual report which is required by the Judgment to summarize the activities of the Watermaster. According to the Watermaster report (WRD, 2025b, pg. 1), in Administrative Year (AY) 2024/25 there were 72 Parties and 55 rights holders to the Judgment, 20 active pumpers, and 42,415 AF of groundwater pumped.

The Central Basin Judgment resulted from litigation filed by the Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District against more than 700 parties on January 2, 1962 to quiet title to ground water rights and to curtail extractions to prevent further ground water supply deterioration. An interim agreement was reached effective September 28, 1962 and the final Judgment completed on October 11, 1965 (CDWR, 1966a). The pumping rights in the basin (“Allowed Pumping Allocation”) were set at 217,367 AF.

The CDWR was named Watermaster for the Central Basin up until December 2013 when, like in West Coast Basin, the Central Basin Judgment was amended to create the same three armed structure with the exception that the Water Rights Panel is made of seven water rights holders instead of five. According to WRD (2025a, pg. 1), in AY 2024/25 there were 151 Parties and 117 rights holders to the Judgment, 62 active pumpers, and 168,966 AF of groundwater pumped.

There is a significant difference between the adjudicated rights established by the courts and the 1957 natural safe yield values established by CDWR. Responsibility for making up this difference (including any changes to the natural safe yield since 1957) would be the responsibility of WRD. The District undertakes managed aquifer recharge to make up the overdraft and strive for balanced basins. More details on the managed aquifer recharge activities of the District are described in the next section.

Complicating pumping in the basins is the fact that a water rights holder has the ability to drill a well anywhere in the basin in which it holds a right and pump groundwater from that location. For example, the City of Lakewood in the Central Basin can drill a well anywhere in the City, or it could go beyond city boundaries to drill a well. Several parties have done this. The City of Signal Hill, for example, has installed wells in the City of Long Beach. Investor-owned water utility companies such as Golden State Water Company (“GSWC”) or California Water Service Company (“CWSC”) do not operate on the basis of municipal boundaries but instead operate in water service areas in which they can install wells wherever needed. Transient pumping locations and patterns create a dynamic groundwater flow system that varies year to year.

Because numerous water agencies have boundaries that cross both the Basins, including California American Water Company, the City of Inglewood, GSWC, City of Los Angeles, CWSC, City of Long Beach, and City of Signal Hill, water pumped from one basin may go into a company's distribution system and mix with imported water and/or other groundwater pumped from the other basin making it impossible to know the source of water flowing out of any given well at any given time (Sorensen, personal communication, 2013).

A map of the water providers in the WRD Service Area and the location of current water production wells is presented as **Figure 6-16**. The groundwater basins combined are a common pool of water from which the water rights holders have the right to extract their entitlement for their beneficial use. The locations of wells and the extraction amounts will vary from year to year, and the distribution of the water can be complicated, but as long as the common pool resource is maintained through managed aquifer recharge, the overdraft will be curtailed and the resource will be available for the direct and indirect benefit of all overlying users.

## 6.5 Managed Aquifer Recharge

To overcome the severe overdraft in both groundwater basins in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (**Figure 6-12**), experienced and concerned water professionals came together to implement solutions to the problem. These solutions included joining the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California to bring imported water into the region to offset the need for only groundwater supplies, adjudicating the groundwater basins to limit and control pumping, construction of barrier wells along the coast to halt further intrusion of seawater that was contaminating the basins, and the creation of the Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District to provide the needed supplemental replenishment water to make up the difference between the adjudicated amounts and the natural safe yield. This process of supplementing natural recharge with additional recharge is known as artificial replenishment or managed aquifer recharge ("MAR"). The success of the various actions eliminated the annual overdraft and prevented seawater intrusion, and has restored the groundwater basins as a sustainable resource for the direct and indirect benefit of all overlying users (Johnson and Whitaker, 2004). Section 6.3.2 above discusses the overdraft and recovery in more detail, and Section 5 is a detailed discussion of how the groundwater pumping community came together to sponsor formation of WRD.

WRD was formed in 1959 and operated then as it does today under Division 18 of the California Water Code. Chapter 1 (Sections 60220 through 60226) describes the purposes and powers of a water replenishment district, including "A district may do any act necessary to replenish the ground water of said district" (Section 60220). The WRD service area covers the entire adjudicated Central Basin boundary and the vast majority of the adjudicated West Coast Basin boundary as well as the Palos Verdes Hills. As such, it is WRD's responsibility to perform any acts necessary for MAR over essentially the entire Central and West Coast Basins to help make up the annual overdraft.

However, there are only limited areas available to perform artificial replenishment of groundwater because of the geology and existing infrastructure in the WRD Service Area. These recharge facilities are shown on **Figure 6-17** and include the spreading grounds in the Montebello Forebay, the three seawater barrier injection well projects along the coast, and the Albert Robles Center for Water Recycling and Environmental Learning (ARC), formerly known as GRIP. In addition, WRD utilizes a tool known as In-Lieu Replenishment, which provides an incentive for pumpers to turn off their pumps and take imported water In-lieu of groundwater in areas that are difficult to replenish by other methods. By not pumping groundwater they help to restore water levels in that area. Since 1959, WRD and others have utilized these groundwater management tools to replenish over 7.97 million AF (2.60 trillion gallons) of imported, recycled, and Make-up water to the depleted Basins for the benefit of all groundwater users in these areas.

**Table 6-2** shows a breakdown of the replenishment activities. The sections below describe each of the replenishment areas in more detail.

**Table 6-2  
Managed Aquifer Recharge in WRD Service Area 1959 – 2025**

| Recharge Method  | Imported Water (AF) | Recycled Water (AF) | Make-up Water* (AF) | Total (AF)       |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Montebello Forebay Spreading Grounds (Rio Hondo and San Gabriel River) | 2,550,995           | 2,483,051           | 215,121             | 5,249,167        |
| Seawater Intrusion Barriers**  | 1,590,338           | 335,863             | 0                   | 1,926,201        |
| In-Lieu Replenishment  | 880,718             | 0                   | 0                   | 880,718          |
| <b>TOTAL (AF)</b>  | <b>5,022,051</b>    | <b>2,818,914</b>    | <b>215,121</b>      | <b>8,056,086</b> |

Notes:

\* Make-up water is replenishment water owed to the Lower Area (downstream of Whittier Narrows) from the Upper Area (upstream of Whittier Narrows) under the Long Beach Judgment (San Gabriel River Watermaster, 2010)

\*\* Does not include water purchased by the Orange County Water District for the portion of the Alamitos Barrier which lies in Orange County.

### 6.5.1 Montebello Forebay Spreading Grounds

One of the main methods to perform MAR in the WRD Service Area is through groundwater recharge at spreading grounds or recharge ponds. These “leaky lakes” must be engineered in geologically suitable areas where surface water can be captured, held, and allowed to sink down into the subsurface through the vadose zone and down to the saturated zone. For a spreading grounds project to work, the soil beneath it down to the water table must be permeable sand or gravel so the infiltrating surface water can move downward without blockage. If less permeable silt or clay layers exist, they can act as a barrier and prevent the water from reaching the water table and aquifers.

The California Department of Water Resources described the areas suitable for surface recharge in the Basins as follows (CDWR, 1963, pg. 4):

Because of the relatively impermeable sediments comprised of clays or silty and sandy clays that overlay and separate these aquifers throughout much of the basin, very little replenishment is derived from direct precipitation or applied water. However, In the vicinity of the Los Angeles and Whittier Narrows, these relatively impermeable strata are not in evidence. At this point, the aquifers are essentially interconnected and the uppermost coarse-grained material extends to the ground surface, thereby permitting relatively free downward movement of water from the surface into the various aquifers.

The Los Angeles Forebay is generally built out and paved over, and the Los Angeles River has been lined with concrete, making the forebay not currently amenable to significant surface groundwater recharge projects. The Montebello Forebay area, however, has open unpaved areas converted to spreading grounds and the unlined San Gabriel River channel which have been utilized for intentional stormwater capture and groundwater recharge since 1938, when the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (“LACFCD”) constructed the Montebello Forebay Spreading Grounds (“MFSG” – also known as the Coastal Spreading Grounds). **Figure 6-3** is a generalized cross section showing how surface water in the MFSG area can replenish the aquifers and recharge the down-gradient aquifers in the Central Basin and West Coast Basin.

These spreading grounds, in the northeast portion of the WRD service area (see **Figure 6-17**), are the principal groundwater recharge facilities for the entire Central Basin and West Coast Basin, providing for nearly half of all the groundwater replenishment activities, both natural and artificial, in the two groundwater basins by combining natural river diversions with supplemental imported and recycled water (USGS, 2003; WRD, 2023a, Table 4).

The MFSG consists of two separate but linked facilities; the Rio Hondo Coastal Spreading Grounds (“RHSG”) and the San Gabriel Coastal Spreading Grounds (“SGSG”) (**Figure 6-18**). They are located downstream of the Whittier Narrows Dam adjacent to the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel river channels, respectively. The RHSG consists of off-channel spreading grounds, while the SGSG consists of both off-channel grounds and the river channel itself. The LACFCD owns and operates the MFSG for storm water conservation and flood control and has been doing so since 1938. Because storm water capture and recharge amounts are insufficient for the total replenishment needs in the WRD Service Area, imported water has been used as a supplemental recharge source in the MFSG since 1953-54 and recycled water since 1961-62 (WRD, 2025a). **Table 6-3** lists additional information on the MFSG groundwater recharge facilities (LACPW website, 2013).

**Table 6-3  
Montebello Forebay Groundwater Recharge Facilities**

| <b>Information</b>  | <b>Rio Hondo Spreading Grounds</b> | <b>San Gabriel River Spreading Grounds</b>                      |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Year First Used   | 1937-38                            | 1938-39 in spreading grounds;<br>1954-55 in river channel       |
| Size (acres)  | 570                                | 128 spreading grounds;<br>308 in river channel                  |
| Number of Spreading Ponds                                     | 20                                 | 3 in spreading grounds;<br>7 in river channel using rubber dams |
| Infiltration (Percolation) Rate in Cubic Feet per Second, cfs | 400                                | 75 in spreading grounds;<br>75 in river channel                 |
| Water Holding Capacity (AF)                                   | 3,694                              | 550 in spreading grounds;<br>913 in river channel               |

LACFCD has an extensive program of maintaining and grooming the spreading grounds to maximize groundwater recharge. During major storm events, the County works around the clock to ensure that as much runoff as possible is captured by diverting the flows to the various sub-basins instead of allowing the water to be lost to the ocean. During the times when the spreading grounds are not filled with storm water, WRD purchases imported and recycled water for managed aquifer recharge. Recycled water is the preferred source as it is available year round, is of excellent quality, and is at a considerably lower cost than imported water. For example, if WRD were to purchase untreated Tier 1 imported water next year for spreading, the cost would be approximately \$1,235 per AF (includes the MWD base rate plus contracted surcharges by the Central Basin Municipal Water District) compared to recycled water from the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (LACSD), which will be at an estimated melded rate of \$144 per AF for an estimated 53,000 AF for Fiscal Year 2026/27.

The amount of recycled water that can be spread, however, is limited by the State Water Resources Control Board – Division of Drinking Water (“DDW”, formerly the California Department of Public Health) and the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (“LARWQCB”). They have set a limit on the amount of recycled water that can be spread to 45% of the total water recharged in the Montebello Forebay over a 10-year period, meaning the other 55% must come from other sources, including stormwater capture, underflow from the San Gabriel Basin, direct precipitation infiltrating the spreading grounds area, and if needed imported water.

Recognizing the importance of maintaining a reliable and cost effective groundwater replenishment source for the Montebello Forebay to help recharge the Central Basin and West Coast Basin aquifers, WRD has implemented its Water Independence Now (WIN) program with the goal of making its service area self-sustaining, eliminating the need for imported water for groundwater recharge. The WIN program is discussed in more detail in Section 7.

## 6.5.2 Seawater Barrier Injection Wells

Seawater intrusion was a major problem for the Basins as severe pumping overdraft caused groundwater levels to fall 100 feet below sea level in some areas which allowed the hydraulic gradient to reverse and flow from the ocean towards the land, contaminating fresh groundwater with seawater. Groundwater in both basins was at risk due to falling water levels and advancing seawater.

To address this problem, in 1951 the LACFCD used an abandoned water well in Manhattan Beach to inject potable water to test whether pressure could be built up in a confined aquifer to block the intrusion. The test worked, so LACFCD performed subsequent tests with additional wells to successfully create a pressure ridge or “wall” along the line of injection wells to overcome the pressure of the intruding seawater. The results are well documented in a report by CDWR (1957). Based on the success of the tests, the LACFCD eventually constructed the West Coast Basin Barrier Project and the Dominguez Gap Barrier Project in the West Coast Basin, and the Alamitos Barrier Project in the Central Basin (**Figure 6-17**). LACPW owns and operates the wells and the WRD provides all of the water used for injection within its service area. The injected water not only builds up a line of pressure equal to or exceeding sea level to block the intrusion, but the injected water also moves inland in a down-gradient direction to replenish the aquifers and maintain groundwater levels higher than they would otherwise be without the injection. The barrier wells benefit both groundwater basins in this fashion. They protect against seawater intrusion, supply replenishment water and maintain elevated groundwater levels. **Table 6-4** presents updated information for the barrier projects.

**Table 6-4**  
**Seawater Barrier Injection Well Facilities**

| Information                                     | West Coast Basin Barrier Project | Dominguez Gap Barrier Project | Alamitos Barrier Project* |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Date Initiated                                  | 1953                             | 1971                          | 1964                      |
| Overall Length (miles)                          | 9                                | 6                             | 2.2                       |
| Number of Injection Wells                       | 159                              | 94                            | 61                        |
| Number of Observation Wells                     | 300                              | 257                           | 220                       |
| 2024/25 Imported Water Injection Amounts - (AF) | 5,636                            | 2,906                         | 1,727                     |
| 2024/25 Recycled Water Injection Amounts - (AF) | 8,543                            | 5,282                         | 1,055                     |

\* Does not include water purchased by Orange County Water District for their portion of the Alamitos Barrier

The barrier projects have been successfully protecting and supplying the fresh water aquifers in the WRD Service Area for decades. Currently, both potable imported water and advanced treated recycled municipal wastewater (some combination of microfiltration, reverse osmosis, ultraviolet light and advanced oxidation) are used. The water is injected into the Basins' aquifers to depths over 600 feet. As mentioned, WRD purchases all of the water injected into the barriers except for about 2,400 AF per year (average of the last five years) purchased by the Orange County Water District for a portion of the Alamitos Barrier in which they are responsible. The recycled water for the Alamitos Barrier is produced by WRD from the Leo J. Vander Lans facility, for the West Coast Basin Barrier by the West Basin Municipal Water District's (WBMWD) Ed Little plant, and for the Dominguez Gap Barrier by the City of Los Angeles' Terminal Island Treatment Plant. Potable water is provided by WBMWD and the City of Long Beach.

Recycled water is the preferred source as it is available year round, is of excellent quality, and costs less than imported water. For example, FY 2025-26, potable Tier 1 imported water for use at the Dominguez Gap barrier would be over \$2,707 per AF (includes the MWD base rate plus surcharges by the WBMWD). The rate for recycled water at the same barrier will be an estimated \$1,446 per AF. In addition to water costs that WRD pays, the LACPW pays for the costs of the construction, operations, and maintenance of their barrier facilities. Realizing the high cost of barrier operations, WRD and others have looked into alternatives for seawater intrusion protection (Johnson and Whitaker, 2004).

WRD has also implemented its WIN program to make its service area independent of imported water for groundwater recharge. Progress on WIN is being made at all three seawater barriers. In fact all three seawater barriers have now been permitted for 100% recycled water, with imported water being used when recycled water is not available due to plant shut downs for maintenance or as needed for additional supply. All of these measures will help ensure continued protection of the groundwater resources in the WRD Service Area from seawater intrusion and will benefit directly or indirectly all groundwater pumpers in its service area.

### **6.5.3 In-Lieu Replenishment**

The In-Lieu Replenishment Program has played an important role in the conjunctive use of the Central Basin and West Coast Basin, utilizing surplus imported water to offset groundwater demands for later use. Its goal is to replenish those areas which are not easily recharged through surface spreading due to their distance from the Montebello Forebay Spreading Grounds and/or location in deep confined aquifers.

MWD historically offered discounted water known as "Long Term Seasonal Storage" that WRD used as a basis for the In-Lieu program. WRD offered financial incentives to encourage pumpers to reduce their groundwater production in favor of purchasing the MWD seasonal imported water. The incentive payments made the imported water less expensive than pumping groundwater. When the wells are turned off, groundwater levels rise and water remains in storage that would have otherwise been pumped out.

WRD first offered the In-Lieu program in 1965-66 and has replenished 880,718 AF under the program since that time. The result has been to the benefit of both Central Basin and West Coast Basin pumpers through increased water levels and more groundwater in storage. Unfortunately, due to water shortages in MWD's system and reconsideration of its replenishment policies, MWD terminated availability of the Long Term Seasonal Storage water in May 2007. It was again offered (2,398 AF) for a limited time in FY 2023-24, but has not been available since, allowing only a couple In-Lieu offerings since then. The future availability of the MWD and WRD In-Lieu program is uncertain.

## 6.6 Groundwater Quality

Section 60224 of the California Water Code gives WRD the responsibility to protect and preserve groundwater quality within the District by:

- (a) Preventing contaminants from entering the groundwater supplies of the District;
- (b) Removing contaminants from the groundwater supplies of the District;
- (c) Determining the existence, extent, and location of contaminants in, or which may enter, the groundwater supplies of the District;
- (d) Determine persons, whether natural persons or public entities, responsible for those contaminants; and,
- (e) Perform or obtain engineering, hydrologic, and scientific studies for any of the foregoing purposes.

The groundwater quality in the WRD Service area is susceptible to contamination from natural sources such as seawater intrusion, iron, manganese, color, odor, and arsenic, and from anthropogenic sources such as leaking underground storage tanks, legacy disposal practices, landfills, and waste disposal wells. Just as replenishment water applied at the ground surface can soak into the underground and refill the aquifers, so can contaminants leaking at or near the ground surface move down to contaminate the soil and groundwater beneath it. Once underground, the contaminants can spread and move with the groundwater flow, potentially jeopardizing the groundwater supply to downstream users.

Although the overall groundwater quality is very good and available for beneficial use with little to no treatment, there are areas of known contamination or potential contamination which WRD monitors. When serious threats are identified, WRD performs investigations and in some cases water treatment. WRD works with regulatory agencies such as the U.S. EPA and California Department of Toxic Substances Control ("DTSC") and LARWQCB to use their regulatory powers to enforce investigations and remediation. All of these actions are to protect the quality of the groundwater resources in the Basins.

The number of potentially contaminating activities in a highly urbanized area such as the Los Angeles Basin can be challenging. Using government databases such as the State Water Resources Control Board's GeoTracker web site, and the DTSC's EnviroStor, WRD has identified over 5,000 potentially contaminating activities in the WRD service area, including nine U.S. EPA Superfund Sites. Many of these sites are not a real threat to groundwater as they have only impacted the ground surface or shallow soil, or perched

groundwater, and many others have been considered clean and closed by regulatory agencies. However, WRD tracks the sites that have the greatest risk of contaminating and spreading in the deeper drinking water aquifers in its service area and works with the regulatory agencies to expedite the investigation and cleanup of these sites. Currently, WRD considers 44 sites to be the highest priority for contamination risks to the Central Basin and West Coast Basin. **Figure 6-19** shows the locations of these sites.

**Figure 6-19** also shows the approximate extent of the “Saline Plume,” the remnant seawater intrusion plume that invaded the freshwater aquifers due to overdraft in the 1900s through 1950s. Much of the plume was cut off by the West Coast Basin Barrier project when it was installed, leaving behind a legacy contamination plume. This plume continues to move inland based on the hydraulic gradient and is a risk to further groundwater supplies. The volume of this saline plume has been estimated at 600,000 AF (Bookman-Edmonston, 1986, pg. 36). WRD’s Goldsworthy Desalter program pumps out a portion of the contamination, treats the water through reverse osmosis membranes, and serves the treated water as a public water supply to the City of Torrance. This action serves to remove the contamination for the benefit of the Basins and pumpers and to provide a new source of drinking water for the region. In 2018, WRD kicked off a Brackish Groundwater Reclamation Feasibility Study with seven other stakeholders to evaluate future pump, treat, and reuse of the salty groundwater. More information on this project is presented below in Chapter 7, Section 7.17.

WRD utilizes its network of specially designed groundwater monitoring wells, installed by the U.S. Geological Survey and others, to check on the condition of the aquifers and groundwater quality throughout its service area. The network currently consists of 373 nested monitoring wells installed at 67 locations. These wells range in depth from 62 feet to 2,900 feet, and tap all the major aquifers used by the groundwater producers in the Central Basin and West Coast Basin. Water quality samples are collected from the wells twice per year and the results tabulated in an annual Regional Groundwater Monitoring Report to present the latest information on the groundwater quality throughout the WRD Service Area (for example see WRD, 2025b). **Figure 6-20** shows the location of the WRD nested monitoring well network.

In addition to the Regional Groundwater Monitoring Report, WRD presents the results of its groundwater quality activities to the pumpers in its service area in Technical Bulletins, which are concise two-page documents summarizing important findings, such as how monitoring wells give aquifer specific information (WRD, 2006), battling seawater intrusion (WRD, 2007), groundwater quality in the Basins, identifying the most prevalent chemicals above drinking water standards (WRD, 2008a), how drinking water quality standards are set (WRD, 2008b), groundwater prevention and cleanup (2009), salt/nutrient management plans (2010a) and WRD’s Safe Drinking Water Program (WRD, 2010b).

Details of the many programs WRD implements to monitor and protect the quality of the groundwater in the WRD Service area are presented in Section 7. Projects such as the Goldsworthy Desalter, the Groundwater Quality Program, the Regional Groundwater Monitoring Program, and the Safe Drinking Water Program all help to ensure a high quality water resource to the direct and indirect benefit of all water users in the WRD Service Area.

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## **7.0 WRD PROJECTS, PROGRAMS, ADMINISTRATION AND WATER PURCHASES**

California Water Code Sections 60220 through 60226 describe the broad purposes and powers of the District “to perform any acts necessary” to replenish, protect, and preserve the groundwater supplies of the District. To meet its statutory responsibilities, WRD has instituted numerous projects and programs in a continuing effort to effectively manage groundwater replenishment and quality in the Basins. These projects and programs include activities that enhance the replenishment program, increase the reliability of the groundwater resources, improve and protect groundwater quality, and ensure that the groundwater supplies are suitable for beneficial uses.

These projects and programs have had a positive influence on the basins, and WRD anticipates continuing these activities into the ensuing year 2026-27. The following is a discussion of the projects and programs. Additional information may be found in the District’s annual Engineering Survey and Report (“ESR”).

### **7.1 Water Purchases (WTR)**

Among certain determinations and findings, the ESR identifies an estimate of the quantity, source, and cost of water available for replenishment during the ensuing water year. As detailed in the ESR, the Basins have an annual overdraft because more groundwater is pumped out than is replaced naturally. The District purchases supplemental water (artificial replenishment water) each year to help offset this overdraft through managed aquifer recharge. The purchased water enters the groundwater basins at the Montebello Forebay spreading grounds, at the seawater barrier injection wells, and through the District’s In-Lieu Program when available. The sources of artificial replenishment water include: (1) Recycled water – wastewater from the sewer systems that is reclaimed through extensive treatment at water reclamation plants (“WRP”s), and (2) Imported Water – river water from northern California (State Water Project) and the Colorado River that are imported into Southern California by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

The detailed breakdown of the estimated quantity, source, and cost of replenishment water for the ensuing year can be found in Tables 1 and 2 of the most recent ESR. The estimated costs described are for water purchases only and do not include the additional costs for projects and programs required to replenish the basins and to protect groundwater quality, as well as the administrative costs to support the various functions of the District.

