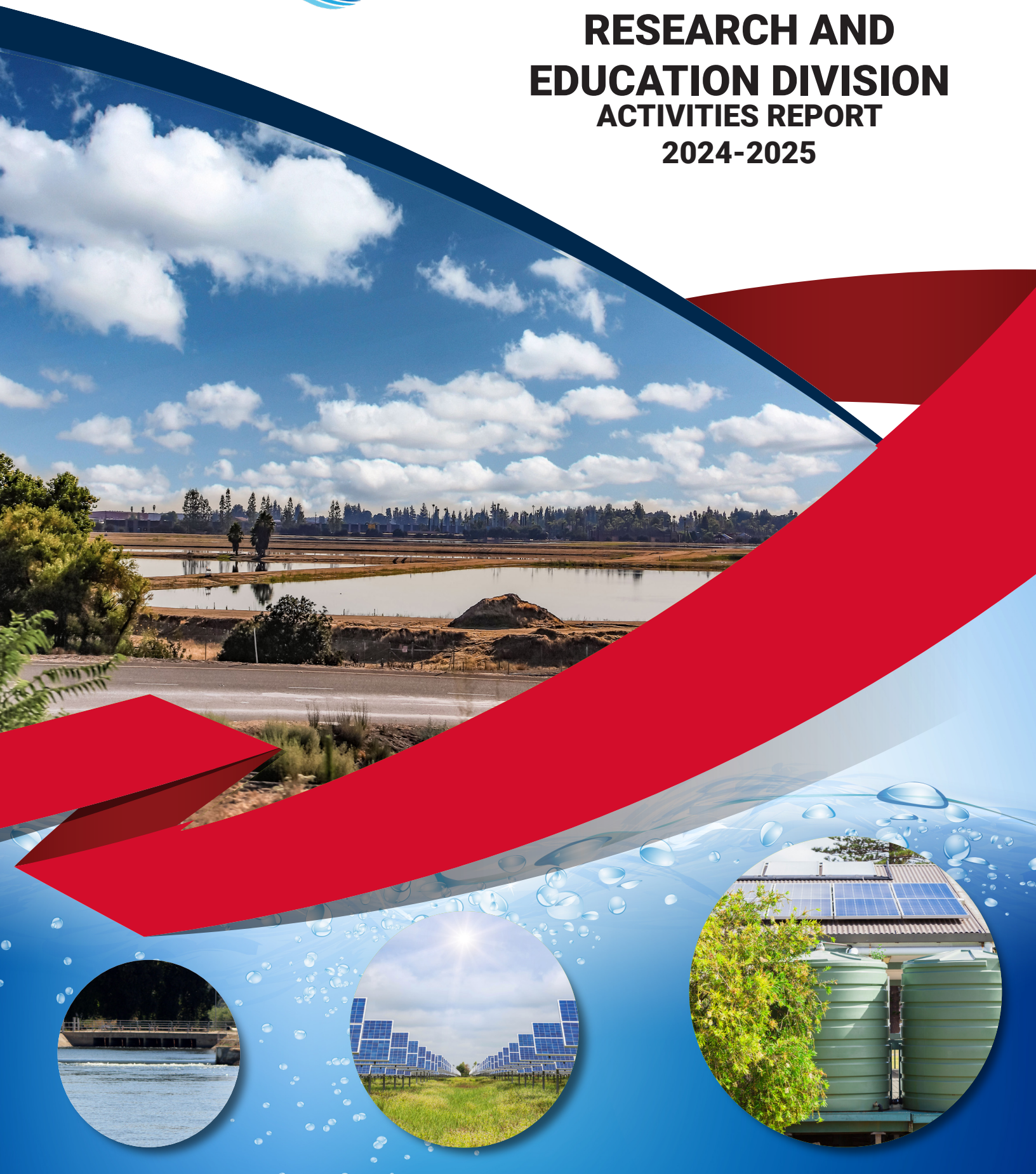


RESEARCH AND EDUCATION DIVISION ACTIVITIES REPORT 2024-2025



Impact in Numbers

At the California Water Institute, impact is more than a concept—it's measurable, visible, and growing. This snapshot highlights the depth and breadth of CWI's work across research, education, outreach, and collaboration. From cross-disciplinary faculty expertise and student engagement to public outreach, media presence, and community partnerships, these numbers tell the story of a research institute driving solutions for California's complex water challenges. Every project, event, and connection reflects our commitment to informed water management, equity, innovation, and resilience.



