

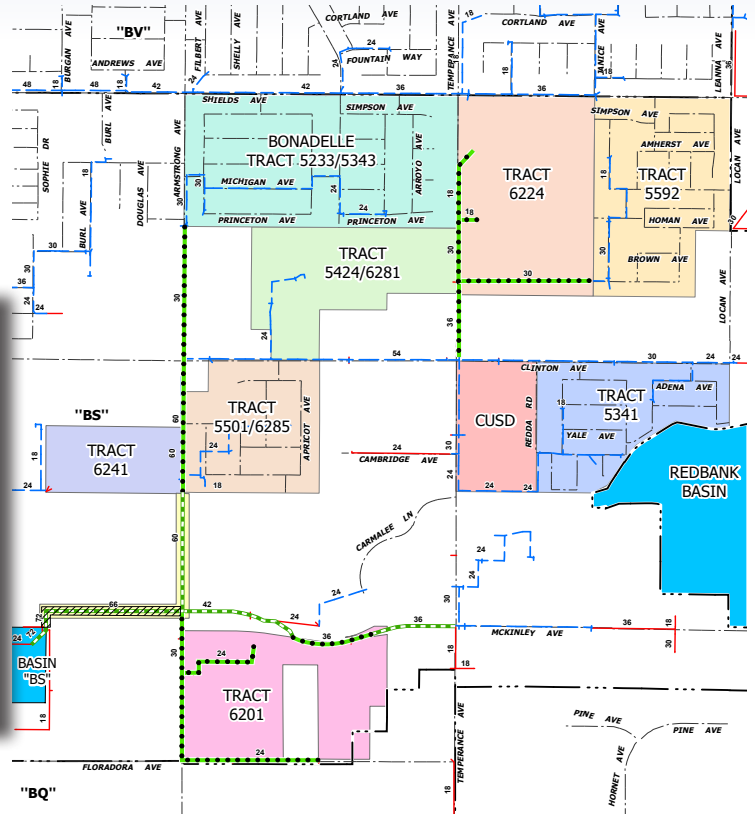
A community for construction

Unity is strength; collaboration is power, as evidenced by one of the District's recent pipeline construction projects involving the city of Fresno and the local development community. As a result of this partnership, permanent drainage service is now available to nearly 400 acres of residential neighborhoods located in the 1,200-acre area bound by Shields, Locan, McKinley and Fowler (a.k.a. Drainage Area BS).



BS-26: 60 Inch cast in place storm drain construction on Armstrong

Prior to constructing the new storm drain pipeline, the area was served by 10 temporary basins, owned and operated by developers. When the basins reached capacity, the streets became flooded and relief operations had to be activated to pump the stormwater to nearby fields, which created a burden for both the developers and those living in the area. Recognizing the need to remedy the flooding issue, the District, the City of Fresno and local developers came together to identify a permanent solution. It involved the District constructing a stormwater pipeline, but first the McKinley right-of-way had to be acquired. Thanks to



LEGEND

- Facilities Required Of A Tract
- Permanent Service Facilities Not Required Of A Tract
- Existing Pipe
- Future Pipe
- Required FMFCD Easement
- Limits Of Developer Cost Share Agreement


 1" = 700'
**"BS" NE BRANCH
DRAINAGE AREA "BS"**

the City and participating developers, the acquisition was completed by Spring 2024. To further assist with the project and make it more affordable, the developers facilitated the closure of Armstrong Avenue so construction could

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Message from the General Manager



Peter Sanchez

As staff were reviewing issues of Flood Line from the past 36 years, they noticed that a particular column -- the Director's perspective -- has been missing for some time. Just as the name implies, it features insights about the state of the District from members of the Board of Directors. I'm grateful to Past Board Chair Frank Fowler for agreeing to author the column for this issue. With 14 years of service on the Board, Frank has a deep understanding of the District's inner workings and I'm confident our readers will benefit from his valuable insight.

In his article, Director Fowler details changes and challenges experienced by the District since its inception, and shares his expectation for a bright future. I'd like to explain some of our upcoming changes and challenges.

Director's perspective

In 2010, after retiring from my 33-year career with the County Department of Public Works and Planning, I was asked by the County Board of Supervisors to serve on the Board of Directors of the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District.

I agreed and that December marked the first of what is now 14 years of service to the District. As I near the end of my fourth -- and probably last 4-year term in August 2026, I am honored to have served as Board Chair twice, with the latest two-year term ending this January.