In addition to the estimated quantity of replenishment water identified in the ESR, over the years, the District has occasionally not purchased the full quantity of water as estimated in the ESR. This deficit in not purchasing the full estimated amount is attributable to different circumstances, including: unavailability of replenishment water, unanticipated increases in imported water prices, revenue constraints (i.e. low RA rate), and cash flow challenges (i.e. collection/non-payment by customers). Since the early 2000s, the District has kept an accounting of the deficit in annual water purchases; the total estimated cumulative deficit to date is also known as the makeup water, which is necessary to ensure the long-term health of the Basins.

The importance and technical details of makeup water can also be found in the ESR. Based upon technical analyses and historical groundwater levels, in 2002, the District adopted an Optimum Quantity for groundwater amounts in the Basins. The Optimum Quantity is based on the Accumulated Overdraft (AOD) concept described in the California Water Code. To ensure there is a healthy quantity to sustain the adjudicated pumping rights in the basins, in 2006, the District adopted a policy to make up the Optimum Quantity should it fall too low. The policy is as follows:

*An Accumulated Overdraft greater than the Optimum Quantity is a deficit. WRD will make up the deficit within a 20 year period as decided by the Board on an annual basis. If the deficit is within 5 percent of the Optimum Quantity, then no action needs to be taken to allow for natural replenishment to makeup the deficit.*

For the ensuing year, the District may purchase some amount of the makeup water. The actual purchase amount, if any, will depend on the decision of the Board, after considering inputs from stakeholders and conducting public meetings, and the availability of the water from suppliers and availability of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works to spread the water for WRD.

Shown below is the detailed breakout of Water Costs and Surcharges to WRD for the ensuing fiscal year:

**Table 7-1  
Water Purchases**

| Detailed Breakout of Water Costs and Surcharges to WRD |   |           |                     |                    |
|--|---|-----------|---------------------|--------------------|
|  | Item  | Quantity  | Melded              | Total              |
| Imported Water   | <b>CBMWD</b>                                  |           |                     |                    |
|  | MWD Untreated Tier 1 - Spreading (\$/af)      | 0         | \$ 1,120            | \$0                |
|  | MWD RTS (\$/month)                            | 12        | \$ -                | \$0                |
|  | CBMWD Administrative Surcharge (\$/af)        | 0         | \$ 70               | \$0                |
|  | CBMWD Water Service Charge (\$/month)         | 12        | \$ 6,200            | \$74,400           |
|  | <b>Total to CBMWD</b>                         |           |                     | <b>\$74,400</b>    |
|  | <b>LBWD</b>                                   |           |                     |                    |
|  | MWD Treated Tier 1 - Alamos Barrier (\$/af)   | 760       | \$ 1,664            | \$1,264,450        |
|  | MWD Capacity Charge (\$/cfs/month)            | 10.2      | \$ 906              | \$110,826          |
|  | LBWD RTS (\$/af)                              | 760       | \$ 237              | \$180,448          |
| LBWD Administrative Surcharge (\$/af)                  | 760   | \$ 5      | \$3,800             |                    |
| <b>Total to LBWD</b>                                   |   |           | <b>\$1,559,525</b>  |                    |
| <b>WBMWD - Imported Water</b>                          |   |           |                     |                    |
| MWD Treated Tier 1-WCBBP Barrier (\$/af)               | 2,880   | \$ 1,427  | \$4,110,887         |                    |
| MWD Treated Tier 1-DGBP Barrier (\$/af)                | 2,800   | \$ 1,664  | \$4,658,500         |                    |
| MWD RTS (\$/af) Dominguez Barrier (DGBP) Only          | 2,800   | \$ 248    | \$693,574           |                    |
| MWD Capacity Charge (\$/cfs/month)                     | 36.1  | \$ 45,864 | \$550,372           |                    |
| WBMWD Reliability Surcharge (\$/af) DGBP Only          | 2,800   | \$ 349    | \$978,546           |                    |
| WBMWD Fixed Service Charge (\$/month) DGBP Only        | 12  | \$ 81,403 | \$976,838           |                    |
| <b>Total to West Basin MWD</b>                         |   |           | <b>\$11,968,717</b> |                    |
| <b>MSGBWM</b>  |   |           |                     |                    |
| Whittier Narrows Operable Unit Water (\$/af)           | 0   | \$ -      | \$0                 |                    |
| <b>IN-LIEU</b>   |   |           |                     |                    |
| MWD Member Agency (\$/af)                              | 0   | \$ -      | \$0                 |                    |
| WBMWD Member Agency (\$/af)                            | 0   | \$ -      | \$0                 |                    |
| <b>Total for In-Lieu Payments</b>                      |   |           | <b>\$0</b>          |                    |
| Recycled Water   | <b>LADWP</b>                                  |           |                     |                    |
|  | Recycled Water for Dominguez Barrier (\$/af)  | 5,200     | \$ 1,446            | \$7,517,406        |
|  | <b>Total to LADWP</b>                         |           |                     | <b>\$7,517,406</b> |
|  | <b>SDLAC</b>                                  |           |                     |                    |
|  | Tertiary Water - WN, SJC, Pomona (\$/af) ≤50k | 53,000    | \$ 144              | \$7,656,793        |
|  | Tertiary Water - WN, SJC, Pomona (\$/af) >50k |           |                     | \$0                |
|  | Tertiary Water for GRIP AWTF*                 | 11,000    | \$ -                | \$0                |
|  | <b>Total to SDLAC</b>                         |           |                     | <b>\$7,656,793</b> |
|  | <b>WBMWD - Recycled Water</b>                 |           |                     |                    |
|  | WBMWD Recycled Water Rate (\$/af)             | 11,520    | \$ 1,398            | \$16,108,481       |
| <b>Total to WBMWD</b>                                  |   |           | <b>\$16,108,481</b> |                    |
| <b>LBWD</b>  |   |           |                     |                    |
| Source Water for Vander Lans Plant (\$/af)*            | 3,040   | \$ -      | \$0                 |                    |
| <b>Total to LBWD</b>                                   |   |           | <b>\$0</b>          |                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>90,200</b>                                 |           | <b>\$44,885,323</b> |                    |

\* Cost of source water for ARC and Vander Lans is covered under that project's separate operations budget

## 7.2 Leo J. Vander Lans Water Treatment Facility (Program 001)

The LVL Advanced Water Treatment Facility (AWTF) provides advanced treated recycled water to the Alamitos Seawater Intrusion Barrier. Source water to the facility consists of tertiary-treated municipal wastewater provided by the LACSD Long Beach WRP (LBWRP). Source water is treated using a treatment process consisting of microfiltration (MF), reverse osmosis (RO) and ultraviolet advanced oxidation processes (UVAOP). The facility's operations permit was approved by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board and operations began in October 2005. The facility capacity was expanded in early 2015 to increase the capacity from 3 MGD to 8 MGD, with the operations permit amended by the RWQCB for the expanded facility. Expansion of the treatment facility provided several unique enhancements to optimize operations. These enhancements included (1) a third-stage RO system to increase recovery from the original 85% to 92.5%; and (2) a recovery MF system that captures the primary MF waste and treats it through a two-step treatment process consisting of dissolved air flotation and secondary MF. With these process enhancements, the facility has been expanded to achieve enhanced production while minimizing the cost associated with brine disposal.

Finished product water is delivered to the Alamitos Barrier to offset the use of imported water, thus improving the reliability and quality of water supplying the barrier. The AWTF has sufficient production capacity to meet WRD's barrier demand of approximately 4 million gallons per day (MGD) of highly purified, potable quality water. Presently the PERC Water Corporation (PERC) is responsible for the operations and maintenance of the AWTF under contract with WRD.

Beginning in early 2026, up to 2 MGD of finished product water will also be injected into the aquifer using a new onsite well. Equipment to connect the AWTF processes to the onsite well was constructed in 2025. An updated operations permit allowing recycled water injection into the well was issued by RWQCB and is effective beginning January 2026.

WRD has established a water purchase agreement with LBUD which guarantees 6,500 AFY of source water will be supplied to the AWTF. Operational costs for the coming fiscal year will include operations and maintenance, groundwater monitoring at the barrier and improvements aimed at optimizing current and future facility operations.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed revenue and expenses for the Leo J Vander Lans Water Treatment Facility:

**Table 7-2**  
**Leo J. Vander Lans Water Treatment Facility**

|                             | FY 2027             |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Revenue</b>              |                     |
| Revenue                     | \$ 3,428,250        |
| Total Revenue               | <u>3,428,250</u>    |
| <b>Expenses</b>             |                     |
| Water Purchases             | 1,566,000           |
| Professional Services       | 2,821,000           |
| R&M/Materials and Equipment | 1,458,000           |
| Other Expenses              | 1,839,000           |
| Salaries and Benefits       | 584,820             |
| Total Expenses              | <u>\$ 8,268,820</u> |

### 7.3 Robert W. Goldsworthy Desalter (Program 002)

The Robert W. Goldsworthy Desalter (Goldsworthy) was commissioned in 2002. Located within the City of Torrance, the facility utilizes RO membrane technology to desalt brackish groundwater in the Torrance area that was stranded inland of the West Coast Basin Barrier after it was placed into operation in the 1950s. The Goldsworthy Desalter was originally designed with a production capacity of 2,200 AFY of potable quality water for delivery to the City’s distribution system. The City of Torrance is responsible for operations and maintenance of the treatment plant under contract with WRD.

An additional RO system was installed in December 2017 to increase production to a total capacity of 4,800 AFY. The overlying purpose of this expansion project was to provide additional remediation of the groundwater quality within the basin for beneficial use. Project costs were funded through WRD’s Capital Improvement Program and grants. Expected costs for the coming fiscal year will include continued capital improvements as well as operation and maintenance costs associated with operations of the facility. This project is funded 100% from the Clean Water Fund.

The Goldsworthy Desalter is currently undergoing another expansion including pretreatment and additional RO capacity, as part of WRD’s ongoing efforts toward groundwater remediation of the saline plume. This expansion was identified via a Feasibility Study with the objective of striving for maximum water quality benefit to the basin and the most efficient life cycle cost. With alternative pretreatment selection and final design near complete, the project is currently in the early construction phase. This Torrance Groundwater Desalter Expansion project (TGDE) focuses on the Silverado aquifer.

Once completed, the benefits of this TGDE project will include recovering an impaired groundwater resource and putting to beneficial use the available space to store water. In addition, local users will decrease their reliance on imported water, further “drought proofing” local communities and the region. This project supports both replenishment activities and groundwater quality efforts.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed revenue and expenses for the Goldsworthy Desalter:

**Table 7-3  
Goldsworthy Desalter**

|                             | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Revenue</b>              | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Revenue                     | \$ 1,578,000           |
| Total Revenue               | <u>1,578,000</u>       |
| <b>Expenses</b>             |                        |
| Professional Services       | 396,000                |
| R&M/Materials and Equipment | 165,400                |
| Other Expenses              | 362,040                |
| Salaries and Benefits       | <u>192,527</u>         |
| Total Expenses              | <u>\$ 1,115,967</u>    |

## 7.4 Montebello Forebay Recycled Water (Program 004)

Recycled water (aka reclaimed municipal wastewater) has been successfully used for groundwater recharge by WRD since 1962. Recycled water provides a reliable source of high-quality water for surface spreading in the Montebello Forebay and for injection at the seawater intrusion barriers. In light of the recurring drought conditions in California and uncertainties about future water availability and growing cost of imported water supplies, recycled water has become increasingly vital as a replenishment source.

To ensure that the use of recycled water for groundwater recharge remains a safe and reliable practice, WRD participates in various research and monitoring activities, proactively contributes to the regulatory and legislative development processes, and engages in information exchange and dialogue with regulatory agencies and other recycled water users. The District continues to closely coordinate with the LACSD, which produces the recycled water used for surface spreading in the Montebello Forebay, on permit compliance activities, including groundwater monitoring, assessment, and reporting. Many monitoring and production wells are sampled frequently by WRD staff, and the results are reported to the regulatory agencies.

In addition to compliance monitoring and sampling associated with the spreading grounds, WRD is continuing its partnering efforts with others to enhance the investigation of the effectiveness of soil aquifer treatment (SAT) during groundwater recharge. WRD completed a research project with the Colorado School of Mines to evaluate the impact on SAT from using different blends of tertiary recycled water and fully advanced treated recycled water. The results of the study indicated that the SAT system can tolerate a wide range of blend ratios, including with only fully advanced treated recycled water with short duration, and can still demonstrate effective treatment performance. The District has also participated in research in characterizing the percolation process and quantifying the filtering and purifying properties of the underlying soil with respect to constituents of concern, such as nitrogen, total organic carbon, and chemicals of emerging concern (CECs). The District continues to be vigilant in monitoring research on the occurrence, significance, attenuation, and removal of CECs, including pharmaceuticals, endocrine disruptors, and personal care products, in accordance with the amended Recycled Water Policy.

Recycled water is also injected into the LACPW's three seawater intrusion barriers located along the Coast of Los Angeles County (Alamitos Gap, West Coast Basin, and Dominguez Gap barriers). Highly purified recycled water used for injection at the Alamitos Gap Barrier is produced at WRD's LVL AWTF. An inland injection well was installed and is currently undergoing commissioning at WRD's LVL AWTF. The recycled water for the Dominguez Gap Barrier is generated at the City of Los Angeles' Terminal Island Water Reclamation Plant/Advanced Water Purification Facility. And the recycled water for the West Coast Basin Barrier is produced at the West Basin Municipal Water District's Edward C. Little Water Recycling Facility. Extensive recycled water monitoring and regular groundwater modeling are performed to ensure that the treatment plants are operating as intended and that the injected water is making a positive contribution to the groundwater basins. All three barrier projects have increased the recycled water produced in the barrier operations and are expanding their respective infrastructures to increase delivery, with the goal of completely phasing out the potable water used at the barriers. All three barriers are currently permitted for 100% recycled water recharge.

Projects under this program help to improve the reliability and utilization of an available local resource, i.e. locally produced recycled water. This resource is used to help maintain the integrity of the basins and improve replenishment capabilities.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the Montebello Forebay:

**Table 7-4**  
**Montebello Forebay**

|                             | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Expenses</b>             | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Professional Services       | \$ 225,000             |
| R&M/Materials and Equipment | 38,700                 |
| Other Expenses              | 48,800                 |
| Salaries and Benefits       | <u>70,860</u>          |
| Total Expenses              | <u>\$ 383,360</u>      |

## 7.5 Groundwater Resources Planning (Program 005)

The Water Resources Planning Program was instituted to evaluate basin management issues and to provide a means of assessing project impacts in the District's service area. Prior to moving forward with a prospective project, an extensive evaluation is completed. Within the Water Resources Planning Program, new projects and programs are analyzed based on benefits to overall basin management. This analysis includes performing an economic evaluation to compare estimated costs with anticipated benefits. As part of this evaluation process, all capital projects are brought to the District's Technical Advisory Committee for review and recommendation. The culmination of this review and evaluation process is the adoption of the Five - Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) by the District's Board of Directors.

Conceptual projects identified in the District's Groundwater Basins Master Plan and in alignment with the goals of WRD's WIN4ALL Program will continue to be evaluated collaboratively through pumper workshops and/or focused meetings with basin stakeholders and prospective project proponents. These workshops and meetings, facilitated by District staff, will further the development of available groundwater resources to reduce the region's demand for imported water. The District will continue collaborating with other agencies, such as the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) on the Pure Water Southern California project and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) on the Pure Water Los Angeles project to potentially bring new sources of recycled water into the region.

Specifically, WRD is supporting Long Beach Utilities Department (LBUD) to complete a feasibility study to evaluate injecting advanced-treated water via existing and new wells, potentially from MWD's Pure Water Southern California Project, into the Central and West Coast Basins to achieve sustainable pumping and address saltwater intrusion. Furthermore, WRD and the West Basin Municipal Water District have committed to developing a joint feasibility study to evaluate projects for replenishment and extraction in the West Coast Basin, and potentially the Central Basin with consideration of existing facilities. Also, WRD completed a Manhattan Beach Desalter Feasibility Study which provided a fatal flaw analysis for a potential desalter in the City of Manhattan Beach. Additional investigations and steps will need to take place to confirm critical financial and operational elements, and hydrogeological investigations will need to be completed prior to moving this project forward.

In addition, WRD and LADWP worked collaboratively and completed a Master Plan which includes an inventory of all potential existing assets within the basins, high-level groundwater modeling to assess overall basin capacities, predictive groundwater modeling, identification of alternative recycled water conveyance routes and advanced treatment locations, and potential storage or augmentation program concepts. The potential storage and augmentation concepts that will be evaluated further in LADWP's Pure Water Los Angeles project. Additionally, impacts of potential augmentation concepts from LBUD was also evaluated. These concepts will be further evaluated as part of LBUD's Augmentation Study. Ultimately, all the various collaborations will result in effective groundwater management programs.

Also, District staff will continue to monitor and apply for private, state, and federal funding programs to determine applicability to the District's list of prospective projects described within the CIP. The District will continue its participation in the various Greater Los Angeles County Region's Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) stakeholder committees, the various Los Angeles County Safe Clean Water Program (SCWP) as committee members of the Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs) within the District's service area, and the Scoring Committee. The SCWP is a regional plan to address water capture and reduce reliance on imported water under Measure W, which was passed in 2018.

Projects under the Water Resources Planning Program serve to improve replenishment operations and general basin management.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the Groundwater Resources Planning Program:

**Table 7-5**  
**Groundwater Resources Planning**

|                       | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Revenue</b>        | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Revenue               | \$ 10,000              |
| Total Revenue         | <u>10,000</u>          |
| <b>Expenses</b>       |                        |
| Professional Services | 1,625,000              |
| Other Expenses        | 411,750                |
| Salaries and Benefits | 393,445                |
| Total Expenses        | <u>\$ 2,430,195</u>    |

## 7.6 Water Quality Master Plan (Program 006)

This program is an ongoing effort to address water quality issues that affect WRD projects and the pumpers' facilities. The District monitors and evaluates the impacts of proposed, pending and recently promulgated drinking water regulations and legislation. The District assesses the justification and reasoning used to draft these proposals and, if warranted, joins in coordinated efforts with other interested agencies to resolve concerns during the early phases of the regulatory and/or legislative process.

Annually, the District offers a groundwater quality workshop to water purveyors. At the workshop, industry experts and regulators provide information on the latest water quality regulations, state of the groundwater in the local basins, information on the cutting-edge technology for contaminant removal or well rehabilitation, and other topics that are of key interest to the District's water purveyors. The annual workshop also gives a comprehensive overview of the resources provided under the District's Groundwater Quality Program.

The District continually evaluates compliance with current and anticipated water quality regulations in production wells, monitoring wells, and spreading/injection waters of the basins. WRD proactively investigates any potential non-compliance situations to confirm or determine the causes of noncompliance, develops recommended courses of action, and estimates their associated costs to address the problem, and implements the best alternative to achieve compliance.

Effective January 1, 2007, the District initiated performance of the Title 22 Groundwater Monitoring Program. The program involves working with participating pumpers to comply with regulatory requirements for well water monitoring, including: (1) scheduling the collection and analysis of samples for Title 22 compliance required by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Division of Drinking Water (DDW) and special sampling such as the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule required by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); (2) coordinating the submittal of results to the SWRCB DDW; and 3) preparing the annual Consumer Confidence Reports for the pumpers. This program is available to pumpers who choose to participate and agree to reimburse the District the actual monitoring costs, including District staff time in administering the program. The District presently has 22 pumpers/participants in this program, which involves a total of 81 wells.

In recent years, new CECs have been identified nationwide as potentially impacting surface water and groundwater. CECs can be broadly defined as any synthetic or naturally occurring chemical or any microorganism that is not commonly monitored in the environment but has been recently detected in the environment. CECs such as pharmaceuticals and personal care products, perfluorinated compounds, polybrominated diphenyl ethers, and others may pose a potential threat to water resources including per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Their detection in the environment does not necessarily mean that they pose a health threat at their measured concentrations. WRD is actively monitoring surface spreading and injection activities for water quality constituents, including many CECs. In addition, the District supports research evaluating CEC removals using innovative treatment technologies and recently completed pilot testing ion exchange and granular activated carbon to treat PFAS.

WRD's service area contains a large and diverse industrial and commercial base. Consequently, many potential groundwater contamination sources exist within District boundaries. Examples of potential contamination sources include leaking underground storage tanks, petroleum pipeline leaks at refineries and petrochemical plants, and discharges from dry cleaning facilities, auto repair shops, metal works facilities, and others. Such contamination sources may pose a threat to the drinking water aquifers. Accordingly, WRD established its Groundwater Contamination Prevention Program as a key component of the Groundwater Quality Program to minimize or eliminate threats to groundwater supplies. The Groundwater Contamination Prevention Program includes several ongoing efforts:

- The CBWCB Groundwater Contamination Forum: In 2005, WRD established this data-sharing and discussion forum with key stakeholders including the EPA, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), the RWQCB, the SWRCB DDW, the United States Geological Survey (USGS), and various cities and purveyors. Stakeholders drafted and signed a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to meet regularly and share data on contaminated groundwater sites within the District. WRD acts as the meeting coordinator and data repository/distributor, helping stakeholders to characterize the extent of contamination to identify potential pathways for contaminants in shallow aquifers to reach deeper drinking water aquifers and develop optimal methods for remediating contaminated groundwater.
- With the cooperation and support of all stakeholders in the Groundwater Contamination Forum, WRD developed a list of high-priority contaminated groundwater sites located within the District. This list is a living document, subject to cleanup and closure of sites, as well as the discovery of new sites warranting further attention. Currently, the list includes 44 sites across the CBWCB. WRD works with the lead regulatory agencies for each of these sites to keep abreast of their status, offer data collection, review and recommendations as needed, and facilitate progress in site characterization and cleanup.
- In 2012, WRD formed the Los Angeles Forebay Groundwater Task Force to coordinate and align regulators and water purveyors/agencies to collaboratively address groundwater contamination in the Los Angeles Forebay that is a threat to drinking water resources. The Task Force members currently include WRD, DTSC, EPA, RWQCB, SWRCB DDW, USGS, City of Vernon, City of Los Angeles and others. WRD and DTSC are investigating and collecting data to assess the extent of regional volatile organic compounds and perchlorate plumes and find the source(s) of this contamination.
- In 2017, WRD was awarded Prop 1 grant funds to remediate a perchlorate “hot spot” located in the City of Vernon. The data generated during the groundwater remediation project will be utilized to identify responsible party(ies) and seek cost recovery through the DTSC. WRD initiated work in 2018, completed the Remedial Investigation and Remedial Design in 2021, completed the construction and installation and began the startup phase of operations of a remediation system in 2022, and began operation and maintenance operations of the remediation system in 2023.
- WRD also developed a well destruction program to assist pumpers in the proper destruction of inactive water supply wells and subsequently received a grant in 2020, to implement the program using funds available from the SWRCB (Proposition 1). The goal of the program is to properly destroy inactive water supply wells; thereby eliminating the potential for contaminants to migrate into deeper aquifers and to protect other nearby water supply wells in the Central Basin. Planning activities began in 2020 and WRD completed the destruction of five inactive water supply wells in late 2022.

WRD continues to do work involving additional investigations at well sites known to have contaminated water, continued monitoring of water quality regulations and proposals affecting production and replenishment operations, further characterization of contaminant migration into the deeper aquifers, and monitoring and expediting cleanup activities at contaminated sites.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed revenue and expenses for the Water Quality Master Plan:

**Table 7-6**  
**Water Quality Master Plan**

|                             | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Revenue</b>              | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Revenue                     | \$ 450,000             |
| Total Revenue               | <u>450,000</u>         |
| <br>                        |                        |
| <b>Expenses</b>             |                        |
| Professional Services       | 727,000                |
| R&M/Materials and Equipment | 34,900                 |
| Other Expenses              | 6,600                  |
| Salaries and Benefits       | 220,013                |
| Total Expenses              | <u>\$ 988,513</u>      |

## 7.7 Geographic Information System (Program 010)

The District maintains an extensive in-house database and GIS. The database includes water level and water quality data for WRD’s service area with information drawn not only from the District’s Regional Groundwater Monitoring Program and permit compliance monitoring, but also from water quality data obtained from the DDW. The system requires continuous update and maintenance but serves as a powerful tool for understanding basin characteristics and overall basin health.

