ANNUAL WATER SUPPLY REPORT

June 2025

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Director of Public Works

1.0 Introduction

The City of Buellton's water is supplied by groundwater and supplemented by State Water Project. The Groundwater is supplied from the Buellton Uplands Groundwater Basin and the Santa Ynez River Underflow. The groundwater sources are shown in Figure 1 (identified as Zone D and Zone A).

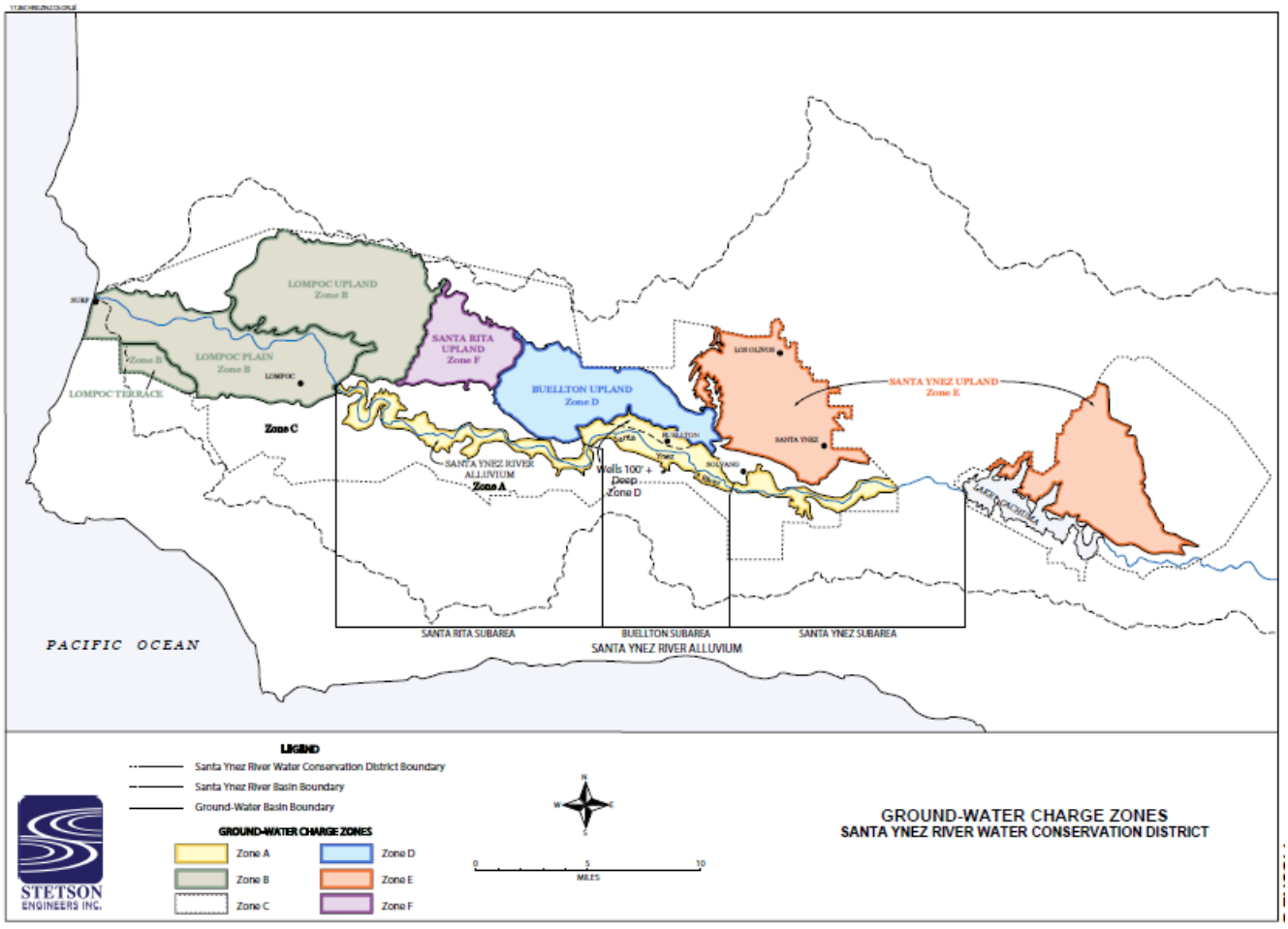

Figure 1. Groundwater Basins

The City currently has four (4) wells as part of the water supply system: three (3) shallow wells in the Santa Ynez Underflow and one (1) in the Buellton Uplands. The City also has two additional wells, located in the Santa Ynez Underflow. However, both wells are used solely for irrigation purposes for the Zaca Creek Golf Course and for hillside/field irrigation at the "Willemsen Ranch".

