

Irvine Ranch Water District **Pipelines**

The Newsletter of Irvine Ranch Water District / May 2004
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Celebrate Water Awareness and American Wetlands Month in May

Water Awareness Month encourages Californians to "Use Water Wisely, It's a Way of Life" and American Wetlands Month focuses on the importance of protecting wetlands with its theme, "It Pays to Save Wetlands." Both are observed in May.

Southern Californians live in a desert, which does not receive much rain, nor does it have many natural water resources. Water often has to be imported from somewhere else. Water Awareness Month reminds us that water is a precious natural resource and that conservation should be practiced by all who live here.

It was the devastating drought of 1987-1993 that was the wake-up call to California residents and the water picture. Water Awareness Month is in its 17th year. Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) offers many events and activities for customers to highlight the statewide program. We offer free conservation devices on a one-time

basis for customers, such as low-flow showerheads, sink aerators, garden hose nozzle and toilet leak detection dye tabs. Stop in the headquarters office at 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue during business hours to pick up these devices. Information is available about free water-saving toilets and rebate programs for toilets and water-saving clothes washers.


If you want to landscape your yard while saving water and lowering your water bill, we have videos from Sunset magazine available for loan to our customers.

Here are a few handy tips to help you save water:

- Turn off water while brushing teeth or shaving.
- Use a brush and a bowl of water, instead of running water over fruits and vegetables.
- Use a broom or rake rather than a hose to remove leaves and debris from driveway, walk,

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Irvine Ranch Water District Moves Ahead on Natural Treatment System to Clean Urban Runoff



Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) is moving forward with the design of the first phase of constructed water quality wetlands 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 project is expected to be the largest 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.

Work on the design phase of the project begins following certification of the Draft Environmental Impact Report by the Irvine Ranch Water District Board of Directors at their meeting April 26. The certification followed rigorous review of the DEIR and the project Master Plan over the past 13 months.

The next step will be determining which of the 31 sites will be designed and constructed first. Some of sites, such as three existing basins within the Quail Hill area of Irvine and the existing flood control basin at Trabuco and Jeffrey Roads in Irvine, are expected to be planted with vegetation and be on line as early as the end of 2004. Work on other sites will take place gradually over the next five years.

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

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Water and Sewer Line Construction Occurring on Jeffrey Road between Irvine Center Drive and Trabuco Road

Irvine Ranch Water District has begun construction on sewer, reclaimed water, and domestic water pipelines on Jeffrey Road for new Irvine Company home development between Jeffrey Road, the former El Toro Marine Corps Air Station, Bryan Avenue, and Trabuco Road. The Irvine Company expects a late August/early September occupancy.

Although it may seem that there is one construction project occurring, there are actually two. The first project entails adding reclaimed and sewer pipelines from Poplar North to Trabuco Road. The second portion of the project will add sewer pipeline from Poplar South to Irvine Center Drive.

Concrete barriers, known as K-rail, are placed around the construction area enabling Jeffrey Road to remain open with two lanes of traffic during construction. For safety reasons the bike lanes have been closed. Traffic delays should be expected. When the new lines are ready to be connected to the existing lines near the

intersections of Jeffrey Road / Irvine Center Drive and Jeffrey Road / Poplar Avenue, the two lanes of traffic will be further reduced to one lane. This one-lane construction is planned for August and will only occur between 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Flagmen will be present to direct traffic during this three-week period.

Construction on Jeffrey Road is taking place intermittently for 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The major advantage of working 24 hours a day is that the project's duration can be shortened by three months, thus reducing the traffic impacts to the community. The City of Irvine has approved these hours of operation. IRWD is making every effort to keep construction noise to a minimum during this project. These projects are two of seven construction projects planned for this general area. The other construction projects are the responsibilities of the City of Irvine and the Irvine Company.

If you have questions about IRWD construction projects, contact the IRWD Public Affairs Department at (949) 453-5500. We apologize for any inconvenience these projects may cause and thank you in advance for your patience.

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Celebrate Water Awareness and American Wetlands Month in May

- patio and pool decks. This saves water and prevents urban runoff.
- Cover your swimming pool to slow down evaporation.
- Choose native or low water use plants for your yard.
- Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running it at the tap until it cools.

Saving Wetlands

Events all through the month of May nationally will highlight the importance of protecting wetlands and focus on the many economic values of wetlands, such as flood control and improving water quality (see related story on page one regarding IRWD's Natural Treatment System).

We also invite you to visit the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in Irvine to enjoy the beauty and serenity of a reconstructed wetlands.



Know Your H₂O

Did you know...

- Irvine Ranch Water District provides free field trips for all public, private and home schools within its service area. Scout groups and other community organizations can also be accommodated.
- Tours of the Michelson Water Reclamation Plant are available to students in fifth grade and above.
- Plant tours also include a visit to the water quality laboratory where students view microbes under a microscope.
- Tours of the San Joaquin Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary are available to students in first grade and above.
- To date in the 2003-04 school year, IRWD has provided field trips to over 700 students from local schools and colleges.
- To schedule a field trip, call the IRWD Public Affairs Department at (949) 453-5500.

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Natural Treatment System

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.

"The regional approach to dealing with urban runoff is the only one that makes sense," said Garry Brown, executive director of Orange County Coastkeeper. "Irvine Ranch Water District is taking the lead in developing the technology. When it's complete they'll have the first statewide model that can be used in other areas. It's something we totally support and see incredible benefits in developing the Natural Treatment System."

