

Irvine Ranch Water District **Pipelines**

The Newsletter of Irvine Ranch Water District / February 2004
Volume 2004 Number 02

Countywide effort

IRWD Customers Asked to Turn Off Sprinklers February 23-27

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) will conduct a planned shutdown of their Diemer Filtration Plant from February 23-27 and all water agencies in Orange County are working together to conserve water during this period.

Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) customers are asked to join in this conservation effort by turning off all sprinklers and other outdoor irrigation during that week. You can further help the conservation effort by not hosing down driveways or other paved areas, repairing leaks and refraining from refilling swimming pools, spas, ponds or fountains during this period.

The scheduled shutdown is necessary for MWD to conduct seismic improvements to the regional water system. To minimize impacts on the public, the proactive work has been scheduled for February, which is the month of the year when water demand

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Revised Draft EIR Released for Natural Treatment System to Clean Urban Runoff

Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) has released the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Natural Treatment System (NTS) project. The project will use man-made wetlands to remove sediment, nutrients, pathogens and other contaminants from dry weather runoff in the San Diego Creek Watershed and improve water quality in Upper Newport Bay.

The public comment period runs through Friday, March 5 at 5 p.m. The revised report can be found online (www.naturaltreatmentsystem.org) or viewed at many public libraries. Official comments on the Revised Draft EIR should be submitted in writing to: Norris Brandt, Irvine Ranch Water District, Box 57000, Irvine, CA 92619-7000.

The project is expected to be the largest

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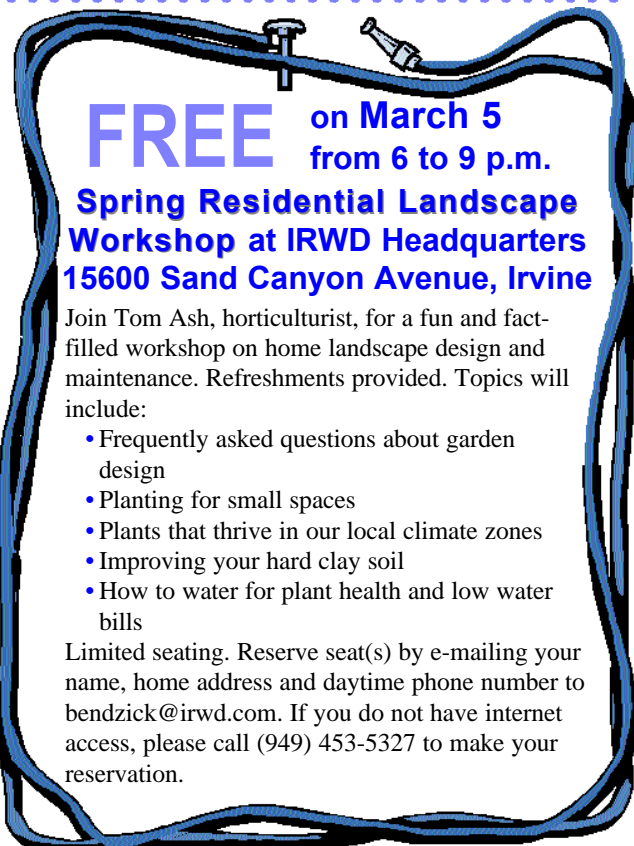
Irvine Ranch Water District Wins Environmental Award

Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) was the recipient of the Theodore Roosevelt Environmental Award presented by the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) at its conference held recently in San Diego.

IRWD will jointly share the award with the Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC). The two agencies were partners in the Irvine Residential Runoff Reduction Study, which demonstrated that weather-based irrigation controllers combined with public education resulted in water savings of 41 gallons per day in typical residential settings, 472 gallons per day for dedicated landscape irrigation accounts, and up to a 71 percent reduction in runoff.

