THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation Group

- **SRI Group Manager Monthly Report**

Summary

Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation activities for September 2026

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Sustainability and Resilience

On September 1, Sustainability and Resilience (SR) staff kicked off greenhouse gas (GHG) verification with SCS Global Services (SCS) for The Climate Registry (TCR) GHG reporting for calendar year 2025. As MWD's accredited third-party GHG verifier, SCS is currently reviewing MWD's GHG inventory documentation.

The Chief SRI Officer attended a day-long briefing with members of Metropolitan's leadership team at Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Areas of potential partnership discussed included near-term weather forecast and operations; climate modeling and resilience efforts; landscape transformation benefits quantification; and Colorado River soil moisture monitoring to inform streamflow and runoff expectations.

Climate Action

SR staff developed and submitted a proposal that was selected for the 2026–27 UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability Environmental Science Practicum. The nine-month capstone research program pairs teams of 7–8 senior Environmental Science students with outside organizations to address applied environmental challenges under the guidance of an expert advisor. Through the Practicum, Metropolitan will receive research, analysis, and recommendations while providing students with an opportunity to work on a multidisciplinary environmental issue with direct application to a large public water agency. Metropolitan's selected project, ***"Advancing Scope 3 Emissions Reduction in Regional Water Infrastructure: Sustainable Procurement, Construction Materials, and Climate Action,"*** will support the Climate Action Plan (CAP) 5-Year Update by evaluating practical approaches to better understand, measure, and reduce indirect (Scope 3) greenhouse gas emissions associated with Metropolitan's operations and supply chain. The student team will assess priority emissions sources and accounting methodologies, identify data gaps and reduction opportunities, benchmark best practices, and evaluate opportunities to reduce embodied carbon through sustainable procurement and lower-carbon construction materials. The research is expected to provide actionable recommendations to inform Metropolitan's CAP implementation, sustainable procurement efforts, and future GHG accounting and reduction strategies.

In September, the Water Utility Climate Alliance (WUCA) released its new *Climate Resilient Engineering Design Guidance for the Water Sector*. Developed in partnership with Brown and Caldwell, the guidance addresses a critical industry need by providing practical, implementable strategies for incorporating climate resilience into the planning, design, and operation of water-sector infrastructure. It

is intended to help utilities move beyond reliance on historical conditions and incorporate a range of projected future climate conditions into infrastructure decisions, with guidance addressing risks including extreme heat and cold, flooding, extreme precipitation, sea-level rise, storms, wildfire-related power outages, and other climate hazards. Metropolitan contributed directly to the development and review of the guidance. SR Section staff participated in the WUCA project committee, representing Metropolitan alongside other major water utilities from across the country, while Metropolitan Engineering staff reviewed draft guidance and provided technical input to help ensure its applicability to water-sector infrastructure.

The final guidance provides an actionable framework for integrating climate considerations throughout the infrastructure lifecycle—from planning and basis of design through detailed design, operations, and maintenance—and is intended to be adaptable to individual utilities' environmental conditions, operational priorities, and governance structures.

Wildfire Mitigation

No update for September.

Innovation, Pilots, and Emerging Technologies

The Innovation Team participated in discussions at the Southern Nevada Water Authority focused on collaborative pilot opportunities with engineering and water quality leadership from Metropolitan and other participating agencies. The engagement provided an opportunity to share operational challenges, explore emerging technologies, and identify potential areas for joint technology demonstrations and learning.

The Innovation Unit also continued preparations for the October 20 PitchFest workshop. The event website is live at: https://www.pilot.city/water-innovation. Staff have been working with teams across Metropolitan and at other utilities to develop research ideas and identify opportunities to connect operational needs with academic expertise. The workshop is designed to provide an informal, low-stakes forum for water professionals to pitch challenges and explore potential research partnerships, with the goal of matching impactful research projects that can generate practical benefits for participating utilities.

