

# Irvine Ranch Water District Pipelines

The Newsletter of Irvine Ranch Water District / April 2002  
Volume 2002 Number 04

## IRWD Customers To See New Urban Water Runoff Treatment Line Item on Monthly Bill

You've probably heard the phrase, "the ocean begins at your front door." Today, with increasing attention being focused on the problems of ocean pollution caused by urban runoff, people are starting to make the connection between their own water use practices and the health of our watershed.

If you irrigate your yard to the point where water is flowing over sidewalks, down the driveway or out into the street, you are not only wasting water, but also contributing to urban runoff. Activities like washing cars and hosing off pavement also contribute to water pollution.

Beginning in May, Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) customers will begin to see a new line item spelled out on their monthly water bill. Shown on the bill as "Urban Water Runoff Treatment," the new line item is **not a charge being added to the bill**. Rather, the notation is simply a new itemization to make customers more aware of the amount of their bill that is going

toward runoff treatment. For the average residential customer, the line item will be less than 50 cents per month.

IRWD has been cleaning runoff in San Diego Creek for the past several years using a reconstructed wetlands system in the San Joaquin Marsh. Much more needs to be done about urban runoff in the future to meet increasingly stringent regulations on the County and cities. IRWD is currently in the planning stages of a project called the Natural Treatment System, which will take the successes demonstrated at the San Joaquin Marsh and apply them to the entire San Diego Creek Watershed by adding smaller constructed wetlands in many locations to treat urban runoff before it reaches San Diego Creek.

More information will appear in the May issue of Pipelines when you will actually begin to see the new itemization on your monthly bill. In the meantime, remember that efficient water use saves money AND helps the environment.

### The Ocean Begins At Your Front Door

#### To help prevent ocean pollution, remember:

- Sewers and storm drains are separate systems
- Storm drains flow to the ocean
- Never dispose of motor oil, paint, pesticides or other chemicals in the storm drain. Take them to a free county household hazardous waste disposal center instead. The one in Irvine is located at 6411 Oak Canyon Ave., just west of Sand Canyon Ave.
- Avoid over-watering your yard. This not only wastes water, but sends fertilizers and pesticides into the storm drain, where they will pollute the ocean.
- Maintain your vehicle so that it does not leak oil or other fluids.

### Irvine Ranch Water District Open House

Saturday, June 8  
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Join us for tours of the Michelson Water Reclamation Plant and San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary

### Free Ultra-Low-Flush Toilets Saturday, June 1 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. El Toro High School

25255 Toledo Way, Lake Forest  
(return date: Saturday, June 15)

For more information, call (toll free)  
1 (866) 373-3928

Note: This program is not run by Irvine Ranch Water District. We inform our customers about the program as a public service.

# April is Earthquake Preparedness Month... Be Prepared

Now in its 19<sup>th</sup> year, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services California Earthquake Preparedness Campaign is charged with raising the public's awareness about what to do in the event of an earthquake.

The goal of this annual campaign is simple: To educate and motivate Californians to prepare for the inevitable damaging earthquake that could strike our state at any given time.

When that happens, police, fire, utilities and medical service could be overwhelmed. It may take days to restore electricity, gas, water or telephones and traveling anywhere may be difficult, if not impossible. The first 72 hours following an earthquake are critical so you should be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least that long.

**A supply of stored water may be your most important survival item. Seven gallons of stored water per person can last two weeks.** To keep drinking water safe from contamination, it should be stored in carefully cleaned, non-corrosive, tightly covered containers. Commercially bottled water is one option. Containers of heavy, opaque plastic with screw-on caps are best if you bottle your own water. All stored water should be clearly labeled and the water replenished every three to six months.

After a quake, tap water could be polluted. Water that is boiled for five minutes will usually be safe from contamination. If boiling isn't possible, strain the water through paper towels, paper coffee filters, or several layers of clean cloth to remove any sediment. Treat the water with household **liquid** chlorine bleach. Add two drops of bleach per one quart of clear water and four drops if the water is cloudy. Add eight drops of bleach to one gallon of clear water and 16 drops if the water is cloudy. Be sure to include an eyedropper in your emergency kit.

**Do not use granular forms of household bleach; they are poisonous.**

Mix water and bleach thoroughly and let stand for 30 minutes. Purify only enough water at a time to last a maximum of 48 hours.

