

# pipeline



FALL 2009

A NEWSLETTER FOR CUSTOMERS OF THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT



## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP Protecting the Watershed and Land

As urban areas grow, there is greater pressure to balance development with conservation. Laws at the state and Federal level exist to protect endangered species, but many agree that habitat conservation planning is also needed at the local level.

The Otay Water District has been involved in habitat conservation planning for more than a decade. Most recently, the District will consider joining forces with the Joint Water Agencies (JWA) – a partnership between the Sweetwater Authority, Helix Water District, and Padre Dam Municipal Water District - to identify valuable resources to be preserved in southern San Diego County.

Water districts already protect and manage public lands and watersheds. Now we are working together to provide additional management to protect threatened and endangered species and the habitat they depend on.

Starting with the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) in the 1990s, the San Diego region has been a leader in habitat conservation planning. The MSCP allowed development to occur in designated areas and created a preserve system of high quality habitat that would ensure the survival of many sensitive species. Regulations at the national and state level provide overarching guidelines to conserve and manage ecological communities, but it is up to local jurisdictions and agencies to find solutions at a regional and sub-regional level.



Water districts followed in the footsteps of the MSCP by starting their own planning efforts. Habitat conservation planning often involves the development of a Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) and a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). Development of these plans meet state and Federal requirements and ensures protection of multiple species. The NCCP and the HCP set aside biologically important areas for mitigation so that agencies can develop and maintain water infrastructure, meeting the needs of their customers while caring for the environment.

The Otay Water District's history of environmental stewardship includes protecting sensitive biological resources such as the California gnatcatcher, western burrowing owl, and San Diego barrel cactus that are found within our service area. The San Miguel Habitat Management Area (HMA), acquired in 1995, preserved more than 200 acres of land.

Conservation requires cooperation between agencies such as the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, environmental groups and concerned citizens. Coordination with other water districts in southern San Diego County will serve to strengthen regional conservation planning efforts while also ensuring an efficient process for essential projects and water operations.

## Otay Water District SUPPLY STATUS

### LEVEL 1 - DROUGHT WATCH

Voluntary measures to stop waste. Repair leaks promptly. Wash cars with a bucket and shut-off nozzle.

### LEVEL 2 - DROUGHT ALERT

Mandatory water use restrictions.

### LEVEL 3 - DROUGHT CRITICAL

No new construction, annexations or development. Strict limits on water used for irrigation and non-public health purposes.

### LEVEL 4 - DROUGHT EMERGENCY

Stop all landscape irrigation. No new construction, annexations or development.

## The Otay Water District continues a Level 1 Drought Watch for its service area.

The Otay Water District thanks its customers for conserving water. We would also like to remind you that as the cooler days of fall arrive, landscapes require less water. You can decrease watering by 10% each month until the winter rains arrive. By mid-November, landscapes need 30% less water compared to the summer months.

In the coming months, the Otay Water District and the JWA will host a public workshop to hear your ideas and comments. The goal of this effort is to create a comprehensive and beneficial conservation program for sensitive biological resources to complement the regional preserve system.

# WATER SMART GARDENING FESTIVAL

Nov. 14, 2009 • 9 am–3 pm

Join us as we celebrate San Diego's fall planting season with an explosion of water smart gardening. Buy drought tolerant plants, hear talks on water-wise gardening, and visit the Ask the Designers area for a 20-minute landscape design consultation with a professional designer or

architect. Kids in the family? They'll love getting their faces painted, the kids activity booth, and the 'Plantastic Show' with Ms. Smarty-Plants at the family-friendly event. Visit [www.thegarden.org](http://www.thegarden.org) for all of the activities, and call 619-660-0614 x10 to reserve your design consultation spot.

Water Conservation Garden, 12122 Cuyamaca College Dr., El Cajon • FREE Admission and parking!

## OTAY RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS SAFETY AWARD Health and Safety of Employees a Priority

The Otay Water District is the recipient of the Larry C. Larson Safety Award for 2009 from the California-Nevada Section of the American Water Works Association (AWWA). The award recognizes public utilities that have demonstrated a commitment to make their employees' health and safety a priority. The award is significant since few agencies are able to meet AWWA's high standards of excellence.

"We have a proactive safety program centered on the premise that all work-related injuries are preventable," said Otay Water District General

Manager, Mark Watton. "Having a strong safety program requires employee input and participation to minimize risk and injury as well as it is a sound business practice: it keeps costs down and keeps productivity high."

With workplace safety becoming an integral part of the District's work culture, in recent years, the District's safety program has reduced the number of job related injuries by 40 percent. In addition, the District has also seen significant reductions in the number of days lost to work-related injuries.



# Jamacha Road Pipeline Project Underway

The Jamacha Road Pipeline project is officially underway. This \$16.2 million, 5.1-mile long, pipeline construction project extends from El Cajon to Rancho San Diego.

