



# DEVIL'S DEN WATER DISTRICT

## PURPOSE & BENEFIT

In 1991 the former Castaic Lake Water Agency had the foresight to purchase an additional 12,700 acre-feet (AF) of State Water Project (SWP) water by acquiring the Devil's Den Water District (DDWD). As described below, DDWD represents a unique asset to the Santa Clarita Valley community.

## LOCATION, SIZE & CAPACITY

Devil's Den is agricultural land located in Kern and Kings Counties. Centered at the corner of Devil's Den Road and West Side Highway (Route 33), DDWD encompasses 8,676 acres. SCV Water is the primary landowner and operator.

## GOVERNANCE

As the majority landowner within the DDWD, the Board of Directors is made up of four appointees from the SCV Water Board.

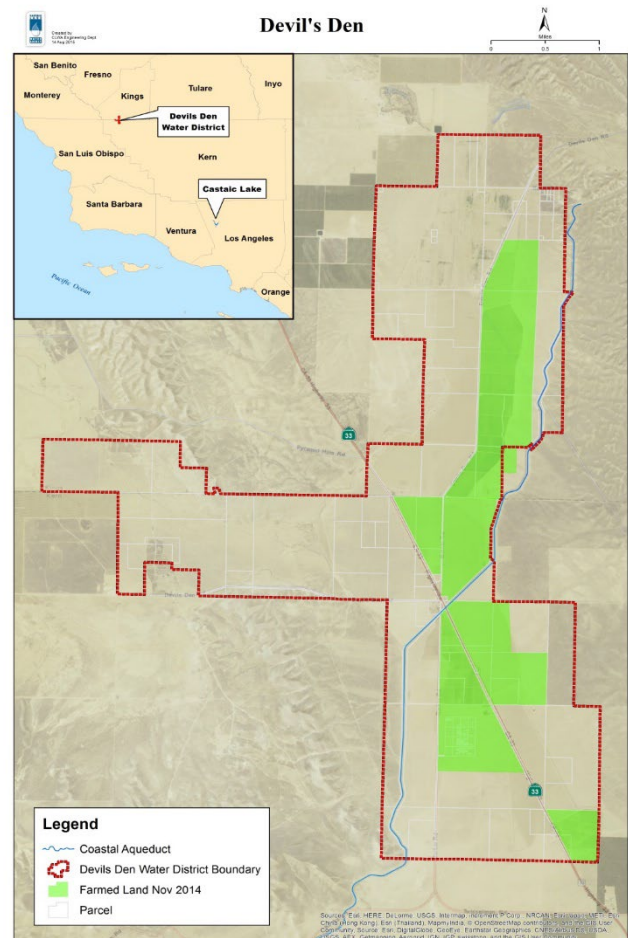
## ROLE IN WATER SUPPLY RELIABILITY

The 12,700 AF of Devil's Den water accounts for 13.1% of our total allotment of State Water Project contract (Table A) water. This is an important water source in our overall water supply portfolio and is subject to State Water Project reliability criteria.

## HISTORY

As told from excerpts of the book "Rivers of Gold" by Brent M. Haddad, "Irrigated farming began at Devil's Den in the 1930s when two Irish brothers drilled the first water wells and planted a barley crop. Ownership changed hands occasionally over the years until Producers Cotton Oil Company bought Devil's Den Ranch in 1957. Irrigated farming at Devil's Den Ranch was accomplished using well water exclusively (no imported water) until 1970, and some dryland farming took place in the western portion of the ranch. The Devil's Den Water District (DDWD) was not formed until 1965. Producers secured its own separate contract with the SWP rather than subcontract through the Kern County/Water Agency, as nearly all other county water agencies did. Producers formed an 8,675-acre district to serve its own property and then contracted for 12,700 acre-feet (AF) per year of SWP water. Luckily for Devil's Den, the SWP system carried water right to its doorstep. SWP deliveries began in 1970, and in some years, DDWD was able to take not only its 12,700 AF allotment but also 1,000 to 1,500 AF of surplus water."

In 1988, the majority of DDWD lands were purchased by Castaic Lake Water Agency (8,459 acres of land plus equipment owned by Producers Cotton Oil Company) at a cost of about \$5 million. Approximately 7,759 acres are within the Devil's Den Water District.





Currently, the land is leased to a tenant farmer, Rolling Hills Farms (RHF), under terms of an operating lease agreement. RHF maintains the property through cattle grazing and mechanical removal of weeds along roadways in lieu of monetary payments. RHF also farmed the land for safflower, melons, onions in past years when water was available but the main crop has been winter wheat which requires less water mainly from rainwater since 2018. RHF has also converted their farming practices to organic farming. As of 2021, RHF has no legal right to State Water Project Table A water. The current lease ends in December 2027.

### Future Benefits of DDWD

**Land Value:** In 2018, SCV Water reviewed several purchase offers to buy the land for alternate uses; however, after an appraisal of the property and much consideration, SCV Water decided to hold off on any decisions to sell the property.

**Sustainable Energy:** SCV Water is considering several options for long-term lease agreement for solar generating facilities.

**Water Resiliency:** SCV Water has been approached by adjacent landowners enquiring about the ability to use the DDWD State Water Project turnout. The turnout provides the capability to wheel\* other water resources through the SWP for delivery and use by DDWD and adjacent landowners. Contractual opportunities could be pursued to recognize the value of these arrangements. In addition to SWP turnout opportunities, the DDWD has groundwater resources, although highly saline, that could provide additional value in the future.



*Property designated for future solar facility.*



*\*Wheel: the use of a water conveyance facility by someone other than the owner/operator to transport water.*