You should learn how to shut off gas, water and electricity. To shut off the water, look for the main valve where water enters the property, usu-

ally in a concrete box near the street. Lift the cover, and then use a pipe or crescent wrench to turn off the water. Some valves have a circular grip that can be turned clockwise to shut the water off and no special tools are needed. Mark the shut-off valve with fluorescent paint or tape so you can find it in the dark.

Preparation for early response to any damage that might occur is a top priority for IRWD. We have a comprehensive emergency response plan, which is routinely reviewed and revised. District employees regularly participate in emergency preparedness drills. After the Northridge quake in 1994, crews from IRWD were dispatched to assist in repairing earthquake-damaged pipelines, which provided valuable real-world emergency response experience for many of our employees.

## CHECK OUT THESE WEB SITES:

- [www.irwd.com](http://www.irwd.com) - information about IRWD
- [www.shadetrepartnership.org](http://www.shadetrepartnership.org) - tree planting events
- [www.naturaltreatmentsystem.org](http://www.naturaltreatmentsystem.org) - learn more about this new project for urban runoff treatment
- [www.h2ouse.org](http://www.h2ouse.org) - this site features current information and resources to help you be water efficient



*Officials from several cities, water districts and legislators' offices recently toured Irvine Ranch Water District's new Deep Aquifer Treatment System (DATS) project. The system uses membrane filtration (visible at right) to remove color molecules from water in the deepest portion of the Orange County Groundwater Basin. While high in quality, the water has a slightly brownish tint caused by ancient redwood trees and other vegetation that populated the area millions of years ago. After treatment, the water is crystal clear. The facility began operation in late February and is providing IRWD customers with an additional source of local water.*

## LANDSCAPE WATERING TIPS!

- This is the growing season for most plants, making it the optimal time to fertilize. For this growth stage, look for a balanced, organic fertilizer suitable for Orange County area to promote even growth.
- NOW is the time to water deeply to encourage deep root growth. Aerating your lawn can improve root growth. Orange County has predominantly heavy clay soils, which absorbs water at a slower rate. To get the deep water penetration, try watering for short periods twice or even three times in one day at least an hour apart. This watering pattern produces better root growth than watering a little every day.
- Water your lawn only when it needs it. Check by stepping on the grass. If it springs back up when you move, it doesn't need water. If it stays flat, fetch the sprinkler. Most homes will need to water their lawns three days per week, three cycles of three minutes. Trees and shrubs generally require about half (some shrubs even less) of what the lawn needs. If you're watering every day or every other day, you're providing more than most plants need. Check the moisture of the soil 3-6" below the surface. With our heavy clay soils, the surface may look dry, but the clay remains moist beneath the surface.
- Cut back on fertilizing. Some fertilizers can burn your lawn. Use a balanced, organic or slow-release formula. Over fertilizing can lead to higher water and mowing demands. Ask your local nursery about fertilizing.
- Aerate your soil: Heavy soils compact easily, making it difficult for plants to send their roots deep.
- Check your sprinkler system. Clean clogged heads. Replace broken sprinklers or risers. Adjust the angle so that spray doesn't wet the pavement.
- Upgrade your irrigation system. Install a drip irrigation system. It's the most efficient way to get water to the roots without any water waste. Soaker hoses are less efficient than drip systems, but inexpensive and easy to use in between rows of vegetables or around big trees.
- Raise the cutting height of your lawnmower by 50 percent. Taller grass will retain more water during the high temperature months. (Hybrid Bermuda: 3/4 inch; Tall Fescue: 3-3½" inches.)

*Important NOTE: Landscapers may turn sprinkler controllers up too high. Watch for runoff. Runoff will carry fertilizers into the storm drain and contribute to pollution in our waterways. 💧*

## WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

### Suggested Weekly Watering Schedule for the months of April and May

#### WEEKLY WATERING SCHEDULE

	Turf grass	Trees, shrubs groundcover
April & May	3 days, 3 cycles* of 3 minutes	2 days 3 cycles* of 3 minutes

*\*By "cycling" your irrigation timer to turn on for the suggested number of minutes an hour apart, you reduce runoff and gain deeper watering and healthier root growth. Start with this weekly schedule and increase the times only if your plants show signs of stress. If stress occurs only in isolated areas, check your irrigation system before increasing the time. Spring is the most active growth period for turf grass and other plants. Be sure to water adequately.*

## HOME WATER USE

### EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

*Receive rebates on the following water efficient home products:*

- \$100 rebate available for high efficiency washing machines.
- Up to \$80 rebate for new state-of-the-art toilets

**For more information on participation criteria and to receive a rebate application call 1 (800) 954-4344. Act now - limited time programs.**

*Note: participants in the toilet rebate programs may get an inspection call and are required to submit their original receipt. These programs are not run by IRWD. We inform our customers about them as a public service.*

### Commercial/Industrial/Institutional Rebates

Call 1 (877) 728-2282 for information and application.

