

Special Edition!

THE METER READER

JANUARY 2025

Mission Statement: To provide, protect, and maintain Joshua Tree's water - our vital community resource.

CONTENTS

>>> In This Issue

Pages 2-4

- January Water Saving Tip
- Curious Minds Want to Know
- In Case You Missed It
- Farmer's Market Booth
- Your Leadership in Action
- Plant of the Month
- Gardening Tips

>>> Special Articles

Pages 5-10

- SPECIAL: State of the District - The Annual General Manager's Report
- Free Upcoming Water Saving Classes:
 - 15 week Desert Edible Gardening Course



agenda

Board Meetings:

- Regular Board Meeting - 1.1.25 **CANCELLED**
- Regular Board Meeting - 1.15.25 - 5:30 pm

Committee Meetings:

- Finance Committee - 01.08.25 -@ 9:00 am
- Water Resources & Ops - 01.08.25 @ 11:00 am

Citizens Advisory Council - 01.14.25 @ 5PM

Classes & Events:

- Seed to Salad 15 week course (see below)
 - Native Plant Sale + Free give-aways: 03.30.24*
- *Mark your calendar and watch for more information in our February Meter Reader!

Monthly Water Use

OCTOBER: GPCD

The measure used for reporting water conservation is called Gallons per Capita per Day (GPCD). The GPCD value reported here reflects water usage from three months earlier. California aims to achieve 42 GPCD by the year 2030.

Keep saving, Joshua Tree!



JANUARY WATER SAVING TIP

Start the new year fresh and challenge yourself to do one new water saving behavior daily every month, in 2025. Simple things add up, like reducing showers to 5-minutes in January, then add keeping a water pitcher by the kitchen sink to catch cold water while waiting for hot water to use otherwise (in February), and so on and so on. You'll have 12 new water saving habits by the end of the year that can help you save!

Curious Minds Want to Know Enjoy the question of the month

Question:

Which has more water? A rain drop or a snowflake?

Answer:

An individual snowflake has mass ~1-3 milligrams. Raindrops have mass from 4-100 milligrams. So, an average snowflake has less mass (and therefore water) than an average raindrop.

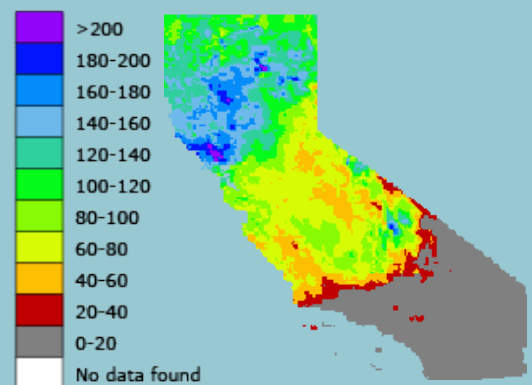
[\(More Info Here\)](#)



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

Actually, there wasn't much to miss in regards to rainfall this past year! Below is a recount of just how dry 2024 was for Joshua Tree:

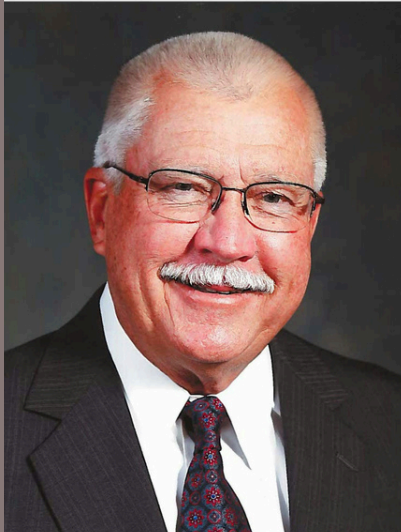
Water Year to Date Precipitation
Percentage of Average (%)



JT FARMERS' MARKET: JANUARY

FREE 2025 Water Wise Gardening Calendars will be available at our Market Booth beginning the first Saturday in January! They are super informative on desert gardening and just plain gorgeous (as usual!) We'll also share the career opportunities in the massive water industry. It may surprise you how lucrative employment can be not just locally, but throughout the state, the nation, and the world!

YOUR LEADERSHIP IN ACTION <<



President Floen



VP Doolittle

- The District's Strategic Plan's Final Draft was approved unanimously (5-0). This is a living document that is revisited annually.
- The 1st fiscal quarter ending 9/30/24 Report was also approved (5-0) after Director Roman's presentation and Board discussion.
- The rate scenario analysis was postponed to the January 2025 meeting to allow for more time and consideration of the topic.
- The presentation on the meter connection methodology and fees was also postponed. This topic will also be agendaized for discussion early in 2025.

After the Board resumed from a *closed* session, they voted on Board Officers for the upcoming 2025 year of leadership: Incumbent Tom Floen was voted in for President for another consecutive term, along with Stacy Doolittle, returning as Vice-President.

