



Tree Nut Times

January 2026

Volume 18, Issue 01

Industry Calendar

North Valley Nut
Conference
Jan. 14, 2026

American Pistachio
Growers Conference
Feb. 16—18, 2026

California Walnut
Conference
Feb. 19, 2026

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Newsletter Sponsored by: Western Alliance Bank

WTNA Board Election Results

This past month, the **Western Tree Nut Association (WTNA)** sought nominations for five (5) open board positions for hullers and processors, plus a vacancy and received six (6) nominations, which included the four incumbents and two new nominations. WTNA also sought nominations for three new grower director positions and received five nominations! At the December Board Meeting the WTNA Board of Directors voted to forego an election and appointed all candidates to the board. Reelected to the Board of Directors on the Huller/

Processor side were **Kevin Long of Minturn Huller Cooperative**, **Ali Amin with Primex**, **John Rodriguez from Mariani Nut**, and **Jared Barletta of Diamond Foods**. Joining the board for the first time on the Huller/Processor side are **Lee Heringer from M & T Chico Ranch**, and **Brad Larsen with Hughson Nut/OFI**. New additions to the WTNA Board of Directors on the grower side are **Vitek Harvey with Harvey Family Farms**, **Dan Errotabere with Errotabere Ranches**, **Justin Spellman from the JG Boswell Company**, **Lucas Cauzza of Cauzza Ranches**, and **Jeff McKinney of McKinney Family Farms**. This brings the Board of Directors to twenty four (25) members. Stepping down from the board after 8 years of dedicated

service is **Jim Sears from Sierra Valley Hulling** who will be retiring this next year. Jim has been a dedicated board member, and the Association wants to thank and recognize Jim for his contributions to the success of the Association.



WTNA Hosts Assemblyman Ahrens

The Western Tree Nut Association welcomed **Assemblymember Patrick Ahrens (AD-26)** for a tour of a member facility. The visit included a guided walk-through of **RPAC LLC**, a hulling, shelling, and processing operation located in Los Banos. The visit provided the Assemblymember with a firsthand look at the scale and complexity of tree-nut handling in California. During the tour, Assemblymember Ahrens met with **Paul Parreira Jr.**, who discussed several key challenges

facing the company and the industry statewide. The Assemblymember also had the opportunity

Welcome New Grower Members!
Eriksson LLC

Welcome New Regular Member!
River Ranch

Welcome New Associate Members!
SDI

to learn more about the association's work, industry innovations, and the regulatory landscape impacting growers and processors.

Association President/CEO Roger Isom and Assistant Vice President of Technical Services Chris McGlothlin

were also in attendance to help brief the Assembly member and answer questions. WTNA extends its sincere appreciation to Assembly member Ahrens for taking time out of his busy

schedule to engage with the industry and gain a deeper understanding of the issues important to our members.

Association Addresses National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology

The **National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology** hosted a meeting in conjunction with **BEAM Circular at UC Merced** this past week, and **Association President/CEO Roger A. Isom** was there to address the group and plead for solutions to the State's growing biomass problem. Isom was part of a key Agriculture Roundtable led by **CDFA Undersecretary Christine Birdsong**, **Joining Isom and Birdsong on the panel were Peter Ansel, California Farm Bureau Federation; Christine Gemperle, Gemperle Orchards; Lisandra Vitorino, California Dairy Campaign; and Dr. Joshua Viers, UC Merced.** Isom highlighted the current plight by pointing out the state had more than 40 biomass plants operating at one time. Now there is only one in the San Joaquin Valley, and due to the



implementation of SGMA, low commodity prices and the elimination of funds to chip and incorporate biomass materials back into the ground, the problem is exponentially greater now. Isom commented "We have met with more than 50 different biotechnology companies working to resolve the biomass issue and we can't get any of them to the finish line and become operational at any significant level. We need viable solutions, and we need them yesterday!"

CPUC Rejects Increase to Cost of Capital by Utilities

The California Public Utilities Commission set new levels for the Cost of Capital that represented a 0.3% decrease. While it may not be significant, it is opposite of the 1% increase that the utilities had originally proposed back in March. Prior to this new decision PG&E had proposed to increase the cost of capital from 10.28% to 11.3% and Edison had proposed to go from 10.33% to 11.75%. Considering the current economic environment, it was a bold request by the utilities that was met with tremendous opposition from industry groups, rate-payers and even legislators who were brave enough to challenge the utilities. **Association President/CEO Roger A. Isom** commented "We applaud the CPUC for having the courage to do the right thing and not only reject the proposed increase, but to decrease the rate of return. Electricity rates in California are astronomical compared to the rest of the country, and it is time for the CPUC to bring these utilities in line. Finally, the state is taking a small step in the right direction."

Reclamation updates long-term operation plan for the Central Valley Project


The Bureau of Reclamation signed a Record of Decision adopting an updated long-term operation plan for the Central Valley Project. The decision advances actions designed to maximize water deliveries across California while maintaining protections for endangered fish species. "With the signing of this Record of Decision, we are delivering on the promise of Executive Order 14181 to strengthen California's water resilience," said **Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum**. "This updated operations plan reflects our commitment to using the best available science to increase water deliveries while safeguarding the environment and honoring the legacy of the Central Valley Project's 90 years of service." The revised plan responds to [Executive Order 14181](#), issued Jan. 24, 2025,



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which directs federal agencies to take all available measures to increase water deliveries from the CVP, including issuing a new Record of Decision consistent with federal law. “Action 5 represents a forward-looking approach to water management that balances the needs of California’s communities, agriculture, and ecosystems,” said **Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Andrea Travnicek**. “By refining real-time governance and operational flexibility, we are ensuring that every drop of water is managed with precision, accountability, and purpose.”

