

Irvine Ranch Water District Pipelines

The Newsletter of Irvine Ranch Water District / May 2006
Volume 2006 Number 05

May is Water Awareness Month

In California, May is officially designated as Water Awareness Month. In Southern California, where a normal rainfall year like 2006 could be followed by several drought years, it's important for residents to know where their water comes from and that it needs to be used wisely in both wet years and dry.



Water Sources

Approximately 65 percent of Irvine Ranch Water District's drinking water supply comes from local groundwater wells in the Dyer Road Wellfield, located west of the 55 Freeway in Santa Ana. These wells range in depth from 400 to 2,000 feet and extract high quality water from the Orange County Groundwater Basin. This basin is a resource shared by all of the cities and water districts in north and central Orange County. Because Lake Forest is outside the groundwater basin boundaries, only about five percent of that area's overall water supply comes from underground via three wells within the City of Lake Forest.

Approximately 35 percent of IRWD's drinking water is purchased from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). This imported water comes from the Colorado River via the Colorado River Aqueduct and from Northern California via the State Water Project. Colorado River water must travel 250 miles to reach Orange County while the State Water Project transports supplies over 400 miles.

Seasonal Supply Changes

Where your water is coming from depends upon the time of year and where you live within the water district. In general, IRWD uses primarily imported water from October through April and primarily groundwater from April through October. Some areas of the District use less groundwater because of their physical location.

Because your water is a blend of these sources, you

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A Day at the Marsh



IRVINE RANCH WATER DISTRICT
45TH ANNIVERSARY

A Day at the Marsh... Open House Sat., June 10

9 a.m. to noon
San Joaquin Wildlife
Sanctuary

- Guided tours of the Marsh
- Environmentally-oriented displays
- Photo Contest Display
- Refreshments and much, much more!

For more information visit
www.irwd.com

Water Conservation Tips



- This is the growing season for most plants, making it the optimal time to fertilize. For this growth stage, look for 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 absorbs 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 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, fetch 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

MAY

Turf grass: 3 days, 3 cycles* of 3 minutes
Trees, shrubs, groundcover: 2 days, 3 cycles* of 3 minutes
Percent option: 80%**

JUNE

Turf grass: 2-4 days, 2-3 cycles* of 3-4 minutes
Trees, shrubs, groundcover: 2 days, 3 cycles* of 3 minutes
Percent option: 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.*
If you don't have the instructions for your controller, check the manufacturer's website. Many controller manufacturers provide online access to the owner's manual.

Weather-Based Irrigation Controller Rebate Increased to \$40 or More per Valve

IRWD encourages residential customers to upgrade old irrigation controllers to new weather-based "smart" technology. These state-of-the-art irrigation controllers conserve water, save money and reduce runoff by automating landscape watering based on the weather and water needs of plants.

The SmarTimer Rebate Program provides IRWD customer with rebate amounts of \$40 to \$44.50 per activated valve, or an average of \$440, to offset the purchase of the new irrigation controller. In order to participate, residents must possess a fully operational automatic irrigation system on a minimum of 1200 square feet of irrigated landscape. The existing controller should not exceed a maximum of 48 valves.

Rebate funds are limited and available on a first-come-first-served basis. To obtain a packet with full details on how to participate call toll free (866) 846-3725 or visit <http://www.mwdoc.com/SmarTimer/>.





It looks like educational programs designed to get girls interested in science are working! For the first time ever, all six students presented IRWD awards for their water-related projects in the Irvine Unified School District Science Fair were female. Left to right are: Rebecca Kim of Northwood High School, Alexa DeLeon of Lakeside Middle School, Cynthia Tsai of Lakeside Middle School, Michelle Sun of Oak Creek School, Julia Biemann of Woodbridge High School and Corey Pettit of University Park School.

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Water Awareness Month

may notice a difference in taste or hardness at different times of year. None of these factors affect the safety of your water. Imported water tends to be "harder" (contains more minerals such as calcium and magnesium) than local groundwater.