The City is also a participant of the State Water Project through the Central Coast Water Authority (CCWA). CCWA owns and operates water treatment facilities and pipeline that delivers water from the State Water Project to the project participants in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties. Buellton has one (1) turn-out from the CCWA pipeline that delivers water directly to the City's distribution system. Figure 2 provides a general exhibit of the State Water line.

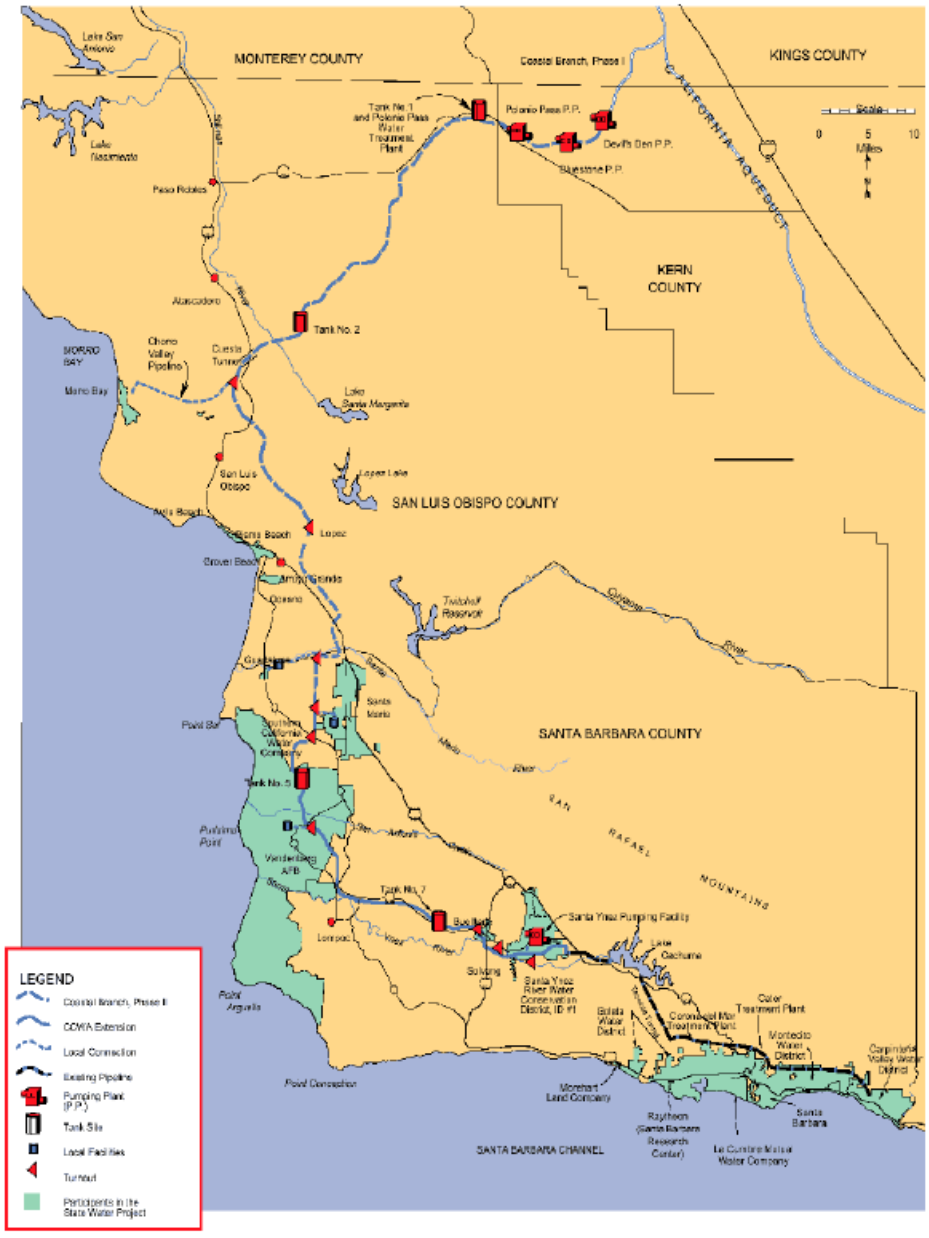

Figure 2. State Water Project

2.0 Production

The City has two water treatment facilities. The McMurray Water Treatment Plant treats water pumped from the three wells in the Santa Ynez River Underflow. The City's permit to draw from the Santa Ynez River Underflow is currently 1385 acre-feet per year. The City's 246 Water Treatment Plant treats water pumped from one well in the Buellton Uplands. There are currently no permit restrictions on pumping from the Buellton Uplands. During normal and wet years, the primary wells utilized are in the Santa Ynez River Underflow. During dry/drought years, the primary well utilized is in the Buellton Uplands. Table 1 shows the total production for each source for the 2024 calendar year.

The City's State Water Project allocation is 578 acre-feet. In February 2024, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) notified its contractors that the initial deliveries would be 15% of the allocation. Several additional notifications followed, with the final notification made in April 2024 increasing deliveries to 40% of its allocations.

In 2024, the City produced 889 acre-feet of water (approximately 289,681,920 gallons) from its groundwater supply. Total water supply produced/received in 2024 (total groundwater plus State Water Project) was 1138.8 acre-feet (approximately 371,079,607 gallons).

With the 2024 population of 5090, the water produced on an average daily basis was 199 gallons/day/capita. It is important to note that this figure reflects total water use/production and cannot be reasonably compared to other agencies daily per capita rates. The City of Buellton has unique conditions where the actual residential vs commercial/industrial water use is approximately 50-50.

Table 1. Water Production 2024

	Buellton Uplands	Santa Ynez River Underflow	State Water Project	Total 2023
Production Amounts (AF)	**623.2**	**265.8**	**249.9**	**1138.8**

