

# Irvine Ranch Water District Pipelines

The Newsletter of Irvine Ranch Water District / March 2003  
Volume 2003 Number 03

## Free Residential Landscape Workshops

**Friday, April 11**

5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

**Saturday, April 12**

8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

at IRWD Headquarters  
15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine

### WORKSHOP TOPICS:

- How to design and/or upgrade your home landscape
- How to prepare the soil for plant success
- How to water for plant health and low water bills
- What to plant and where

Workshop speaker: Tom Ash, IRWD horticulturist. Limited seating. To make your reservations call the Residential Landscape Workshop Hotline at (949) 453-5327.

## www.irwd.com

Need to know your IRWD account balance at midnight? Want to access the latest Water Quality Annual Report on a weekend? Care to sign up for a tour or request a brochure? These items and a great deal more information are available seven days a week through the IRWD Web site ([www.irwd.com](http://www.irwd.com)). The site also features water education information for teachers and "kid friendly" water information and games for students. So next time you're Web surfing, visit the IRWD site and give it a try - [www.irwd.com](http://www.irwd.com).

**Check it out!**



*Shahl Amad (left), President of the Southern California Chapter of the American Public Works Association, presented Irvine Ranch Water District's General Manager Paul D. Jones II with the 2002 Project of the Year Award for the Deep Aquifer Treatment System at the January 13 Board of Directors meeting. The project removes color from water in the deepest zones of the Orange County Groundwater Basin.*

## Natural Treatment System

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





*Big, bold and bright signs will help volunteers looking for a Shadetree Partnership tree planting site, thanks to Jacob Davis, far left, who undertook making the signs for his Eagle Scout project.*

*Jacob, 17, is an Irvine resident and member of Boy Scout Troop 699. Using volunteers and donated materials, Jacob created 20 signs. The signs are portable and stored at the Shadetree nursery on the UC Irvine campus. The sign shown is stationary and located in the corner of the nursery. Jacob's is the tenth Eagle Scout Project to benefit Shadetree, which is a non-profit organization that donates water-efficient trees for planting at parks, schools and other public property.*

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## water quality water quality water quality **Seasonal Changes of Water Sources**

If you call Irvine Ranch Water District to find out where your water comes from, the answer may depend on what month it is and where you live within the District.

In general, IRWD supplies 60 percent of its water from local wells that tap into the Orange County Groundwater Basin. The remaining 40 percent of our water supply must be purchased from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), who imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California.

Between April and October, most of the District receives well water. However, a few areas at higher elevations, such as Newport Coast, will receive imported water year-round.

Between October and April, the entire District receives mostly MWD water. Because Southern California usually receives most of its rainfall in the winter, IRWD shuts off most of its groundwater wells during that time to allow the groundwater aquifer to recharge naturally.

Because your water source may vary or be made up of a blending of these various sources of water, you may notice a difference in the taste or hardness (mineral content) of the water at different times of year. None of these factors affect the safety of your water.

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

# 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.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Aerate your soil: Heavy clay soils compact easily, making it difficult for plants to send their roots deep. Amend your soil. Composted mulch and other soil amendments incorporated into the soil greatly improve its texture.
- ◆ Change the battery. If your sprinkler timer has a backup battery, now is a good time to install a fresh one.

## WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

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

WEEKLY WATERING SCHEDULE FOR SPRAY HEAD IRRIGATION SYSTEMS			
	Turf grass	Trees, shrubs groundcover	% Option
March	3 days 2 cycles* of 3 minutes	2 days 2 cycles* of 3 minutes	50%**
April	3 days 2 cycles* of 4 minutes	2 days 2 cycles* of 4 minutes	70%**

*\*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.*

## Services Offered by IRWD

- **Automatic Payment.** Automatic Payment allows customers to authorize IRWD to withdraw the amount of their water and sewer bill from their checking account automatically each month. Automatic payment requires no further action from the customer once enrollment is completed and automatic payment is activated on their account. If you'd like to take advantage of this program, call (949) 453-5300.
- **Conservation videos.** IRWD has water-efficient gardening videos from Sunset Magazine available for free check-out for a two-week period. Call (949) 453-5500.
- **Water Conservation Devices.** Pick up free low-flow showerheads, sink aerators and other devices at IRWD, 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine. For more information call (949) 453-5500.

## IRWD offices closed on:

- Friday, April 18, 2003

## Community Calendar

### 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 every day 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 **Saturday, 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 Peter and Mary Muth Interpretive Center, located at 2301 University Drive, Newport Beach, CA 92660. Reservations are required. Call (949) 923-2295.

- **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.

### GUIDED BIRD TOURS OF PRADO WETLANDS AREA OFFERED BY ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

The tours are scheduled on the following Saturdays: **March 29, April 26, May 10, June 7, June 21, July 12, August 9 and 23, and September 6 and 20.**

These free tours are open to the public by reservation only. Tours book up quickly, so interested parties should call today. An OCWD environmental expert will guide attendees on a three-mile walk through the wetlands. Attendees will receive a map of the area in advance of the tour and will meet the tour guide in the Prado wetlands area. To make reservations please call (714) 378-3219 or log on to [www.ocwd.com](http://www.ocwd.com).

### ORBIT IRRIGATION PRODUCTS SPONSORS ESSAY CONTEST TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE NEED TO CONSERVE WATER

The contest is for students in 11th and 12th grades on the topic, "Outdoor Watering Conservation - The Next Step." The contest ends March 30, 2003. The winner will receive a \$5,000 scholarship to the college/university of their choice. More information on the contest is available at [www.orbitonline.com](http://www.orbitonline.com) or by calling (800) 488-6156.

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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Paul D. Jones II

### 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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