

# Irvine Ranch Water District **Pipelines**

The Newsletter of Irvine Ranch Water District / February 2003  
Volume 2003 Number 02

## **Free Water Awareness Tours**

Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) offers free Water Awareness Tours to all its customers. Spring tours are scheduled for Saturday, April 26 and Saturday, May 17. These tours, open to those who live or work within IRWD boundaries, are an excellent opportunity to gain valuable information about the water system, wastewater treatment, and recycled water use.

Tours include a discussion of water supply issues, rates, water conservation, water quality, the distribution system and other issues. Also featured are tours of the Water Quality Laboratory, the Michelson Water Reclamation Plant, and other District facilities. A special attraction is a guided tour of a portion of the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary.

The free tours start promptly at 8 a.m. and conclude at approximately 2 p.m. Lunch is provided.

To sign up, customers may send in the form (on page three), register on the IRWD Web site at [www.irwd.com](http://www.irwd.com), or call (949) 453-5500.

The tours fill very quickly and are first-come first-served based on the date we receive your reservation. You will receive a call if your selection is not available and you can choose another date or be placed on a waiting list. Tours are limited to those 16 years of age or older.

For more information, call (949) 453-5500. ♦  
*registration form on page three...*

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

Visit Irvine Ranch Water District's Web site to access your IRWD account or get other information about your water district 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Check it out!**

## **Natural Treatment System Draft EIR and Master Plan Nearing Completion**

Irvine Ranch Water District's (IRWD) proposal to build a number of constructed wetlands throughout the San Diego Creek Watershed for the purpose of treating urban runoff is moving forward. Both the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and the project master plan for the Natural Treatment System (NTS) project are nearing completion.

A public meeting on the draft EIR will be scheduled soon after the documents are completed. While that date is still uncertain, residents who would like to receive notification of the meeting may contact the IRWD Public Affairs Dept. at (949) 453-5500 and asked to be added to the mailing list for the NTS project.

The proposed NTS project builds on the successes of IRWD's San Joaquin Marsh in Irvine, which has been treating urban runoff from San Diego Creek for the past several years. Water

from the creek is pumped into a series of ponds at the Marsh and following a 7-10 day retention time, is returned to the creek with over half of the nitrogen removed. Nitrogen causes algae blooms in Upper Newport Bay and results in water quality degradation. Sediments and phosphorus are also removed using settling basins within the creek bed.

More information about the NTS project is available at [www.naturaltreatmentsystem.org](http://www.naturaltreatmentsystem.org).



