

Mono Lake Status Update



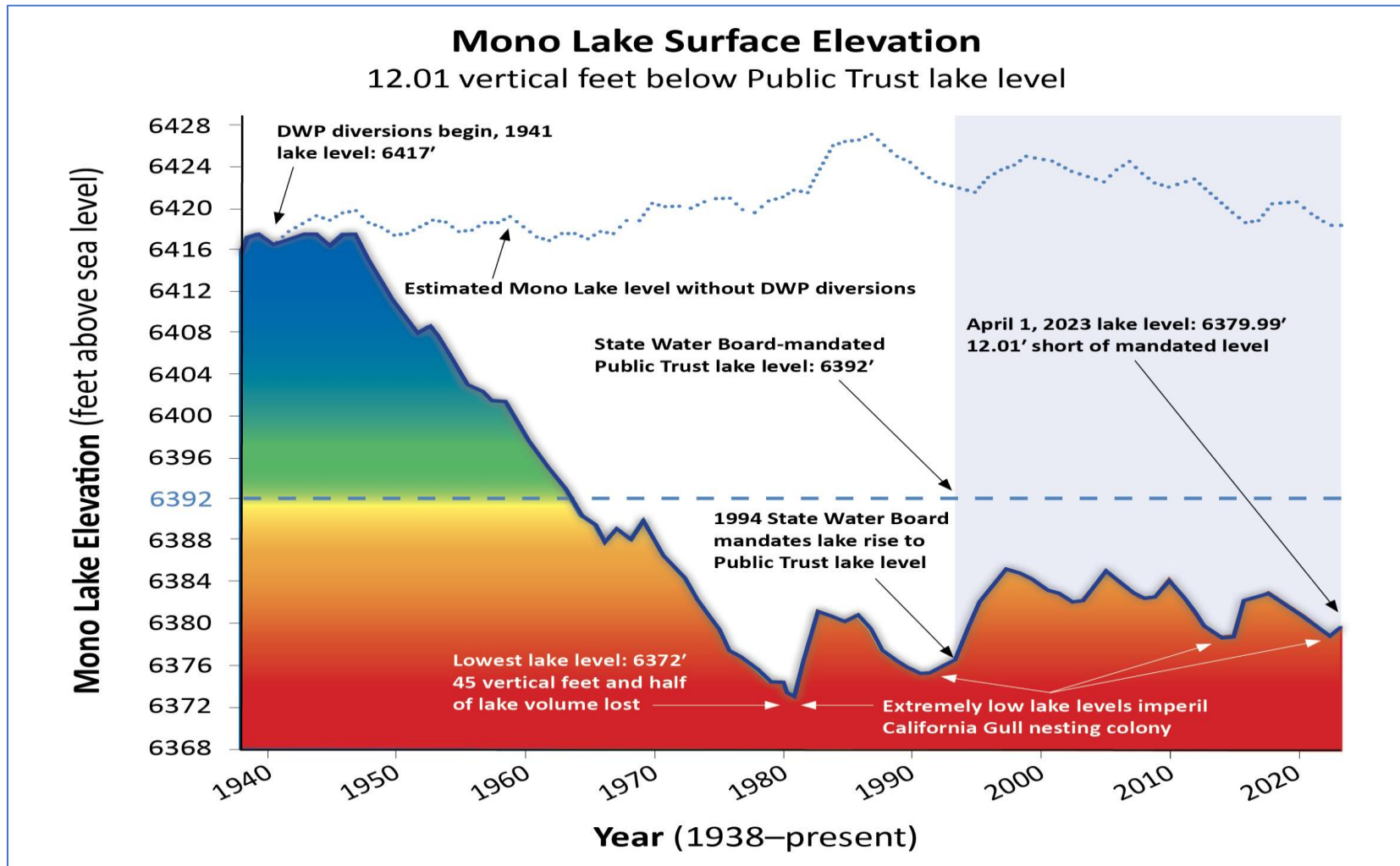
Peter Essick

Geoff McQuilkin, Executive Director, Mono Lake Committee
Martha Davis, Board Member, Mono Lake Committee
mark! Lopez, East Yards Communities For Environmental Justice