The GIS is used to provide better planning and basin management. It is used to organize and store an extensive database of spatial information, including well locations. The GIS allows the spatial data to relate to the water level data, water quality information, well construction data, production data, aquifer locations, and computer model files which are stored in a regularly updated SQL database, assuring accurate and timely data output. In the coming year, this information will be further integrated with readily available data from other state and federal agencies, as well as other District departments. Staff use the system daily for project support and database management. Specific information is available upon request to any District pumper or stakeholder and can be delivered through the preparation of maps, tables, reports, or in other compatible formats. Additionally, the District has made its web-based Interactive Well Search tool available to the public. This web site provides these users with limited access to WRD’s water quality and production database. The site was upgraded to increase performance, functionality and improve access in 2025.

District staff will continue to streamline and refine the existing data management system and ensure its compatibility with the District’s asset management system, which is currently under development. As part of the streamlining of the data, staff will work closely with other District departments to evaluate and implement updates to the District’s existing system to facilitate the seamless transfer of data and access to that data. Additionally, District staff will continue the development of applications to more efficiently manage and report groundwater production information. Continued use, upkeep, and maintenance of the GIS are planned for the coming year. The use of the system supports both replenishment activities and groundwater quality efforts.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the Geographic Information Systems:

**Table 7-7**  
**Geographic Information Systems**

|                       | <b>FY 2027</b>           |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Expenses</b>       | <b>Proposed Budget</b>   |
| Professional Services | \$ 200,000               |
| Other Expenses        | 78,300                   |
| Salaries and Benefits | <u>227,288</u>           |
| Total Expenses        | <u><u>\$ 505,588</u></u> |

## 7.8 Groundwater Monitoring (Program 011)

WRD has been monitoring groundwater quality and water levels in the CBWCB for more than 60 years. The Regional Groundwater Monitoring Program (RGWMP) encompasses the collection of information used for groundwater basin management including groundwater level data and water quality data. The RGWMP utilizes a network of 373 WRD and USGS-installed monitoring wells at 67 locations throughout the District, supplemented by data from groundwater production wells operated by the water purveyors. The information generated by this program is stored in the District's GIS and provides the basis to better understand the dynamic groundwater system in the CBWCB. WRD hydrogeologists and engineers provide the in-house capability to collect, analyze and report on new and historical groundwater data.

Water quality samples from the monitoring wells are collected once or twice a year and analyzed for numerous common constituents such as general minerals, volatile organic compounds, metals, and general physical properties, as well as "special study constituents" such as 1,2,3-trichloropropane, pharmaceuticals and personal care products, explosives such as HMX, RDX, and TNT, and other chemicals of emerging concern on a case-by-case basis (such as PFAS). Water levels are measured in most monitoring wells with automatic data loggers every six hours, while water levels in all monitoring wells are manually measured by field staff a minimum of four times per year. On an annual basis, staff prepares the Regional Groundwater Monitoring Report that documents groundwater level and groundwater quality conditions each water year throughout the District. This report is distributed to the WRD stakeholders and is also available on the District's website. The RGWMP also generates the data required for the District's Salt and Nutrient Management Plan. In 2011, the National Groundwater Association presented WRD with the "2011 Groundwater Protection Project Award" in recognition of the RGWMP.

WRD is also the designated groundwater monitoring entity for the CBWCB under the State of California's California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (CASGEM) program. WRD collects water level data from 28 of its nested monitoring wells and uploads it to the State's CASGEM website on a regular basis for seasonal and long-term water level trend tracking with data accessible to the public at <https://casgem.water.ca.gov/>.

In 2018, WRD was awarded a grant for various groundwater monitoring related activities (including the installation of a regional groundwater monitoring well (Montebello #2)) associated with the National Groundwater Monitoring Network (NGWMN) administered by the USGS. The overall goal of the program is to develop a nationwide, long-term groundwater monitoring framework that could provide information necessary for the planning, management, and development of groundwater resources to meet current and future water needs, and ecosystem requirements with a primary focus on the nation’s principal aquifers as defined by the USGS. WRD has a very extensive groundwater monitoring network within one of the most heavily utilized aquifers in California. The data generated through the RGWMP provides beneficial information for the nationwide evaluation of groundwater resources and help fill a key data gap in the current NGWMN.

Ongoing work by WRD involves continuous field activities including quarterly, semi-annual, and annual data collection, well and equipment maintenance, and annual reporting activities. Work associated with the RGWMP also supports activities relating to both replenishment and water quality projects.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the Groundwater Monitoring Program:

**Table 7-8  
Groundwater Monitoring Program**

|                             | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Expenses</b>             | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Professional Services       | \$ 648,000             |
| R&M/Materials and Equipment | 119,400                |
| Other Expenses              | 147,500                |
| Salaries and Benefits       | 663,556                |
| Total Expenses              | <u>\$ 1,578,456</u>    |

## **7.9 Safe Drinking Water (Program 012)**

WRD’s Safe Drinking Water Program (SDWP) has operated since 1991 and is intended to promote the cleanup of groundwater resources at specific well locations. Through the installation of wellhead treatment facilities at existing production wells, the program removes contaminants from the underground supply and makes the extracted water available for potable use. Projects implemented through this program are accomplished in collaboration with well owners.

One component of the program focuses on the removal of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and offers financial assistance for the design, equipment, and installation at the selected treatment facility. Another component offers 10-year, zero-interest loans for secondary constituents of concern that affect a specific production well. The capital costs of wellhead treatment facilities range from \$1,000,000 to over \$5,000,000. Due to financial constraints, the initial cost is generally prohibitive to most pumpers. Financial assistance through the District’s SDWP makes project implementation much more feasible.

There are several projects in various stages of implementation. In 2026, two projects will be coming online and two additional projects are anticipated to begin construction. A total of 19 facilities have been completed and are online and one facility has successfully completed removal of the contamination and no longer needs to treat. The District's Program guidelines place a greater priority on projects involving VOC contamination or other anthropogenic (man-made) constituents, now classified as Priority A Projects. Treatment projects for naturally occurring constituents are classified as Priority B Projects and funded as a secondary priority, on a case-by-case basis and only if program monies are still available during the fiscal year. While such projects are of interest to WRD, availability of funding for them will not be determined until after the budget process is completed.

The District's Safe Drinking Water Program includes a revolving fund plan for Priority B Projects and implementation of a revitalization plan to maximize program participation. Specifically, the Disadvantage Communities (DAC) Program provides assistance to water systems in disadvantaged areas with applying for State funding. Through the District's program, five participants have received \$5.3 million in State funding for their projects. Staff continue to assist other participants interested in seeking funding.

Projects under the SDWP involve the treatment of contaminated groundwater for subsequent beneficial use. This water quality improvement assists in meeting the District's groundwater cleanup objectives.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the Safe Drinking Water Program:

**Table 7-9**  
**Safe Drinking Water Program**

|                       | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Revenue</b>        | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Revenue               | \$ 1,805,250           |
| Total Revenue         | 1,805,250              |
| <br>                  |                        |
| <b>Expenses</b>       |                        |
| Professional Services | 2,210,250              |
| Other Expenses        | 228,400                |
| Salaries and Benefits | 89,350                 |
| Total Expenses        | <u>\$ 2,528,000</u>    |

## **7.10 Dominguez Gap Barrier Recycled Water Injection (Program 018)**

This Project involves the delivery of recycled water from the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works - Bureau of Sanitation (LASAN) Terminal Island Water Reclamation Plant/Advanced Water Purification Facility (AWPF) to the DGBP. Delivery of recycled water to the barrier commenced in February 2006.

Prior to injection at the barrier, the recycled water produced at the AWPf undergoes advanced treatment processes including microfiltration, reverse osmosis, and chlorination. The DGBP was originally permitted by RWQCB in conjunction with DDW for up to 5 MGD of recycled water and 50% recycled water contribution (meaning recycled water may not exceed 50% of the total injected volume with the remainder consisting of potable water). In 2016, the permit was revised to allow up to 12 MGD of 100% recycled water to the DGBP. Water quality requirements, including turbidity and modified fouling index, must also be satisfied to minimize potential fouling of DGBP injection wells owned and operated by the LACPW.

While LASAN is responsible for the treatment and the water quality monitoring of the recycled water at the AWPf and LADWP for the delivery of the recycled water to the DGBP, WRD performs the groundwater monitoring and modeling aspects for compliance purposes at the request of LASAN and LADWP. WRD measures and tracks groundwater levels and quality conditions, evaluates potential impact of recycled water on groundwater, and identifies potential problems at monitoring wells before recycled water arrives at any downgradient drinking water wells. In addition, WRD performed an extensive tracer study from the start of recycled water injection in February 2006 through fall 2010 to determine the extent of travel and movement of the recycled water through the aquifers. The tracer study confirmed that after injection, adequate mixing and further blending of recycled water with diluent water occurs in the ground and that groundwater samples collected were representative of the recycled water blend. In December 2018, WRD entered into a 30-year recycled water purchase agreement with LADWP to deliver 7.5 mgd of advanced treated to the DGBP with the ability to expand up to 9.5 mgd to meet other needs of the District.

Recycled water use at the seawater intrusion barriers in Los Angeles County improves the reliability of a supply in continuous demand. Traditionally, water purchases for the barriers have been viewed as a replenishment function.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the Dominguez Gap Barrier Recycled Water Injection:

**Table 7-10  
Dominguez Gap Barrier Recycled Water Injection Program**

|                             | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Revenue</b>              | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Revenue                     | \$ 2,827,130           |
| Total Revenue               | <u>2,827,130</u>       |
| <br><b>Expenses</b>         |                        |
| Professional Services       | 145,000                |
| R&M/Materials and Equipment | 27,700                 |
| Other Expenses              | 2,715,300              |
| Salaries and Benefits       | 234,427                |
| Total Expenses              | <u>\$ 3,122,427</u>    |

## 7.11 Replenishment Operations (Program 023)

WRD actively monitors the operation and maintenance practices at the LACPW-owned and operated spreading grounds and seawater barriers within the District. Optimizing replenishment opportunities is fundamentally important to WRD, in part because imported and recycled water deliveries directly affect the District's annual budget. Consequently, the District seeks to ensure that the conservation of stormwater is maximized, and that imported and recycled water replenishment is optimized.

Due to the high cost and susceptibility of imported water to drought and environmental concerns, WRD is continuing its Water Independence Now (WIN) initiative to eventually become independent from imported water for groundwater recharge at both the spreading grounds and the three seawater intrusion barriers. By maximizing the use of recycled water and stormwater, the amount of imported water needed can eventually be reduced or eliminated, thereby providing the groundwater basins with full replenishment needs through locally derived water.

WRD coordinates regular meetings with LACPW, MWD, LACSD, and other water interests to discuss replenishment water availability, spreading grounds operations, barrier operations, scheduling of replenishment deliveries, seawater barrier improvements, upcoming maintenance activities, and facility outages or shutdowns. The District tracks groundwater levels in the Montebello Forebay weekly to assess general basin conditions and determine the level of artificial replenishment needed. WRD also monitors the amount of recycled water used at the spreading grounds and seawater barriers to maximize use while complying with pertinent regulatory limits. While improvements undertaken in the past by LACPW/WRD (e.g., expansion of Whittier Narrows Conservation Pool, installation of rubber dams on San Gabriel River, Interconnection Pipeline, and recycled water diversion structures) have considerably increased the stormwater portion of WRD's supply portfolio, the potential for further increasing the use of stormwater for groundwater augmentation remains significant, and WRD will work to enhance storm water capture and replenishment.

The District plans to continue working with the LACPW on several design projects for the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel coastal spreading grounds with the goal of increasing the volume of storm water and recycled water conserved. The District is continually looking for opportunities to work with the LACPW on improvement projects at the recharge facilities. Several potential projects have been identified and are being further evaluated to determine if they should be pursued. This fiscal year the District plans to continue working with the LACPW to maximize the use of the turnout structures and increase the volume of recycled water conserved as well as using of the Montebello Forebay Spreading Grounds Operation Model to evaluate and prioritize future improvement projects. The District will also install new groundwater monitoring wells in the Montebello Forebay to maintain regulatory compliance with the new recycled water use requirements.

The District plans to continue partnering with the LACPW to co-fund enhancements to the Interconnection Pipeline and associated pump station at the Montebello Forebay Spreading Grounds.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the Replenishment Operations:

**Table 7-11**  
**Replenishment Operations**

| <b>Expenses</b>             | <b>FY 2027</b>         |                |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
|                             | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |                |
| Professional Services       | \$                     | 75,000         |
| R&M/Materials and Equipment |                        | 27,700         |
| Other Expenses              |                        | 4,000          |
| Salaries and Benefits       |                        | 216,344        |
| Total Expenses              | \$                     | <u>323,044</u> |

## 7.12 Hydrogeology Program (Program 025)

This program accounts for the projects and programs related to hydrogeologic investigations of the District and surrounding areas to ensure safe and reliable groundwater. Work performed under this program includes the preparation of the annual Engineering Survey and Report, which incorporates the calculation and determination of annual overdraft, accumulated overdraft, changes in storage, pumping amounts, and replenishment water availability into a document to help the District assess its replenishment needs and costs in the ensuing year. Extensive amounts of data are compiled and analyzed by staff to determine these values. Maps are created showing water levels in the basins and production patterns and amounts.

An ongoing effort at the District to better characterize the hydrogeologic conditions across the Central and West Coast Basins is called the "Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model". This long-term project being performed in cooperation with the USGS involves compiling and interpreting the extensive amounts of data generated during drilling and logging of the WRD/USGS monitoring wells and collected from historical information for production wells and oil wells within the District. A new geologic framework model based on sequence stratigraphy was developed and incorporated into an updated groundwater model, which was recently published by the USGS (2022). The model was subsequently updated with additional data and converted into a Modflow 6 platform in 2023. These upgrades will lead to a much-improved groundwater modeling simulator for the District's future management efforts. This model is a significant analytical tool utilized by WRD to determine basin benefits and impacts of changes proposed in the management of the Central Basin and West Coast Basin.

Hydrogeologic analysis is also needed for projects associated with groundwater quality concerns and specific cleanup projects. Staff work may include investigative surveys, data research, and oversight of specific project studies. Such efforts are used to relate water quality concerns with potential impact to basin resources. An example of this type of staff work is the District's Well Profiling Program. The District assists pumpers in evaluating drinking water supply well contamination. Services may include existing data collection and review and field tasks such as spinner logging and depth-discrete sampling. WRD's evaluation helps pumpers to determine the best course of action, e.g., sealing off a particular screened interval of a well, wellhead treatment, or well destruction.

Salt / Nutrient Management Plans are a State requirement for all groundwater basins throughout California. The Plans are required as part of the Recycled Water Policy issued by the SWRCB and effective as of May 14, 2009. As stated in the Policy, its purpose is to “establish uniform requirements for recycled water use and to develop sustainable water supplies throughout the state”. The SWRCB therefore “supports and encourages every region...to develop a Salt / Nutrient Management Plan by 2014”. WRD along with other stakeholders completed the SNMP in 2014 and the Regional Water Quality Control Board adopted a Basin Plan Amendment to incorporate the SNMP in February 2015. Follow up work will be to monitor the salt and nutrient concentrations in the District over time and compare results to the model predictions in the SNMP. In September 2024, a data assessment per the updated recycled water policy was requested by the RWQCB. WRD is currently working with several basin stakeholders to jointly fund the data assessment with analysis commencing in 2026 and report submittal anticipated in 2027.

Modeling of groundwater flow and movement of injected recycled water at the Alamitos and Dominguez Gap seawater barriers are also included in this program. These efforts are required under permits for the recycled water injection.

In 2019, WRD replaced Central Basin MWD, City of Long Beach, and City of Compton, as the Lower Area Plaintiff under the Long Beach Judgment. In 1959, the Long Beach Board of Water Commissioners filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles County Superior Court against numerous parties in the San Gabriel Basin to determine the rights of the various parties to the water flow from the San Gabriel River. Central Basin MWD and the City of Compton joined the case in Long Beach's support shortly thereafter. The WRD was not yet formed when the case was filed and therefore not part of the original lawsuit. After several years of court proceedings and negotiations, judgment was entered in 1965, allocating the San Gabriel River's flow between the Upper Area and the Lower Area, with Whittier Narrows established as the dividing line between the Upper and Lower Areas. The Judgment, commonly referred to as the "Long Beach Judgment", entitles the Lower Area to receive a long-term average of 98,415 acre-feet per year of water from the San Gabriel River system, which can be adjusted from time to time based on hydrology.

Because WRD is the groundwater manager for the Lower Area and benefits from the water provided under the Judgment, the three plaintiffs in 2018 agreed that it was more appropriate for WRD to replace Central Basin MWD, Long Beach and Compton as the sole plaintiff to represent the Lower Area and take on the Lower Area's responsibilities under the Judgment. WRD agreed and submitted the appropriate paperwork to the Court to make the switch official in 2019.

The Hydrogeology Program addresses both groundwater replenishment objectives and groundwater quality matters.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the Hydrogeology Program:

**Table 7-12  
Hydrogeology Program**

| <b>Expenses</b>             | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
|                             | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Professional Services       | \$ 477,500             |
| R&M/Materials and Equipment | 18,900                 |
| Other Expenses              | 65,000                 |
| Salaries and Benefits       | 544,642                |
| Total Expenses              | <u>\$ 1,106,042</u>    |

### **7.13 Facility Maintenance (Program 032)**

The Facility Maintenance Program is responsible for all maintenance and repairs at the District's office facilities and fleet vehicles. Office facilities include WRD headquarters, Fleet Annex and Albert Robles Center.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the Facility Maintenance Program:

**Table 7-13  
Facility Maintenance**

| <b>Expenses</b>             | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
|                             | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Professional Services       | \$ 368,500             |
| R&M/Materials and Equipment | 454,627                |
| Other Expenses              | 830,910                |
| Salaries and Benefits       | 288,226                |
| Total Expenses              | <u>\$ 1,942,263</u>    |

### **7.14 Robert Whitaker Treatment Facility (Program 033)**

After completion of RWTF construction, WRD received final approval from the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board in January 2020 to discharge product water to the Montebello Forebay Spreading Grounds. RWTF offsets the current use of imported water at the spreading grounds by providing up to 10,000 AFY of advanced treated recycled water for groundwater recharge. Due to the high quality of the AWTF effluent, an additional 11,000 AFY of tertiary recycled water can also be used, offsetting the need for imported water at the spreading grounds. The primary goals of RWTF are to:

- Provide a sustainable and reliable supply for replenishing the Basins;
- Protect and improve groundwater quality;
- Minimize the environmental/energy footprint;
- Comply with pertinent regulatory requirements employing an institutionally feasible approach; and
- Minimize cost to agencies using groundwater.

Using tertiary recycled water supplied by the LACSD’s San Jose Creek Water Reclamation Plant, the RWTF produces at least 10,000 AFY of highly treated recycled water for groundwater recharge in the Montebello Forebay. Specifically, the advanced treated water will be diverted to both the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo spreading basins via two (2) turnout/diversion structures that were constructed by WRD in 2016.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed revenues and expenses for the RWTF

**Table 7-14**  
**Robert Whitaker Treatment Facility**

|                             | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Revenue</b>              | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Revenue                     | \$ 585,000             |
| Total Revenue               | <u>585,000</u>         |
| <br><b>Expenses</b>         |                        |
| Water Purchases             | 1,190,000              |
| Professional Services       | 2,692,500              |
| R&M/Materials and Equipment | 1,602,500              |
| Other Expenses              | 2,710,650              |
| Salaries and Benefits       | 517,728                |
| Total Expenses              | <u>\$ 8,713,378</u>    |

### **7.15 Engineering Program (Program 038, ADM 1030, 1060, 1090, 1100)**

The Engineering Department provides technical planning, engineering, program management, environmental review, construction management, and hands-on support on capital improvement projects ranging from concept development through planning, engineering design, entitlement, project management, and construction inspections. The Engineering Department is also responsible for developing, updating, and managing the five-year CIP and its related projects. The Engineering Department prepares and/or oversees the preparation of plans, specifications, and engineer’s estimates of probable construction costs, and/or prepares requests for interest/proposals/qualifications for professional engineering consultation and construction management services depending on the size and specific needs of the project.

The Engineering Department receives and reviews public bids and provides recommendations to various committees and the Board of Directors to award contracts. The Engineering Department also applies, secures, and administers/manages grants from various, Federal, State, and Local organizations to supplement funds allocated by WRD.

The Engineering Department provides and oversees project planning and environmental review/entitlement services for its CIP projects. The Engineering Department also monitors construction work in progress, reviews/approves progress pay estimates, and provides quality assurance/quality control oversight services on approved projects to ensure compliance with Board goals and objectives.

The Engineering Program is intended to provide a mechanism for engineering staff to plan and further develop alternatives for potential capital improvement projects. Not all CIP project concepts develop into multi-year capital improvement program projects, and more often than not require many months of advanced planning and concept development before being capitalized.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the Engineering Program:

**Table 7-15  
Engineering Program**

| <b>Expenses</b>             | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
|                             | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Professional Services       | \$ 12,000              |
| R&M/Materials and Equipment | 1,000                  |
| Other Expenses              | 66,776                 |
| Salaries and Benefits       | 1,094,689              |
| Total Expenses              | <u>\$ 1,174,465</u>    |

## **7.16 Well Construction and Well Rehabilitation Loan Program (Program 046)**

The Well Construction and Rehabilitation Loan Program (Program) assists groundwater producers to maintain or increase their groundwater pumping capabilities. This Program improves the producers' ability to utilize their full groundwater extraction rights and reduce their need for imported water. The Program, modeled after the Safe Drinking Water Program, provides 10-year, zero percent interest loans, and expert assistance with the design, construction, and implementation of new production wells and projects to rehabilitate existing wells. There is a significant economic benefit to Program recipients; specifically, when compared to the cost of imported water, each recipient has the potential to save on average \$904 per acre-foot of water at today's prices.

To be eligible, the applicant must be an entity within the District’s service area, must be a Party to the Central Basin Third Amended Judgment or the West Coast Basin Amended Judgment, and must demonstrate that the new well construction or well rehabilitation project will maintain or increase their annual extractions. Currently, there are two Program recipients, each receiving \$1.5 million loans. Both projects are completed and the Program recipients are repaying their respective loans. A few additional parties have expressed interest in Program loans. The overall goal of the Program is to support the District’s goals of fully maximizing adjudicated pumping rights and to provide assistance to underserved communities.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the Well Construction and Rehabilitation Program:

**Table 7-16**  
**Well Construction and Rehabilitation Program**

| <b>Expenses</b>       | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
|                       | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Salaries and Benefits | \$ 8,165               |
| Total Expenses        | <u>\$ 8,165</u>        |

### **7.17 PFAS Remediation Program (Program 048)**

PFAS are a group of man-made chemicals, which include perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS), and perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS), that have been manufactured and used in a variety of industries around the globe and the region since the 1940s. The State Water Resources Control Board's Division of Drinking Water (DDW) established Response Levels (RLs) of 10 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOA, 40 ppt for PFOS, and 5,000 ppt for PFBS. Assembly Bill-756, codified as Health and Safety Code Section 116378 effective January 1, 2020, requires that community water systems, including groundwater pumpers, either notify their customers of PFAS detections exceeding RLs or remove from service drinking water sources with PFAS exceeding RLs. In response, the WRD Board of Directors established the PFAS Remediation Program on August 20, 2020, to provide either grants for water producers (e.g., groundwater pumpers) to install their own treatment systems (referred to as Funding Support Projects), or for WRD to design and construct treatment systems for the pumpers (referred to as Turnkey Projects) to remediate impacted production wells.