3.0 Supply

The City of Buellton's water is supplied by Groundwater and supplemented by State Water Project. The City's groundwater basins are informally managed by the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District. Formed in 1939 for the primary purpose of protecting water rights on the lower Santa Ynez River, the District has overseen the groundwater basins from Santa Ynez to Lompoc (as shown in Figure 1, page 1). The District provides an annual report summarizing the groundwater production and charges and a status of groundwater and surface water supplies.

In April 2024, the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District published its 46th Engineering and Survey Report on Water Supply Conditions. This report summarizes the conditions of supply and basin storage, particularly during Spring which provides the best direct indication of the groundwater conditions during the past year. The report summarizes that the Buellton Upland basin showed a slight increase in storage in the past year. The conditions in the Santa Ynez River Alluvium (Santa Ynez River Underflow) showed a slight decrease in storage in the past year. Due to the relatively normal conditions with the rain season, no water rights releases occurred in 2023 from Lake Cachuma to provide replenishment.

During normal conditions, both groundwater supply sources are in good condition and for planning purposes are equally utilized for production of water. Table 2 provides a summary of water supply reasonably available to the City during the Fiscal Year 2023 and for a cumulative long term period (5 years). Operationally, the City utilizes one of the two groundwater sources as the primary resource based on needs and efficiency. Due to permitting rights, the primary wells the City utilizes are in the Santa Ynez River Underflow during normal and wet years. However, during dry/drought years, the primary well utilized is in the Buellton Uplands.

Table 2. Water Supply Availability

	Buellton Uplands	Santa Ynez River Underflow	State Water Project	Total 2023
FY 2023 (AF)	**1,000**	**1,385**	**578**	**2,963**
Cumulative Long Term Projection (AF)	**5,000**	**6,925**	**2,890**	**14,815**

The following Table 3 is an estimate of the water demand anticipated during Fiscal Year 2023 and over the long

term (5 year) period. These estimates are well within the Supply Available in Table 2.