Faculty Fellows and Advisory Board Areas of Expertise

- Plant science
- Irrigation and water management
- Library and digital services
- Information technology
- Finance and business law
- Sociology
- Communications
- Liberal studies
- Civil and geomatics engineering
- Physical therapy
- Earth and environmental sciences
- American Indian studies
- Analytical chemistry
- Art, design and art history



Topics of Proposed Research Projects

- Water efficiency
- Water equity
- Socio-economic impact
- Water quality
- Septic system education
- Regional water resilience
- Community-innovator collaborations
- Multi-language water education
- Emergency preparedness education
- Digital twin technologies
- Farmer-centric solutions
- Rural water infrastructure resilience
- Economic analysis

Director's Message



Dear Colleagues and Partners,

This year marks a defining milestone for the California Water Institute: 25 years of advancing collaborative, research-driven water solutions for California and the San Joaquin Valley. Since its founding in 2000, CWI has served as a convener, connector, and catalyst helping decision-makers, communities, and researchers navigate some of the state's most complex water challenges. That legacy of service and partnership shaped every aspect of our work in 2025.

It was also a meaningful year for me personally. After serving as Interim Director for two years, I was honored to be officially appointed Director of CWI's Research and Education Division. As a first-generation college graduate from Chowchilla and a Fresno State alum, stepping into this leadership role is deeply personal. It reflects not only my commitment to the region I call home, but also my belief in the power of education, science, and collaboration to build a more resilient water future.

This year, our work reflected the urgency and complexity of the moment. We launched new research initiatives on groundwater recharge, soil health, climate resilience, and water equity. Our Faculty Fellowship Program continued supporting interdisciplinary projects that brought together engineers, economists, environmental scientists, and more. We continued to expand our education and outreach efforts—from launching the Weekly Water Insights radio segment and California's Water Collaborations blog series, to hosting events like World Water Day, the Ag Summit, and the Legislative Water Bootcamp.

We also strengthened our role as facilitators and thought partners in regional water planning. As is shown by the type of projects we work on, CWI has remained committed to helping stakeholders move from dialogue to implementation.

To honor this 25-year milestone, this year's activity report includes a special retrospective timeline showcasing key research, partnerships, publications, and educational initiatives that have defined CWI's impact since 2000. We hope this timeline serves not only as a record of our progress, but as a foundation for future innovation.

This work would not be possible without the remarkable people who contribute to it: our multidisciplinary staff, Faculty Fellows, student interns, campus advisory committee, partner organizations, and community collaborators.

As we celebrate 25 years of impact, we're also looking ahead. We're sharpening our strategic focus to ensure CWI continues to fill a meaningful niche in California's water landscape such as amplifying research, aligning partnerships, and delivering practical solutions that support long-term sustainability for our communities, environment, and economy.

Thank you for being part of this journey. I look forward to what we can accomplish together in the next 25 years.

Sincerely,

A stylized, cursive signature in blue ink that reads "Laura Ramos".

Laura Ramos
Director

Advisory Committee

The Campus Advisory Committee includes one faculty member from each college to provide multidisciplinary guidance to the California Water Institute (CWI). We are thankful for all the advice they provide to our team.



Florence Cassel



David Drexler



Andres Jauregui



Andrew Jones



Robert Lull



Fayzul Pasha



Frederick Nelson



Monica Rivera



Beth Weinman

Faculty Fellows

The Faculty Fellowship Program supports interdisciplinary research and innovation that addresses the San Joaquin Valley's most critical water challenges. Open to faculty from all schools and colleges, it offers structured opportunities for applied research, cross-sector collaboration, and professional development.

Faculty Fellows engage in projects focused on themes such as climate resilience, agricultural innovation, water policy, social equity, and sustainable resource management. In addition to conducting original research, fellows contribute to grant development efforts, share findings through public presentations, and participate in strategic discussions with fellow academics and water stakeholders. By fostering campus-wide engagement and aligning academic expertise with regional needs, the program advances CWI's mission to develop practical, research-driven solutions for California's water future.