With a total budget of \$61M, funding for this program is derived from 2018 Bond issuance, various reserve funds, and future borrowing.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the PFAS Remediation Program:

**Table 7-17**  
**PFAS Remediation Program**

| <b>Expenses</b>       | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
|                       | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Professional Services | \$ 342,500             |
| Other Expenses        | 8,759,561              |
| Salaries and Benefits | 134,672                |
| Total Expenses        | <u>\$ 9,236,733</u>    |

### **7.18 Perchlorate Remediation in the Los Angeles Forebay (Program 049)**

WRD received grant funding to build a groundwater remediation system to address groundwater contamination located in a deep aquifer system within the Los Angeles Forebay. In 2023, the groundwater remediation system began treating some of the highest perchlorate concentrations in the state along with other comingled constituents such as 1,4-Dioxane and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). WRD is also working with regulatory agencies to identify potentially responsible parties (PRPs). In 2024, investigation orders were issued to two sites by the RWQCB.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the Perchlorate Remediation in the Los Angeles Forebay:

**Table 7-18**  
**Perchlorate Remediation in the Los Angeles Forebay**

| <b>Expenses</b>             | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
|                             | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Professional Services       | \$ 783,000             |
| R&M/Materials and Equipment | 322,500                |
| Other Expenses              | 211,625                |
| Salaries and Benefits       | 128,570                |
| Total Expenses              | <u>\$ 1,445,695</u>    |

## 7.19 Water Education (Program EAE)

Water Education and Outreach activities aim to provide direct informative communication between WRD and a broad range of constituents including:

- Groundwater purveyors (pumpers)
- Elected officials and policymakers
- Federal and state regulators
- Members of the public
- Children and Youth (schools)
- Members of the water industry
- News reporters, bloggers, other media.

Water Education and Outreach activities engage constituents on a variety of important policy and project development areas pertaining to groundwater management and practices, as well as recycled water production and use. These activities include tours; participation in community events and forums; development of printed and digital educational materials; involvement in industry and organizational conferences; and promotion of education through annual public events, such as the WRD Groundwater Festival.

These avenues of communication enable WRD to successfully advance discussions around critical policies and programs that promote public interest in, and awareness of, water. The district also maintains a robust government affairs program ensuring that our local legislators continue to advocate for crucial funding needed to maintain our region’s water infrastructure and build projects that can secure our water future.

WRD provides these educational opportunities with attention focused on the Water Independence Now (WIN) Program and the WIN 4 ALL Program through presentations at conferences, conventions, and regional community events. These programs encapsulate WRD’s core projects that are helping the region by creating a completely sustainable local source of water for groundwater replenishment.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the Water Education Program:

**Table 7-19  
Water Education**

| <b>Expenses</b>             | <b>FY 2027<br/>Proposed Budget</b> |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Professional Services       | \$ 150,000                         |
| R&M/Materials and Equipment | 51,000                             |
| Other Expenses              | 574,500                            |
| Salaries and Benefits       | 299,159                            |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>       | <b>\$ 1,074,659</b>                |

## 7.20 Administration (Programs ADM 1000, 1020, 1040, GMR 1005)

Administration generally consists of services that are necessary to support the day-to-day functions, projects, and programs of the District. Such services include policy development (Board of Directors), policy implementation and oversight (General Manager), finances, accounting and human resources.

The Board of Directors is the policy-making body of the District. The General Manager is responsible for implementing the policies of the Board, supervising the staff and managing the daily activities of the District. The finances, accounting, and human resources functions are general administrative services that support the functions of the District. Additionally, each year the District sets aside funds to partially fulfill its long-term employee retirement pension obligation, as recommended by Governmental Accounting Standards Board (“GASB”) Statement 45. This annual set-aside to meet retirement fund obligations reduces the District’s long-term unfunded liability and corresponding fiscal impacts.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the WRD Administration:

**Table 7-20**  
**Administration**

|                             | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Expenses</b>             | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Professional Services       | \$ 812,500             |
| R&M/Materials and Equipment | 23,500                 |
| Other Expenses              | 753,264                |
| Salaries and Benefits       | <u>3,367,051</u>       |
| Total Expenses              | <u>\$ 4,956,315</u>    |

## 7.21 Board of Directors (DIR, D09, D11, D13, D14, D15)

The District’s mission statement is interpreted and directed by the District’s policymaking and governing body, the Board of Directors, which represents the highest authority within the management structure of the District. The five-member Board is elected by the voting public to serve four-year terms. Stated goals and objectives are accomplished through a committee structure that reports to the Board of Directors. Committees may delegate some of its authority to staff in the interest of efficiency, stability, and prudent management for completion of specific tasks.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the Board of Directors:

**Table 7-21**  
**Board of Directors**

|                       | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Expenses</b>       | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Other Expenses        | \$ 135,060             |
| Salaries and Benefits | 441,974                |
| Total Expenses        | <u>\$ 577,034</u>      |

## 7.22 Water Conservation (Program EAC)

Water Conservation outreach activities provide tangible and proven strategies to successfully engage constituents, pumpers, and cities to continue to conserve water throughout the service area. Even with a record-breaking year for stormwater capture, the public is eager to keep up with conservation because they know the next drought is around the corner.

The WRD conservation program has maintained its outreach to proactively educate the public about making conservation a way of life. Outreach is also geared towards educating the public about WRD's innovative planning to address future droughts in the face of climate change. Programs are aimed at residents of all ages and available in multiple languages in order to maintain accessibility.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for the Water Conservation Program:

**Table 7-22**  
**Water Conservation**

| <b>Expenses</b>       | <b>FY 2027</b>         |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
|                       | <b>Proposed Budget</b> |
| Professional Services | \$ 76,500              |
| Other Expenses        | 476,500                |
| Salaries and Benefits | 272,306                |
| Total Expenses        | <u>\$ 825,306</u>      |

## 7.23 Data Technology Services (ADM 1080)

As the technological backbone of the Water Replenishment District, DTS oversees a broad array of responsibilities and is tasked with implementing and managing systems to optimize the District's operational efficiency, data integrity, and cybersecurity. DTS is dedicated to advancing technological innovation and empowering the District to meet its mission and achieve excellence, paving the way for a future marked by efficiency, transparency, and progress. By taking a multi-faceted approach to technology management, DTS is positioned to meet the current and future needs of the District in a rapidly evolving digital environment.

DTS is home to a diverse set of responsibilities and products that include traditional information technology (IT) infrastructure and extend into operational technology (OT), data management, and web application development, making it central to both day-to-day functions and long-term strategy. Through the incorporation of specialized functions like geographic information systems (GIS) and asset management, DTS ensures comprehensive seamless operation and future-proofing, harnessing the power of the District's data to drive innovation and strategic decision-making. The department plays a critical role in the District's mission, aligning its core functions with a commitment to modernizing administrative processes and enhancing service delivery through technological solutions.

Shown below is a summary of the proposed expenses for Data Technology Services:

**Table 7-23**  
**Data Technology Services**

| <b>Expenses</b>             | <b>FY 2027<br/>Proposed Budget</b> |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Professional Services       | \$ 300,000                         |
| R&M/Materials and Equipment | 80,000                             |
| Other Expenses              | 533,940                            |
| Salaries and Benefits       | 887,046                            |
| Total Expenses              | <u>\$ 1,800,986</u>                |

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## 8.0 UNIFORM RATE

Groundwater occurring in and flowing through the WRD service area, although originating from differing regions, is interrelated. Actions in one basin affect available groundwater in the other. The groundwater resources constitute a common underground pool that all groundwater pumpers in the Basins share. The service that WRD provides is to maintain the integrity of the Basins as a water resource of sufficient quantity and quality for purposes of beneficial use. It is equitable that the costs of replenishing and maintaining this resource as a safe source of water should be shared by all pumpers in proportion to the amount of water pumped.

### 8.1 Reasons for a Uniform Rate

The use of a uniform rate for each acre-foot of water pumped is supported by the following reasons, among others:

- It was decided long ago that it was necessary to manage the Basins as a single system, as these important, interconnected groundwater resources were in jeopardy of being rendered unavailable to pumpers due to overdraft and saltwater intrusion. The original plan for replenishment and barrier protection has been implemented over several decades, and remains the basis for protecting the system from being destroyed, in which case economic pumping might be lost altogether. All pumpers place a stress on the system that is proportional to the amount of water withdrawn. The District imposes a uniform rate on all pumpers in light of that basic reality.
- WRD replenishment activities benefit all groundwater pumpers in both basins directly or indirectly. If the system is preserved, everyone benefits. If the system is destroyed, everyone loses. The only cognizable “service area” is the overall system itself. Max Bookman, who was arguably the most knowledgeable expert on the geology of the two groundwater basins, said it succinctly: “Separate replenishment programs for the Central Basin and West Basin, wherein each basin pays their individual costs, is not practical because of the interdependence of the common water supply of the two areas and because the two basins must be conjunctively operated in order to obtain the maximum benefits of the groundwater supply.” (Bookman and Edmonston, 1963).
- In the mid-1950s, groundwater producers in the Central and West Coast Basins considered forming separate replenishment districts. They chose to form one district overlying both basins, with a replenishment district operating as a single unit with a single, uniform RA. They did so for a variety of policy, economic and scientific reasons, which are still applicable to today’s circumstances.

- The Basins, although separately adjudicated, are subbasins to the larger Coastal Plain of Los Angeles Groundwater Basin, according to the California Department of Water Resources (CDWR, 2003). The subbasins are created “for the purpose of collecting and analyzing data, managing water resources, and managing adjudicated basins.” CDWR defines subbasins as a smaller unit than a groundwater basin that are divided using geologic and hydrogeologic barriers or, more commonly, institutional boundaries. The name “subbasin” connotes that the two are not separately isolated basins but instead are interconnected.
- The adjudicated Basins share a common boundary at the Newport-Inglewood Uplift, which is an approximate linear geologic structural feature of discontinuous small hills and broken fault segments that is roughly 40 miles long and one mile wide. Although the Uplift has been shown to be a partial barrier to groundwater flow, stronger in some areas than others, there is uniform agreement amongst the references that significant quantities of groundwater move through aquifers across the Uplift. Although groundwater flow is typically from the Central Basin across the Uplift into the West Coast Basin, there can be direction reversals based on hydraulic gradients and groundwater can flow from the West Coast Basin into the Central Basin (Garcia, 1995).
- The West Coast Basin historically and presently relies on groundwater underflow across the Newport Inglewood Uplift for a significant portion of its natural water supply. The amount of underflow varies from year to year based on the hydraulic gradient present on opposite sides of the Uplift. The CDWR (2003) states that increased pumping in the Central Basin caused reduced underflow to the West Coast Basin. This further demonstrates the connectivity and reliance of the two groundwater basins on each other. As stated by a water professional in the area: “Replenishment water purchased by WRD, for example, is spread in the Montebello Spreading Grounds and in the bed of the San Gabriel River at the eastern end of the Central Basin. The spread water percolates or sinks into the ground, and flows in a general direction from the Central Basin aquifers into the West Coast Basin aquifers, so that groundwater elevations in both basins are maintained.” (Declaration of Mr. Desi Alvarez, Director of Public Works for the City of Downey, 2001).
- An analogy can be given to blowing up a beach ball – the WRD has four valves to “blow” replenishment water into the two basins to “inflate” the aquifers for the benefit of all – not just those who are closest to the valves. Geographic locations to provide artificial replenishment water to the WRD Service Area are very limited. The facilities available must be used to replenish the groundwater for everyone’s use, not just the groundwater pumpers closest to the facilities. Only facilities owned and operated by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, including the Montebello Forebay Spreading Grounds and Alamitos Seawater Barrier in the Central Basin, and the West Coast Basin Barrier Project and the Dominguez Gap Barrier in the West Coast Basin, are available to WRD for direct delivery of replenishment water.

- In-lieu replenishment is another tool that WRD has used in the past to manage aquifer recharge, and is another reason for a single service area. In-lieu replenishment can potentially occur anywhere within the service area that is difficult to replenish by other means. It has been used successfully in both basins in the past including the Los Angeles Forebay, the lower Central Basin Pressure area, and the West Coast Basin. When pumping of a well is turned off by the In-lieu program, groundwater levels rebound at the well and near the well, and the unpumped groundwater remains in the aquifers for others to use or to move downgradient to other potential users further away.
- There are no complete physical barriers to groundwater flowing from one basin to the other in WRD's Service Area. There are partial barriers to groundwater flow in some places, such as certain segments of the Newport-Inglewood Uplift, the suspected Charnock Fault or channel in the West Coast Basin, the Coyote Hills in the Central Basin, and the thinning of aquifers in places in both basins, but as groundwater flows and encounters a barrier, it changes course and continues moving down gradient until it eventually gets pumped out by a well or finds some other exit from the groundwater basins. Because of this, there is no practical way to subdivide the WRD Service Area into zones of influence or zones of recharge benefit, or zones of recharge cost due to the holistic nature of the aquifer systems.
- Trying to define zones of benefit leading away from the spreading grounds towards the confined aquifers in the Central Basin, or away from the seawater barrier wells in the Central Basin or in the West Coast Basin, is not practical from a management or scientific standpoint. The water recharged at these facilities either directly or indirectly provides benefit to all of the groundwater users in both basins. Replenishment at the spreading grounds helps maintain a high water table to create a steep hydraulic gradient so groundwater will flow to the rest of the Basins. Barrier well injection along the coast not only protects the groundwater quality in both basins from further degradation from seawater, but the elevated groundwater levels they provide allow pumping to continue at adjudicated levels.
- An adjudicated rights holder is entitled to its share of groundwater and can construct a well to pump from wherever it deems necessary within the groundwater basin for which it holds rights. The rights holder can also lease out all or some of its rights to another party that can install a well and pump from its own well location. Because of this, pumping patterns and amounts are very transient, changing from year to year, complicating the groundwater flow system and changing hydraulic gradients. Well locations are variable not only in geographic locations but also vary by aquifers from which they draw. Water demands are not predictable and can change year to year. Precipitation patterns are also unpredictable, requiring WRD to manage based on a long-term hydrologic cycle, but flexible to adapt to extremely wet or extremely dry years. Groundwater "pumping holes" are transitory and lead to wide swings in water levels and groundwater flow conditions. These factual variables illustrate the complexities of trying to subdivide a large groundwater reservoir into a set of fixed subareas when the conditions inside of the groundwater reservoir are continually changing. This is another reason why WRD has established its service area as a single service area.

- A recent study by PPIC provides an important assessment of how costs of service analysis should be done. As noted by the PPIC, “because the various components of a water system—including the management of native surface water and groundwater supplies, the acquisition of imported water, recycled water programs, stormwater capture, conjunctive ground and surface water management, and demand reduction strategies—cannot be segregated from one another, it is lawful to charge individual property owners and water users a share of all of the system costs.”<sup>3</sup> The PPIC concludes that an accurate cost-of-service analysis cannot be accomplished by a molecular-level accounting of water units by cost and location. An accurate cost-of-service analysis would need to account for the external costs of pumping by one user on all other users of the basin, for instance the implications of overdraft by inland groundwater users on saltwater intrusion facing coastal users, rather than to consider only the physical cost of delivering the individual water unit to the property owner.

WRD has evaluated claims that there should be a split assessment and has rejected them because, among other reasons, they are inconsistent with management of the Basins as a single system and that service that the District provides, and do not reflect the hydrogeology, connectivity and interdependency of the Central and West Coast groundwater basins. For example, HF&H Consultants, LLC prepared report (2006) on the allocation of cost through the RA. The report, which claims that the Central Basin is currently subsidizing the West Coast Basin, is unrealistic and results in incorrect conclusions. The report ignores the hydrogeology of the Basins by explicitly assuming that Central and West Coast Basins are geologically distinct and independent Basins.

As the discussion in Section 5 of this report describes, the Basins are fundamentally linked through underflow across the Newport Inglewood Uplift. Groundwater pumping in the Central Basin affects the underflow across the NIU to the West Coast Basin and pumping in the West Coast Basin affects the underflow across the NIU from the Central Basin. When pumping in one Basin affects the amount of groundwater available to users in the other Basin, it is not feasible to independently attribute cost to each Basin without consideration of the hydrogeology that connects water supply and determines replenishment needs for each of the two Basins. The HF&H report was funded by parties including the City of Downey, which had previously provided testimony to the court about the interconnection of the Central and West Coast groundwater basins (Declaration of Mr. Desi Alvarez, Director of Public Works for the City of Downey, 2001).

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<sup>3</sup> Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), “Paying for Water in California,” March 2014 (p. 31) <<http://www.ppic.org/main/publication.asp?i=1086>>.

## 8.2 References Cited for Section 8

- Bookman and Edmonston, 1963, Letter to Mr. Carl Fossette, General Manager of the Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District regarding the effect of elimination of assessment on the safe yield of the ground water resources within the Replenishment District: dated January 15, 1963.
- California Department of Water Resources, 2003, California's GROUNDWATER: Bulletin 118, 246 p. Supplemental information on the Central Basin found at [www.water.ca.gov/pubs/groundwater/bulletin\\_118/basindescriptions/4-11.04.pdf](http://www.water.ca.gov/pubs/groundwater/bulletin_118/basindescriptions/4-11.04.pdf) (accessed 1/17/2013). Supplemental information on the West Coast Basin found at [www.water.ca.gov/pubs/groundwater/bulletin\\_118/basindescriptions/4-11.03.pdf](http://www.water.ca.gov/pubs/groundwater/bulletin_118/basindescriptions/4-11.03.pdf) (accessed 1/17/2013).
- Declaration of Desi Alvarez, 2001, Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Los Angeles, California Water Service Company, et al., Plaintiffs v. City of Compton, et al., Case No. 506 806, Declaration of Desi Alvarez in Support of the City of Downey's Motion to Intervene: dated August 30, 2001, and filed in LA Superior Court September 5, 2001.
- Garcia, D.H., 1995, Impact of the Newport-Inglewood Structural Zone on Groundwater Flow in the Area of Signal Hill, California: A Thesis Presented to the Department of Geological Sciences, California State University, Long Beach, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, 183 p.
- HF&F Consultants, LLC, 2006, Replenishment Assessment Cost Allocation Study: Prepared for Southeast Water Coalition, December 29, 2006, 13 p.

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## 9.0 COST OF SERVICE

The total annual revenue requirements, net of revenue credits from miscellaneous sources, are by definition the cost of providing service. This Chapter provides a review of the projects, programs, administration and water as well as other related costs that are necessary to support the District’s functions. A general description of the District’s other revenue sources will also be presented.

All estimated costs and revenues contained herein are considered preliminary estimates, reflecting the costs associated with the proposed levels of services. Every year, the District conducts a series of public budget meetings to seek comment pursuant to the Water Code and other applicable regulatory requirements. To ensure transparency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility, the District has two committees with representatives from stakeholders. The two committees are: Budget Advisory Committee (“BAC”) formed in 2013 pursuant to SB620 and Technical Advisory Committee (“TAC”). The Committees are charged with providing guidance and advice on budgetary, finance, and technical matters relating to the District’s projects and programs.

The District, through its Finance Audit Committee (FAC) and the Board of Directors, conducts meetings and solicits comments from the BAC, groundwater community and stakeholders. After considering the recommendations from the BAC as well as the public, the FAC makes budget and Replenishment Assessment recommendations to the Board of Directors. Upon final approval by the Board, the preliminary estimates contained herein will be revised accordingly to reflect the approved budget amounts and corresponding levels of services.

### 9.1 Projects, Programs, Administration & Water Costs

The Projects, Programs, and Administration (“PPA”) and water costs are generally considered as operational expenses for budgetary purposes, and their detailed descriptions are provided in Chapter 7 of this report. **Table 9-1** summarizes the estimated PPA & water costs, totaling \$85,442,208 for Fiscal Year 2026-27. Water and water related costs make up \$68,067,968 or 80 percent of operational expenses for budgetary purposes.

**Table 9-1**  
**Summary of FY 2026-27 Estimated Projects, Programs and Administration & Water Costs**

| Description                          | Estimated Amount     |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Water Purchases                      | \$ 44,885,247        |
| Water Treatment and Production       | 19,543,860           |
| Water Resources                      | 3,638,861            |
| <b>Total Water and Related Costs</b> | <b>\$ 68,067,968</b> |
| Water Quality Programs *             | \$ 4,398,473         |
| Water Replenishment Support          | 4,878,742            |
| WRD Facility Maintenance             | 1,942,263            |
| Total General and Administrative     | 5,533,346            |
| <b>Total PPA Costs</b>               | <b>\$ 16,752,824</b> |
| <b>Total PPA and Water Costs</b>     | <b>\$ 84,820,792</b> |

## 9.2 Other Special Programs and Supportive Costs

In addition to the PPA & water costs, the FY2026-27 estimated expenses include other special programs and support cost components, as described below.

- **Required Retirement Funding:** These costs include GASB 45 post-employment benefits (OPEB) and Retiree Benefits.
- **Litigation:** The District is potentially engaged in legal matters from time to time. The estimated annual litigation expense contained herein represents the District’s good faith estimate based on anticipated litigation activities.
- **Cost of Service Study:** Public Notices & Hearings, SB620: To ensure transparency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility, the District prepares a cost of service study, disseminates public notices, and conducts public hearings including a Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) per Senate Bill 620. Services in support of preparing the study, processing the notice, postage, and incidental expenses are included in this cost component.
- **Election Expense:** The District is governed by a five - member elected Board. The District’s elections of Board members are held in November of even calendar years, during which either two or three members are elected by the voters. Each year, the District sets aside funds for upcoming election expenses, based on a 2-year election cycle and the number of seats up for election.

For other special programs and supportive costs, **Table 9-2** summarizes the estimated FY2026-27 expenses.

**Table 9-2**  
**Summary of FY 2026-27 Other Special Projects and Supportive Costs**

| <b>Description</b>   | <b>Estimated Amount</b>    |
|--|----------------------------|
| OPEB/UAL (Required Retirement Funding)                     | \$ 2,529,090               |
| Litigation   | 100,000                    |
| Election Expense   | 2,000,000                  |
| <b>Total Other Special Programs &amp; Supportive Costs</b> | <b><u>\$ 4,629,090</u></b> |

### 9.3 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

The WRD's primary responsibilities are to protect the Basins by replenishing groundwater, deterring sea water intrusion, and removing contaminants from the groundwater. With the ongoing drought and diminishing supplies of imported water, the District is implemented the Water Independence Now ("WIN") program, a series of projects designed to fully utilize stormwater and recycled water sources to protect the Basins and ensure a sustainable, reliable local groundwater supply. The District's Capital Improvement Plan ("CIP") serves as a comprehensive planning document that identifies capital project expenditures in conjunction with anticipated revenue sources (e.g., grant funding, etc.), for the current and the next five fiscal years. In consultation with stakeholders and as additional information becomes available, expenditure and revenue estimates for the later fiscal years will be amended as appropriate to reflect changing conditions.

- For the purpose of financial and budget planning, the CIP accounts for common capital projects that generally meet one or more of the following criteria: Typically, non-recurring, one-time expenditures.
- Expenditures spanning over two fiscal years or longer.
- Total project cost exceeding \$5,000.

Not included in a CIP account are operation and maintenance expenses, or (e.g., computer software, office furniture, etc.), which are necessary to support the day-to-day functions of the District.

Every two years, the District adopts a Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), outlining detailed descriptions of planned capital projects, including financial analyses, estimated costs, and funding sources. Construction projects are primarily financed through proceeds from Revenue Bond issuances designated for CIP initiatives. Additionally, capital funds may be supplemented by federal and state grants when successfully secured by the District.

For partnership projects, financial contributions may also come from collaborating entities such as the Los Angeles County Sanitation District or Los Angeles County Public Works.