During my tenure, I've witnessed many changes at the District: the cities of Fresno and Clovis and Fresno County have appointed many new board members to replace the long-serving members who were present when I started; I have had the pleasure of working with three different General Managers, all with nearly 40 or more years of service with the District; and I've seen many long-serving staff retire and be replaced by new colleagues. Despite all this change, the District has remained unwavering in its mission to provide much needed drainage, flood control, and recreation to the communities it serves.

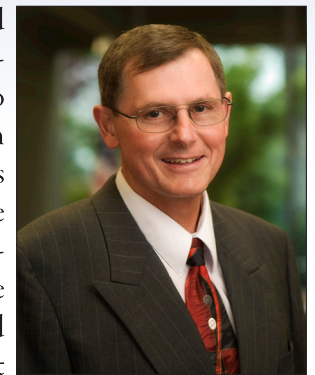
In the nearly 69 years since the District was formed, it has

Future growth outside of the current District Boundaries will require the District to complete its first annexation in 40 years. It is fortunate that the current District boundary was large enough to encompass the rapid growth in the Fresno/Clovis area since the last annexation.

The District will also be severely impacted by recent legislation and new regulations related to potable water usage. If you're wondering how much water conservation efforts could really impact a flood control agency, you may be surprised to find that the answer is: a lot! Presently, the District has more than 240 acres of landscaped basins, plus the District campus. New legislation no longer allows potable water to be used for irrigating "non-functional turf" (turf not used for recreational activity), so staff is currently reviewing our options to save the turf.

These are just a couple of examples of issues the District will encounter over the next few years, but as our historical accomplishments demonstrate, we are up for the task. 💧

constructed numerous flood control facilities, ponding basins, and miles of pipelines to convey flood flows and urban drainage. As Fresno and Clovis continue to grow, developers are also contributing to this infrastructure in accordance with the District's Master Plan. Beyond urban flooding, the District has also built larger facilities to control water coming from the foothill streams that once flowed uncontrolled into the cities of Fresno and Clovis.



Frank Fowler

As someone who has lived in the Fresno/Clovis area for nearly 60 years, I can remember what it was like before the District was formed and we had no drainage system or flood control facilities. I specifically recall the winter of 1969 when a heavy rainfall flooded parts of Clovis from Pup Creek, along with other areas of the community. Fortunately, most of these areas are protected today which has greatly reduced and in many cases, eliminated former flooding issues. Our wet winter in 2022-2023 proves just

Director's perspective, continued

how far the District has come in fulfilling its mission. Even with an above-average rainfall that year, there were only a few localized flooding issues.

The District and its staff have been very successful in protecting our communities, and for that we are grateful. Still, challenges remain. One of these is retaining trained professional staff. When I joined the Board, the total number of employees was 75-80 and a large number had been with the District 25-40 years or more. Though many of these individuals have since retired, management, with support from the Board of Directors, is proactively protecting the District's future and mission by offering competitive salaries and benefits to secure qualified replacements, and by promoting experienced staff.


A second challenge is the rising cost of doing business. Inflation has been a huge issue, especially as it pertains to construction costs. The price of materials and labor have increased by as much as 20-30 percent, causing the pace of some projects to slow. While the District cannot control inflation, it is keenly aware of the ramifications that rising costs have on future projects and prepares its annual budget accordingly.

In addition to protecting our community from flooding, the District plays an integral role in replenishing the community's water supply. Though it is not a water provider like the Cities of Fresno and Clovis and local irrigation districts, it utilizes its ponding basins to assist these agencies with meeting state mandates for water conservation and groundwater management. During the dry months, the basins are used for groundwater recharge and when the rain

comes they provide water storage.

Additional water storage is provided by Big Dry Creek Reservoir located north of Shepherd Avenue at DeWolf Avenue. In the 1990s, the Army Corp of Engineers and the District increased the reservoir's capacity so it could store more runoff from the upstream watersheds, protecting Clovis and Fresno from flooding. While it is currently only allowed to operate as a temporary storage facility, the District, in cooperation with local water providing agencies, has requested the Army Corp of Engineers conduct a study for reoperation of Big Dry Creek Reservoir to provide long-term water storage. If the study moves forward and the project is approved, it will allow for more water to be available to recharge the aquifer, addressing an important groundwater issue currently facing the region.

