



CFWC Activity Report

TO: San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority Board of Directors

FROM: Michelle Paul, Executive Director

DATE: September 9, 2026

SUBJECT: CFWC Activity Report, August 2026

Summary

August was a productive month at CFWC. I logged plenty of miles across California, visiting more than a dozen members, touring farms and water infrastructure, and connecting with people who shape water policy and public opinion, from Colusa to Imperial County. That work is already paying off through stronger relationships, expanded media engagement, new outreach opportunities, and a deeper understanding of how current water policy affects on-the-ground users.

Media Landscape and Response

August kept us busy on the water-news front. We tracked more than 2,000 articles, most focused on Colorado River operations. Key topics included the federal 10-year shortage framework, Lake Powell reaching a record low, and the Lower Basin states' two-year operating cycle. Other coverage addressed water supplies and allocations, policy and governance, climate and drought, groundwater and water rights. Overall, the tone was more negative than in recent months, with an emphasis on declining reservoirs, shortage planning, litigation, and drought monitoring.

The picture was a little brighter for agriculture. Coverage was mostly neutral, with positive stories about SGMA implementation, irrigation efficiency, farm economics, and habitat partnerships.

Editorial Outreach and Placement

Between member visits and watershed tours across the state, we made progress placing positive stories about agricultural water use. In response to a Los Angeles Times story, we submitted a [letter](#) explaining that all growers, regardless of size, location or commodity, must comply with groundwater pumping rules. It also explains that SGMA is a statewide law carried out through local groundwater plans.

I also represented the Coalition in an interview with Capitol Public Radio in Sacramento and drafted several editorials about the cost of building water infrastructure and the need to expand it as California's population grows. We look forward to seeing these pieces published in September.

Outreach

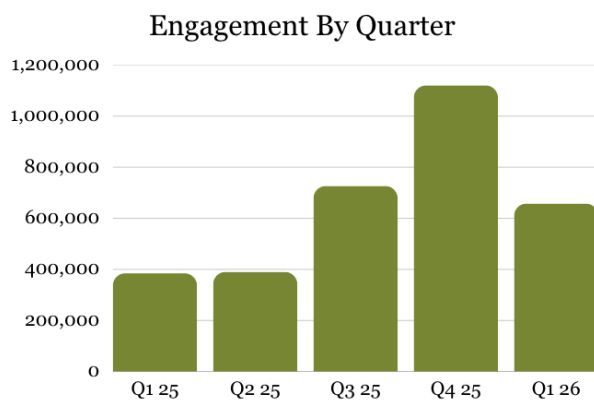
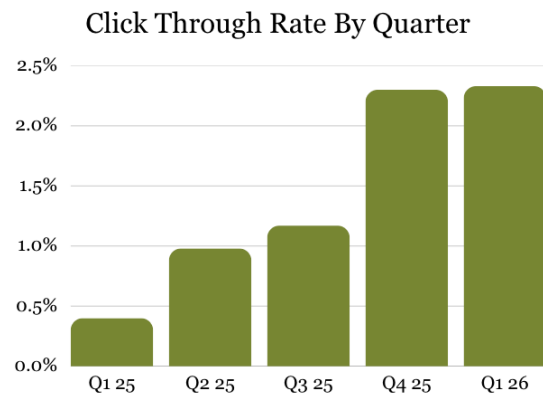
The Unified Water Plan has been released! It's available to read on waterblueprintca.com. This congressionally authorized plan estimates the Valley will face an annual water shortfall of about 2.4 million acre-feet by 2040 and proposes an \$18 billion to \$33 billion response. The plan provides a pathway for Congress and the state to fund projects prioritized in the Valley and urges a streamlined permitting process to ensure timely completion.

Cultivate California: Quarterly Results and Strategy

As part of our work, the Coalition manages [Cultivate California](#), a social media program that helps people understand the connection between California agriculture, responsible water use, and the food they eat. The goal is to build appreciation and support for the role California agriculture plays in everyday life.

To see whether the content is reaching the right people, we track how they respond to each post. Follower growth matters, but actions such as likes, comments, shares, saves and link clicks tell us more. They show that people, including urban audiences who may be less familiar with California agriculture and water, are interested enough to engage or learn more.

The charts below show the program's performance over the past year. Click-through rate is the percentage of viewers who clicked on a link to learn more. Engagement measures how often viewers took another action, such as liking, commenting on, sharing or saving a post, instead of simply viewing it.



Top-performing posts in August:



Maddox Farm Boys Almond Harvest

Interactions: 4.1k
Views: 84.9k



People and California Agriculture

Interactions: 3.8k
Views: 88.7k



Maddox Farm Boys Calf Care

Interactions: 5.5k
Views: 81.3k