Mono Lake Status Update - Friday, June 23, 2023
Los Angeles City Council / Energy & Environment Committee
Councilwoman **Katy Yaroslavsky**, Chair



Mono Lake not at mandated healthy level



Los Angeles – Mono Lake Agreement

1994 State Water Board modified Los Angeles water rights to include

- Restore damaged streams and fisheries
- Raise lake to healthy, sustainable 6,392-foot level

1994 Los Angeles – Mono Lake Agreement -

- City Council, Mayor, LADWP, Mono Lake Committee, state and federal agencies, and other organizations
- At Mono Lake, implement the State Water Board's Mono Lake decision.
- In Los Angeles, state and federal funding for local water supply

A nature-based solution counted on by many

- Public Trust protection
- Fish and Game code compliance
- Clean Air Act compliance
- National Forest Scenic Area
- Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve
- Cultural resources
- Recreation and economy

20 years expected for lake to rise.

- Lake protection expected by 2014
- Lake protection is **past due**



2023 – Update on Mono Lake status

February 2023

- State Water Board workshop. Wide ranging public call to implement lake protection
- State Water Board recognition that Mono Lake protection not yet fulfilled
- Formal hearing pending

April 2023

- Discussions with Los Angeles leaders
- Reaffirmation of the Agreement
- Affirm raising Mono Lake to 6392 lake level is a requirement of the water right, and is overdue
- Opportunity identified: explore diversion scenarios that quickly raise lake while considering years of high water value in LA

June 2023

- Mono Lake Committee and LADWP preparing joint technical team to explore diversion scenarios with State Water Board, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Kutzadika'a Tribe, others