When I was first appointed to the Board 14 years ago, it was comprised primarily of engineers – myself included. Our current Board looks very different, with members representing various sectors, including private business, law, finance, water science, farming and real estate. But just like our predecessors, we each remain dedicated to providing the oversight and support needed to ensure the continued success of the District and its staff.

I am proud to represent the County of Fresno as a member of the Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District Board of Directors and even more honored to work with the District's dedicated team. Their future is bright and with continued support from the Board, I am confident they will continue to fulfill their obligation to protect our community now and in the years to come. 

Passing the gavel


At its January 8, 2025, meeting, the Board of Directors elected a new Chair and Vice Chair to serve for the next 2-year term. Frank Fowler completed his term as Chair, and has now passed the gavel to Sarge Green.

Chair Green was first appointed to the Board of Directors in 2022 by the City of Clovis. He has a wealth of experience and has been actively involved in the water resource management industry for much of his



Sarge Green

career. Chair Green is a member of many professional associations and also serves on many boards involving water management.

Sarge Green vacates the Vice Chair seat as he steps into his new role. He passes his former Vice Chair duties on to Raquel Busani, who was elected Vice Chair. Director Busani was first appointed by the City of Fresno in 2021. 

Trash capture education at CASQA


Staff from the District’s Environmental Resources Department recently had an opportunity to connect with other professionals in the water quality industry during the California Stormwater Quality Association’s (CASQA) 2024 Annual Conference in Sacramento. This year’s theme, “Inspiring Solutions Together,” emphasized the importance of collaboration in the multifaceted world of stormwater quality management.

Presentations included public outreach and engagement about such issues as stormwater quality, stormwater capture, pollutant source control, funding, and municipal programs. Some sessions centered on the potential for practices established by stormwater agencies in one region to be extended to other regions of the state.

A strong focus of the conference was on the Trash Amendments to existing National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. Stormwater agencies are challenged to address this Priority Pollutant. For California stormwater management agencies, working to attain compliance with the Trash provision of their



permits, CASQA serves as the central hub to access the resources, guidance and connections needed to help understand recent permit changes.

In response to the NPDES Trash Amendments, the District is actively exploring ways to improve upon its already high trash capture rate (approximately 90%) to ensure compliance with this evolving mandate. In 2025, the community can expect to see the installation of the first of a series of full-capture devices that will intercept trash that might otherwise make its way into the protected waters of the San Joaquin River. 

Leave the floods out of winter storms

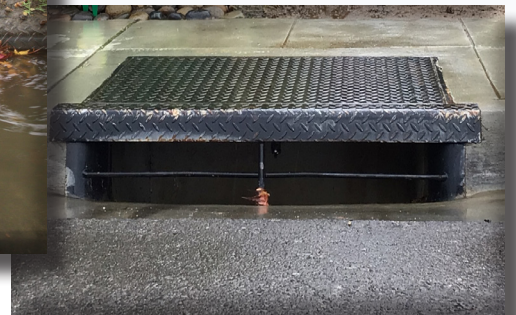
Below: Storm drain inlet clogged with leaves and debris.



Above: Leaves restricting water flow.




Below: Cleared storm drain inlet for optimal drainage.



Although droplets have already fallen this rainy season, we are in the thick of the winter storm season, and with more wet weather to come, you may have concerns about temporary street flooding. Fortunately, there is something you can do to protect your neighborhood.

If you have leaves and debris along the front of your property, it’s time to bring out the rake so they don’t make their way down the curb and gutter and into storm drain inlets. Disposing of leaves in your green waste bin is the best

way to keep the inlets open and the water flowing. With nothing to slow or block its flow, the water can travel freely down the streets, along the gutters and into the storm drains. From here, it moves through a network of underground pipelines and, finally, into nearby retention basins.

So if you want to avoid putting on your rubber boots or getting your canoe out of storage, please help us keep those inlets clear. Your home and your neighbors will thank you! 

Campaigning for clean water

As you travel around town the next few months, keep your eyes open for our colorful public service banners. Hanging on basin fences in high-traffic areas, the banners are part of the District's multi-year public education campaign, designed to help Fresno County residents understand where rainwater goes as it flows down the street, through the storm drain inlets and, finally, into our stormwater basins.




Public Outreach Campaign banners on basin fences.