The study area included five similar neighborhoods in Irvine, each with its own single point of drainage in the urban storm drain system. The runoff volume was monitored and water

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FREE on March 5
from 6 to 9 p.m.

**Spring Residential Landscape Workshop at IRWD Headquarters
15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine**

Join Tom Ash, horticulturist, for a fun and fact-filled workshop on home landscape design and maintenance. Refreshments provided. Topics will include:

- Frequently asked questions about garden design
- Planting for small spaces
- Plants that thrive in our local climate zones
- Improving your hard clay soil
- How to water for plant health and low water bills

Limited seating. Reserve seat(s) by e-mailing your name, home address and daytime phone number to bendzick@irwd.com. If you do not have internet access, please call (949) 453-5327 to make your reservation.

Free Water Awareness Tours

Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) offers free Water Awareness Tours to all its customers. Spring tours are scheduled for Friday, April 23, Saturday, April 24 and Saturday, May 22. 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 reclaimed 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 (below), register on the IRWD Web site at 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.

RESIDENT TOUR REGISTRATION FORM

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

Friday, April 23 Saturday, April 24
 Saturday, May 22

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.

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Natural Treatment System

watershed-wide urban retrofit project for runoff treatment in the nation.

Plants such as bulrush and cattails and the beneficial bacteria within the wetlands soils provide natural cleanup of pollutants that would otherwise flow to the Bay and the ocean. The natural "technology" used for this project has been used successfully at the San Joaquin Marsh in Irvine and also at the Playa Vista Wetlands in Los Angeles County.

IRWD has taken the lead on this project as a result of the success of its San Joaquin Marsh project in treating runoff from San Diego Creek. In that project, water is taken from San Diego Creek and allowed to spend 7-10 days flowing through a series of ponds in a constructed wetlands. Over half of the nitrates and tons of phosphorus and sediment are removed during natural treatment. IRWD now plans to expand this project by constructing smaller wetlands in locations throughout the watershed, including Irvine, Tustin and Orange.

Because the Natural Treatment system is so unique, it became a touchstone for the concept of using wetlands for the treatment of runoff. During the initial public meetings and comment period, IRWD received excellent input on the project from federal, state and local agencies in addition to comments from the general public and stakeholder groups. With the quality of input received, IRWD elected to make several changes to the proposed project and is recirculating the revised document to give the public another opportunity to review the changes.

Initially, 71 possible sites within the 118-square mile watershed were studied during the master planning process. Those sites have now been reduced to the 31 best locations in terms of treatment effectiveness, constructability, land availability and cost.

The project has been developed in consultation with the County of Orange and the cities within the watershed, who face tough regulations on Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), or limits of pollutants that can flow to Upper Newport Bay. While it will not solve all of the pollution challenges within the watershed, the project is expected to make significant strides toward meeting water quality objectives for San Diego Creek.

eSlate Voting is Here!



Orange County's new state-of-the-art electronic voting system will debut in February for early voting and again on Election Day, March 2 for the Primary Election. Early voting starts on February 2 and ends February 24 in several locations throughout the county, including Irvine Spectrum, Irvine City Hall and Newport Beach City Hall.

The new system is easy to use, accessible to people with disabilities-including those who are blind-displays the ballot in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, or Chinese, and allows the voter to easily correct mistakes.

To use the eSlate, a voter simply turns a SELECT wheel to highlight the candidate of choice, presses the ENTER button to mark that choice, and, after reviewing a Ballot Summary screen showing the votes, presses the CAST BALLOT button to finish voting. The voter will know the vote has been cast when the American flag is waving on the screen.

Visit www.OCVOTE.org for a slide show or video demonstration on how the new voting system works, to request print or video materials about the system, or to view a schedule with dates and locations of demonstrations of the equipment. The Web site also has more information on early voting.

For more information or to schedule a demonstration for your organization, call the Registrar of Voters office at 1-888-OCVOTES (628-6837) or visit the website.

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Customers Asked to Turn Off Sprinklers

is lowest.