Aric Mine



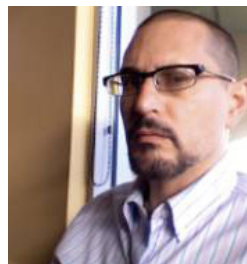
Jai Choi



Paula Durette



Jorge Pesantez-Sarmiento



George Rozsa



Harry Xia

RESEARCH, STUDIES and FACILITATION PROJECTS

Climate Resiliency through Regional Water Recharge in the San Joaquin Valley

The CWI team has been gathering data from multiple contacts to harness extreme runoff events to recharge the groundwater. By mapping existing and potential recharge locations, including strategically selected new basins and Flood Managed Aquifer Recharge (FloodMAR) sites, we are developing a comprehensive regional water management plan that includes coordinating operations among Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs), local irrigation/water districts, and flood control agencies during excess runoff events. The Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation granted support. To help with outreach efforts, a webinar was held with multiple GSAs and water agencies to introduce the project and gather data. The team is on its way to completing data collection and comprehensive recharge mapping project goals. To meet its goal of empowering water users and informing rural and disadvantaged communities, educational resources have been gathered, and curriculum is being developed.

Improving Water Quality and Soil Health Outcomes for On-Farm Recharge in California Pistachio Orchards

CWI is working in partnership with Sustainable Conservation to expand On-Farm Recharge (OFR) in the San Joaquin Valley. The project focuses on pilot sites in pistachio orchards to examine the impact of nitrate leaching, soil health, and crop yield during FloodMAR events. Soil sampling took place from February to March 2025 and is currently undergoing lab studies. In addition, researchers are working to develop a recharge methods manual and conduct outreach to growers. As part of outreach efforts, a "Train the Trainer" webinar was held on June 11th. This project aims to enhance the long-term sustainability of the specialty crop industry while protecting groundwater quality and boosting agricultural resilience.

Unified Water Plan for the San Joaquin Valley

CWI is developing a unified water plan for the San Joaquin Valley alongside the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley, thanks to a grant awarded by the Bureau of Reclamation. The team is making progress on drafting chapters for the final report. Chapters 1 and 2 have been completed. The project's goal is to identify a holistic approach to water management solutions for the Valley by leveraging information and assets from current plans and strategies prepared by local agencies. These water management agencies include groundwater sustainability agencies, local nitrate management zones, local water districts, and municipalities. Through this research initiative, the project team plans to address strategies for water management solutions in the San Joaquin Valley while also focusing on a water plan implementation approach.



Canal running through agricultural land in the San Joaquin Valley.

California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley Water Work Group



Farmland in the San Joaquin Valley

Working with the Office of Community and Economic Development at Fresno State, CWI staff is helping coordinate and facilitate the San Joaquin Valley Partnership Water Work Group. In 2023, the work group focused on developing an outreach plan and marketing materials to inform San Joaquin Valley growers about resources available to them to learn more about groundwater recharge benefits and how to get involved. These resources will highlight groundwater recharge benefits, success stories, how to overcome limitations, and best management practices. Information on this effort will be shared on RechargeCA.org once completed.

San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Program

In 2020, CWI in partnership with Water in the West at Stanford University began the San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Program (CAP). CAP is a coalition of leaders from agriculture, water agencies, environmental justice organizations, environmental organizations, academia, and state and federal agencies working to collectively tackle the San Joaquin Valley's water challenges through on-the-ground action.

In the second phase, CAP's members took a more active role in the direction of CAP and CWI moved to a facilitation and coordination role. CWI has planned and executed multiple in-person meetings throughout the year. These meetings have been held at UC Merced and the El Capitan Hotel, with CWI staff coordinating meeting logistics. CWI has also played a major role in advocacy efforts, assisting the CAP group with submitting letters to the Governor and Legislators about the SAFER program renewal, the recent executive order, and funding cuts for water hauling.



CAP tour participants visit the San Luis Reservoir.

Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley Meeting Coordination Support



Water Blueprint Board of Directors meeting in the Jordan Agricultural Research Center.

CWI has provided continuous coordination and support services for the Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley. CWI has helped to grow, organize and maintain the Blueprint's digital presence by maintaining the website and posting regular e-blasts and blogs written by Water Blueprint members. Services also include facilitating monthly board meetings held on campus at Fresno State. CWI coordinates crucial meeting tasks, like workgroup agenda development, meeting preparation, minute-taking, and action item tracking.

Fresno State Students Engagements

CWI Participate in Fresno State Dog Days

All incoming freshmen and transfer students attending Fresno State must sign up for Dog Days orientation before beginning their first semester on campus. In addition to meeting with an academic counselor and getting help registering for classes, students participated in a resource fair. CWI occupied an information booth at the resource fair to introduce students to the new water minor offered at Fresno State. Students learned about the benefits of taking the water minor including learning from water professionals.



CWI Staff at Dog Days

CWI Provides Project Opportunities for Students: Case Studies Showcase

CWI has successfully documented past collaborative projects that gave students real-world work experience, through a number of case studies. The projects highlighted in the case studies show how students can benefit from working with research and data outside of the classroom, often resulting in job opportunities in their field of study, shortly after graduating. The case studies also showcase how CWI's research partners advanced their projects with the help of student work. The case studies are featured on CWI's website.