January 2025 Plant of the Month

Ghost Plant

Graptopetalum paraguayense

Plant Form: Succulent
Water Use: Very low
Mature Size: 0.5-1 ft. tall x 2-3 ft. wide
Exposure: Full Sun, Part Sun
Bloom Time: Spring (Mar-May)
Native to: Mexico
Hardiness: Cold Hardy to 20°F

Ghost Plant is one of the most widely grown of all succulents, popular for over a century because it is so easy to grow and offers an intriguing range of pastel leaf colors. In full sun, its fleshy leaves blush pink, purple, and yellow, while in partial shade, they display blues, greens, and silvers. This small succulent produces fleshy rosettes of thick, triangular leaves on stems that spread to trail or hang. Stems detach easily, an adaptation that allows it to reproduce vegetatively in its habitat. Any rosette or leaf that breaks off has the potential to root and start a new plant. Place it away from high traffic areas, and avoid handling it or moving it from its favorite spot. This hardy and forgiving succulent can rebound if frozen by weather below 20 degrees. It needs well-drained soils and hates to be overwatered, so water only when the soil is dry, or you risk root rot. Ghost Plant is attractive as a groundcover in rock gardens and border edgings, spilling over walls, and in hanging baskets and pots.



awac

Water-Conserve Today for Tomorrow

Alliance for Water
Awareness and Conservation

For more information on low-water-use gardening,
contact your local water provider or go to

www.mojavewater.org/conservation/awac/

Photos © 2025 Robin Kobaly ~ Content © 2025 The Power of Plants (www.PowerofPlants.com)
Produced by The SummerTree Institute (www.SummerTree.org)

➤➤➤ GARDENING TIPS FOR YOUR DESERT-SMART LANDSCAPE:

- Water after 9AM or before 3PM. To prevent ice from forming on driveways and sidewalks, water only during the warm of the day.
- Keep plants watered to help prevent frost damage
- Wrap irrigation valves and pipes to protect from freezing
- Turn off irrigation timers if it rains
- Apply mulch around plants to retain water and soil, and to feed nutrients into soil with each rain. Prune roses and summer-blooming, deciduous fruit trees
- Plant bare-root trees and shrubs now through early March
- Mulch around plants and under downspouts with bark, compost or gravel

HISTORIC USES OF GHOST PLANT

Graptopetalum

The ghost plant is a medicinal plant. In traditional practice, the herb has been used for its sedating and anti-inflammatory properties. Indian tribes' extracts of this herb were used to overcome pain, anxiety, and other nervous diseases.



December 26, 2024

As I approach the end of my third year as General Manager for Joshua Basin Water District this December, I enjoy reflecting on our progress over the past year. Despite unexpected challenges, our staff's dedication and our Board's support have led to significant achievements. Together, we have ensured the continuity of essential services and advanced key projects to modernize our infrastructure and operations. Every day, we remain steadfast in upholding the District's mission:

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

Here are some highlights of accomplishments in 2024:

- District Transparency Certificate of Excellence: JBWD earned the Special District Leadership Foundation's Transparency Certificate of Excellence, showcasing the steps taken to ensure transparency to the constituents and customers we serve.
- Annual Audit: Each year, the District undergoes an extensive mandated annual audit. As expected, this year's audit results are positive, with no audit findings!
- US Water Alliance (USWA) Partnership: In January, staff began its work with USWA. USWA provides technical assistance to the District to support our compliance efforts with the Lead and Copper Rule Revision and Chromium-6 regulations. This year, USWA made an onsite trip to tour our facilities and participated in community outreach efforts. Through this partnership, next year, the District will collaborate with Jacob's Engineering to evaluate the Best Available Treatment (BAT) strategies to determine the most effective solution for treating Chromium-6. Each strategy will take into account both social and environmental impacts associated with its implementation. Stay tuned!
- District Tours: This year, the District proudly reintroduced the much-loved District tours after many years without tours. This engaging four-hour experience offered participants valuable insights and an up-close look at District operations while addressing questions about JBWD's tap water. Tour participants shared enthusiastic reviews!

Continued on next page.