# Community Calendar

## IRWD OFFICES CLOSED ON THE FOLLOWING HOLIDAY:

- Monday, May 27 - Memorial Day Holiday

## SHADETREE PARTNERSHIP HOSTS AN ORANGE COUNTY VOLUNTEER CENTER VOLUNTEER CONNECTION DAY ACTIVITY

Saturday, April 27 from 8:30 a.m. to noon

Plant seedlings received from the National Tree Trust grant at the Shadetree Nursery. For more information call (949) 453-5670 or visit their Web site at [shadetreepartnership.org](http://shadetreepartnership.org).

## IRVINE ANIMAL CARE CENTER CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

Saturday and Sunday, May 4 and 5

Attention pets and pet lovers! The City of Irvine Animal Care Center celebrates 20 years of providing extraordinary pet services to the community with fun activities. Events include: A Pet Trek and low-cost vaccination clinic at Central Bark. Call (949) 724-7740 or check the Web site at [www.irvineshelter.org](http://www.irvineshelter.org) for more information.

## CELEBRATE LAKE FOREST • Saturday, May 4 from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday, May 5 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Town Center in Foothill Ranch (near Regal Cinemas)

Business Fair • Community Fair • Food Court • Games/prizes • Entertainment • Pony rides • Petting Zoo • Small rides

For more information contact the Lake Forest Chamber of Commerce at (949) 768-3002.

## YOUNG MASTERS • Saturday, May 11 • 1 to 4 p.m. at Irvine City Hall

View the works of more than 500 of Irvine's top artists (K-6th grades) at the opening day festivities, which include children's hands-on art projects, entertainment, and refreshments. Free admission. The artwork will remain on display for two weeks. For more information call (949) 856-1760.

*City of Irvine - Community Services Department*

## OPEN SPACE DEDICATION EVENT • Saturday, May 18 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The City of Irvine will accept the first portion (2,126 acres) of open space from The Irvine Company at a dedication ceremony in Bommer Canyon. Gates open at 8 a.m., dedication at 10 a.m., barbeque lunch - 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., family nature walks, music, community booths and interactive stations until 2 p.m. Call (949) 724-6646 for more information.

## IRVINE JUNIOR GAMES • Sunday, May 19 at Irvine Stadium

Irvine school children will compete in various track and field events. Proceeds benefit childcare at Irvine elementary school sites. To volunteer, donate money, or for more information, call the Irvine Junior Games at (949) 786-6454.

## PUBLIC SAFETY EMERGENCY SERVICES EXPO

Sunday, May 19 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The City of Costa Mesa invites you to a PUBLIC SAFETY EMERGENCY SERVICES EXPO. Held at Placentia Fire Station at 2300 Placentia Avenue in Costa Mesa, there will be demonstrations and displays for everyone including a structure fire demo, auto extrication demo and a fire dog demonstration. For more information contact Barbara Marcosa at (714) 754-5091.

## SEA AND SAGE AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

- Friday evening bat walks (May 24 & 31, June 14 & 28 and July 19 & 26) from 7:15 to 8:45 p.m.

Don't miss the chance to see the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary by moonlight. Cost: \$10 per person; \$5 for children ages 7 to 12. Advance payment and reservations are necessary.

Call (949) 261-7963 or visit their web site at [www.seaandsageaudubon.org](http://www.seaandsageaudubon.org).

## IRWD OPEN HOUSE (Michelson Water Reclamation Plant and San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary) • Saturday, June 8 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Tours - displays - refreshments. Save this date! More details out soon!

The mission of Irvine Ranch Water District, a public agency, is to provide reliable, high quality water and sewer service in an efficient, cost effective manner and environmentally sensitive way that provides a high level of customer satisfaction.

## IRWD Board of Directors

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## Pipelines

Published by the  
Community Relations Dept.  
IRWD  
P.O. Box 57000  
Irvine, CA 92619-7000

For comments, suggestions or questions, call (949) 453-5500.

## 24 Hour Service (949) 453-5300

Should you discover a disruption in your water service or other problems call the IRWD 24-hour emergency line and a representative will assist you.

Visit the IRWD Web site:

[www.irwd.com](http://www.irwd.com)

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4/2002 83K