From a budgetary standpoint, the District's projected debt service costs for fiscal year 2026-27 related to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) are approximately \$18,481,392. This amount encompasses principal and interest payments on outstanding obligations, including Series 2015 (\$148,340,000), Series 2018 (\$65,785,000), Series 2025 Revenue Bonds (\$82,600,000), and Series 2026 (\$105,000,000, August 2026). Additionally, it includes 30-year loans from the California State Revolving Fund (SRF) totaling \$80,000,000.

Additionally, the Replenishment Assessment includes:

- \$5,400,000 held in restricted reserves, per SRF loan covenants.
- \$4,800,000 more revenue needed for a 1.40x debt service coverage.
- \$685,016 allocated to PAYGO capital projects.

## 9.4 Water Purchase Carryover & Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund (Replenishment)

Pursuant to the California Water Code, the District has established an annual reserve fund to meet ongoing cash flow requirements, purchase water, and serve emergency needs. On an as-needed basis, the District either collects revenue to replenish the reserve fund or uses the reserve fund to provide rate relief. This reserve fund is also used to manage and track revenue received and disbursed for water rights placed in storage and water extracted from storage.

## 9.5 Summary of Budgetary Cost Estimates

The estimates for the various cost components (PPA & Water, CIP, etc.) are described above. **Table 9-3** provides a summary of the cost components, including the total cost (total revenue requirements).

**Table 9-3**  
**Summary of FY 2026-27 Budgetary Cost Estimates**

| <b>Description</b>                                    | <b>Estimated Amount</b> |
|---|-------------------------|
| Projects, Programs, Administration and Water Costs    | \$ 84,820,792           |
| Total Other Special Programs & Supportive Costs       | 4,629,090               |
| Revenue Bond Debt Service Payments (incl DSC Funding) | 23,281,392              |
| Funding PAYGO Capital Projects [\$2 to fund CIP]      | 685,016                 |
| <b>Total Revenue Requirements</b>                     | <b>\$ 113,416,290</b>   |

## 9.6 Income (Sales, Subsidies and Grants)

The District generates annual revenue from the operation and delivery of high-quality treated water through its three capital assets: the Leo J. Vander Lans Water Treatment Facility, the Robert W. Goldsworthy Desalter, and the Albert Robles Center (ARC). The methodology for estimating capital revenue for each facility is outlined below.

For FY 2026-27, the total estimated capital revenue from these three assets is approximately \$5,591,250.

Leo J. Vander Lans Water Treatment Facility – Water Supply. The advanced treated recycled water (product water) from the treatment facility is delivered to the Alamitos Barriers for injection into the aquifer(s), in order to prevent ocean water intrusion from damaging the health of the groundwater basin. To the extent insufficient advanced treated water is available, imported water is purchased from the Long Beach Water Department to supplement water supply to the barriers. Since the water injected at the barrier partially benefits the Orange County Water District’s (“OCWD”) service area, revenue is collected from OCWD for its fair share of the costs.

Additionally, the District receives a subsidy through MWD's Local Resources Program ("LRP"). The estimated total revenue from this treatment facility is approximately \$3,428,250 for FY 2026-27.

Robert W. Goldsworthy Desalter – Water Supply. The Goldsworthy Desalter ("Desalter") treats brackish groundwater to a level that can be used for potable purposes. While the Basins realize the water quality benefits from operating the Desalter, the product water from the Desalter is sold to the City of Torrance for beneficial use. Additionally, the District receives MWD's LRP subsidy through the City of Torrance, a MWD member agency. The estimated total revenue from this treatment facility is approximately \$1,578,000 for FY 2026-27.

Robert Whitaker Treatment Facility (RWTF) – Water Supply. The RWTP takes in tertiary treated recycled water as source water and subjects it to additional advanced treatment through ultrafiltration, reverse osmosis, and advanced oxidation to further purify the water for groundwater replenishment in the Montebello Forebay. Since RWTP offsets the need for imported water from MWD, the District receives MWD's LRP subsidy through the City of Torrance, an MWD member agency. The estimated total revenue from this treatment facility is approximately \$585,000 for FY 2026-27.

Carryover Conversion – The estimated FY 2025-26 revenue from carryover conversion to groundwater storage is approximately \$18,044,802.

Title 22 - the District continues to administer the Title 22 Groundwater Monitoring Program in the Central Basin and one system in the West Basin, which provides source water monitoring of 84 active wells owned and operated by 22 pumpers. In addition to performing the required compliance monitoring, the District prepares the annual Consumer Confidence Reports for these pumpers. The estimated revenue is \$450,000.

Other Income – The District receives property tax revenue each year. The total revenue from this source is estimated to be \$1,046,500. The District also receives interest income, for FY 2026-27, it is estimated to be \$5,000,000. After attributing \$10,000 for miscellaneous income and non-replenishment assessment expenses of \$380,000, the net amount of \$5,676,500 is subtracted from the total revenue requirements to provide service.

Rate Stabilization - This policy is designed to promote financial stability and reduce volatility in Replenishment Assessment (RA) rates. It provides a mechanism to smooth rate fluctuations and protect groundwater pumpers from steep annual increases. The reserve is activated when the projected annual RA increase exceeds 4%. The Board approved the use of \$800,000 from the reserve account to assist in mitigating the impact of the proposed RA increase for FY 2026-27.

**Table 9-4** provides the FY 2026-27 Income from Sales, Subsidies and Grants.

**Table 9-4**  
**FY 2026-27 Income (Sales , Subsidies and Grants)**

| <b>Description</b>                             | <b>Estimated Amount</b>       |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Leo J Vander Lans (LVL)                        | \$ (3,428,250)                |
| Goldsworthy Desalter                           | (1,578,000)                   |
| Robert Whitaker Treatment Facility (RWTF)      | (585,000)                     |
| Water Quality Improvement (Title 22)           | (450,000)                     |
| Other (Property Taxes, Interest, Misc Income.) | (5,676,500)                   |
| Carryover Conversion                           | (18,044,802)                  |
| Rate Stabilization                             | (800,000)                     |
| <b>Income (Sales, Subsidies,Grants)</b>        | <b><u>\$ (30,562,552)</u></b> |

## 9.7 Cost of Providing Service

The various cost components for providing the water replenishment services that are funded by the Replenishment Assessment are described above. The total cost or revenue requirement, net of income (sales, subsidies and grants), is the estimated cost to provide service. **Table 9-5** provides the cost of providing service.

**Table 9-5**  
**Cost of Providing Service**

| <b>Description</b>               | <b>Estimated Amount</b>     |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Total Revenue Requirement        | \$ 113,416,290              |
| Income (Sales, Subsidies,Grants) | (30,562,552)                |
| <b>Cost to Provide Service</b>   | <b><u>\$ 82,853,738</u></b> |

## 10.0 COST ALLOCATION ANALYSIS

The District's perimeter boundary represents a single service area for which all groundwater pumping within its service area is subject to a common rate, known as the Replenishment Assessment (RA). Pursuant to the Water Code and applicable regulations, the RA is established annually by the Board of Directors. Mathematically, the RA is estimated based on the cost allocation analysis which includes assessing the beneficiaries' proportional share of the cost to provide water replenishment services.

As required by the Water Code, the District annually prepares the Engineering Survey & Report (ESR), which contains the following key components:

- A discussion of groundwater production within the District;
- An evaluation of groundwater conditions within the District, including estimates of the annual overdraft, the accumulated overdraft, changes in water levels, and the effects of water level fluctuations on the groundwater resources;
- An appraisal of the quantity, availability, and cost of replenishment water required for the ensuing water year; and
- A description of current and proposed programs and projects to accomplish replenishment goals and to protect and preserve high quality groundwater supplies within the District.

Specifically, the ESR provides an estimate of the assessable groundwater pumping quantity for the ensuing year that is subject to the RA, which is approximately 171,000 AF in the District's service area. However, the assessable groundwater pumping for the ensuing year was increased to 180,000 AF based on pumper input from a WRD survey of active pumpers and at subsequent meetings held with the Finance Audit Committee and BAC. This estimate will be used for the maximum potential RA for the ensuing year. Furthermore, the ESR identifies the quantity of supplemental water required to replenish and protect the groundwater basins, from pumping. The replenishment services, including descriptions of individual cost components, are provided in the previous chapters of this report. The total estimated cost of services for FY 2026-27 is approximately \$82,853,738, which is necessary to service the estimate of 177,254,000 AF of groundwater pumped in the basins. Therefore, the estimated total cost of service is allocated in proportion to the estimated total groundwater pumped. The unit cost per AF of water pumped, also known as Replenishment Assessment (RA), can be calculated as follows:

$$\text{Total Cost of Service (\$/Total Groundwater Pumped (AF)) = Unit Cost (\$/AF pumped)}$$

For FY 2026-27, the estimated unit cost, or Replenishment Assessment (RA), is as follows:

**Replenishment Assessment (\$/AF pumped) = \$82,853,738/171,254 AF = \$484/AF, that excludes a PFAS fee of \$12/AF.**

To fund the services described in this report (cost of services), the District collects RA from operators of “water-producing facilities.” Such operators include municipal water utilities, water companies, and others who use wells to pump groundwater from the basins. Many of these operators pass through RA expenses to homeowners, businesses, schools, public properties, retail water customers, and others. The amount of RA charged to an operator is calculated based on the quantity of water pumped by the individual operator multiplied by the RA (unit cost of \$484/AF of water pumped). For example, if an operator pumps a total of 1,000 AF, that operator will be charged a total of \$484,000 (1,000 AF x \$484/AF).

## 11.0 DROUGHT

Droughts are a recurring phenomenon in Southern California, and the activities that WRD funds through its RAs provide a benefit to all pumpers by maintaining a reliable, drought-resistant supply of water.

As an example, continued dry conditions in the State led Governor Jerry Brown to declare a drought emergency on January 17, 2014 and for the state to mandate water conservation. For California, calendar year 2013 was the driest year on record since the state started measuring rainfall in 1849, and in Los Angeles, the 3.6 inches of rainfall that fell was below the previous 1953 record of 4.08 inches and was over 11 inches below the average rainfall total of 14.93 inches.<sup>4</sup> In the 2015/16 WY, pumping was significantly reduced due to the State's fifth year of drought that resulted in mandated water reductions and public awareness for conservation efforts and the shutdown of some wells due to operational issues. This led to the lowest pumping amounts the District has seen in over 20 years. The drought was declared over by the California Governor due to a wet year in 2016/17. This was followed by a year of dry weather in 2017/18 and another wet year in 2018/19. This was then followed by average rainfall in 2019/20 and another two dry years in 2020/21 and 2021/22. Rainfall was nearly double the long-term average in the subsequent two years (2022/23 and 2023/24). The back-to-back record rainfall was then followed by an extremely dry year in 2024/25. Rainfall is currently well above normal for this time of year as of January 26, 2026. This back and forth from dry to wet is commonplace, and drought periods will certainly reappear. The highly variable climate in California causes the groundwater basins to rise and fall in the state, including the CBWCB, and the local basins remain lower than the pre-drought conditions since it takes significantly longer to refill aquifers than it does surface water reservoirs. Reliance on consistent stormwater capture and recharge is a poor groundwater management strategy.

Therefore, since its formation in 1959, WRD has served to prevent the depletion of groundwater by providing groundwater replenishment services to pumpers in the Basins. Sustainable management of groundwater supplies made possible by the replenishment operation of WRD results in multiple benefits to the pumping community.

First, the District's activities help to ensure the integrity of the Basins as an economic and beneficial water resource. The District was created to prevent the destruction of the Basins from over pumping and seawater intrusion. The continued existence of the Basins over 60 years after the District was created demonstrates the long-term success of the District's replenishment and groundwater quality programs.

Second, replenishment activities of WRD reduce the average cost of service as pumpers are able to adjust their water portfolios to replace high-cost imported water with cheaper sources of groundwater replenished with water derived from stormwater capture, recycled water, and, when available, from cheaper sources of imported replenishment water.

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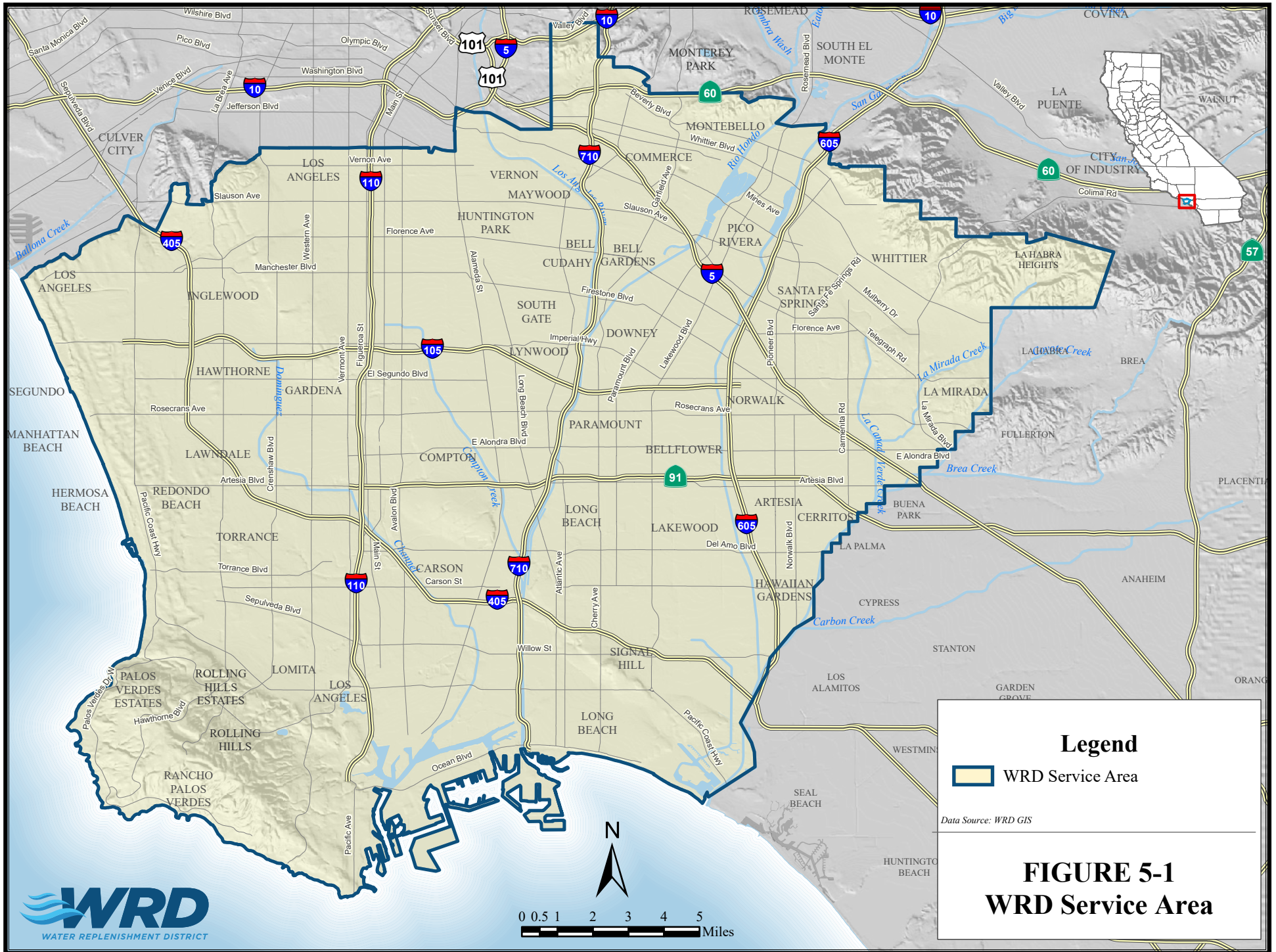
<sup>4</sup> University Corporation for Atmospheric Research, AtmosNews  
<<http://www2.ucar.edu/atmosnews/perspective/10879/california-dryin>>.

Third, WRD provides pumpers in the Basins with a water source that is more reliable than imported water. The ability to utilize groundwater allows pumpers to decrease their exposure to supply rationing imposed on imported water during periods of extreme droughts.

Fourth, greater flexibility of groundwater use through carryover provisions provides a “last line of defense” against water shortages under conditions of extreme drought. Groundwater carryover provisions, which allow pumping rights that aren't used in one year to be carried over for use in another year, make it possible for pumpers to reduce pumping water during wet years when water is relatively abundant and extract it during drought conditions when imported water supplies are relatively scarce. This benefits all residents of California by reducing demand for imported water within the WRD service area, increasing availability of imported water to other regions of the State that cannot rely on groundwater during periods of extreme drought.

# FIGURES

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**Legend**

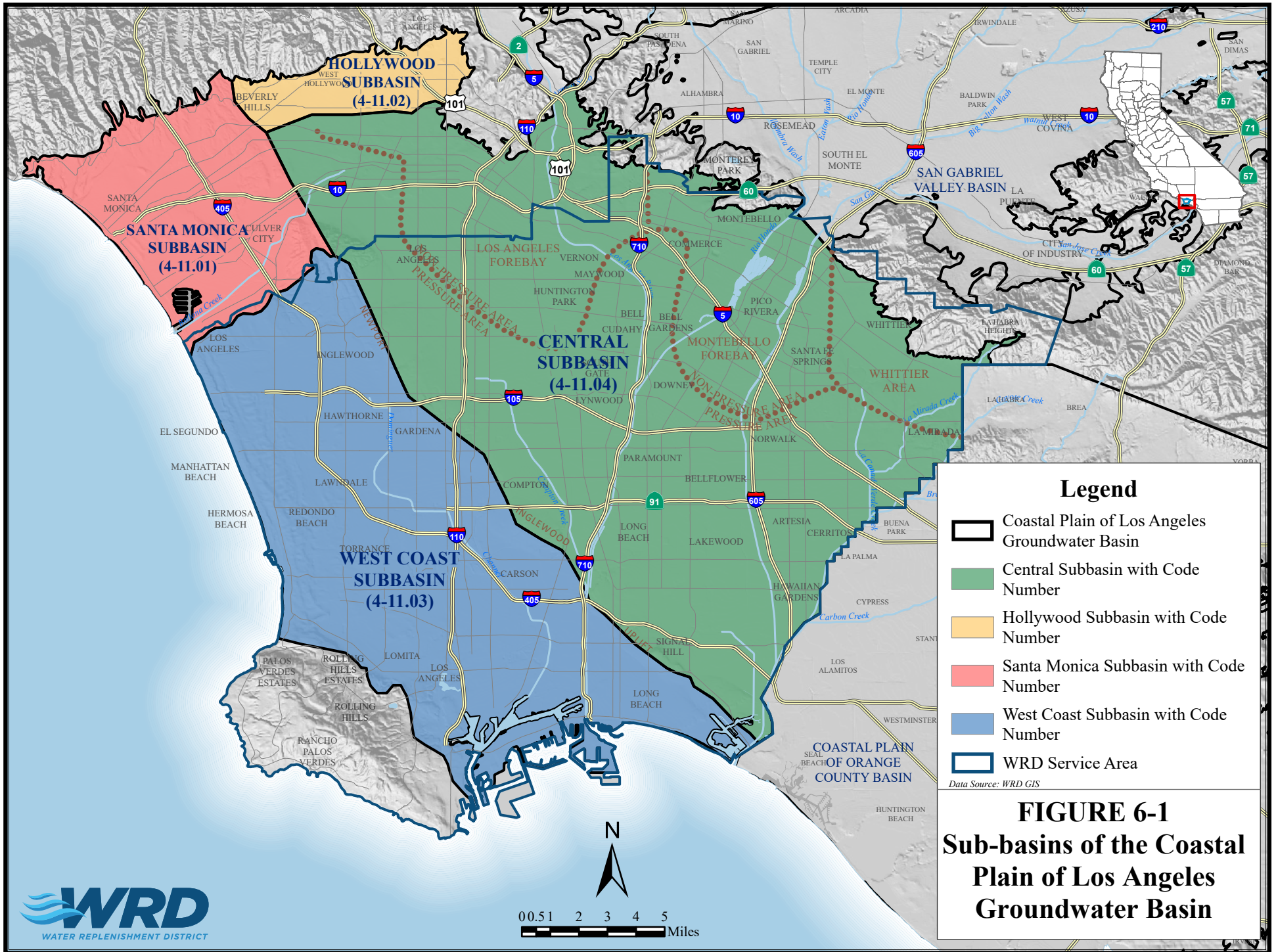
WRD Service Area

Data Source: WRD GIS







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**FIGURE 5-1**

**WRD Service Area**

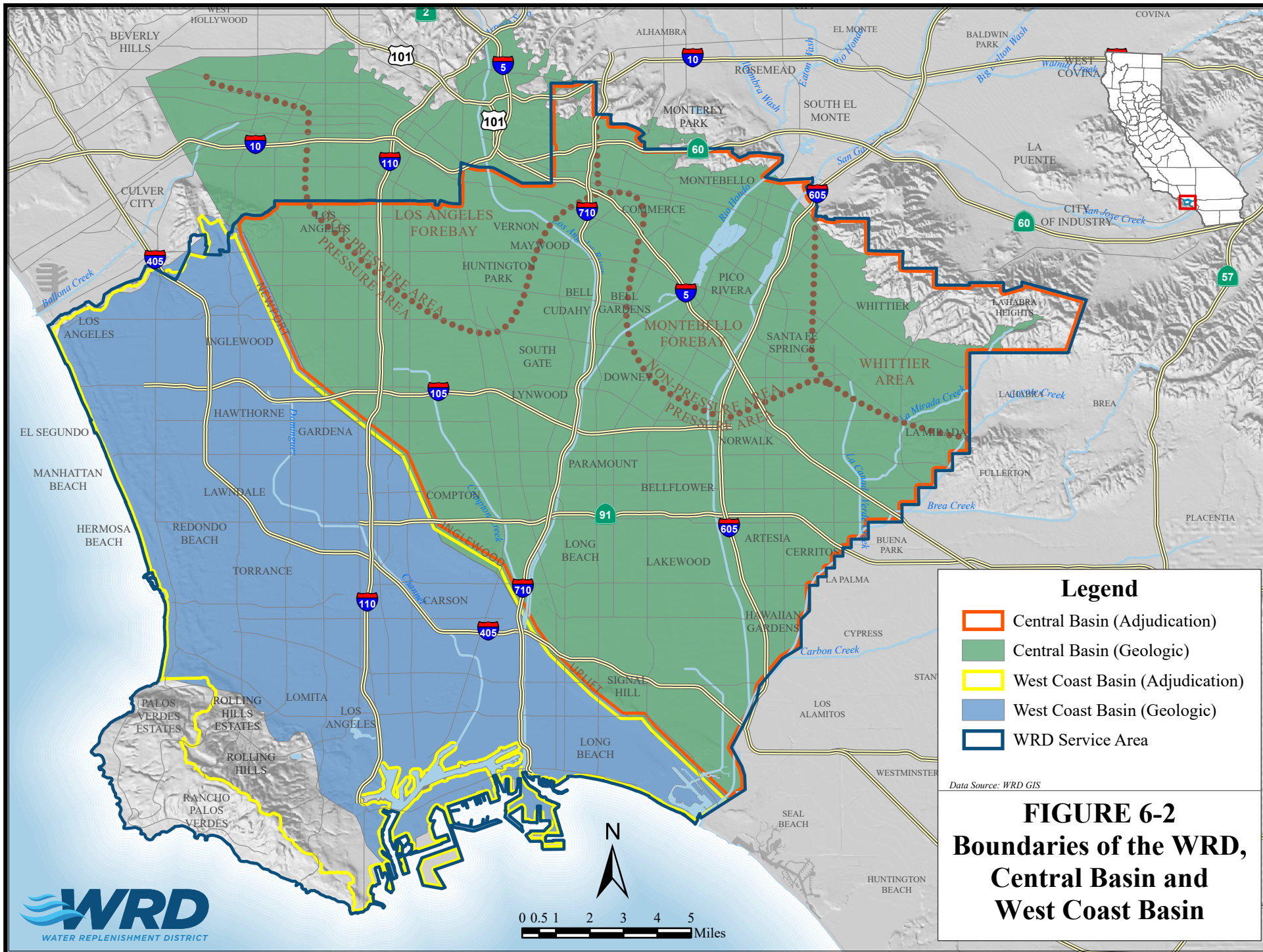


**Legend**

-  Coastal Plain of Los Angeles Groundwater Basin
-  Central Subbasin with Code Number
-  Hollywood Subbasin with Code Number
-  Santa Monica Subbasin with Code Number
-  West Coast Subbasin with Code Number
-  WRD Service Area