CWI 101 Speaker Series Debuts for Water Minor



Director Ramos Presenting in Data Analytics Class

This spring semester, the California Water Institute introduced a new class to the water minor at Fresno State – the only minor of its kind in the CSU system. Offered as a rotating elective, CWI 101 is a guest speaker series that introduces students to dynamic careers in water-related fields such as agriculture, environmental preservation, or public policy.

California Water Institute Timeline

The California Water Institute (CWI), established to address the complex water challenges facing California, has been a cornerstone of sustainable water management since its inception in 2000. The following timeline highlights key milestones, projects, and leadership changes that have shaped CWI's contributions to water management in San Joaquin Valley and beyond over the past 25 years.



Voters approved Proposition 13, a \$2 billion water bond measure that allocated \$3 million in start-up funds for CWI. Founding Director Karl Longley appointed (2000-2004); mission and vision established with input from government, public, and industry organizations.

2000



Leadership transitioned when David Zoldoske was appointed director, serving in that role until 2017.

2004



CWI published a report recommending Integrated Regional Water Management Planning for the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley, Water Work Group. In addition, CWI initiated a field investigation on seepage impacts of San Joaquin River Restoration flows on neighboring farmland.

2009



The institute evaluated the feasibility of using recycled wastewater for agricultural irrigation for the Tulare Irrigation District and City of Visalia Water Supplies Exchange Project, confirming it can be safely integrated with proper management.

2012

Facilitation efforts supported the development of the Stanislaus and Merced County Groundwater Transfer Ordinance, which established permitting requirements for out-of-county groundwater transfers.

2014

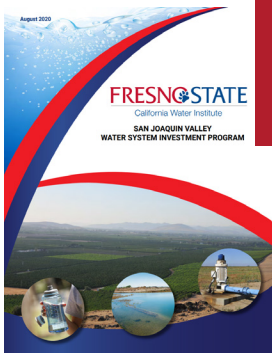


Work expanded to a regional scale with the preparation of the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan for the San Joaquin Valley of California. This plan aligned the efforts of 19 regional water planning entities to enhance water reliability, efficiency, and sustainability.

2016

CWI published Funding a Future for Water in the San Joaquin Valley, a review of public funding for water infrastructure. Additional studies included evaluating the effectiveness of carbonated charcoal as part of a point-of-entry treatment and contributing to PPIC's publication of California's Water: Providing Safe Drinking Water.

2018



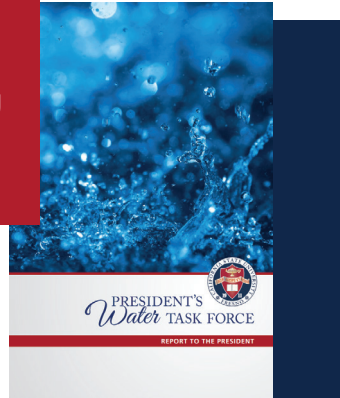
2013



In collaboration with the New Jerusalem Drainage District and the Department of Water Resources, CWI assessed alternatives for managing subsurface drainage systems serving farmland near Tracy, California.

2015

- Fresno State President Joseph Castro created the Water Task Force to examine water issues across campus, recommending CWI as the lead institute for water-related activities at the university.



2017



Thomas Esqueda appointed as the first Associate Vice President overseeing water initiatives and led the institute from 2018 to 2020. During this period, CWI contributed to the Public Policy Institute of California's (PPIC) publication, Water Stress and a Changing San Joaquin Valley.

The institute assisted Woolf Farming with B-Corp certification by developing an environmental management system. Other major efforts included the SGMA Governance Strategies Summary Report, assistance with drinking water planning for Nile Garden School (Manteca) and Kernvale Mutual Water Company (Lake Isabella), and contributions to PPIC's Water and the Future of the San Joaquin Valley.



2019

2020

Cordie Qualle was appointed as interim director, serving for the 2020 – 2021 academic year. CWI completed an in-depth analysis of key socioeconomic and demographic trends in the San Joaquin Valley and published major governance, finance, and feasibility studies, including the City of Fresno Department of Public Utilities Regional Consolidation Feasibility Study. The institute launched its Faculty Fellows Program and Water Bootcamp. It also partnered with PPIC on stakeholder engagement for their land repurposing study, and with Stanford on launching the San Joaquin Valley Water Collaborative Action Program.