Initially, 71 possible sites within the 118-square mile watershed were studied during the master planning process. Those sites have 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 this project alone will not solve all of the watershed's water quality problems, it is expected to make significant strides toward meeting TMDL objectives for San Diego Creek. More information about the NTS project, including the full DEIR and Master Plan, is available online at www.naturaltreatmentsystem.org.

Water Conservation Tips



- This is the growing season for most plants, making it the optimal time to fertilize. For this growth stage, apply a balanced, organic fertilizer.
- Water deeply to encourage deep root growth. Aerating your lawn can improve root growth. Orange County has predominantly heavy clay soils, which absorb 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, use the sprinkler. 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.
- Prevent runoff. Landscapers may turn sprinkler controllers up too high. Watch for runoff and check for broken sprinkler heads. Runoff will carry fertilizers into the storm drain and contribute to pollution in our waterways.

Suggested Weekly Watering Schedule for the months of May and June

WEEKLY WATERING SCHEDULE FOR SPRAY HEAD IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

	Turf grass	Trees, shrubs groundcover	Percent Option
May	3 days, 3 cycles* of 3 minutes	2 days, 3 cycles* of 3 minutes	80%**
June	2-4 days, 2-3 cycles* of 3-4 minutes	2 days, 3 cycles* of 3 minutes	100%**

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.

***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.*

Put the Decimal in the Correct Place!

The ability to pay bills electronically through the bank is a wonderful convenience for our customers. However, customers need to be aware of how easy it is to make a mistake – for example, a \$15.99 bill could easily become a \$1599 payment if the customer doesn't double check the figure before hitting the "enter" button. The Customer Service Department has reported that this error occurs at least once a month. Please check your final figures carefully!

SEA AND SAGE AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

- **June 28 through July 2 and July 12 through 16** - Sea and Sage Audubon will once again offer their popular summer day camps for children at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. These camps are an exceptional opportunity for youngsters age nine through 12. Students will explore all aspects of marsh bird life. Enjoy daily nature walks. See live hawks and owls. Keep a daily journal. Children will have fun with Sea and Sage's naturalist educated staff. For questions go to the Sea and Sage website at www.seaandsageaudubon.org or call Audubon House at (949) 261-7963. Scholarships based on need are available.
- **Saturday, July 31** - Come join Sea and Sage Audubon for a mid-summer's evening picnic barbecue under the stars at the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. The public is welcome. Dinner is \$15 and that includes beverages. Join Sea and Sage Audubon and see Irvine's best kept secret by moonlight. There will be informally led walks on the marsh, dinner and a lively after dinner program by Kimball Garrett of the Los Angeles Natural History Museum. Information and reservation forms are available on line at www.seaandsageaudubon.org or by calling (949) 261-7963.
- **Saturday, July 31 through September 18** - Learn to embroider with a master of embroidery, Sylvia Gallagher. Learn Sylvia's special and unique embroidery techniques and use of color. Participants will learn how to select a picture, transfer the picture to cloth, select thread colors, learn new stitches and bring a picture of a bird to life. This eight week course is sponsored by Sea and Sage Audubon. All levels of interested embroiderer will be accommodated. Classes will be held in Huntington Beach and limited to 15 participants. Attendance at the first meeting is essential. The fee for the class is \$50 and there are no materials provided. Information and registration forms are available on the Sea and Sage Audubon website at www.seaandsageaudubon.org or at (949) 261-7963.

IRVINE GARDEN CLUB • Monday, June 7 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Do you like working in the garden? If so, the "Irvine Garden Club" invites you to their next meeting. They meet at the Irvine Ranch Water District offices, 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine, the first Monday of the month. Rita Corpin will be the speaker and the topic is "Growing Herbs." Rita is a UCI Master Gardener and she is active in four garden clubs. For information call Carol Green (949) 551-3962.

IRVINE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EVENTS

- **Wednesday, June 9 - Jim Ellis Memorial Golf Classic** at Oak Creek Golf Club, 1 Golf Club Dr., Irvine. Play a round of golf with some of Irvine's business and government leaders at Oak Creek Golf Club. For more information, please contact the Chamber at (949) 660-9112 or check out their Web site at www.irvinechamber.com.
- **Saturday, June 19 from 6:30 to 11:30 p.m. - 25th Anniversary Gala Celebration** at the Irvine Marriott, 18000 Von Karman, Irvine. Cost: \$100/members and \$135/non-members. Dance the night away during a gala to remember. Win great prizes at the Silent Auction, enjoy a five-course meal and listen to the tunes of today and yesterday from the Jay Sterling Orchestra. Businesses or individuals may donate goods and/or services to the silent auction. For more information, contact Suzanne Espinoza at (949) 660-9112 at Ext. 128 or visit their Web site at www.irvinechamber.com.
- **Wednesday, June 23 from 8 to 10 a.m. - Mastering Sales Techniques** at Alliance Royale, 2575 McCabe Way, Irvine. Cost: \$35/members, \$55/visitors. Speakers: Scott Sorrell, Sales Adrenaline; Pete Nelson, Valeo Group; and Chris Jennings, Sandler Sales Institute. Contact the Chamber for details at (949) 660-9112.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Court Appointed Special Advocates is seeking volunteers to serve as advocates and mentors for abused children. Information sessions held monthly at the Heritage Park Library, 14361 Yale Avenue, from 6 to 8 p.m. For dates call (714) 619-5155 or www.casaoc.org.

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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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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