Data Source: WRD GIS

**FIGURE 6-1**  
**Sub-basins of the Coastal Plain of Los Angeles Groundwater Basin**

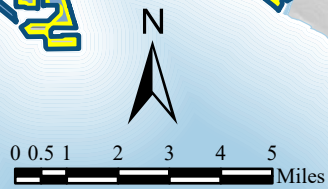


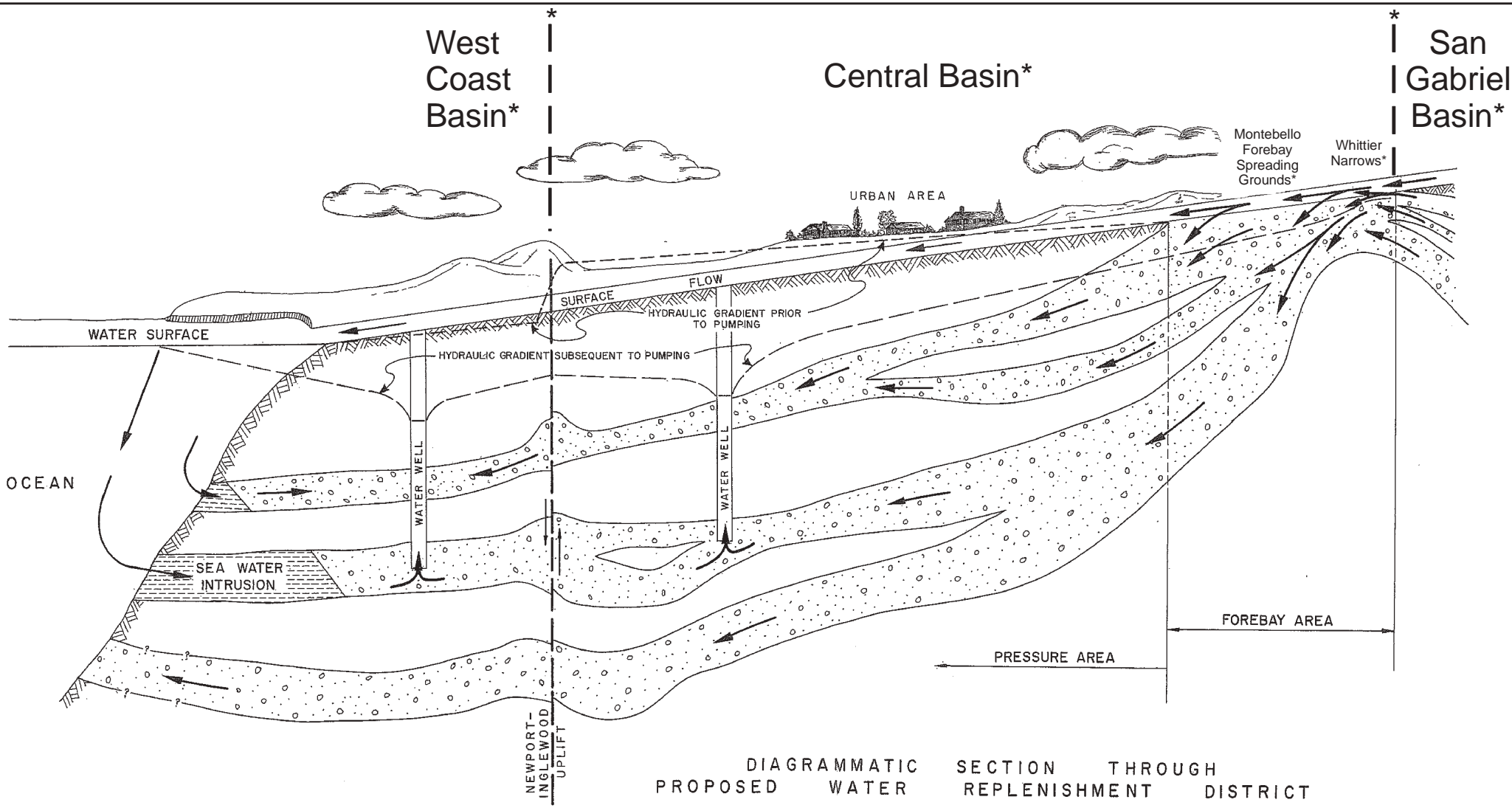
**Legend**

- Central Basin (Adjudication)
- Central Basin (Geologic)
- West Coast Basin (Adjudication)
- West Coast Basin (Geologic)
- WRD Service Area

*Data Source: WRD GIS*

**FIGURE 6-2**  
**Boundaries of the WRD,**  
**Central Basin and**  
**West Coast Basin**





DIAGRAMMATIC SECTION THROUGH PROPOSED WATER REPLENISHMENT DISTRICT

Data Source: CDWR, 1959  
 \* Text and Lines added by WRD for Clarity

Figure 6-3  
 Generalized Cross-Section

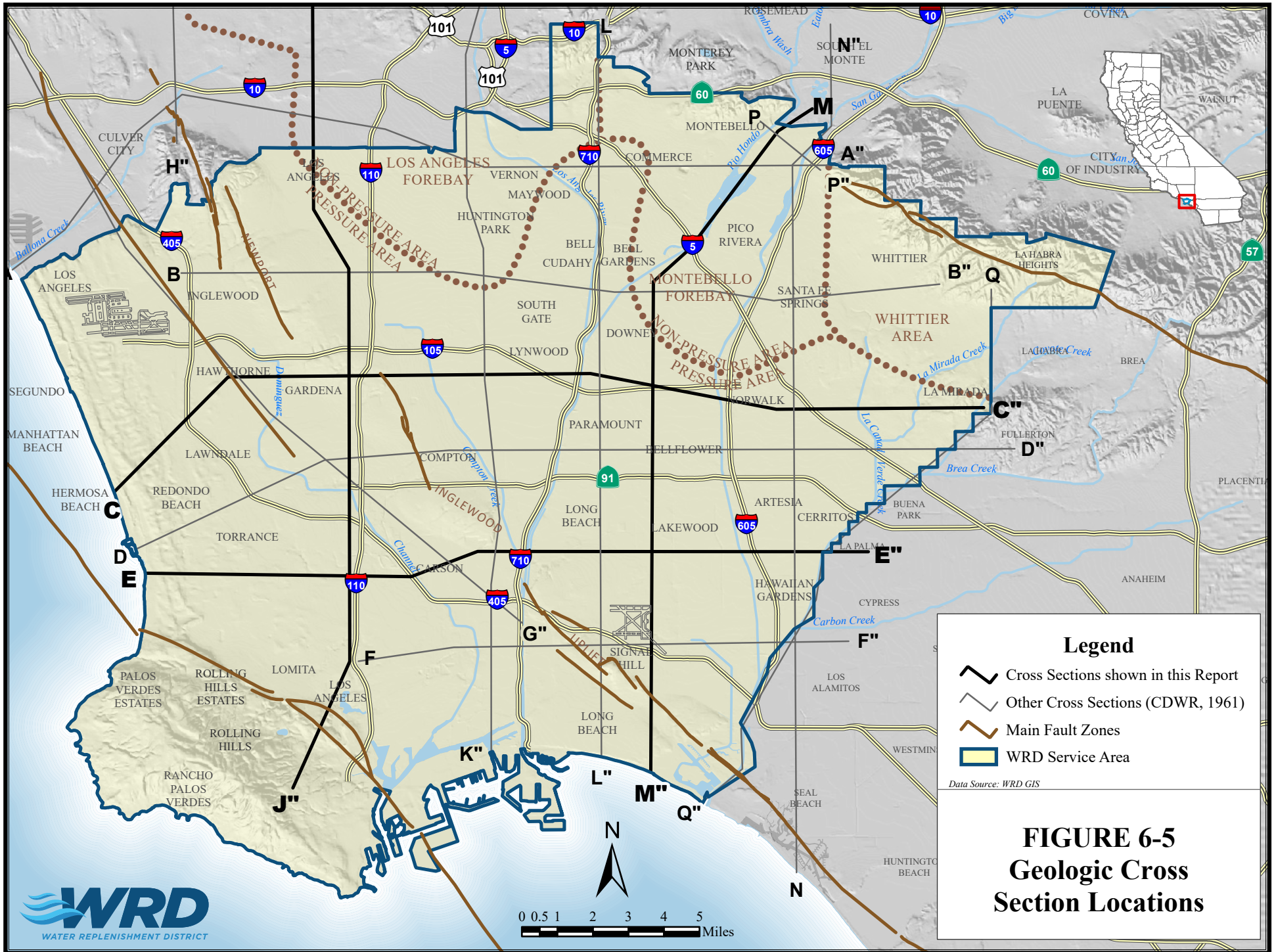
| SYSTEM     | SERIES            | FORMATION           | LITHOLOGY | AQUIFER AND AQUICLUDE            | MAX. THICKNESS (FEET) | PREVIOUS FORMATION NAMES* | PREVIOUS AQUIFER NAMES*                                      |  |
|------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| QUATERNARY | RECENT            | ACTIVE DUNE SAND    |           | SEMIPERCHED                      | 60                    | ALLUVIUM                  | SEMIPERCHED <sup>†</sup>                                     | <p>LEGEND OF LITHOLOGY</p> GRAVEL AND SAND<br>SAND<br>SILTY OR SANDY CLAY<br>CLAY OR SHALE |
|            |                   | ALLUVIUM            |           | BELLFLOWER AQUICLUDE             | 140                   |                           | GASPUR <sup>†</sup><br>"50 FOOT GRAVEL"                      |  |
|            | UPPER PLEISTOCENE | OLDER DUNE SAND     |           | SEMIPERCHED BELLFLOWER AQUICLUDE | 200                   | TERRACE COVER             | SEMIPERCHED <sup>†</sup>                                     |  |
|            |                   | LAKEWOOD FORMATION  |           | EXPOSITION ARTESIA               | 140                   | UNNAMED UPPER PLEISTOCENE | GARDENA <sup>†</sup><br>"200 FOOT SAND"                      |  |
|            |                   |                     |           | GARDENA                          | 160                   |                           |  |  |
|            |                   |                     |           | GAGE                             | 160                   |                           |  |  |
|            |                   |                     |           | LOCAL UNCONFORMITY               |                       |                           |  |  |
|            | LOWER PLEISTOCENE | SAN PEDRO FORMATION |           | HOLLYDALE                        | 100                   | SAN PEDRO FORMATION       | "400 FOOT GRAVEL" <sup>†</sup><br><br>SILVERADO <sup>†</sup> |  |
|            |                   |                     |           | JEFFERSON                        | 140                   |                           |  |  |
|            |                   |                     |           | LYNWOOD                          | 200                   |                           |  |  |
| SILVERADO  |                   |                     |           | 500                              |                       |                           |  |  |
| SUNNYSIDE  |                   |                     |           | 500                              |                       |                           |  |  |
| TERTIARY   | UPPER PLIOCENE    | LOCAL UNCONFORMITY  |           | UNDIFFERENTIATED                 |                       | PICO FORMATION            |  |  |
|            |                   | PICO FORMATION      |           |                                  |                       |                           |  |  |

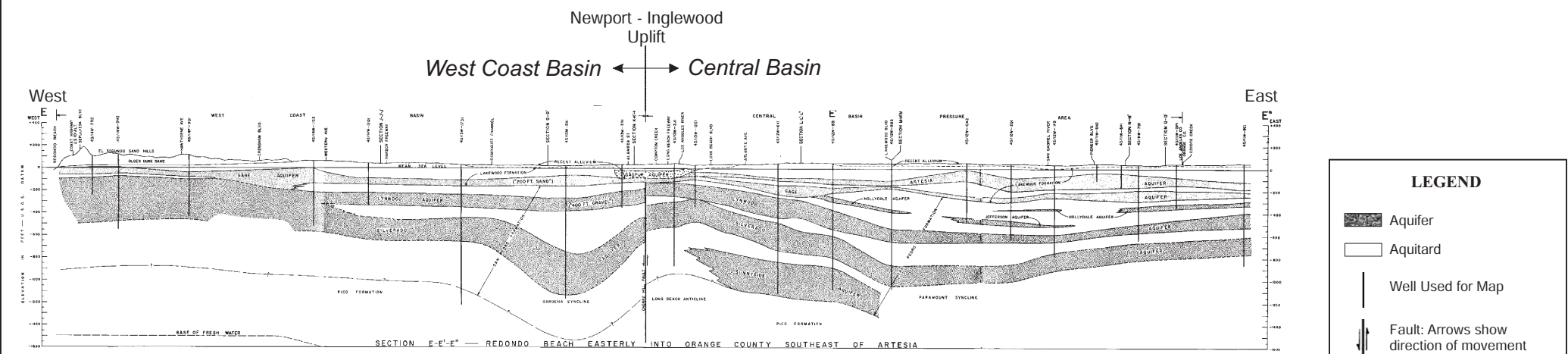
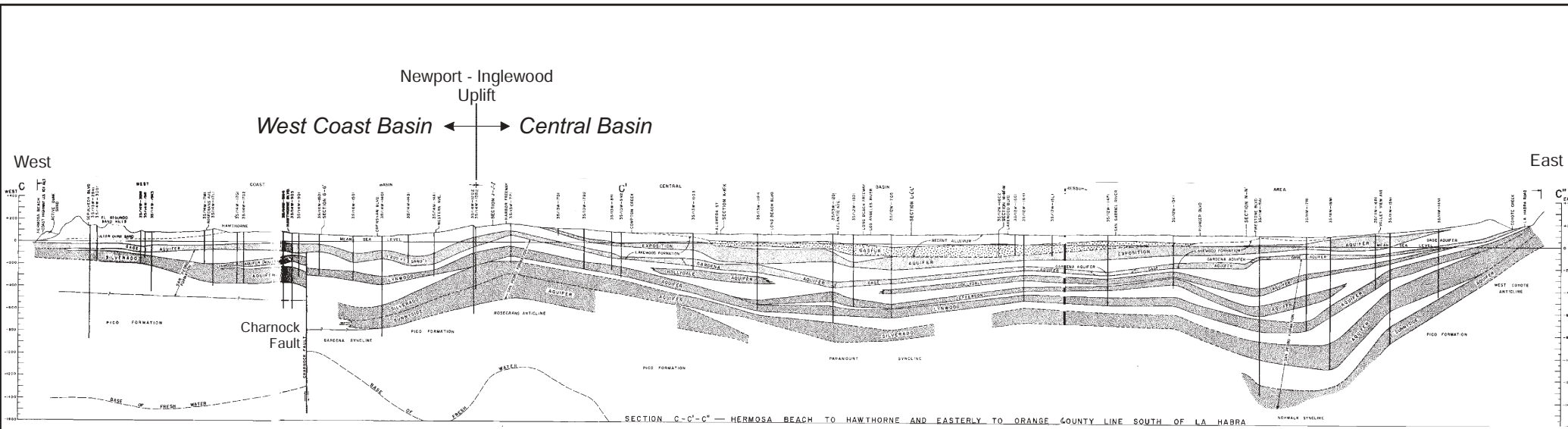
\* DESIGNATIONS AND TERMS UTILIZED IN "REPORT OF REFEREE" DATED JUNE 1952 PREPARED BY THE STATE ENGINEER COVERING THE WEST COAST BASIN

† DESIGNATED AS "WATER BEARING ZONES" IN ABOVE NOTED REPORT OF REFEREE

GENERALIZED STRATIGRAPHIC COLUMN  
COASTAL PLAIN OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Figure 6-4  
Data Source: CDWR, 1961 - Plate 5





**LEGEND**

- Aquifer
- Aquitard
- Well Used for Map
- Fault: Arrows show direction of movement

0 6,000  
Horizontal Scale (feet)

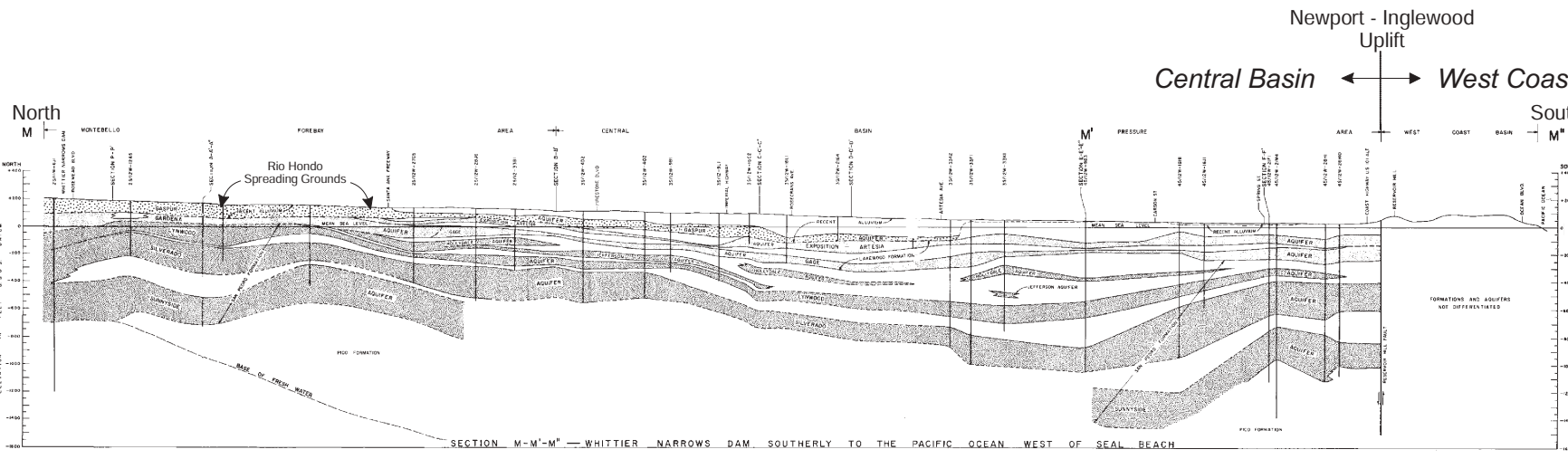
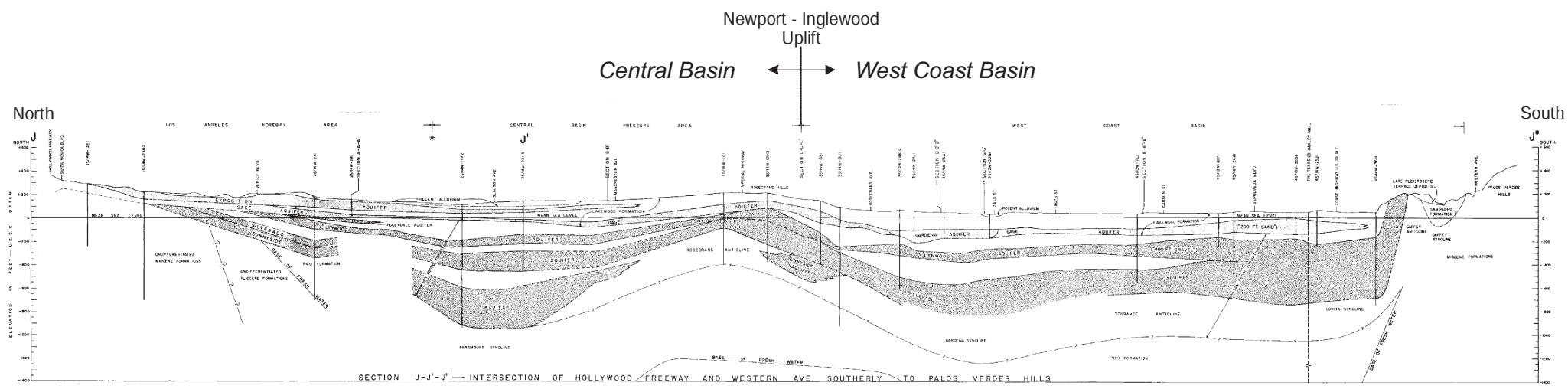
Data Source: CDWR, 1961

**Figure 6-6**  
**Geologic Cross Sections C & E**

Text added by WRD for Clarity: West Coast Basin, Central Basin, Newport-Inglewood Uplift, East and West, Charnock Fault, and arrow lines

Top Cross Section C-C'': Note that aquifers cross the Newport-Inglewood Uplift from the Central Basin into the West Coast Basin without any geologic offset of the aquifers. No separation.

Lower Cross Section E-E': Aquifers are depicted as being partially cut off and separated by the Newport-Inglewood Uplift.