Launched in 2020, the campaign aims to raise awareness about the fact that, if not controlled, trash and other pollutants can end up in our groundwater

recharge basins and negatively impact local drinking water. Our goal is to help the public recognize that stormwater is a valuable resource that needs to be protected.

When the rainy season is over, the banners are recycled into small storage pouches. This diverts waste from the landfill and gives us an opportunity to feature our important

stormwater message on some cool

swag! Look for this year's banners hanging on a basin fence near you. 

Board awards 2025 Clean Stormwater Grants

In 1997, the District Board of Directors created the Clean Stormwater Grant program to help raise local awareness about the importance of protecting stormwater from pollution, as well as to help the District meet its stormwater quality goals. The program offers two tiers of grants:

Tier 1: \$2,000 - General Project

Education about one or more of these topics: stormwater quality and education; household hazardous waste information and education; stormwater pollution prevention education and assistance for businesses, environmental restoration, enhancement or preservation.

Tier 1: \$2,000 - River Field Trip

School trips to Scout Island Outdoor Education Center, where students learn about the water cycle, local water resources, water quality, and the importance of keeping stormwater clean.

Tier 2: \$4,000 - High Priority Project

Project focused on urban trash reduction and elimination, integrated pest management, low impact development, stream cleanup/restoration, or research related to stormwater pollutants.

Volunteer groups, environmental organizations, schools, neighborhood improvement groups and other not-for-profit associations are encouraged to apply. In 2024, the application period was October 1-December 13.

At its January 22, 2025 meeting, the Board awarded

\$35,000 for 19 projects. 17 local projects were fully funded. Partial funding was awarded to 2 other High Priority applications to keep the program within budget.

General Project:

CART - Basin Bird Populations

River Field Trip Grants were awarded to:

Golden Charter Academy

University High School

Clovis High School

Gettysburg Elementary School

Fresno Area Community Enterprises

Temperance-Kutner Elementary

Olmos Elementary

Houghton-Kearney Elementary (3rd & 5th Grades)

Sunset Elementary

Yokomi Elementary

Roeding Elementary

Robinson Elementary

Vang Pao Elementary

Powers-Ginsburg Elementary


High Priority Project grants were awarded to:

California State University Fresno - Basin Algae Research

Master Gardeners - Public Outreach (Partial Funding)

Boy Scout Troop 8900 - River Cleanup (Partial Funding)

Visit this website for more information:

<https://www.fresnofloodcontrol.org/clean-stormwater-grant-program/>. 

Over a dozen milestones in a handful of years

Over the past five years, the District has celebrated many retirements and welcomed many new employees. Among the new faces are our unsung heroes who have dedicated 20-plus years of service.



Peter Sanchez (L) and Sarge Green (R) present Cynthia Martinez (C) with Resolution of Appreciation for 20 Years of Service on January 8, 2025.

The newest member of the 20-Year Club is Cynthia Martinez, who completed this service milestone on December 20, 2024. Cynthia received a Resolution of Appreciation at the January 8, 2025, Board Meeting, and her family joined her to celebrate this occasion. Cynthia stated, “It’s been a pleasure working here at the District. I love it here, and [have] always loved it here.”



Peter Sanchez (L) and Frank Fowler (R) present Michael Folsom (C) with Resolution of Appreciation for 20 Years of Service on February 22, 2023.

It is thanks their institutional knowledge and expertise that we remain a strong a stable organization rooted in our commitment to serving the public with the highest quality of service.

Congratulations to the following individuals who have achieved significant career milestones. We are grateful for your many years of service.

20+ Years

Bret Phillips, Facilities Technician III
Cynthia Martinez, Senior Accounting Technician
Leana Lopez, Office Program Technician
Michael Folsom, Construction Inspector III
Michael Maxwell, Engineering Technician III
Paul Marvin, Records/Information Clerk II
Tim Parrish, Engineering Technician III



Peter Sanchez (L) and Frank Fowler (R) present Tim Parrish (C) with Resolution of Appreciation for 20 Years of Service on February 22, 2023.



Left: Peter Sanchez (L) and Frank Fowler (R) present Paul Marvin (C) with Resolution of Appreciation for 20 Years of Service on September 26, 2024.

