

Congress Approves Bill to Fund Three Local Projects Designed to Clean Urban Runoff and Increase Groundwater Supplies

Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) announces the passage of federal legislation that will provide over \$19 million in federal funding for three projects that will clean urban runoff and increase local water supplies.

The Irvine Basin Surface and Groundwater Improvement Act, H.R. 1598 by Congressman Christopher Cox (R-California), amends the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide 25 percent of the total cost of constructing the three projects. The bill is now headed to President Bush for his signature.

"Irvine Ranch Water District appreciates the leadership Congressman Cox and Senator Feinstein (D-California) demonstrated in helping secure funding for these cutting edge projects," said IRWD General Manager Paul D. Jones II. "These projects will help ensure a more reliable supply of water for local residents as well as improving the quality of the water flowing to environmentally sensitive Upper Newport Bay."

The three IRWD projects benefiting from this legislation are the Natural Treatment

System, the Irvine Desalter Project and the Orange County Regional Brine Line.

The Natural Treatment System (NTS) 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.

The environmental impact report for the NTS project was approved last month by the Irvine Ranch Water District board of directors and design work has now begun. Construction on the first phase of the 31 wetland sites is expected to begin by early 2005.

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Irvine Ranch Water District participated in Estuary Awareness Day May 1 at Shellmaker Island in the Newport Back Bay. Information on the District and IRWD's Aqua Splash bottled water was distributed.

In April, IRWD staffed a booth at the annual Woodbridge Community Fair, which has a conservation theme. On display were the energy and water efficient Maytag Neptune washer and dryer, donated to Irvine-based Families Forward by Flex Your Power and the California Water Awareness Campaign. The washer and dryer will be used in one of Families Forward's transitional housing units locally.



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"We believe that the Natural Treatment System project will become a statewide and national model for the treatment of urban runoff," said Jones. "We are already removing 50 to 60 percent of the nitrates from San Diego Creek as a result of IRWD's San Joaquin Marsh. With over 30 additional wetlands to be added to the watershed, we expect to improve the quality of water in Upper Newport Bay even more."

The Irvine Desalter Project is really two projects in one. The first component will focus on removing chemicals from the groundwater basin emanating from the former El Toro Marine Base and be used only for irrigation and other non-drinking water uses.

The second component will treat water outside of the base pollution area to remove salts caused by the natural geology and past agricultural drainage. This water will be treated to drinking water standards and will provide a new source of local water for IRWD customers. This new supply of drinking water will cost no more than buying imported water, but will be much more reliable because it is a local supply. Several wells that are part of the Irvine Desalter Project have been constructed by IRWD during the past year. The project is scheduled for completion in 2006.

The purpose of the Orange County Regional Brine Line Project is to reduce salinity in both drinking water and recycled water by constructing a pipeline that will be used to dispose brine directly into the ocean rather than in existing sewer lines. Keeping salt out of sewer lines is important to water agencies like IRWD that use reclaimed water for landscape irrigation since salt is not removed during the reclamation process. The regional brine line will facilitate additional reclaimed water development in the region and is an important strategy for increasing local water supply. The Brine Line Project is currently in the design phase.

Coming Soon!

Customers should expect to receive their Annual Water Quality Report during the month of June. If you want additional copies, please contact IRWD's Public Affairs Department at (949) 453-5500.



Know Your H₂O

Did you know...

Irvine Ranch Water District participates in a number of science-oriented events in the Irvine, Saddleback Valley, Tustin and Newport-Mesa Unified School Districts. Some of these events include:

- Sponsorship of "Future Scientists and Engineers of America" chapters at schools in Irvine, Tustin and Lake Forest.
- The Science Career Options Conference for middle school students held at UCI.
- The "Ask-a-Scientist Night" event at Irvine Unified School District to help guide students in preparing their science fair projects.
- Judging of water-related projects in the annual science fair.
- Sponsorship of the annual Water Awareness Poster Contest for students in grades 1-



Irvine Ranch Water District honored local students for their exemplary water-related projects in the recent Irvine Unified School District science fair. Left to right are David Aldrich of South Lake Middle School, Jennifer Yuen of Lakeside Middle School, Daniel Dunkle of College Park Elementary, Steven Covelman of Turtle Rock Elementary and Anthony Nguyen of Plaza Vista Elementary. Not shown is Alan Foreman of University High School.

Fight the Bite! Help Prevent West Nile virus

West Nile virus is commonly found in Africa, West Asia and the Middle East. Although primarily a virus found in birds and other mammals, it can be transmitted to humans via a bite from an infected mosquito. West Nile virus had not been found in the U.S. prior to 1999 but has steadily made its way across the U.S. since that time.

