



Sustainable Kern River

Newsletter | March 2024



2023-2024 Kern County Ag Snapshot

Water for agriculture is an investment in Kern County's people, farmers and future



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We all know that agriculture is important to Kern County, but how important? It can be easy to take agriculture, and by extension the water it requires, for granted. After all, Kern County is one of the top producing agricultural counties in the nation. We tend to think of farmers, but the value of agriculture is so much more than that. Agriculture directly or indirectly touches the lives of everyone who calls Kern County home. Yes, it's about the farmers who grow the food we eat. And yes, it is about the delivery drivers, warehouse workers, grocery store clerks, waiters, and more.

2022-2023 KERN COUNTY AG SNAPSHOT

Total Jobs	Total Wages	Total Output
125,901	\$8,068,889,600	\$22,304,277,000
Direct Jobs	Direct Wages	Direct Output
71,254	\$3,914,138,900	\$11,900,851,100

Did you know? 1 in 3 Kern County jobs are supported by agriculture!

Agriculture is just another word for the hundreds of thousands of people that rely on the industry, and the irrigation water that supports it, to maintain their quality of life here. There may be many local beneficial uses of water, but there is only one beneficial use that provides the jobs and economic security that a third of the county rely on to fuel our economy, and that's agriculture.

The data on the following page comes from Feeding the Economy's U.S. Food and Agriculture Industries Economic Impact Study, 2023, which estimates the economic contributions made by the food and agriculture industries at the county level. The study calculates jobs based on monthly jobs data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and uses these figures to extrapolate wages, output and business taxes.

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[Click Here to View Our New Fact Sheet](#)

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Kern County Water Monitor

There is no shortage of media coverage when it comes to California water. Finding the most relevant articles to better understand how current weather conditions, groundwater management, irrigation efficiency and so many other issues stand to impact water availability in Kern County can be a daunting task. SKRC continues to monitor the wide range of voices weighing in on these subjects and more through our "Kern County Water Monitor." We pulled out just a couple of the articles that we found particularly noteworthy to share with you.



Number of farms continues to drop in state and nation

By: Ag Alert
February 28, 2024

"Small-scale farmers continue to struggle to stay in business in California and across the country, according to the results of the 2022 Census of Agriculture, which was released earlier this month by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

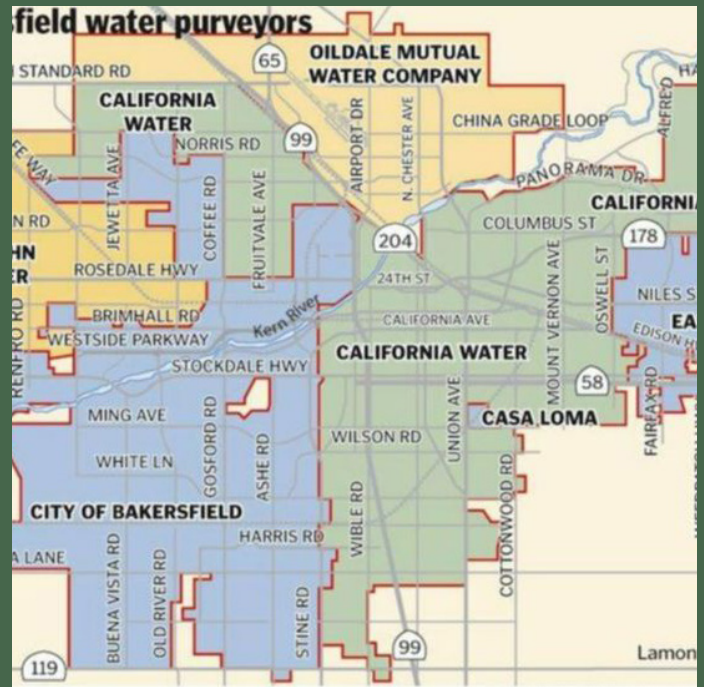
In California, the overall number of farms decreased 10% from 2017 to 2022, while the average acreage per farm increased 10%. The USDA conducts the census every five years."

MEETING NOTES: Bakersfield accrued the most Kern River water last year since buying its river rights in 1976

By: Sonia Lemus, SJV Water
February 26, 2024

“Solomon Sackett and Joshua Tristan, with Water Resources, reported that in the 2022-2023 water year (which runs each year from October 1 through September 30) the city accrued 491,086 acre feet in the Kern River – the most since the city’s [acquisition of Kern River rights](#) in 1976.

They also reported that the February storms this year have increased snow-water content by almost seven inches so far.”



Kern River Canyon reopens following rockslide

By: Newsroom, Bakersfield Now
February 8, 2024

“Caltrans District 6 reports Highway 178 is now open following a day-long closure due to a rockslide.”

Fish in California’s Kern River remain protected following new ruling

By: Alan Riquelmy, Courthouse News
February 6, 2024

“An injunction protecting fish in California’s Kern River remains in place, even after a judge rebuffed several claims in a case looking to restore water to the dried up river.

Environmental groups — including Bring Back the Kern, Water Audit California and the Center for Biological Diversity — sued Bakersfield in 2022, saying that the city’s water diversions hurt wildlife habitats and the river’s ecosystem.”



Kern County Groundwater Subbasin Water Sources Comparison	
Recent 10-year Average (AF)	2023 Estimates (AF)
<u>Kern River</u>	
541,000	2,160,000
<u>Rainfall</u>	
931,000	1,680,000
<u>State Water Project</u>	
566,000	1,240,000
<u>Friant-Kern Canal</u>	
215,000	390,000

Comparison of Kern River Operations — 1983 v 2023

By: Sustainable Kern River Coalition

See here to view our table comparing 2023's extraordinary water year with the recent 10-year average volume of water passing through the Kern County Groundwater Subbasin in light of DWR's projected 2024 snowpack.

Follow SKRC on Twitter (X)



Stay part of the conversation on Twitter (X): <https://twitter.com/SustainTheKern>.

While the SKRC will continue to release regular newsletters, following the SKRC Twitter account is a great way to receive even more of our commentary and engage with us on the most recent Kern River water stories as they happen in real time.

About the Sustainable Kern River Coalition

The Sustainable Kern River Coalition is a regional group of water users, community members and business interests who are committed to protecting and maintaining the rights and access to Kern River water that support the families, farmers, small businesses and disadvantaged communities who are the backbone of Kern County's economy. If you or your organization is interested in joining the Sustainable Kern River Coalition, or in receiving additional information, contact us at info@sustainablekernriver.org.