25+ Years

Brent Sunamoto, District Engineer - Assistant GM
Denise Wade, Master Planning/Special Projects Manager
Jason Clarke, Development Services Manager
Jean Lespade, Telemetry Technician III
Robert McIntyre, Computer Network Technician II

30+ Years

Mark Will, Senior Engineer
Peter Sanchez, General Manager-Secretary
Robert Villalobos, Engineering Technician III

40+ Years

Debbie Campbell, Design Engineer



A community for construction, continued

commence and be completed more expeditiously.

Each partner played an integral role in bringing the multi-year project to completion in Summer 2024. Their efforts also lay the groundwork for providing permanent drainage

service to the remaining area east of Armstrong Avenue once it is developed. This project is but one example of how, together, we are making localized flooding a thing of the past.



Pavement grinding to begin trenching for the storm drain on Armstrong



Left: Cast in place concrete pipe machine



66 Inch cast in place storm drain pour on Armstrong

Team Spotlight: Development Review

Meet the District's Development Review Team. While their work goes largely unnoticed by the public, they are critical to our community, assuring all homes and businesses are properly designed to protect against flooding.

Whether residential, commercial or industrial, all plans for new development must be submitted to the Development Review Team. These are the individuals responsible for outlining the conditions that must be met to comply with District's Master Plan, such as setting appropriate minimum finish floor elevations and evaluating drainage patterns. Submittals include grading plans, storm drain plans, street plans, drainage reports, maps, and easements, depending on what is proposed. The team works closely with developers and their engineers, as well as the cities of Fresno and Clovis and the County of Fresno, to assure that all conditions are met prior to construction.

ments, during the plan review process – all with the intent of meeting the District's mission to protect the community.

The team has been especially busy these past few years due to a ramp up in development and an increase in land use changes. These changes add another level of complexity for the team because they require an adjustment to the District's master plans. For example, if an area zoned for rural residential is incorporated into the urban sphere, the District's urban storm drainage and rural streams master plans must be adjusted. In some cases, developers must mitigate the impacts of increased runoff generated by densifying land uses, requiring the team to conduct additional reviews.



Back Row Left (L) to (R): Robert Villalobos, David Everitt, Antonio Tolentino, Jason Clarke, Gary Chapman, Mark Will.
Front Row: Amjad Qadar, Shauna Espinoza Mendoza, Leana Lopez, Anthony Zaragoza.

Managed by Jason Clarke, this eight-person department is broken into two teams, each led by a supervisor. Staff will often meet with developers and their consulting engineers, while also coordinating closely with other District depart-

ments, during the plan review process – all with the intent of meeting the District's mission to protect the community. The team has been especially busy these past few years due to a ramp up in development and an increase in land use changes. These changes add another level of complexity for the team because they require an adjustment to the District's master plans. For example, if an area zoned for rural residential is incorporated into the urban sphere, the District's urban storm drainage and rural streams master plans must be adjusted. In some cases, developers must mitigate the impacts of increased runoff generated by densifying land uses, requiring the team to conduct additional reviews. With the record-setting pace of development in the Fresno-Clovis area over the past few years, this will be the Development Review Team's busiest year yet or as we say in our world, their 100-year storm. We are grateful to this dedicated team and in part, thanks to their hard work, we can rest assured our community will stay high and dry.

Close Up: Melissa Westrick

Meet the voice and first face of the District, Melissa Westrick. As the Administrative Office Receptionist, Melissa is typically the first point of contact for anyone who calls or visits our office, be it a private citizen, community partner or local developer. You can't help but be uplifted by her bright and energetic demeanor.

Melissa has been praised for spreading positivity throughout the community and among District staff, so it's fitting that "Sunshine," is the nickname coined by her coworkers. She intentionally focuses on finding the good in any situation and after just one year of working at the District, she's already made a lasting mark.

Previously an assistant store manager in the retail industry, member of our team and encourage her to continue shining!



Melissa, her husband Brent, and their dog, Ridge.

Melissa decided to trade in her manager's hat for a more predictable work schedule and the opportunity to serve the public. With all that she's learned so far and the sense of purpose she's gained from contributing to an organization that she believes has a strong impact on the community, Melissa has no doubt she made the right move.

Melissa shares her life with her husband, Brent, and their spoiled only-child-dog, Ridge. They enjoy fishing, camping, target shooting and all things outdoors. Melissa also loves to get creative at home and spreads joy by making and sharing her homemade chocolate peanut clusters and other sweet treats.

In her personal and professional life, Melissa is a true ray of sunshine.

We're so grateful to have her as a

