

## **Rebecca Unger, Candidate for Joshua Basin Water District**

*What issues of water use and District responsibility in Morongo Basin's desert environment do you believe your Water District needs to focus on in the short- and long-term?*

I believe the California Water Code is woefully outdated by blandly asserting that a water agency can neither promote nor discourage development, only say whether there is enough water to serve a project for a reasonable length of time. Water IS land use, and this is becoming more evident and important as we are in the era of climate change-induced drought that could be irreversible. If re-elected, I want to re-open this section of the water code and advocate for my battle cry, "Water IS land use."

In my first four years on the Joshua Basin Water District board, I have voted against issuing will-serve letters to NextEra and Alta Mira, and have forwarded letters for signatures to my board members from the National Park Conservation Association against the Cadiz project.

The directors and staff of Joshua Basin Water District are conservationists and environmentalists. We are very mindful that we live in the desert with limited natural recharge. We gratefully thank our customers for allowing us to raise water rates so we can upgrade our system to prevent catastrophic wasteful pipe ruptures and purchase State Water Project water for our recharge ponds.

The customers of Joshua Basin Water District have remained committed to a 20% voluntary reduction in water use. While this also reduces our revenue from water sales, we applaud that voluntary commitment. We are already using the much-needed revenue bump buy equipment, hire field crews and start a pipe replacement project in the Saddleback area. The district has deferred maintenance and refurbishment for too long, and now we can start to protect the community's investment.

We are also looking at our own seven-acre solar installation to cut our energy costs, and this working group includes some of the most knowledgeable people in our desert. This effort is being supported with grants from the California Energy Commission.

This water district is community-owned, and we will always work for Joshua Tree.