Environmental Planning Section

In support of the Pure Water Southern California Program, Environmental Planning staff continued to review the feasibility study addendum for the Direct Potable Reuse Demonstration Facility, develop the National Environmental Policy Act compliance strategy, coordinate with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) on the large-scale grant amendment, and prepare the USBR Real Property form for potential property acquisition with the grant funding. For the Webb Tract Wetland Restoration Project, staff obtained approvals for pre-construction submittals in compliance with regulatory permits. Approvals were received for the dewatering, water quality monitoring, giant garter snake relocation, western pond turtle relocation plans, and biologists' resumes. Staff continued preparation of supplemental California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation for the Sepulveda Feeder Reach 9 PCCP Rehabilitation Project, provided support for the progressive design-build process for the Sepulveda Feeder Pump Stations Project and the Lake Mathews New Pressure Control Structure and Electrical Upgrades Project, and continued CEQA analysis and document preparation for the District Housing and Improvements Project. For the Inland Feeder-San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (SBVMWD) Foothill Pump Station Intertie Project, staff continued coordination with California Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to finalize the mitigation strategy required under the federal and state incidental take permits, began developing a mitigation partnership agreement with SBVMWD, continued pre-construction activities including biological surveys and preparation of fencing and trapping plans required under the state Endangered Species Act incidental take permit, and continued coordinating with the USFWS under Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act to obtain the Biological Opinion which is expected to be issued by September 25, 2026. For the Copper Basin Discharge Valve Replacement and Access Road Improvements Project, pre-construction activities, including species surveys and preparation of plans

required under regulatory permits, were conducted. Environmental monitoring of construction activities continued for the La Verne Shops Upgrades, Weymouth Administration Building Seismic Upgrades, Sepulveda Feeder Reach 2 PCCP Rehabilitation, and the Garvey Reservoir Rehabilitation projects.

Environmental Planning staff provided CEQA and regulatory clearances and conducted pre-construction biological resources surveys for critical operations and maintenance activities, including shutdowns and routine road grading and patrol road maintenance, throughout the conveyance and distribution system. Staff provided subject matter expert review of the following legislative bills: Assembly Bill (AB) 706 (Aguiar-Curry) – FOREST (Forest Organic Residue, Energy, and Safety Transformation) and Wildfire Prevention Fund Act; AB 1600 (Arambula) – Disadvantaged communities: farmworker communities; AB 1881 (Ramos) – California Indian Freedom Act of 2026; AB 2032 (Ransom) – Fish and wildlife: invasive mussels: golden mussels; Senate Bill (SB) 492 (Becker) – Wildfire reform; and SB 601 (Allen) – Water: waste discharge. Staff provided analysis for and participated in the preparation of the September Board letter on Proposition 45: Building an Affordable California Initiative. This initiative, which will be on the November 2026 ballot, would modify environmental review for certain projects. In addition, staff reviewed and analyzed CEQA notices for three external projects to determine the potential impacts on Metropolitan and protect Metropolitan's right-of-way and facilities; comment letters were prepared and submitted for projects that had the potential for impacts. On September 3, Environmental Planning hosted an in-house training on air quality and greenhouse gas emissions analysis. This training is a part of a series of training presentations on CEQA that are being conducted for staff professional development.

The Environmental Planning Section continued oversight of reserve management activities to protect valuable natural resources and meet Metropolitan's mitigation obligations. Security patrols and fence repairs were conducted throughout the Lake Mathews Multiple Species Reserve and the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve (MSR) to prevent trespassing, vandalism, poaching, and theft and to protect the reserves' natural and cultural resources, facilities, and equipment. Specific activities at the Lake Mathews Reserve included invasive species management and making irrigation adjustments at the Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub restoration site, mowing grassland habitat to reduce thatch and invasive species accumulation, and installing burrowing owl boxes to house and protect the species. Activities at the MSR included coordinating with researchers to conduct bird and mammal surveys and conducting weed abatement for fire and habitat management.

Zero Emission Vehicle Transition

No update for September

Land Management

A new, 25-year license agreement has been issued to Verizon Wireless for the installation and operation of a commercial cellular communication site adjacent to Lake Skinner. The site is expected to enhance cellular communication for the area surrounding Lake Skinner.

Entry permits were issued to the City of Fontana to allow pre-construction activities within Metropolitan's Etiwanda pipeline right-of-way in connection with the City's proposed public road improvements. A Purchase and Sale Agreement was also executed with the City, as a precursor to Metropolitan granting public road easements to the City. New public roads are being constructed as part of the Building a Better Connected Inland Empire Project.

Staff is concluding the RFP process with prospective agriculture lessees interested in leasing Bouldin Island. The intent is to conclude negotiations and present a lease recommendation to the Board in December 2026.

Annexation

There were no changes to Metropolitan's service area during the reporting quarter.