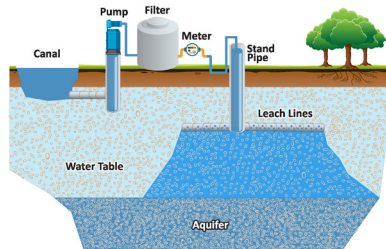
2021



Charles Hillyer became Interim Associate Vice President and led the institute from 2021 to 2023. The Faculty Fellows Program produced white papers on precision agriculture and wastewater treatment innovations. In partnership with the Center for Irrigation Technology, CWI also completed a literature review and meter testing for the Kaweah Subbasin.

2023

CWI published research on stormwater and groundwater impacts on housing markets in Fresno, Clovis, and rural Fresno/Madera, as well as groundwater recharge monitoring using gravimetric survey technology. A research study on Subsurface Agriculture Groundwater Recharge was also completed.



2024



The institute partnered with the San Joaquin Valley Water Blueprint to facilitate board meetings and work groups.

2025

Laura Ramos was appointed as director, marking a new chapter in the institute's leadership.



Presentations and Appearances

Director Laura Ramos made several presentations and appearances during the year. Ramos educated the public about water management issues, provided an overview of CWI including current research projects and partnerships, and promoted Fresno State water-related research and academic opportunities.

On the Radio

Director Ramos appeared twice on Spanish-language station Radio Bilingue to discuss water issues. The first appearance in July 2024 centered on a discussion of the water cycle and educated listeners on the Central Valley Project. The second appearance in May 2025 promoted the upcoming Spanish-language session of the Water Bootcamp, encouraging listeners to sign up for the free workshop.



Director Ramos on Radio Interview

Guest Speaker



Director Ramos Presenting at WET Center

Director Ramos was invited to speak about water issues at several events reaching diverse audiences throughout the year including: the “River Parkway Speaking Series: Coexist with Water” to discuss the challenges facing the water supply; as a panel moderator at the “Agricultural Land & Water Value Symposium” to lead the panel discussion on critical issues surrounding agricultural land and water management; addressing the water agency, irrigation academia, and agricultural operations representatives from the Uzbekistan Delegation hosted by the WET Center; as a guest speaker on CleanStart Organizations webinar to discuss the topic of Navigating California’s Water Regulations and resources available.

Presentations

Director Ramos introduced members of the Fresno Sunrise Rotary Club to CWI’s background, mission, projects and grants. At the WERA-72 Annual Meeting, Ramos also gave a joint presentation with Charles Hillyard regarding Water and Climate issues.

Education & Outreach

Legislative Water Bootcamp (July 25, 2024)



Speakers at legislative water bootcamp

Legislative staff gained a better understanding of California's complex water systems through the Legislative Water Bootcamp, hosted by the California Water Institute, in partnership with the Maddy Institute. The session covered fundamental topics such as watersheds, surface water, and essential infrastructure projects. Attendees learned about the history of California's water management, water rights, and policies, which fostered a dialogue about the future of policy directions.

Ag Summit (September 4, 2024)

Members of the agricultural community converged at Fresno State for the second annual Ag Summit hosted by the Maddy Institute in partnership with CWI. More than 200 farmers, professors, engineers, and business leaders attended the summit both virtually and in person to discuss water challenges facing the agricultural community. Panel discussions included water management projects, water data collection, and overcoming distrust and conflict among water stakeholders. The summit featured speakers from the California Natural Resources Agency and the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

"I appreciated the "Town Hall" feel, where people from the audience had a chance for their concerns to be heard."

-Ag Summit Attendee

Water Book Club Fall 2024

The Water Book Club for the fall semester featured the book "The Water Problem: Climate Change and Water Policy in the United States" by Pat Mulroy. The book explores the crisis of climate change on key water infrastructure projects throughout the U.S. Mulroy offers insights on how to build water resilience with input from scientists, engineers, and economists. Fresno State faculty, staff, and students met weekly for in-depth discussions about the reading. Since its inception in 2019, the semester-long Water Book Club has drawn a diverse range of participants from departments across the university as well as community members.

Rural West Conference (February 26-27, 2025)



Panel presentations at Rural West Conference

The Eleventh Annual Eccles Family Rural West Conference was held February 26-27 at Fresno State, featuring a diverse range of presentations and panel discussions focused on the Central Valley's vital role in addressing climate change and its impact on rural communities. The theme, "People and Places: Resourcing California's Climate Future in the Central Valley," examined our region, considered to be at the intersection between environmental sustainability, economic resilience, and community engagement in the state's climate future. The California Water Institute and the Maddy Institute partnered with Stanford University's Bill Lane Center for the American West to bring the event to campus.