**LEGEND**

- Aquifer
- Aquitard
- Well Used for Map
- Fault: Arrows show direction of movement

0 6,000  
Horizontal Scale (feet)

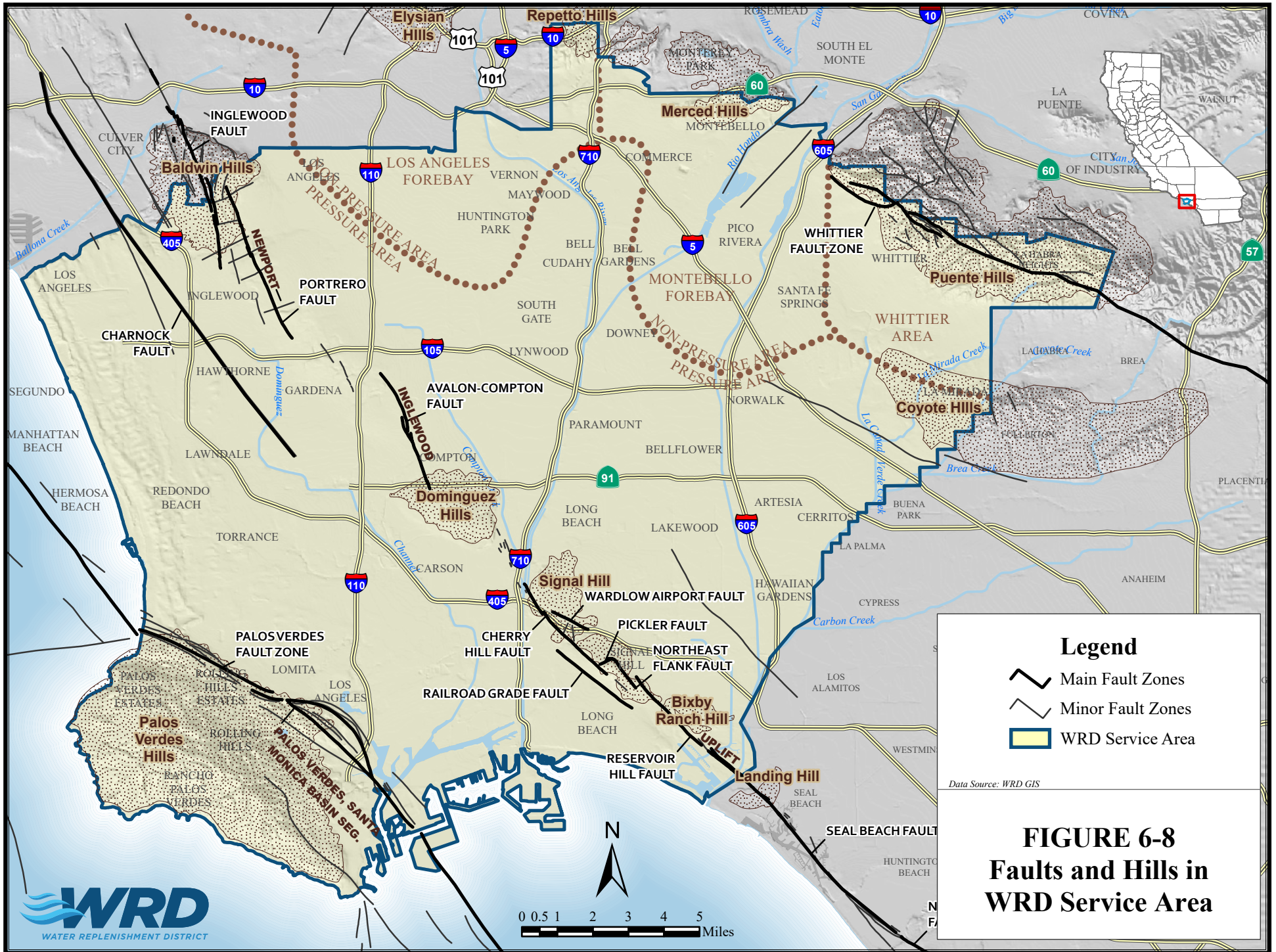
Data Source: CDWR, 1961

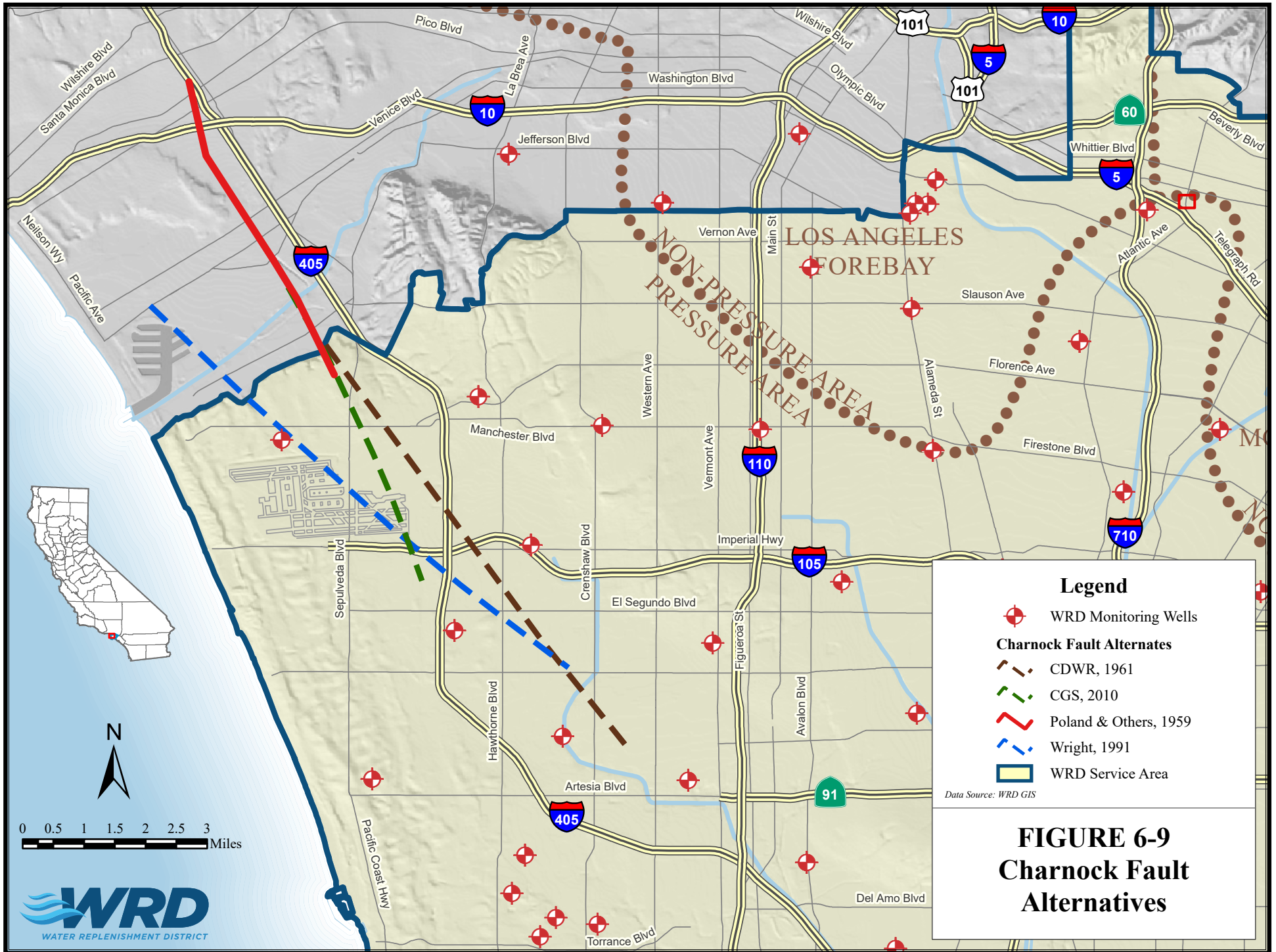
Text added by WRD for Clarity: West Coast Basin, Central Basin, Newport-Inglewood Uplift, South and North, J J' M M', Rio Hondo Spreading Grounds, and arrow lines.

Top Cross Section J-J': Note that aquifers cross the Newport-Inglewood Uplift from the Central Basin into the West Coast Basin without any geologic offset of the aquifers. No separation.

Lower Cross Section M-M': Aquifers are depicted as being cut off by the Newport-Inglewood Uplift and the aquifers on the West Coast Basin side have not been differentiated in this part of the basin.

**Figure 6-7**  
**Geologic Cross**  
**Sections J & M**



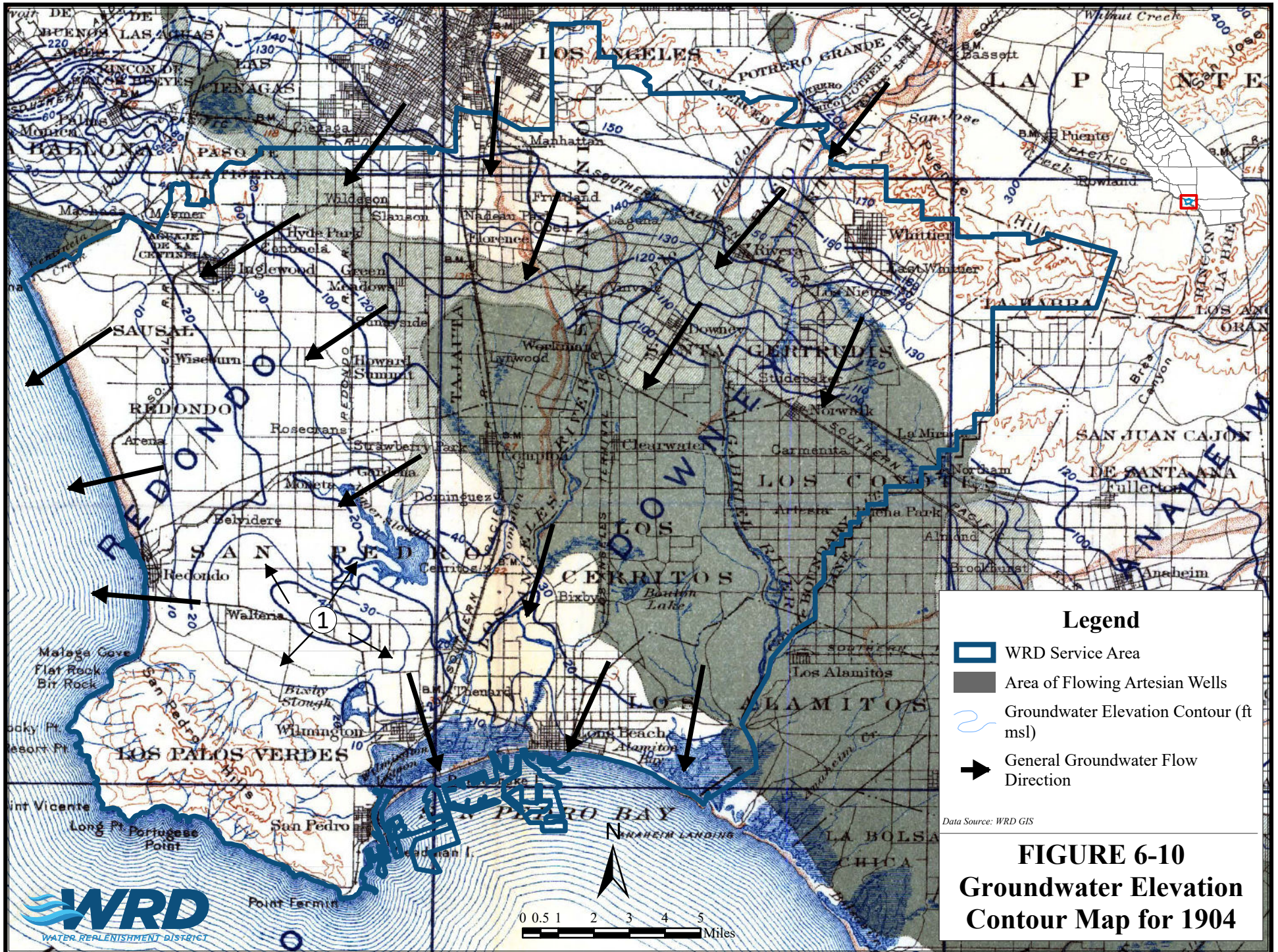


**Legend**





- WRD Monitoring Wells
- Charnock Fault Alternates**
  - CDWR, 1961
  - CGS, 2010
  - Poland & Others, 1959
  - Wright, 1991
  - WRD Service Area

*Data Source: WRD GIS*

**FIGURE 6-9**  
**Charnock Fault**  
**Alternatives**

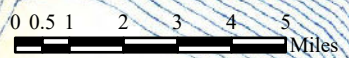


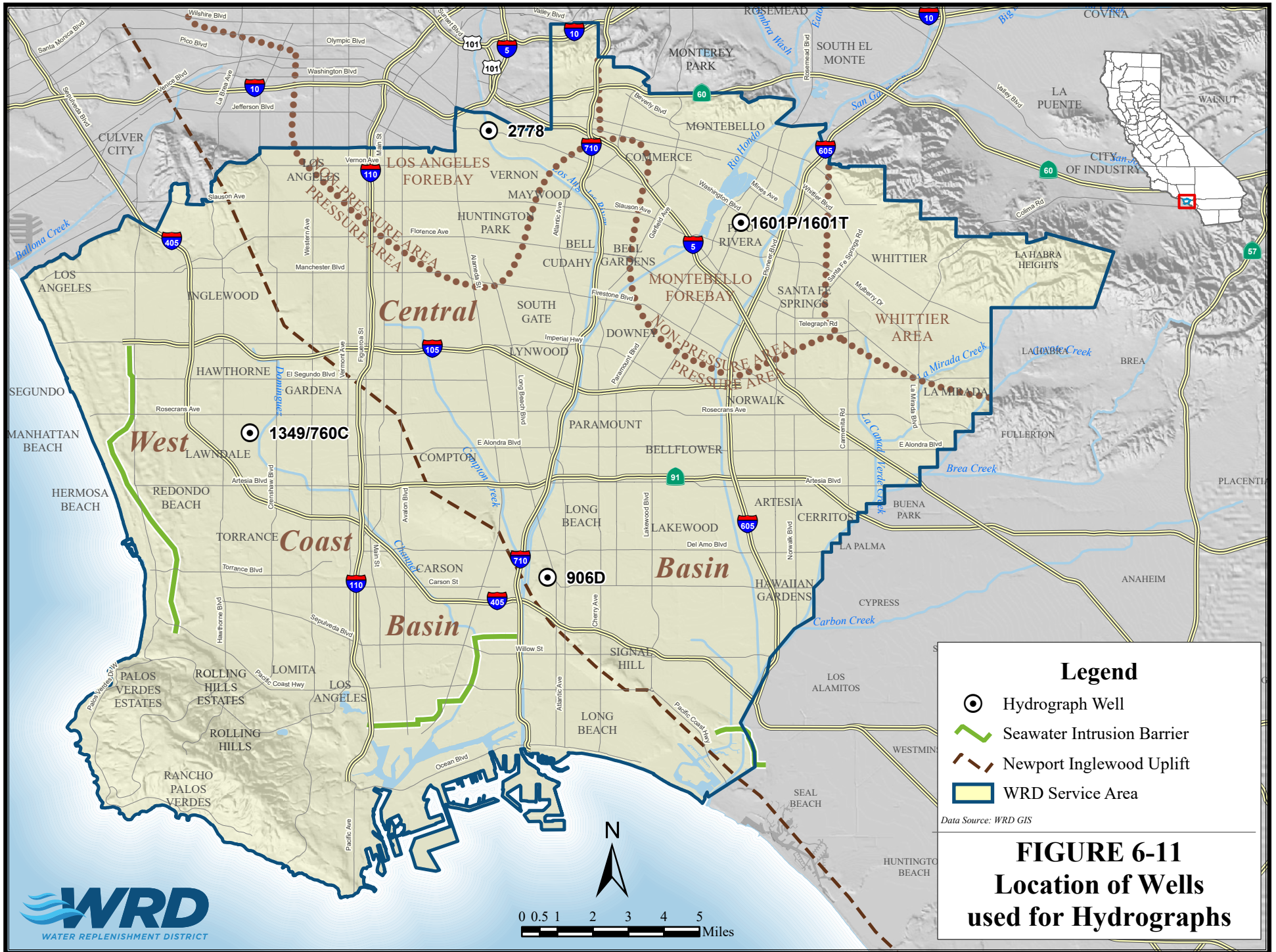
**Legend**

-  WRD Service Area
-  Area of Flowing Artesian Wells
-  Groundwater Elevation Contour (ft msl)
-  General Groundwater Flow Direction

Data Source: WRD GIS

**FIGURE 6-10**  
**Groundwater Elevation**  
**Contour Map for 1904**





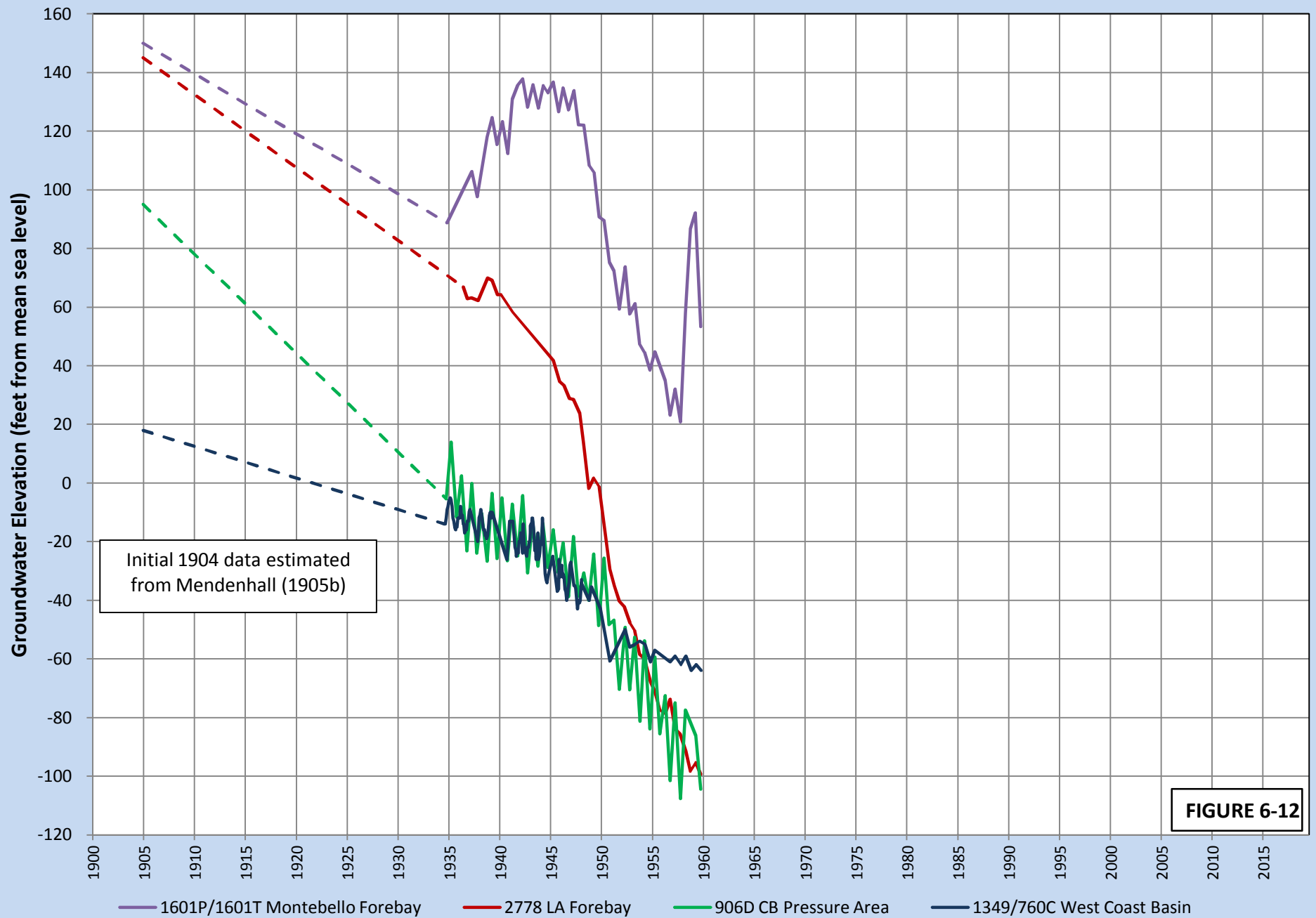
**Legend**

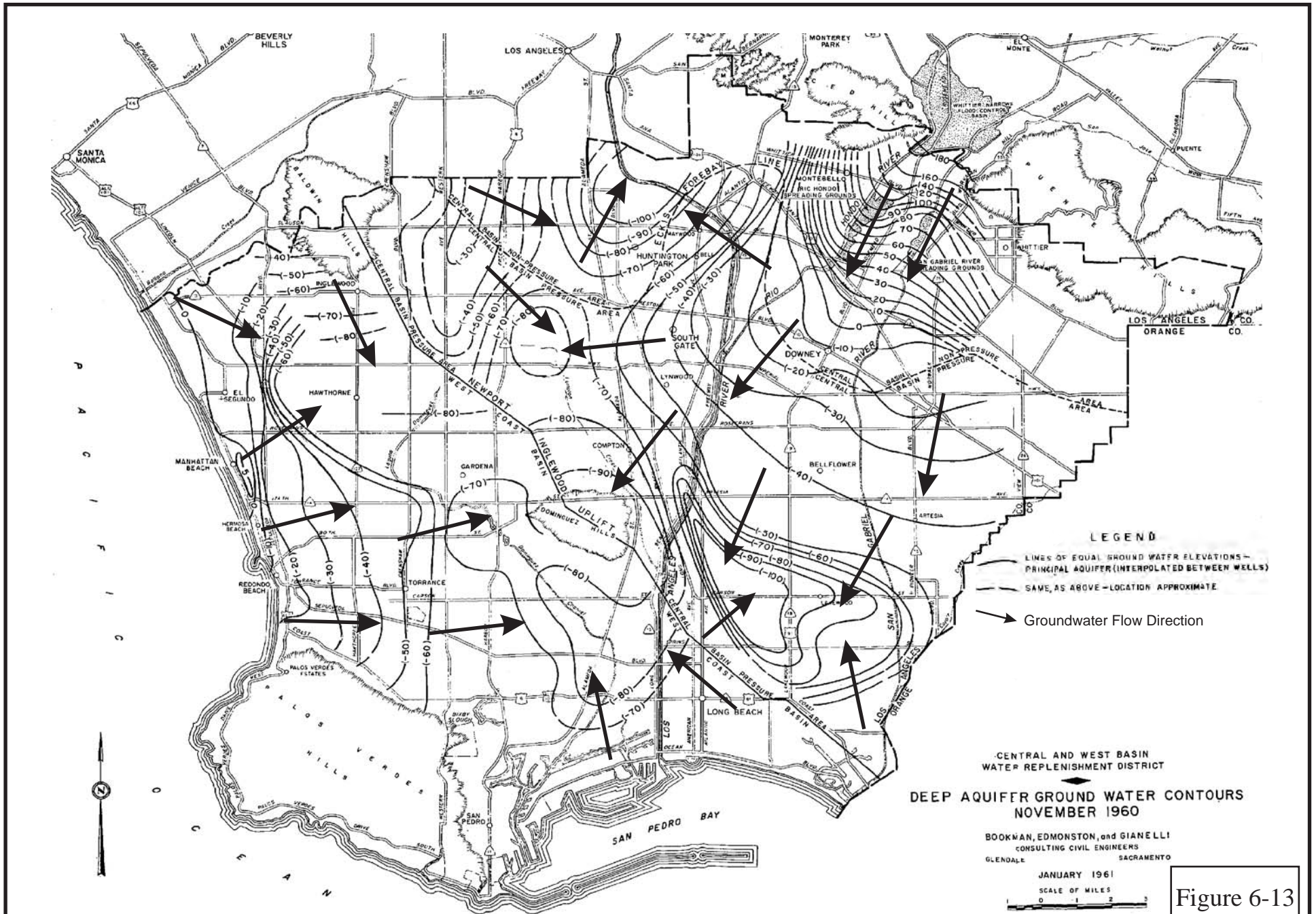
- Hydrograph Well
- Seawater Intrusion Barrier
- Newport Inglewood Uplift
- WRD Service Area