The IRWD service area is fortunate to have access to groundwater, so we are not totally dependent upon the imported water that MWD brings to the region. However, the cooperation of all parts of the county is needed to assist communities in southern Orange County that rely completely on imported water and are therefore more greatly impacted. Many South County cities and water agencies are planning mandatory conservation measures.

"Plants can easily withstand five days without water at this time of year," said IRWD horticulturist Tom Ash. "Plants require much less water now because the weather is cooler."

You can plan ahead for this shutdown by refraining from planting new landscaping prior to the week of February 23. MWD has indicated that in the event of unseasonably warm weather during that week that they will reschedule the shutdown and publicize this fact in the local media.

The conservation request applies only to drinking water and does not impact areas irrigated with recycled water such as parks, school grounds, golf courses, street medians and some homeowner association common areas. Most individual homes in the IRWD service area use drinking water for landscape irrigation, so homeowners are being asked to cooperate.

IRWD thanks you in advance for your assistance with this regional conservation effort. In the weeks leading up to the shutdown, use the chart (below) as a guide to help you water your landscaping the correct amount for this time of year.

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	Percent Option
February	2 days	1 day	30%**
	2 cycles* of 2 minutes	2 cycles* of 3 minutes	
	3 days	2 days	
March	2 cycles* of 3 minutes	2 cycles* of 3 minutes	50%**
	3 days	2 days	
	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. March/April is the most active growth period for turf grass and other plants. Be sure to water adequately.*

***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.*

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16 - PRESIDENT'S DAY

Irvine Ranch Water District Holiday (offices closed)

Community Calendar

SHADETREE PARTNERSHIP EVENTS

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

SEA AND SAGE AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

- For more information visit their Web site at www.seaandsageaudubon.org or call the Audubon House at (949) 261-7963.
- Summer Camp 2004 - for children. Enrollment brochures are available from Audubon House or visit www.seaandsageaudubon.org, or call Camp Coordinator Grace McElhiney at (714) 969-9617.

CITY OF LAKE FOREST

- Create the 12th Annual 4th of July Parade Logo - the City of Lake Forest is sponsoring a logo contest. All entries must be received by February 24, 2004 at 5:30 p.m. For a set of contest guidelines, please call Brenda Silvey at (949) 461-3458 or e-mail bsilvey@ci.lake-forest.ca.us.

FAMILIES FORWARD

Next time you go shopping please think about picking up a few extra items and donating them to the Families Forward food pantry. Each month Families Forward provides nonperishable groceries for approximately 180 families in Irvine and South Orange County. We rely on donations from our neighbors to stock our pantry. Our most needed items include: flour, sugar, powdered milk, syrup, pancake mix, jelly, pork and beans, baked beans and tomato paste. Families Forward is located at 9221 Irvine Blvd. For more information please contact Alycia Harshfield at 949-552-2727.

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Environmental Award

quality samples taken from these drainage points. The participating 112 homes and 15 dedicated landscape irrigation accounts in the 18-month study were retrofitted with evapo-transpiration (ET) irrigation controllers, which receive weekly information from weather stations and automatically adjust irrigation timers to meet landscape needs.

ET refers to the rate at which plants lose water through evaporation and transpiration. Not only did the ET controller apply the correct amount of water to each home's landscape, it eliminated the need for the homeowner to reprogram the sprinkler controller as the weather changed.

ACWA's annual award program is named after Theodore Roosevelt to reflect his philosophy of wise use of natural resources. ACWA is a statewide organization whose members are responsible for about 90 percent of the water delivered in California.

This marks the fifth time that IRWD has won the prestigious Theodore Roosevelt Award. IRWD also received the award in 2000 for the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary, in 1997 for the Shadetree Partnership nursery project in cooperation with UC Irvine and two awards in 1996 for the Shadetree Partnership and for its water conservation program.

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.

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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

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