World Water Day (March 21, 2025)



Panel discussion at World Water Day

The California Water Institute celebrated World Water Day on Friday, March 21, an international day to observe the importance of access to fresh water for drinking. CWI organized an event at the Jordan Agricultural Research Center to invite the public to learn about water-related issues and to take part in activities throughout the day. This year, Fresno State's Civil Engineering Department and the Earth and Environmental Science Department partnered with CWI and presented winners of an essay contest.

Water Bootcamp (May 2025)

The Water Bootcamp virtual series was held for Water Awareness Month in May. CWI organized the virtual educational series to help participants better understand the complexities of California's water systems and to see how water decisions affect them directly. Three online sessions were offered in English, and one online session was in Spanish. Topics include hydrology, watersheds, climate change, groundwater management, surface water rights and more.

California Water Collaborations Blog (Monthly)

The California Water Collaborations: Stories of Shared Success is a new blog series that started this year on LinkedIn, highlighting real-world examples of collaborative water management solutions. Through these stories, CWI highlights how partnerships—between farmers, urban planners, environmental groups, and researchers—are successfully addressing water management challenges across California. By sharing these case studies, we hope to inspire new collaborations and provide a resource for those seeking innovative water solutions.

Weekly Water Insights Radio Show

Weekly Water Insights is a radio segment designed to provide accessible, science-based water information to the public. In partnership with KMJ's Farm Report with Don York, each week, this segment breaks down complex water issues into practical and engaging discussions, ensuring that listeners gain a deeper understanding of the water challenges and opportunities that impact their daily lives. By reaching a broad audience, we are working to bridge the gap between research, policy, and community awareness.



Director Ramos Recording KMJ Segment

CWI on Social Media

CWI has utilized social media accounts over the last year as educational outreach tools to provide updates regarding California water issues, promote events hosted by CWI, and education for the community to see what is happening with California water and what CWI is doing to find solutions. Over the fiscal year, CWI gained 21 followers on "X" and 103 additional followers on LinkedIn.

In the News

Throughout the year, CWI has been featured in regional and national media for its leadership on water education, research, and policy engagement. The following highlights showcase the Institute's continued efforts to inform decision-makers, support community-based solutions, and advance sustainable water management across California.

California Water Institute Highlights Complex Water Issues for Legislative Staff

[\(https://www.fresnostatenews.com/2024/08/19/california-water-institute-highlights-complex-water-issues-for-legislative-staff/\)](https://www.fresnostatenews.com/2024/08/19/california-water-institute-highlights-complex-water-issues-for-legislative-staff/)

Fresno State News highlighted an event aimed at helping state legislative staff gain a better understanding of California's complex water systems at a Water Bootcamp. The California Water Institute partnered with The Maddy Institute to host the event. CWI's leaders stressed the importance of continued education. Fundamental topics included watersheds, climate change impacts, and the history of California's water management. The event is aimed at helping legislative staff make informed water resource decisions.

Fresno State Study Examines How Water Recharge Could Help or Harm Disadvantaged Communities on a Regional Scale

[\(https://sjvwater.org/fresno-state-study-examines-how-water-recharge-could-help-or-harm-disadvantaged-communities-on-a-regional-scale/\)](https://sjvwater.org/fresno-state-study-examines-how-water-recharge-could-help-or-harm-disadvantaged-communities-on-a-regional-scale/)

SJV Water featured the California Water Institute study to examine how groundwater recharge basins could impact rural communities in Merced, Madera, Fresno and Tulare counties. The \$500,000 regional study is funded by the state Office of Planning and Research and will take place over two years. Researchers are trying to identify the best recharge locations near disadvantaged communities facing water challenges from agricultural over pumping. SJV Water interviewed Laura Ramos about the benefit of collaborating with organizations on this project to better serve San Joaquin Valley residents. CWI, Fresno State faculty and students are working together with irrigation districts, groundwater agencies, and Self-Help Enterprises to improve water quality and accessibility.

Join the Fresno State Water Book Club

<https://campusnews.fresnostate.edu/august-26-2024/join-the-fresno-state-water-book-club>

A Fresno State Campus News article focused on the California Water Institute hosting a Water Book Club open to staff, students, faculty, and the community. The fall book selection was "The Water Problem: Climate Change and Water Policy in the United States" by Pat Mulroy, former general manager of the Southern Nevada Water Authority. The book examines climate-induced water crises across America, from Miami's rising sea levels to depleted aquifers in Kansas and Nebraska, and Colorado River stresses.