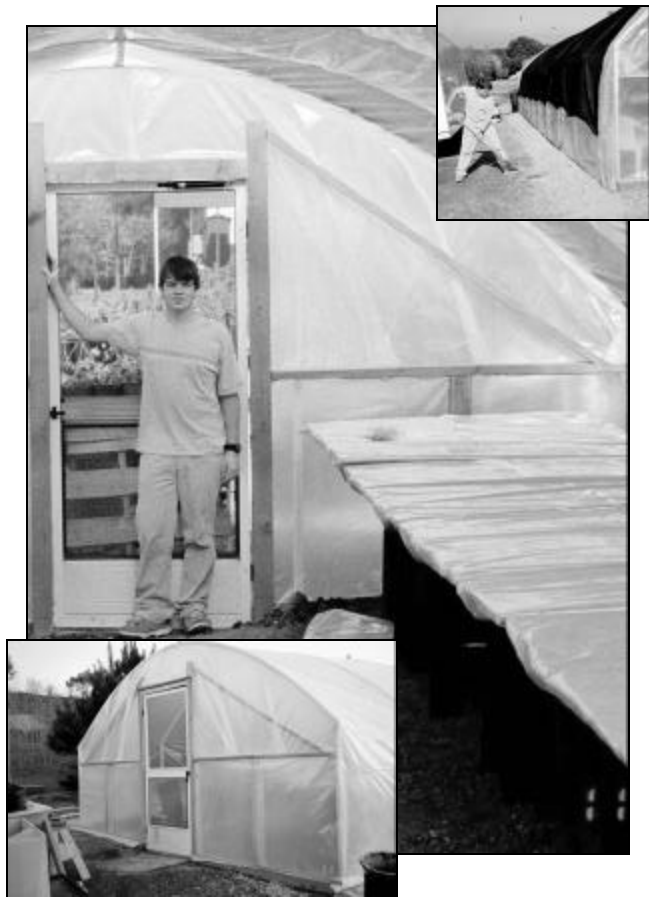
## Flushing Your Water Heater

Just as IRWD routinely flushes its water distribution mains to refresh the delivery system, it's a good idea to flush your home's hot water heater once a year. Routine flushing will prevent sediment from building up, prolong the life and efficiency of your hot water heater, and prevent water quality problems in your home's hot water system.

Here's a step-by-step guide to flushing a hot water heater. Warning: if you have an older hot water heater that has not been maintained regularly, the bottom valve may already be corroded and may make it impossible to shut the valve after flushing. If you are in doubt or if you do not feel comfortable performing home maintenance tasks such as these, contact a plumber for assistance.

1. Hook up garden hose to the faucet located at the bottom of your hot water heater.
2. Place the other end of hose so that it can drain to a sink or flower bed. The water coming out will be hot so be careful where you place the end of the hose.
3. Turn on the valve slowly and allow to drain until the water coming out of the hose is tepid and/or is clear.
4. Turn off valve and remove hose.

*This column provides information on some of the most frequently asked water quality questions and topics. If you have other water quality questions or concerns, call the IRWD Public Affairs Department at (949) 453-5500.*



## Another Eagle Scout Project Completed at Shadetree

Shadetree Partnership's UCI nursery has a new greenhouse, thanks to 17-year-old Peter Ogden, who took on the planning and construction for his Eagle Scout Project.

It took about five months of work with volunteers from his Irvine-based Troop 616 in the effort to build the nursery, which will be used to propagate cuttings from Shadetree's stock.

Peter and his volunteers gathered on evenings and weekends to complete the structure, which is 10 feet wide, 10 feet high and 40 feet long. Peter inquired about a possible Eagle project last March and settled on the greenhouse idea.

"It was really unique and I'm quite proud of it," he said. "Designing and building it was real challenge and great experience."

The greenhouse was completed in November and has already proven sturdy enough to withstand two Santa Ana wind events.

Shadetree Partnership is a non-profit organization that donates water-efficient trees for planting at parks, schools and other public property.

# Water Conservation Tips

## More plants suffer from over watering

- Too much water can stress plants and cause disease. Most homes can leave their sprinkler systems OFF this time of year, especially in shady areas. If you think you need to water, 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. According to the California Association of Nurserymen, more plants are lost due to over-watering than to any other cause.
- Avoid fertilizing. Fertilizing can force a growth spurt at a time of year when plants naturally go into a dormant phase. If a growth spurt happens before a chill, the intense cold can permanently damage the plant. In addition, fertilizers laid during this time of year are more likely to get washed away by rain, contributing to pollution in the waterways.
- Cut back roses.
- Bare root season for fruit trees and roses. Water to keep the plants moist, but not wet. Water deeply, not frequently. Hand water the new plants directly in the early morning. Allow about an hour for the water to soak in before re-applying.
- Place native plants on slopes and large common areas. When native plants are established, you can turn water nearly to off. Native plants not only save water, but provide valuable habitat for local wildlife. ♡

## Free Toilet Distribution Event

**Saturday, March 8**

**9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

(return date: Saturday, March 22)

**El Toro High School  
25255 Toledo Way  
Lake Forest, CA**

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Web site: [www.mwdoc.com](http://www.mwdoc.com)
- Call toll free - (800) 693-5331



*This is a free county-wide event. IRWD does not sponsor the program but makes its customers aware of local distribution events.*

## WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

### Suggested Weekly Watering Schedule for the months of February and March

WEEKLY WATERING SCHEDULE FOR SPRAY HEAD IRRIGATION SYSTEMS			
	Turf grass	Trees, shrubs groundcover	% Option
February	2 days	1 day	30%**
	2 cycles* of 2 minutes	2 cycles* of 3 minutes	
	3 days	2 days	50%**
March	2 cycles* of 3 minutes	2 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. If it rains, keep the system off.*

*\*\*Some irrigation controllers have a feature by which the watering time can be set by changing the percentage instead of specifically entering the days, cycles and minutes.*

## RESIDENT TOUR REGISTRATION FORM

Yes, I am interested in learning more about IRWD. Please make reservations for the following tour:

\_\_\_ Saturday, April 26

\_\_\_ Saturday, May 17

Number of adults in party: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of each person attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to:

IRWD Public Affairs Department,  
P.O. Box 57000, Irvine, CA 92619-7000.

For further information, call (949) 453-5500 or visit our Web site at [www.irwd.com](http://www.irwd.com)

## IRWD offices closed on the following Holiday:

- Monday, February 17, 2003 - President's Day

## Community Calendar

### IRWD RESIDENT TOURS • Saturday, April 26 and Saturday, May 17

Registration form on page three.

### SHADETREE PARTNERSHIP EVENTS

- March 15 and April 2 - Community Tree Planting events at the Shadetree Partnership Nursery
- April 12 - Earth Day Nursery Event
- April 26 - Tierra Nativo (Native Planting) Event in the Mission Viejo Wilderness Open Space.

Community service hours are available for all volunteer activities. For more information call (949) 453-5670 or visit their Web site at [www.shadetreepartnership.org](http://www.shadetreepartnership.org).

### SEA AND SAGE AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

Sea and Sage Audubon House, located at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary, is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. seven days a week. There is a small natural history museum, book store, gift shop and free trail maps and bird lists. A volunteer is on duty everyday to answer questions. For information call (949) 261-7963.

### CITY OF IRVINE EVENT - Docent-led hikes and interpretive nature walks are highlights of Irvine's "Bommer Canyon: Get into it!" Event

Community members of all ages are invited to attend this event on March 22 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, please contact Alexis Secka in the City of Irvine Community Services at (949) 724-6738.

### PUBLIC SAFETY EMERGENCY SERVICES EXPO

The City of Costa Mesa hosts their annual event on Sunday, May 18 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Placentia Fire Station #4, 2300 Placentia Avenue, Costa Mesa. Events include fire demonstrations, police demonstrations, fun and food. For more information contact Shawn Brosamer at (714) 327-7420 or (714) 754-5666.

### UPPER NEWPORT BAY PETER AND MARY MUTH INTERPRETIVE CENTER EVENTS

Unless otherwise indicated events take place or start at the Interpretive Center. Reservations are required. Call (949) 923-2295.

- **Astronomy Night – March 8 from 7-9 p.m.** Join members of the Orange County Astronomers (one of the largest local astronomy clubs in the U.S.A.) for an inspirational tour of the night sky. This program is open to all ages and will include a presentation, observation with telescopes. No fee for this program, only a suggested donation of \$2 per participant.
- **Tigers of the Sky and the O.C. Birds of Prey Center – March 15 from 2 p.m.-3:30 p.m.** Learn about some of the top predators of the sky and about their amazing adaptations for capturing their prey. Suggested ages five and up. Fee is \$7 per participant.
- **Toddler Time "Mud and Muck!" – March 19 from 9-9:45 a.m. (for 2 to 3-1/2 year olds) and 10:30-11:15 a.m. (for 3-1/2 to 4 year olds)** - Join a Park Ranger for this parent and child educational playtime with a mud theme. Parent participation is required. The fee for this program is \$3 per child.
- **Night Hike – March 29 from 7-8:30 p.m.** Come for a night hike and learn about the wonders nighttime brings to the nature preserve. This is a family program best suited for ages five and up, although younger children are welcome. Fee is \$3 per person; children under five are free. If it is raining, the program will be rescheduled.

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

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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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