Water: Use it Wisely

Regardless of the source of your water, remember that it is a very precious commodity in Southern California and that it needs to be used wisely year-round. IRWD provides a limited number of free water conservation devices (low-flow shower heads, sink aerators and hose nozzles) to its customers. If you haven't already taken advantage of this service, just drop by our office at 15600 Sand Canyon Ave. in Irvine between 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Fridays to pick up your conservation devices. And because over 50 percent of a typical family's water use is outside the home,

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Irvine Desalter Project Nears Completion

The Irvine Desalter Project (IDP) is nearing completion and is expected to be finished this summer. As we have reported to you many times over the past several years, the IDP is a joint groundwater quality restoration project by Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) and the Orange County Water District, with financial participation by the Dept. of the Navy, the State of California and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). The project has been under construction in Irvine since 2003.

The IDP is essentially two separate projects in one. One project will clean trichloroethylene (TCE) from a plume coming from the former El Toro Marine Base. TCE is a chemical used in solvents for degreasing airplane engine parts. **The plume does not currently affect IRWD's drinking water since our wells are several miles away.** IRWD water meets, or is of higher quality than, all state and federal standards and is safe to drink. However, if no action is taken, the plume will eventually threaten Orange County's main water supply. The Irvine Desalter Project is the solution to this problem. Two purification

plants will remove TCE from the water and the cleaned water will be added to the irrigation water system that is used for non-drinking water purposes. The Navy is paying for this portion of the project.

The second project will remove salts and nitrates from groundwater outside of the plume of contamination. This water does not contain TCE. The salts and nitrates are caused by natural geology and past agricultural use of the land. A separate purification plant will treat this water using reverse osmosis and it will be added to the drinking water system. IRWD, with assistance from MWD, will pay the costs for this portion of the project.

The IDP project is proceeding on schedule and is expected to be completed by late this summer. The remaining construction includes installing a new pipeline in portions of Culver Drive from Irvine Center Drive to Interstate 5. This work will be performed during May and June in compliance with permits obtained by IRWD from the City of Irvine. As always, we will try to minimize traffic impacts.

Water Awareness Month *(continued from page three)*

each issue of this Pipelines newsletter contains handy tips (see page two) to help you use water more efficiently in your yard and garden.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

IRWD OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED ON THE FOLLOWING HOLIDAYS:

- Monday, May 29
- Monday, July 3 and Tuesday, July 4

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.

IRVINE POLICE ASSOCIATION'S 22nd ANNUAL 4th FOURTH OF JULY CONCERT ON THE GREEN AND FIREWORK FESTIVAL

Celebrate the City of Irvine's 35th Anniversary

Irvine Police Association presents this event at Irvine High School Stadium (next to Heritage Park). Gates open at 3 p.m. Game booths, balloon jumpers, face painting, door prizes and local live band performances throughout the event. Fireworks festival at 9 p.m.

- **Advance tickets:** \$40 for family tickets (two adults and up to four children). Family tickets will not be sold on the 4th of July.
- **Individual tickets may be purchased at the Irvine High School football stadium box office the day of the event.** Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$7 for seniors (60+) or children two through 13. Children under two are free.

For ticket information call Vince Palazzolo at (949) 724-0488 or for information only visit their Web site at www.irvinepa.org.

IRVINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION HOUSE RAFFLE

The winner of the grand prize will receive a new three-story townhome valued at more than \$800,000 by Taylor Woodrow Homes. The 1,802-square-foot townhome located in the Village of Woodbury in Irvine features two bedrooms and two-and-a-half bathrooms with a two-car garage. Money raised from the raffle will support science, art and music education programs in elementary schools, class size reduction, health education services, after-school programs, teaching supplies, and scholarships to enable all children to participate in fee-based programs. **Deadline to buy grand prize tickets is June 2.** Tickets for the raffle are on sale for \$200 each and are available by visiting the IPSF Web site at www.ipsf.net or by calling the House Raffle Hotline at (949) 734-6873.

FAMILIES FORWARD NEWS

Spring is here and summer quickly coming around the corner! With the warmer weather, children need their juice and drinks along with their peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. The Families Forward food pantry at this moment is at an all time low with juice, juice boxes and jelly. Each week we provide food for 30-40 needy families with children. Your donations of these items would be a great help! Please feel free to bring your donations to the office at 9221 Irvine Blvd., Irvine, 92618 or call us at (949) 552-2727.

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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