A Week of California Water Talks Call for Regulatory Haste

https://www.agri-pulse.com/articles/21612-a-week-of-california-water-talks-call-for-regulatory-haste?mc_cid=ff2c269cf3&mc_eid=452a39aaa5

Agri-Pulse published an article on the second annual Ag Summit at Fresno State focused on discussions over water storage, data collection, and the 10-year impact of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). A major issue speakers addressed was the length of time it's taken to push forward the state's reservoir projects, including expansion of the San Luis Reservoir and the long-awaited Sites Reservoir. In his keynote, California Natural Resources Agency Secretary Wade Crowfoot focused on regulatory pace, especially floodwater.

Campus Farm Irrigation Facilities Mapped to Support Groundwater Sustainability

<https://campusnews.fresnostate.edu/september-16-2024/campus-farm-irrigation-facilities-mapped-to-support-groundwater-sustainability>

A Fresno State Campus News article featured the work of CWI Research student employee Phoebe Bloomfield, who helped Fresno State's water system get a digital makeover. She conducted a specialized project to digitally map all of the basins, wells and irrigation systems Fresno State owns and operates. Bloomfield is working with CWI Assistant Director Cordie Qualle to create a single file containing multiple 3D layers showing where Fresno State water systems are located and how they are used. CWI plans to use the digitized inventory to apply for grants to fund construction and implementation of water irrigation systems that support water sustainability on campus.

California Water Institute Partners with Sustainable Conservation to Study On-farm Recharge

<https://www.fresnostatenews.com/2024/10/03/california-water-institute-partners-with-sustainable-conservation-to-study-on-farm-recharge/>

Fresno State News detailed The California Water Institute's partnership with Sustainable Conservation on a \$498,423 grant-funded project to study on-farm recharge in the San Joaquin Valley. The practice, which is the application of surface water to farm fields to recharge aquifers, is being studied as a potential solution for water management. This project focuses on six on-farm recharge pilots in pistachio orchards to study nitrate leaching, soil health and function, and crop yield.

Fresno State Utilizes Grant Funding to Study Groundwater Recharge

https://sjvsun.com/ag/fresno-state-utilizes-grant-funding-to-study-groundwater-recharge/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

The San Joaquin Valley Sun highlighted a grant-funded groundwater recharge study forming a partnership between CWI and the nonprofit Sustainable Conservation. SJV Sun reported that the study was designed to enhance the Central Valley's groundwater sustainability. The outlet outlined the core mission of the project was to study the effects of cover crops on soil health and the outcomes of on-farm recharge. SJV Sun emphasized the importance of groundwater recharge as a vital resource for Central Valley farmers.

Often-criticized SGMA is State's Response to Ag's Overpumping of Ground Water | Opinion

<https://www.fresnobee.com/opinion/readers-opinion/article294418174.html>

CWI marked the 10-year anniversary of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) by addressing the ongoing concerns that still need to be addressed to meet its goals. Members of CWI's leadership team, Laura Ramos, Tom Holyoke, and Cordie Qualle published an opinion article in the Fresno Bee's Valley Voices section. While the law has successfully established groundwater sustainability agencies and management plans, Valley farmers resent new regulations and costs. Restrictions from the Endangered Species Act and similar laws have left many farmers with too little water, and fostering collaboration has proven difficult. CWI's leaders suggest the state should provide more support to agencies and reduce surface water restrictions to improve cooperation.

California Water Institute Announces New Radio Partnership with KMJ

<https://campusnews.fresnostate.edu/january-13-2025/california-water-institute-announces-new-radio-partnership-with-kmj>

The California Water Institute at Fresno State launched a new radio series exploring some of the state's most pressing water issues. The announcement was featured in Fresno State Campus News. Topics include groundwater recharge, drought resilience, habitat restoration, and the effects of climate change. The series examines science, history, and policies affecting California's watersheds, from the Delta to Central Valley farmland. Weekly Water Insights airs weekly mornings on KMJ's Ag Report.

California Water Institute's Faculty Fellowship Program

<https://campusnews.fresnostate.edu/february-3-2025/california-water-institutes-faculty-fellowship-program>

A Fresno State Campus News article announced the California Water Institute's selection of a new cohort for its 2025 Faculty Fellowship program. The six fellows hail from four different colleges at Fresno State, including two from the College of Science and Mathematics, two from the College of Arts and Humanities, one from the Craig School of Business and one from the Lyles College of Engineering. CWI's Faculty Fellowship program fosters collaboration across disciplines, encouraging fellows to come up with innovative solutions for some of the most pressing water issues in the San Joaquin Valley.