Table 3. Water Demand Forecast – 5 Years

	Buellton Uplands	Santa Ynez River Underflow	Total 2023
FY 2023 (AF)	**750**	**750**	**1,400**
Cumulative Long Term Projection (AF)	**3,750**	**3,750**	**7,000**

The City also utilizes State Water Project as part of its water supply. Buellton's State Water Project allocation is 578 acre-feet, but is subject to availability by the State. The City may utilize State Water Project water in lieu of (or in addition to) pumping from the Santa Ynez River Underflow or the Buellton Uplands. At this time, State Project Water is used to supplement the City's peak water demands or if any of the City's water facilities is under repair.

Water Supply Limitations

While the supply discussed above appears adequate, there are several factors that greatly impact the realistic availability of supply. These include: Weather, facility operations, and demand requirements. It is obvious during periods of drought, that the groundwater supply (including State Water Project) has the potential for overdraft and minimizing the availability of groundwater. We have also experienced the lack of State Water Project allocations during periods of drought. Conversely, during periods of excessive rain, our water supply is limited to State Water Project and Buellton Uplands (Well 9). Wells 3, 7 and 8 are located in the Santa Ynez River and are not available to use when the surface water is within 50 feet of the wells. Our facilities' capacity is also a limiting factor. Currently, Reservoir 2 is still in repair with expected completion date of 2024. However, we will need to do continuous repairs and improvements to Reservoir 1 and 3. In addition, each well's pumping capacity diminishes over time due to casing issues, pumping issues, and groundwater/aquifer/ issues. With continued growth, the City will need to continue to evaluate additional water resources. The last evaluation of the City's water supply indicated an overall limitation to fire demand supply. It is critical to continue evaluation and modeling of the City's water supply, facilities and storage to ensure supplies are adequate.

4.0 Groundwater Management

On November 10, 2016, the City Approved Resolution No. 16-26, deciding to become a Groundwater Sustainability Agency with the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District to pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). This provides the organization of the Central Management Area and begins our SGMA compliance and formal groundwater management, further protecting the long term sustainability of the City's groundwater basin supply. The Central Management Area is shown in Figure 3. During 2018, the formation of the Central Management Area was finalized. Under the lead of the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District, a Request for Proposals was published, and subsequently consulting contract awarded to Stetson Engineers, for the groundwork for the SGMA compliance. Grant Agreement was also finalized with the Department of Water Resources under Prop 1b to assist in funding these early SGMA studies required for completion.