Under the updated approach, the CVP may increase annual water deliveries

by between 130 to 180 thousand acre-feet, and the State Water Project by 120 to 220 thousand acre-feet, depending on hydrologic conditions and subject to the State’s adoption of Action 5. The updates improve the use of scientific modeling and analysis in operational criteria. Changes remain within the range analyzed in the 2024 Long-Term Operations Final Environmental Impact Statement and consistent with effects analyzed in the 2024 Biological Opinions issued by NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Key operational changes include adjustments to Delta export operations, removal of the Delta Summer and Fall Habitat Action and removal of early export-reduction concepts from the State of California’s Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program. **Association President/CEO Roger A. Isom** stated “this type of action is what we all hoped for, and represents the balance so desperately needed. While it won’t eliminate the devastating impact of SGMA, it will go a long way in helping to mitigate the damaging effects on farmers, agricultural processors and everyone that lives here.”

Proposed Changes to Cal/OSHA First Aid Kit Requirements

California Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) is moving forward with long-anticipated updates to its First Aid Kit standard, marking a significant shift from the current prescriptive requirements that have been in place for decades. Efforts to modernize and simplify the rule date back to 2006. Under the proposed revisions, Cal/OSHA would allow employers to meet nationally recognized first aid kit standards, such as ANSI, rather than requiring first aid kits to be approved exclusively by a physician. This change is intended to provide greater flexibility while still ensuring employee protection.

Key elements of the proposal include:

- Alignment with national standards (e.g., ANSI) for first aid kit contents
- Weekly inspections of first aid kits to ensure completeness and usability
- Clear accessibility requirements, including labeled locations for first aid kits
- Hazard-based evaluations, requiring employers to add supplemental supplies based on workplace-specific risks

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The draft language will be formally considered by the Standards Board during a January 2026 public hearing, providing stakeholders an opportunity to comment on the proposal and its potential impacts. The Association is reviewing the draft regulation and will be submitting comments on behalf of tree nut growers, handlers, and processors. We will continue to keep you updated as this rulemaking moves forward.

WTNA Members Donate Big to Fresno State

Last month, another load of donated almond hulls was delivered to the Fresno State Dairy Unit from WTNA member **Dairyland Hullers**. Over the past couple of months, Western Tree Nut has worked to secure donations from local hullers, to help provide much needed almond hulls to supplement the Dairy Unit’s feed rotation. In October, **Minturn Huller Cooperative, Inc.** stepped up with a donated truckload. Each load lasts the department around 6 weeks, and with the current donations on file, there is enough donated hulls to last the university well into 2027. WTNA would like to thank participating members for the generous contribution to the Dairy Unit, the Jordan College of Ag and to Fresno State as a whole.



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State Announces Initial 10% Water Allocation for SWP

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has announced an initial State Water Project (SWP) allocation of 10 percent of requested supplies for the new water year. The SWP is contractually required to make an initial allocation forecast by December 1 each year. Since it is so early in the season, the initial allocation typically reflects current hydrological conditions, existing reservoir storage, and an assumption of dry conditions through the rest of the year. So far, the wet season is off to a good start with beneficial rain falling in Northern California and Southern California already seeing significant rainfall following a dry year last year. "Recent history has shown us that anything can happen during a California winter, so it's important that our early season allocation for the State Water Project is conservative," said **DWR Director Karla Nemeth**. "Traditionally our wettest months are yet to come. With improvements to forecasting and science, we are better prepared to capture water supply during wet periods if Mother Nature delivers." Across the state, California's water supply starts the season in good shape with statewide reservoir storage just above average at 114 percent. Lake Oroville, the SWP's largest reservoir, is at 100 percent of average for this time of year, slightly above where it was at last December. Each year, DWR provides the initial SWP allocation based on available water storage, projected water supply and water demands. Allocations are updated monthly as snowpack, rainfall and runoff data is analyzed, with a final allocation typically determined near the end of the season in May or June.

CalOSHA Appeals case

- Participated in In formal Conference on CalOSHA Appeals case
- Conduct three hazard inspections for a client
- Attended Fresno Madera Young Farmers & Ranchers Meeting
- Attend APG LeadOn Meeting
- Developed five lockout/tagout procedures for pistachio processor
- Attended and testified at CARB Heavy Duty Truck Strategy Meeting
- Attended Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Expert Panel Meeting
- Attended Citizens Advisory Group of Industry
- Developed one safety program for an almond huller
- Conducted one Hazard Inspection for client
- Conducted one Employee Orientation Preseason Training for an almond processor
- Participated in the SJV Water Blueprint Education Work Group meeting
- Conducted Confined Space reclassification assessment
- Participated in an organic recertification audit with a client
- Assisted in Global Organic Textile Standard Audit for a client
- Developed and submitted an ATC application for a walnut processor
- Assisting a client through the ATC application process

WTNA Activities for December:

- Attended SJVAPCD Governing Board Meeting
- Spoke before the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology Commission
- Met w/ two companies and one hydrogen committee on biomass
- Prepared and submitted nominations for CDPR SPARC and SPMAC Committees
- Conducted tour of almond hulling/processing operation w/ Assemblyman Ahrens
- Participated in Navel Orangeworm SIT meeting
- Attended SJV Water Blueprint Technical Workgroup meeting
- Conducted tour w/ US Senator Schiff's staff
- Attended and exhibited at Almond Board Conference
- Participated in Status Conference on

**REGISTRATION TO
OPEN SOON...**

Interested in early sponsorship opportunity? Give us a call!

**Western Tree
Nut Association**



**SAVE
THE
DATE**

2026 Annual Meeting
June 10 - 12, 2026
Monterey, CA