Trump Officials Release Water in California that Experts Say Will Serve Little Use

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/31/us/trump-water-california-central-valley.html>

CWI director, Laura Ramos was featured in the New York Times in January, following an order from the Trump administration for massive water releases from two Central Valley dams. The administration claimed the water would help fight Los Angeles wildfires, but the New York Times interviewed experts including Ramos, who explained the reservoirs don't connect to Southern California's water system. Ramos cautioned that the release could potentially cause flooding and deplete reserves farmers needed for summer irrigation.

Experts in the News

<https://campusnews.fresnostate.edu/february-10-2025/experts-in-the-news>

Fresno State Campus News published a summary of outlets that quoted Laura Ramos, director of the California Water Institute, on the release of water from Kaweah and Success lakes in January 2025. Ramos conveyed that releasing the water won't aid Southern California fires or benefit farmers because crops were in a dormant season. Ramos cautioned that the water releases could potentially cause flooding or revive Tulare Lake.

Conference Examines Central Valley's Role in State's Climate Future

<https://campusnews.fresnostate.edu/february-10-2025/eleventh-annual-eccles-family-rural-west-conference>

Fresno State featured a Campus News article about the 11th Annual Eccles Family Rural West Conference. The California Water Institute and the Maddy Institute partnered with Stanford University's Bill Lane Center for the American West to bring the event to campus. Fresno State president Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval was among the speakers, many of whom were local experts in the areas of climate science, water law, health policy and community development.

Conference Examines Central Valley's Role in State's Climate Future

<https://www.morningagclips.com/conference-examines-central-valleys-role-in-states-climate-future/>

Morning Ag Clips featured a Fresno State Campus News article announcing the 11th annual Eccles Family Rural West Conference at Fresno State. The conference was free and open to the public. Stanford University's Bill Lane Center for the American West, partnered with the California Water Institute and the Maddy Institute at Fresno State in its commitment to advancing scholarly and public understanding of the past, present and future of Western North America. The event featured speakers, presentations, and panel discussions.

Employee Spotlight: Laura Ramos

<https://campusnews.fresnostate.edu/february-18-2025/employee-spotlight-laura-ramos>

Laura Ramos was featured in Fresno State's interview series where campus employees were highlighted. In the question-and-answer section, Ramos talked about her family's Central Valley roots in Chowchilla and her work with CWI. Ramos spoke about her mentors on the job, most memorable moments at work, and personal hobbies. As a water professional with over 20 years of experience, Ramos considered reaching the director position at CWI to be her most notable accomplishment.

California Water Institute Names Director

<https://www.fresnostatenews.com/2025/02/27/california-water-institute-names-director/>

Fresno State News highlighted the CWI appointment of Laura Ramos as Director of Research and Education in February 2025. Ramos has served as Interim Director since January 2023, guiding CWI through significant advancements in research, educational partnerships and community outreach. A Valley native from Chowchilla and first-generation college graduate, she earned her B.S. in Business Administration from Fresno State. She's currently pursuing an MBA at Fresno State's Craig School of Business.

Recognizing World Water Day at Fresno State

<https://campusnews.fresnostate.edu/march-10-2025/recognizing-world-water-day-at-fresno-state>

A Fresno State Campus News article featured the California Water Institute's campaign to recognize World Water Day. The institute held a community event on campus, Friday, March 21, at the Jordan Agricultural Research Center. The open house featured educational resources on water-related issues, including networking with industry professionals and hands-on activities. The public was invited to attend this free event. World Water Day aligns with the California Water Institute's mission to raise awareness about sustainable management of our freshwater resources.

The California Water Institute at Fresno State: Working for a Sustainable and Economically Vibrant Central Valley

<https://irrigationleadermagazine.com/volume-16-issue-5-may/>

The California Water Institute (CWI) at Fresno State and its three principal directors were featured in a recent article for Irrigation Leader magazine. CWI is the umbrella organization for three water centers at the university. Laura Ramos, director of the Division of Research and Education (DRE), Eric Hadden, director of the Water Energy Technology Center (WET), and Charles Hillyer, director of the Center for Irrigation Technology (CIT), talked about their innovative research, plus the products, technology, and trends leading the future of development in irrigation and agriculture today.

Contact:

Twitter: @FSCWI

Website: californiawater.org

Phone: (559) 278-7001



FRESNO STATE

California Water Institute