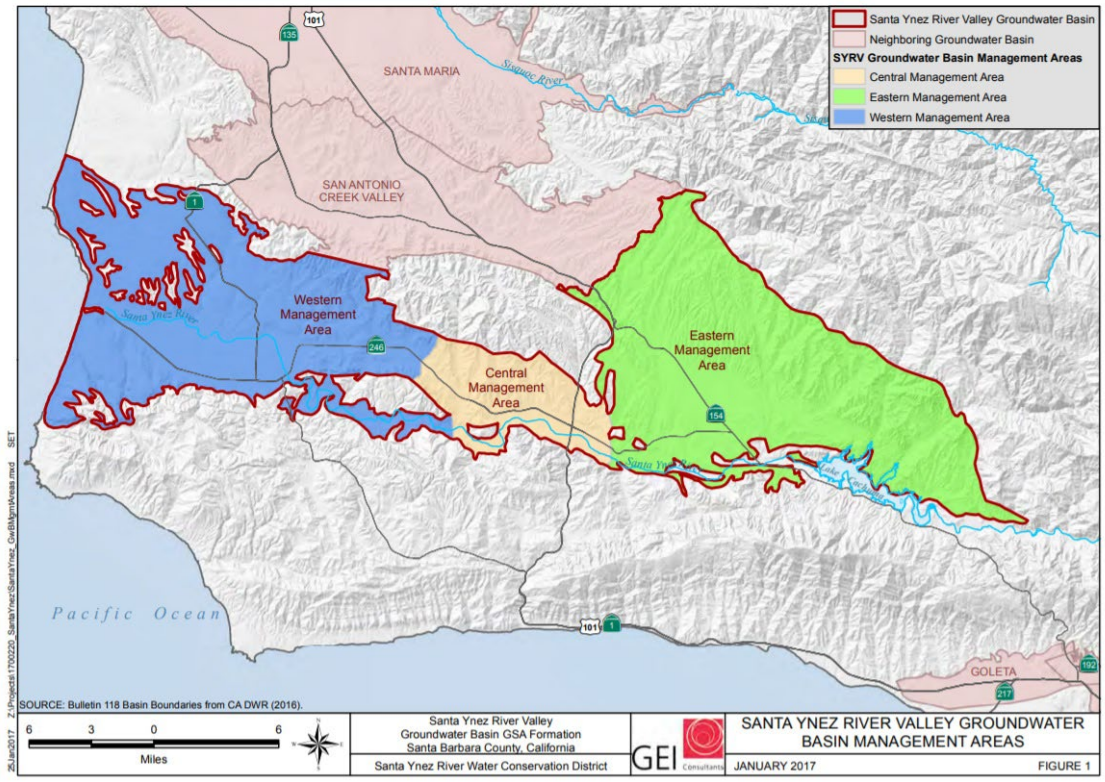

Figure 3. SGMA Basins

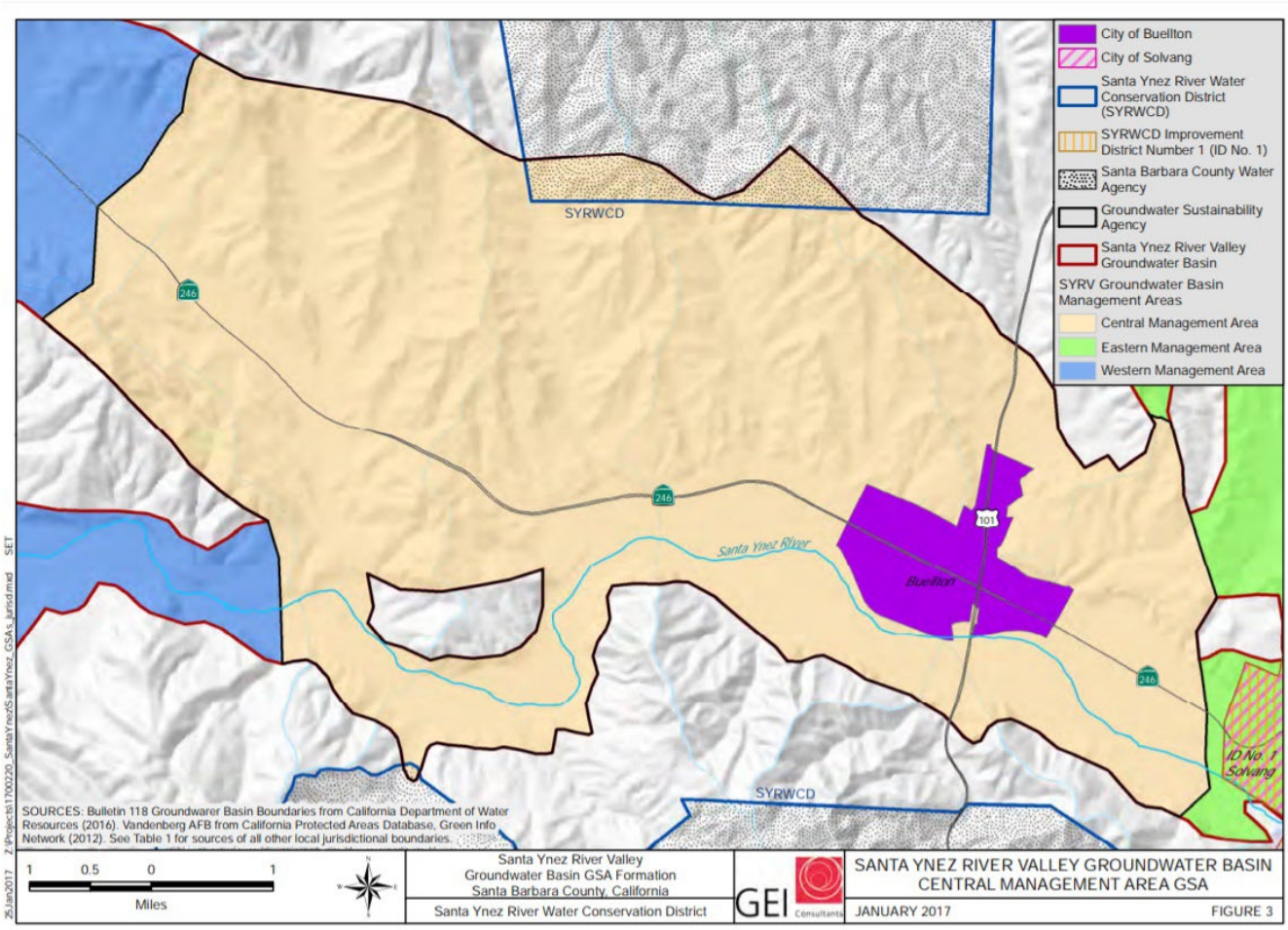

Figure 4. Central Management Area

Local organization of the Central Management Area continued in 2023 with the following general milestones:

- Completion and submission of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan by Stetson Engineers, which includes:
    - Data Management Plan,
    - Stakeholder Engagement Plan, and
    - Hydrogeologic Conceptual Model
- Various Well Verifications for Santa Barbara County Health
- Continued coordination on GSA management with WMA and EMA
- Formation of the Central Management Area Joint Powers Authority (JPA)

These documents can be located at the Santa Ynez River Valley Groundwater Basin website at: https://www.santaynezwater.org/central-gsa . These documents provide the base data sets which will be used for the Groundwater Sustainability Plan.

Work in 2024 will continue the work implementing the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) and formation of governance amongst the basins to efficiently provide compliance and implementation.

2023 is the first complete water year following the submittal of the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) to the State Department of Water Resources in 2022. The CMA GSP indicated that the current CMA conditions are sustainable. The CMA GSP established sustainable management criteria for measuring progress toward groundwater sustainability and recommended projects and management actions to maintain sustainability, avoid undesirable results, and avoid unsustainable groundwater conditions.

The Annual report can be found at: https://www.santaynezwater.org/files/c48a23670/AR3-CMA-WY2023.pdf

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5.0 Groundwater Replenishment/Recycled Water

The City of Buellton's does contribute to the replenishment of the groundwater systems. The City's wastewater treatment plant currently discharges approximately 427,000 gallons of secondary treated effluent per day (2023 average daily flows) into infiltration basins. Specific studies on the extent of actual replenishment have not been conducted.