Data Source: WRD GIS

**FIGURE 6-11**  
**Location of Wells**  
**used for Hydrographs**

# Groundwater Level Hydrographs - 1904 - 1960

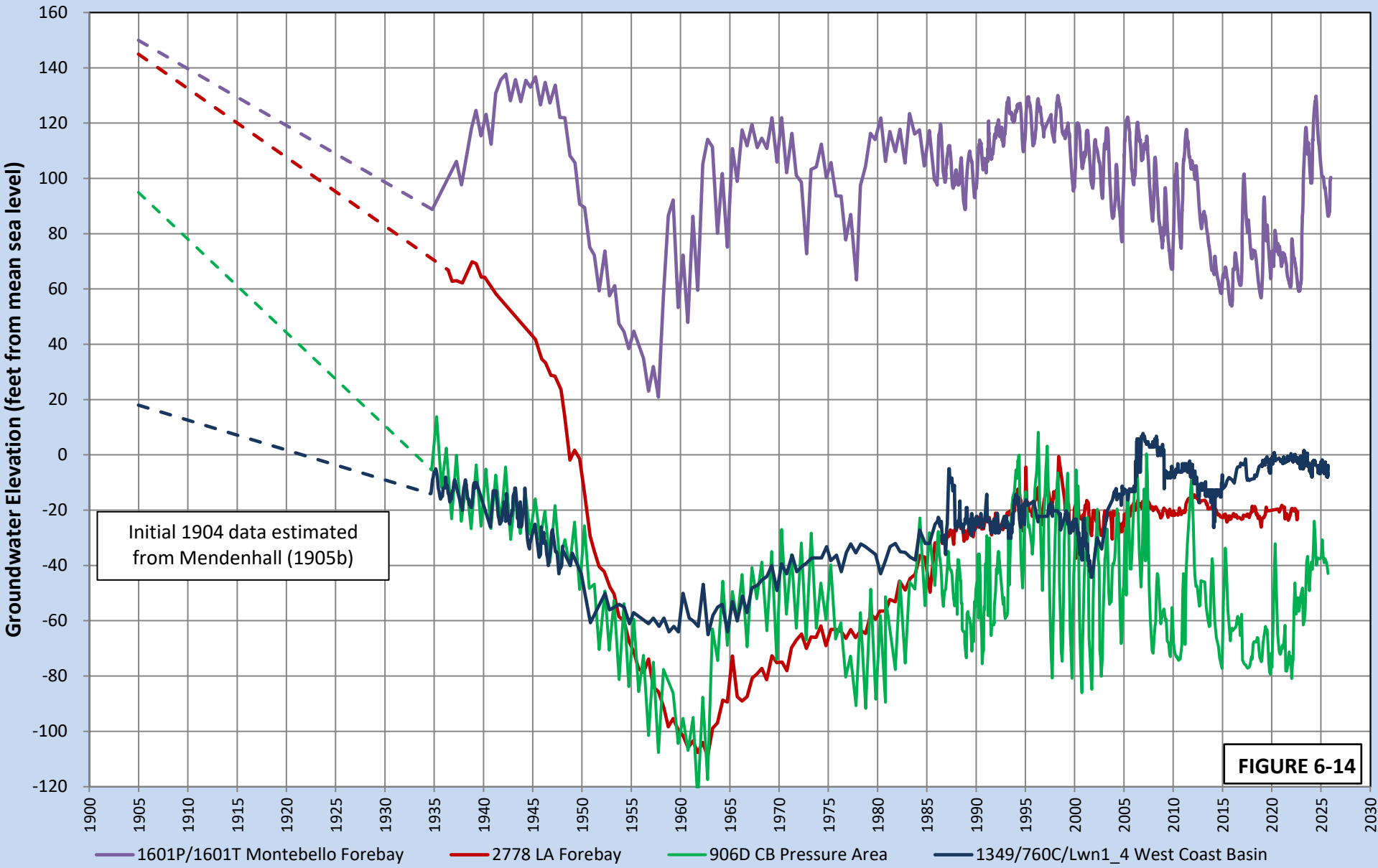


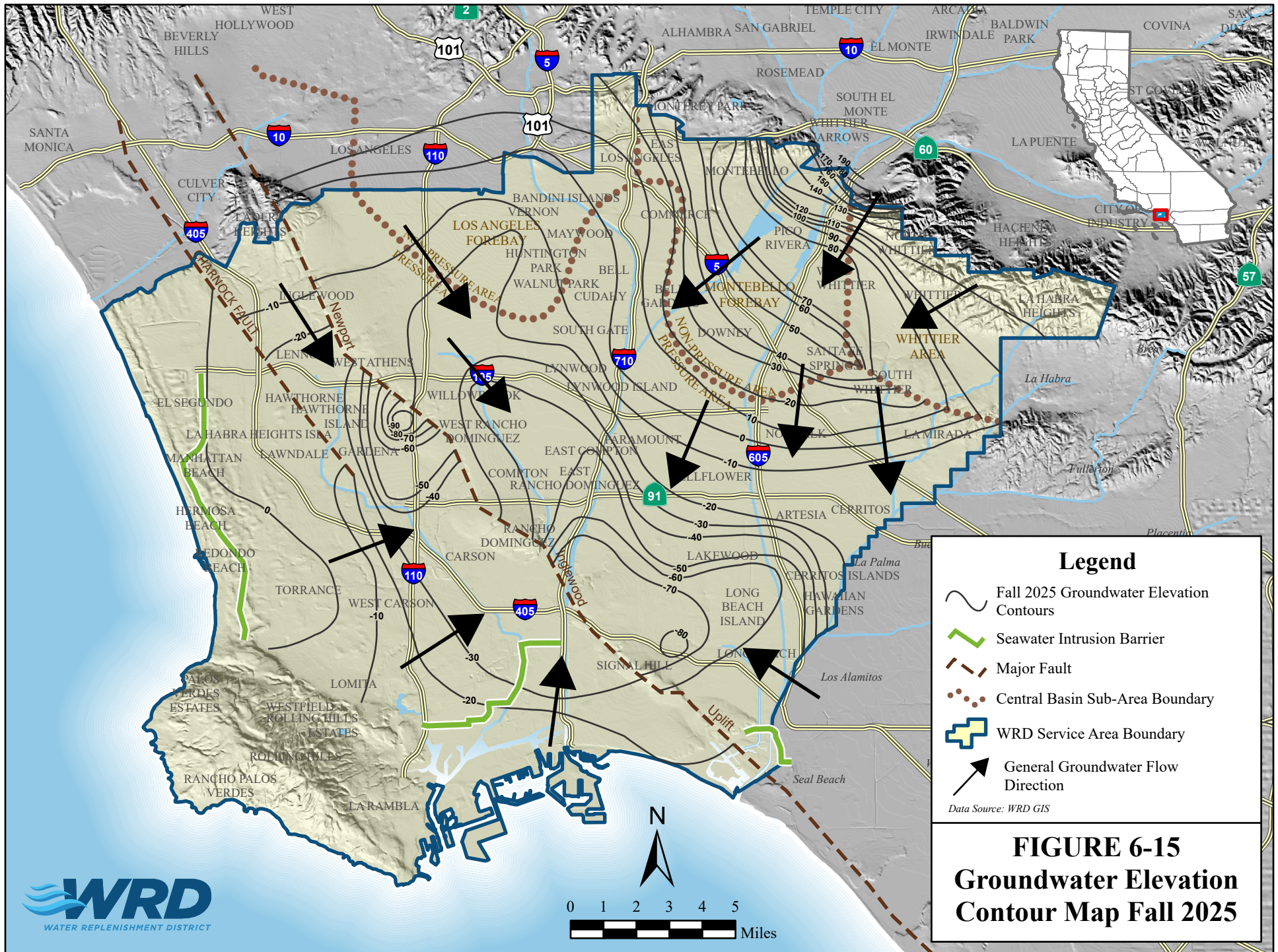


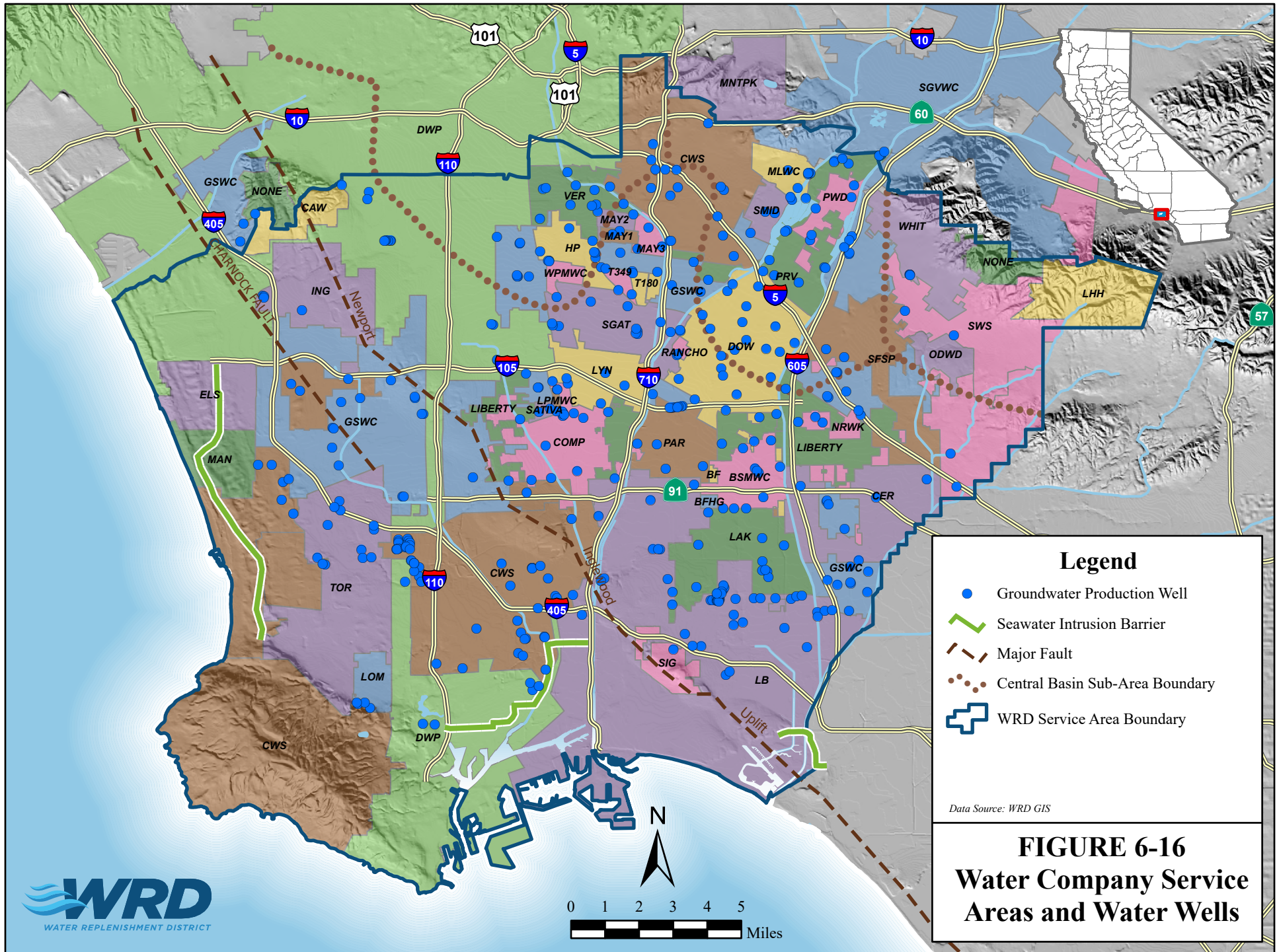
Data Source: Central and West Basin Water Replenishment District, 1961  
Groundwater Flow Arrows added by WRD for this Study

Figure 6-13

# Groundwater Level Hydrographs - 1904 - 2025







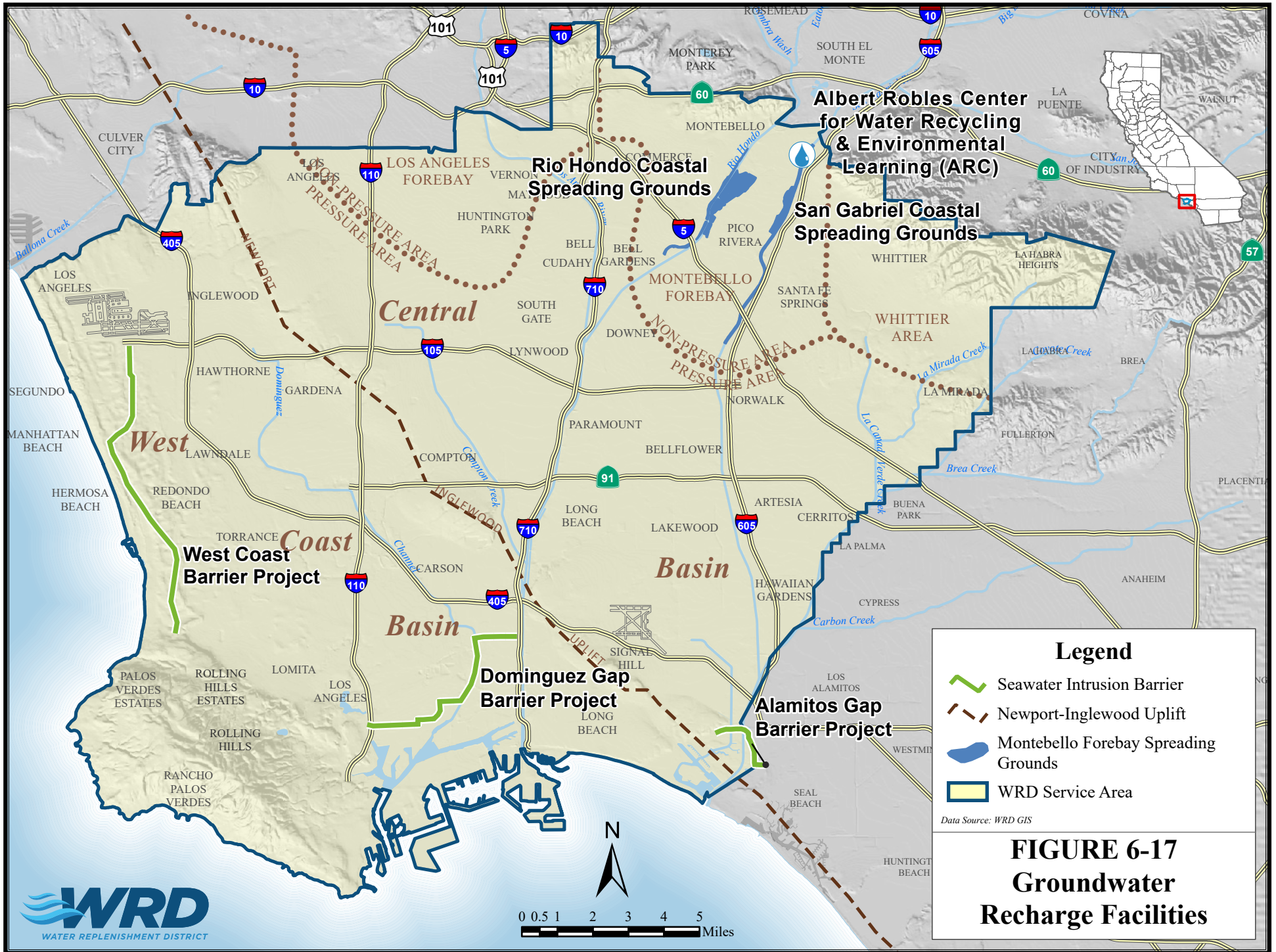
**Legend**

- Groundwater Production Well
- Seawater Intrusion Barrier
- - - Major Fault
- ⋯ Central Basin Sub-Area Boundary
- WRD Service Area Boundary

*Data Source: WRD GIS*

**FIGURE 6-16**  
**Water Company Service**  
**Areas and Water Wells**





## Rio Hondo Coastal Spreading Grounds



Spreading grounds owned and operated by LACDPW.  
Stormwater captured and spread by LACDWP.  
Imported and recycled water for spreading purchased by WRD.

Photo Source: WRD

## San Gabriel Coastal Spreading Grounds

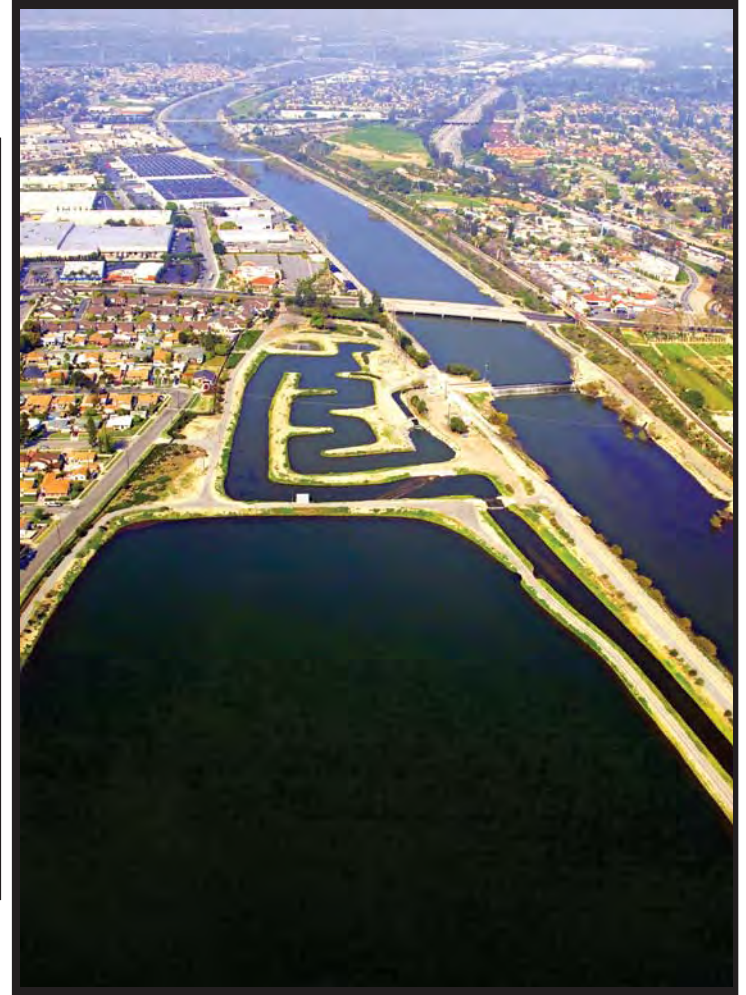
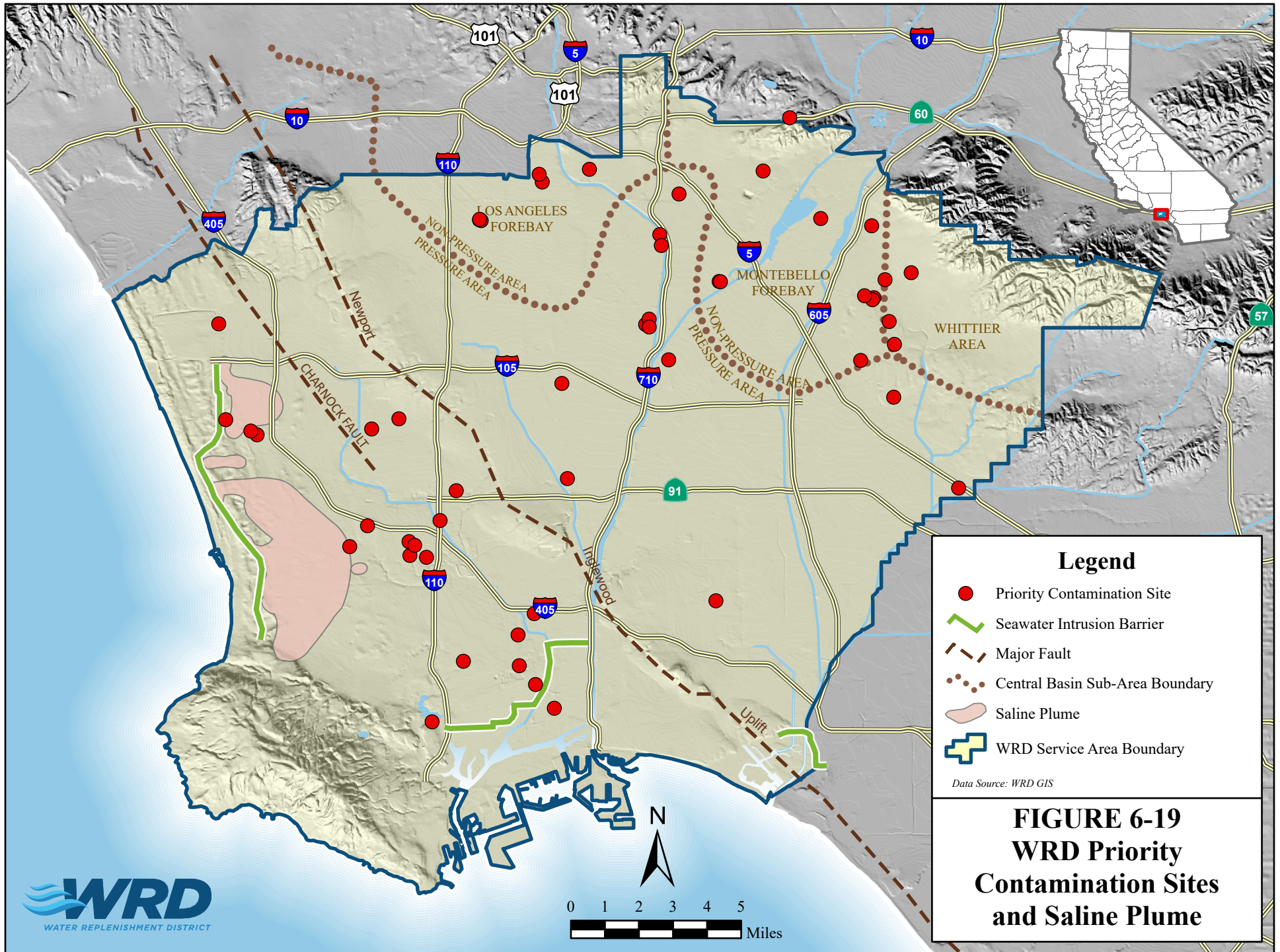
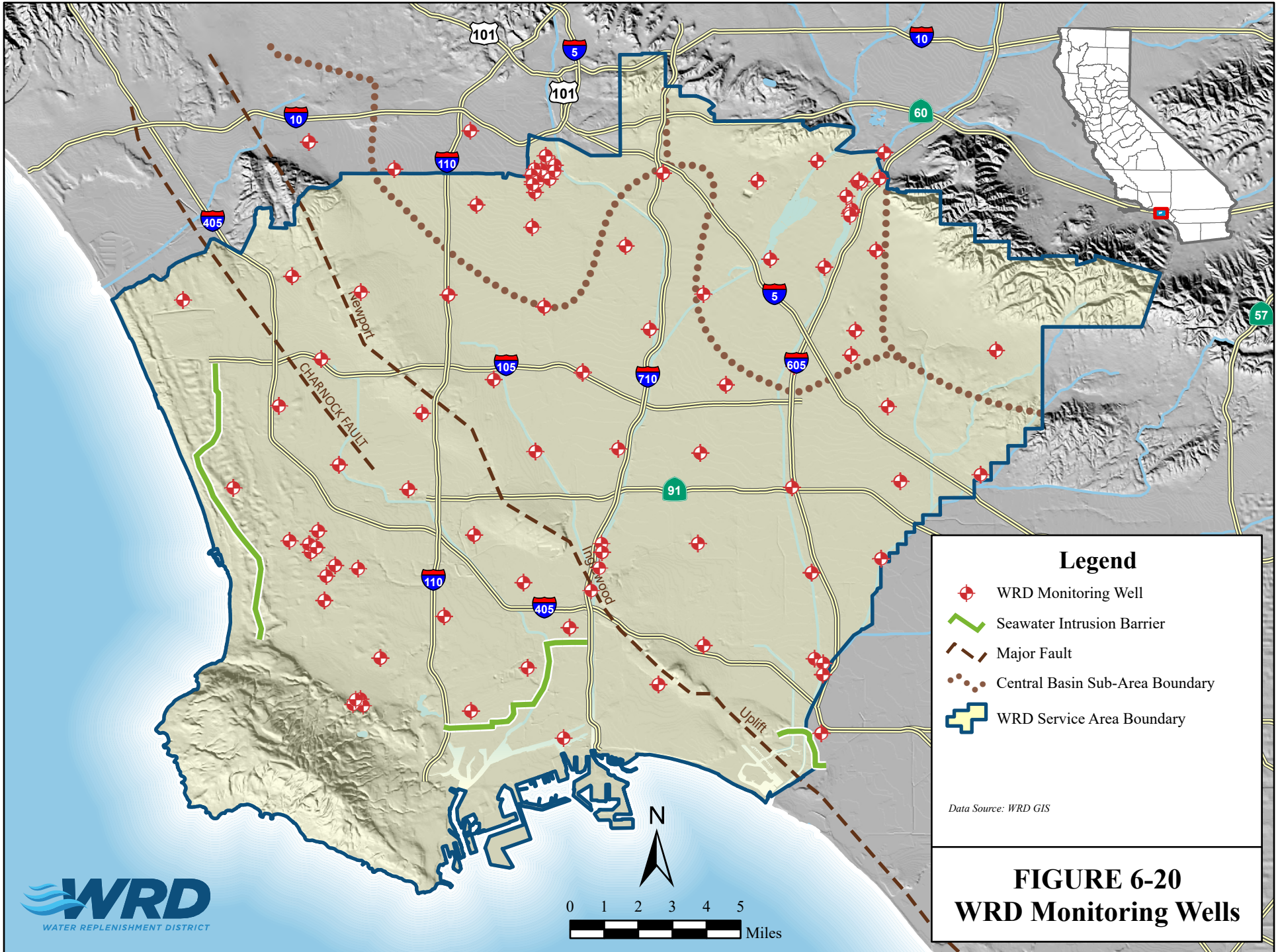







Figure 6-18  
Rio Hondo and San Gabriel  
Coastal Spreading Grounds





**Legend**

-  WRD Monitoring Well
-  Seawater Intrusion Barrier
-  Major Fault
-  Central Basin Sub-Area Boundary
-  WRD Service Area Boundary

*Data Source: WRD GIS*

**FIGURE 6-20**  
**WRD Monitoring Wells**

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