Irvine Ranch Water District takes many steps to prevent mosquitoes at its San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary in Irvine. These steps include maintaining a constant flow of water to prevent stagnation, using mosquito fish in the ponds and maintaining good access for Orange County Vector Control crews to do their work.

The Vector Control Districts of Southern California has launched a campaign called "Fight the Bite" to remind all local residents that simple steps can be taken to help prevent West Nile virus in Southern California:

- Eliminate standing water in your yard. Empty water from cans, buckets, flowerpots, pet bowls, old tires and gutters.
- Guard against mosquito bites by minimizing time spent outdoors at dawn and dusk when insects are most active. When outdoors, wear long pants and long sleeves and apply mosquito repellent containing DEET.
- To report a dead bird, call (877) WNV-BIRD or visit www.wipeoutwestnile.com for more information.



- Use a balanced, organic or slow-release fertilizer and water thoroughly. Over fertilizing can lead to higher water and mowing demands. Ask your local nursery about fertilizing.
- Water your lawn 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, turn on the sprinklers. Shrubs generally require about half of what the lawn needs. Mature trees generally need watering which allows for deep infiltration on an infrequent basis (about twice a month). 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.
- Check your sprinkler system. Look for clogged heads, broken sprinklers or risers and misdirected spray. Adjust the angle so that spray doesn't wet the pavement. Turn the system on valve by valve. If water hits walks, fences or runs into the street, fix the problem.
- Important NOTE: Landscapers may turn sprinkler controllers up too high. Check the irrigation times yourself. Watch for runoff. Runoff will carry fertilizers into the storm drain and contribute to pollution in our waterways.

Suggested Weekly Watering Schedule for the Months of June and July

WEEKLY WATERING SCHEDULE FOR SPRAY HEAD IRRIGATION SYSTEMS			
	Turf grass	Trees, shrubs groundcover	Percent Option
June	2-4 days, 2-3 cycles* of 3-4 minutes	2 days, 3 cycles* of 3 minutes	100%**
July	4-5 days, 3 cycles* of 3-4 minutes	2 days, 3 cycles* of 4 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.*

SEA AND SAGE AUDUBON ACTIVITIES

- June 28 through July 2 or July 12 through 16 - Marsh Bird Camp from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. - 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 the 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 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.

20TH ANNUAL 4TH OF JULY FIREWORKS CELEBRATION AND CONCERT ON THE GREEN

Irvine Police Association presents this event at Irvine High School Stadium (next to Heritage Park).

- 3 p.m. - Gates open.
- Game booths, balloon jumpers, face painting, door prizes and jazz band
- 7:30 p.m. - Patriotic Concert
- 9 p.m. - Fireworks Festival

Advance tickets: \$35 for family tickets (two adults and up to four children); \$11 for adult and \$6 for seniors (60+) or children 13 and under. **No family tickets will be sold on the 4th of July.** For ticket information call Vince Palazzolo at (949) 724-0488 or for information only visit their Web site at www.irvinepa.org.

ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT - O.C. WATER 101

An informative, free two-hour water education class about the basics of water in Orange County is being offered in Fountain Valley. You will learn about the water situation from global, California, and Orange County perspectives, understand the basics of water quality, gain a thorough understanding of the county's groundwater basin, learn about the county's imported water supply, and explore the future of water in Orange County. The 2004 Water 101 class schedule (all classes meet Wednesday evenings): June 23, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; July 28, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; August 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m.; September 22, 6-8 p.m.; and October 27, 6-8 p.m. If you are interested in signing-up for Water 101, please: e-mail: rwilke@ocwd.com, phone: (714) 378-3206 or fax: (714) 963-0291. When contacting OCWD, please provide the following information: date and time requested for class, number of guests, contact name and affiliation, mailing address, e-mail address (if available) and phone and fax numbers. For more information visit OCWD's Web site at www.ocwd.com.

FAMILIES FORWARD

The Families Forward food pantry is running low on a few food items and other household supplies. When you are out shopping, consider purchasing a few of these items and drop them off at our food pantry at 9221 Irvine Blvd., Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Friday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Items needed include laundry soap (40 load size), coffee, jelly, canned tomatoes, spaghetti sauce, boxed potatoes and canned stew. The food pantry is stocked entirely through donations and run by volunteers. Call (949) 552-2727 if you are interested in volunteering.

As a service to residents we feature a calendar of community events in "Pipelines." Events or activities of community-wide interest can be included in the calendar on a space available basis. We reserve the right to print those items of most interest to the public. If your group has an event you would like to include, please submit written information at least two months prior to your event. Please include date, time, place, contact person's name and telephone number. Mail your request to: Public Affairs Department, IRWD, P.O. Box 57000, Irvine, CA 92619-7000, fax your request to (949) 453-0527, or e-mail your request to velazque@irwd.com.

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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