SPECIAL: STATE OF THE DISTRICT GENERAL MANAGER SARAH JOHNSON REPORTS

Continued from page 05

- **Mojave Water Agency (MWA) and Joint Powers Insurance Authority (JPIA) Grant Awards:** The District was awarded three grants this year (2 from MWA and 1 from JPIA) totaling \$26,040. These funds are dedicated to several purposes, including community outreach efforts and covering costs for employee wellness programs.
- **New Website:** The District's new website debuted this year after months of planning and development, with a constant focus on ease of use for the end user.
- **Community Outreach Efforts:** Continued engagement through weekly farmers markets, deployed a newly revamped monthly newsletter renamed the "The Meter Reader," and held various educational classes.
- **Meter Replacement Program:** Despite supply chain issues, we made significant strides with the meter replacement program. Our unwavering commitment to this project is evident in our progress. We aim to complete this project within FY 24/25, a testament to our dedication to infrastructure improvement.
- **Capital Replacement Improvement Program (CIRP):** The District successfully completed several major projects this year. Two notable projects include the installation of a Mixed Oxidant Generator (MIOX) and the replacement of the D11 Booster Station.
 - MIOX is an on-site generator (OSG) that produces chlorine-based solutions when sodium chloride brine (salt + water) is passed through an electrolytic cell, allowing the District to reduce costs and become self-sufficient in chlorine generation.
 - The D11 Booster Station Replacement was a critical infrastructure project that addressed the urgent need to upgrade an aging and inefficient booster station. By investing in this replacement, we are safeguarding the reliability of our water supply system.

Continued on next page



SPECIAL: STATE OF THE DISTRICT GENERAL MANAGER SARAH JOHNSON REPORTS

Continued from page 06

- **More Improved Customer Service Offerings:** Enhanced electronic self-service options, including new online web forms and applications. In 2024, the District partnered with San Bernardino County to oversee the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP), which helped many customers with over \$130,000 in payment assistance.
- **Completion of Major Reports:** Key reports completed this year include the Electronic Annual Report, Annual Water Use Reports, Annual Water Loss Questionnaires, Annual Water Loss Audit, Water Use Objective Report, Annual Supply & Demand Assessment, and the Safer Clearinghouse Conservation Report. Additionally, the District has completed a new Hazard Mitigation Plan and the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan.

Upcoming Mandates:

The District faces several regulatory challenges that require significant resources and planning:

- **Chromium-6 Regulations:** New state standards for Chromium-6, effective October 1, 2024, will require the District to install costly treatment facilities within three years to ensure compliance.
- **Lead and Copper Rule Revisions:** The District completed a service line inventory in October 2024, as required by the EPA. Moving forward, a funding strategy and replacement plan for lead service lines exceeding EPA thresholds must be developed.
- **Regulatory Reporting:** With over 70 recurring reports required, compliance is labor-intensive and often unfunded. Inefficiencies and overlapping mandates from regulatory bodies increase costs and divert resources from strategic initiatives.

Continued on next page...



SPECIAL: STATE OF THE DISTRICT GENERAL MANAGER SARAH JOHNSON REPORTS

Continued from Page 07

- **Fleet Electrification:** The CARB mandate for zero-emission medium and heavy-duty vehicles, effective January 2024, presents challenges due to high costs, infrastructure needs, and tight timelines for compliance.

Ongoing Challenges:

The District continues to address several ongoing challenges to ensure the reliable delivery of water to the community:

- **Aging Infrastructure:** Regular capital replacement and maintenance of aging facilities are essential for maintaining water reliability and quality.
- **Inflation and Rising Costs:** Increased operational costs require careful budgeting and cost-effective solutions to meet community needs without compromising service quality.
- **Supply Chain Disruptions:** Securing essential supplies like vehicles, meters, and pipes remains a challenge. The District focuses on proactive inventory management and fostering strong supplier relationships.
- **High Housing Costs:** Recruiting skilled staff is impacted by local housing affordability. Competitive compensation and partnerships with local stakeholders aim to address this issue.



Recharging our aquifer via our percolation ponds, along with "water banking", ensures JBWD's ground water levels for future years. District Tour guests saw the process first hand.

Continued on next page...



SPECIAL: STATE OF THE DISTRICT GENERAL MANAGER SARAH JOHNSON REPORTS

Continued from Page 08

Summary:

As the General Manager of the Joshua Basin Water District, I am deeply committed to advancing the goals and priorities established by our Board of Directors. My role involves leading the District's operations with a focus on efficiency, managing our budget with fiscal responsibility, and developing forward-thinking strategies to ensure long-term sustainability and success. I am truly grateful for the trust and collaboration of our Board, our staff's dedication, and our community's continued support. Together, we've achieved significant milestones, and I am excited to build on this momentum for an even more prosperous 2025!

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Johnson
General Manager

District Tours guests stopped at the Hi-Desert Medical Center's Package Treatment Plant to learn how JBWD uses this system to protect our community's ground water.



Desert Edible Gardening Course



**Mojave
Water
Agency**

FROM SEED TO SALAD

Edible Gardening Class

Thursdays, January 30 to May 8
6 to 7 p.m.

Learn to grow vegetables in the desert with minimal water usage during this **FREE**, on-line, 3-month class sponsored by the Mojave Water Agency.

Scan the QR code to register today!



For more information contact
Liz Fratt at efratt@mojavewater.org
or (760) 946-7000



WWW.MOJAVEWATER.ORG