Why Los Angeles cares about Mono Lake

Connecting Both Ends of the Aqueduct

East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice

Communities for a Better Environment

Pacoima Beautiful

Homeboy Industries

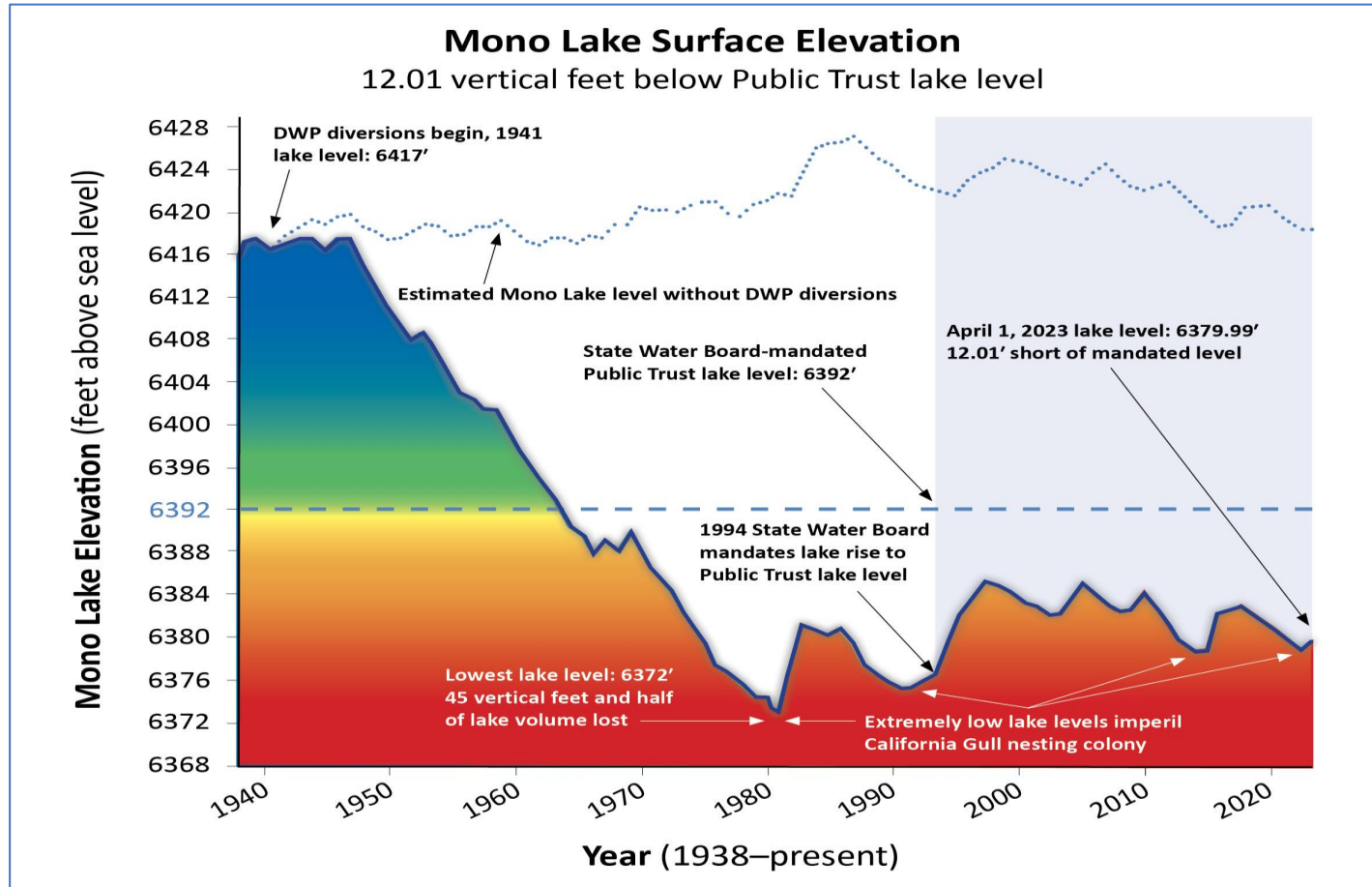
Port of Los Angeles High School

East LA Performing Arts

... And many more



Thank you! Questions?





MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

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May 11, 2023

Anselmo Collins
Senior Assistant General Manager – Water System
Los Angeles Department of Water & Power
111 N. Hope Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Collins,

At our Mono Lake meeting in April, convened by Deputy Mayor Nancy Sutley, we agreed to assemble the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (LADWP) and Mono Lake Committee technical teams as soon as possible to explore Mono Basin diversion operating rule scenarios that implement the State Water Board's 1994 Mono Lake decision by quickly raising Mono Lake to the 6392-foot lake elevation management level.

I am writing to move this process forward by (a) initiating meeting scheduling for the joint technical team meeting and (b) proposing you and I meet this month to prepare an agenda and guidance for the joint team meeting.

The agreed-upon framework for the technical meeting includes the following:

- Reaffirmation of the 1994 agreement by all parties, including the Committee, LADWP, and the City of Los Angeles, to accept and implement the State Water Board's Mono Lake decision, D1631, and its requirement that the lake rise to a management level of 6392 feet above sea level;
- Recognition that the timeline by which Mono Lake was expected to reach the 6392-foot management level has not been met, and that the lake's protection is past due;
- Recognition that, because Mono Lake's level fluctuates in response to wet and dry years, progress in raising Mono Lake requires a "ratchet" strategy to maximize wet year gains and preserve those gains through the inevitable dry years that follow;

I have prioritized this effort for the Committee's hydrology and modeling technical team so that we are available to immediately begin work with LADWP's team to examine scenarios for how the Mono Basin diversion operating rules can be revised to implement D-1631. I have asked Greg Reis at the Committee to reach out to Eric Tillemans in Bishop to set the date for the kick-off meeting.

In addition, as we discussed, I've shared our plan to assemble a technical group with staff of the State Water Board along with other engaged parties, notably the Mono Lake Kutzadika'a Tribe and the California Department of Fish & Wildlife.

As always, the Committee is committed to solving the problem shared by Los Angeles and Mono Lake. Both need an adequate and reliable water supply that augments our joint climate resilience. We believe that there are flexible and innovative solutions that will help meet our shared needs and we will continue to advance this work.

A guiding framework and agenda will be important for the launch of the joint technical team work. I propose that you and I meet in the next two weeks to discuss this guidance while the scheduling effort is underway. Thank you for your engagement with this important Mono Lake matter amidst the very busy spring snowmelt season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. McQuilkin', with a stylized, flowing script.

Geoffrey McQuilkin
Executive Director

Cc: Nancy Sutley, Deputy Mayor