



Securing a Resilient Water Supply

As we come together with friends and family to celebrate the holidays and anticipate the arrival of the new year, it's an ideal moment to pause and reflect on the fundamental role that water plays in our lives. The Orange County Water District (OCWD), a leader in responsible groundwater management and innovative water solutions, continues to be at the forefront of ensuring a reliable water supply.

We take immense pride in serving a population of 2.5 million residents and extending our expertise to the industry at large. OCWD remains steadfast in its mission, serving the city of Fullerton and communities near and far, and supporting other agencies throughout the state and around the globe in adopting similar technologies and initiatives that advance water sustainability in their region. This year has been particularly rewarding as we marked the 90th anniversary of our dedicated management of the region's water resources.



Harnessing rainfall to make the most of nature's gifts, OCWD maximized its operations from Tropical Storm Hilary's rainfall, capturing every drop that fell over Orange County and recharging it into the groundwater basin, ensuring no water was lost to the ocean. These efforts significantly boosted the District's water storage behind Prado Dam to an impressive 3.4 billion gallons, a testament to our commitment to optimizing every available opportunity to enhance our water supplies. This achievement could not be possible

without the cooperation and partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, allowing us to make every drop count and improve operational efficiencies to better serve our communities.

Maximizing our resources is a win-win for us all. A shining example of this collaboration is our public agency partnership with the Orange County Sanitation District (OC San). Together, our agencies have created the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS), the world's largest water recycling facility that takes OC San's treated wastewater and purifies it through an advanced treatment process. The GWRS produces 130 million gallons of high-quality water every day – enough water to meet the needs of one million people. Building on this partnership over the decades, the GWRS can now recycle 100% of local reclaimable wastewater flows.

This work was recently recognized by the U.S. Water Alliance, where OCWD and OC San were honored with the prestigious U.S. Water Prize in the Outstanding Public Sector Organization category, which recognizes outstanding achievements in the advancement of solutions to the water sector's challenges.

This accolade underscores our global reputation as pioneers in groundwater management and water reuse, driven not only by technological innovation but also by community engagement and education. Our robust tour and speakers bureau program, alongside our commitment to maintaining high water quality standards, further solidify our mission to secure a resilient water supply for Orange County.



As we make our New Year's resolutions, let's not forget the resolution that OCWD has made year after year: to secure a sustainable water supply for Orange County. We hope you join us in this effort by learning more about your local water resources. OCWD offers an array of free programs, tours and educational activities that can be found at www.ocwd.com. We hope to see you soon!

In collaboration with Orange County Water District staff, this article was provided by Orange County Water District Director Bruce Whitaker, who represents Division 10, which covers the city of Fullerton. Contact Director Whitaker at BWWhitaker@live.com.