Recycled Water Feasibility evaluation has previously been conducted by staff. At this time, the cost-benefit to construct the necessary plant improvements and city-wide infrastructure to treat, produce and deliver tertiary treated, Title 22 compliant effluent cannot be met due to the limited amount of potential users that could utilize the reclaimed water. While this option is not currently feasible, it will remain an option to review periodically as grant funding becomes available or if alternative opportunities surface.

The City participated in a Potable/Indirect Potable Reuse Study with the County of Santa Barbara in 2023. The study was conducted and prepared by Carollo Engineers to evaluate the potential for potable water reuse using the effluent from the municipal wastewater treatment facilities in the County. This is a high level study that evaluated the City of Buellton, City of Solvang, Buellton-Solvang Joint and Summerland Sanitary District for Advanced Water Purification Facilities. Though the technology is not new, costs are not economically feasible on the small scale for Buellton or Buellton/Solvang jointly.

6.0 Conservation

In order to provide long term sustainability, the City has been emphasizing water use reductions in the community. In an effort to advocate water conservation, the City has continued to implement outreach programs in conjunction with Santa Barbara County and other local jurisdictions. This outreach can be recognized as:

Let's Save Together
waterWise
City of Buellton

Currently, the City provides water conservation "Cash-4-Grass" rebate programs to residents and businesses. The City is currently revamping this program to allow more residents and businesses to make the most of this benefit. In addition, the City has been providing outreach through the local newsletter – *The Buellton Buzz* in addition to additional water bill inserts.

The City has also been striving to lead by example with the drought tolerant landscape renovations at City Hall, completed in 2015. Additional conservation efforts include "smart irrigation" tuned to weather forecasts at all City Parks and Medians and conversion of Median 2 from grass to permeable pavers and drought tolerant landscaping.