

KEEPING THE WATER FLOWING



CALIFORNIA WATERFIX PROVIDES INNOVATIVE WAY TO OPTIMIZE DELTA RIVER DIVERSIONS

BY CATHI DOUGLAS

A solution to Southern California's water needs, especially during record-breaking drought years, is now within reach. It's called the California WaterFix.

The plan has been around only about a year, but supplementing Southern California's local supply with water from the north has been going on for decades. The State Water Project first delivered water to Southern California in 1973.

That supply, though, is increasingly scarce because of droughts and environmental concerns for protected species of native fish in the California Delta.

"Right now, the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers are running higher than in recent years, but pumping cannot move in tandem because this is an important time for the salmon and smelt which are spawning," says Nancy Vogel, deputy secretary of communications for the California Natural Resources Agency. "If we had pumps in different locations, we'd gain more flexibility to move water into storage for the dry times." The agency is charged with restoring, protecting and managing the state's resources.

"Man and nature can coexist and work together, but that hasn't been the case," notes Brett R. Barbre, a Yorba Linda resident who serves on the boards of the Municipal Water District of Orange County and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. "There has been a lot of time and energy spent over the past 30 years trying to block a fix to the Delta."

Orange County relies on water from the SWP and the Colorado River for 40 to 50 percent

Learn More about the Water Wise Lifestyle at the OC Register's Knowledge Café:
ocregister.com/sections/knowledge-café

WATER PARTNER PROFILE: SOUTH COAST WATER DISTRICT

THE SOUTH COAST WATER DISTRICT serves 35,000 residents, nearly 1,000 commercial accounts and more than 2 million visitors a year with potable drinking water, recycled water for irrigation, and sanitary sewer services. The District's service area consists of Dana Point and portions of Laguna Beach, San Juan Capistrano and San Clemente.

Since 2000, the District has operated, maintained, and administered the Joint Regional Water Supply System under contract to member agencies, including the cities of San Clemente and San Juan Capistrano, El Toro Water District, Irvine Ranch Water District, Moulton Niguel Water District, as well as Camp Pendleton, San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station, and San Onofre State Park. The system transports imported

water into south Orange County from MWD's Diemer Filtration Plant in Yorba Linda. The water travels through 30 miles of transmission mains, is distributed to more than 200,000 residents through its member agencies, and has 60 million gallons of storage capacity in two reservoirs in San Clemente.

A leader in recycled water for irrigation, the District provides 800 acre feet of recycled water each year to irrigate a variety of golf courses, homeowner association landscaping and parks.

The district plans to construct a 5-million-gallon-per-day ocean desalination facility to provide a reliable, sustainable and drought-proof source of potable water using proven state-of-the-art Reverse Osmosis technology and an intake system designed to protect marine life.

For more info, visit scwd.org.



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Water will travel through two underground pipes into the aqueducts



Operation of pumps in the southern Delta will be coordinated to "maximize reliability and reduce environmental conflict," according to the MWD, which supplies water to Orange County from the SWP

Welcome to **Orange County's Water Wise Lifestyle**, an ongoing series to help you navigate the new normal of California's water resources. Various water districts will be offering important information and tips along with rebates and cost-saving incentives for homeowners and businesses.

of its water supply. The MWDOC distributes water to 28 agencies supplying nearly a million households and almost 90,000 businesses. Typically, about 5.2 million acre-feet of water are pumped from the Delta each year by numerous pumping stations along the length of the California Aqueduct.

But in recent years, it's been, on average, 4.7 million and could drop to 3.9 if nothing is done. An acre foot of water will cover a football field 1-foot deep and provide water to about 2 million homes. This reduction has resulted in water restrictions, both for farmers and residents.

California WaterFix will create a new collection and transport system. Three new structures south of Sacramento, called intakes, will capture water from the north; state-of-the-art screens will keep fish out of the intakes. Then the water will travel through two underground pipes into the aqueducts. In addition, the operation of pumps in the southern Delta will be coordinated to "maximize reliability and reduce environmental conflict," according to the MWD, which supplies water to Orange County from the SWP.

This new \$15-billion system will improve the state's ability to store water for dry years in the many dams that are part of the State Water Project, help Delta fish and other wildlife recover, fix levees that are now mostly made of earth and protect water supplies from natural disasters.

If California WaterFix isn't implemented, "our supplies will be less reliable and more expensive," Patterson says.

An ongoing OC Water Reliability Study conducted

by MWDOC and 30 local agencies found the California WaterFix is critical to OC: without it, the county could face shortages 7 of 10 years. With the project in place, OC would be solidly reliable nine of 10 years.

"One of the public policy challenges is that 99 percent of the people in the state turn on their faucets and water comes out," Barbre notes. "They don't worry about where it came from or what it took to get there."

Like Barbre, many believe California WaterFix is the best way to keep that water flowing.

It's not too soon for Southern Californians to get involved, water experts say. More information is available at californiawaterfix.com, and the MWD has information on its website. ■

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OC GARDEN FRIENDLY EVENTS:

Free events where you can learn about **DROUGHT-TOLERANT LANDSCAPE**, efficient irrigation and how to save water and eliminate runoff.

APRIL 2: 8AM - 12PM
Home Depot - Huntington Beach
7100 Warner Ave.

APRIL 30: 8AM - 12PM
Home Depot - Costa Mesa
2300 S. Harbor Blvd.

CALIFORNIA LANDSCAPE TRAINING CLASS:

Learn Six Ways to Make Your Garden California Friendly.® Join us for an evening of **LANDSCAPING TIPS, DO'S AND DON'TS** of water wise gardening. RSVP Required: Call 949-644-3195

APRIL 21: 6 - 9PM
Newport Beach
100 Civic Center Dr.

Orange County's Water Wise Lifestyle page is brought to you weekly by the family of OC water providers, including the cities of Brea, Buena Park, Fountain Valley, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, La Habra, Newport Beach, Orange, San Clemente, Seal Beach and Tustin, and the East Orange County, El Toro, Irvine Ranch, Santa Margarita, Serrano, South Coast, Trabuco Canyon and Yorba Linda water districts. The Municipal Water District of OC and the OC Stormwater Program are also participating.