The new pipeline will deliver up to 12 million gallons per day of treated water from the Helix Water District's Levy Treatment Plant to Otay customers. This water will be stored in two newly completed 10 million-gallon storage reservoirs. This project, Otay's largest ever, represents a \$50 million investment in water infrastructure in San Diego's East County.

The pipeline is a key element of the region's water supply planning efforts. It is a joint venture between Otay, the San Diego County Water Authority and the Helix, Padre Dam, and Lakeside water districts, to enhance the water supply, reliability and fire fighting capabilities in the East County.

For more information about the Jamacha Road Pipeline project, please visit [www.jamachapipeline.com](http://www.jamachapipeline.com).

### SCHEDULE—Schedule subject to change.

#### Phase I—July 2009 – November 2009

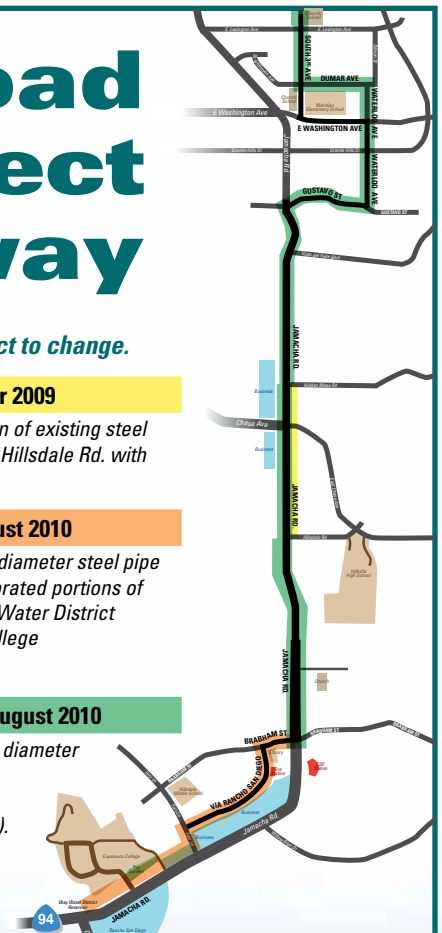
Phase I will entail replacing a portion of existing steel pipe between Hidden Mesa Rd. and Hillsdale Rd. with a new PVC pipe.

#### Phase II—October 2009 – August 2010

Phase II will involve installing a 36" diameter steel pipe from Brabham St. into the unincorporated portions of Rancho San Diego toward the Otay Water District Reservoir adjacent to Cuyamaca College (see map for route details).

#### Phase III—November 2009 – August 2010

Phase III will involve installing a 36" diameter steel pipe from Brabham St. into the City of El Cajon toward Third St. and Lexington (see map for route details).



## OTAY WATER DISTRICT – Board of Directors

The Board of Directors meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 3:30 pm in the Board meeting room. The public is encouraged to attend at 2554 Sweetwater Spring Blvd., Spring Valley, CA.

### President

Gary Croucher, Division 3  
[gcroucher@otaywater.gov](mailto:gcroucher@otaywater.gov)

### Vice-President

Jose Lopez, Division 4  
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### Treasurer

Jaime Bonilla, Division 2  
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### Boardmember

Larry Breitfelder, Division 1  
[lbreitfelder@otaywater.gov](mailto:lbreitfelder@otaywater.gov)

### Boardmember

Mark Robak, Division 5  
[OtayWater@cox.net](mailto:OtayWater@cox.net)





## FREE HOTLINE FOR GARDENERS

Concerned about how to garden in these water-challenging times? Nan Sterman, author of California Gardener's Guide Vol. 2, host of the gardening show "A Growing Passion", and instructor of the Water Conservation Garden's popular "Bye Bye Grass" class will answer your questions about water smart landscaping when you call The Water Smart Pipeline at 866-962-7021 x 17. The hotline is available:

**Tuesdays 8:30 a.m. – Noon**  
**Thursdays 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

*This free service is available  
through the end of 2009.*

## HOLIDAY LIGHTING EXCHANGE EVENTS!



Exchange up to three incandescent holiday light strings for more energy-efficient, multi-colored LED holiday lights (while supplies last). LED holiday lights are cool to the touch making them safer for you and your family. They are brighter, last up to 100 times longer than incandescent lights, and provide up to 90% in energy savings!

**DATE:** Saturday, Nov. 21, 2009  
**TIME:** 11:00 am to 3:00 pm  
**LOCATION:** Water Conservation Garden, 12122 Cuyamaca College Dr., El Cajon

**DATE:** Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009  
**TIME:** 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm  
**LOCATION:** Memorial Park (before Starlight Parade), Chula Vista

*Bring a valid California ID and a copy of your current SDG&E bill. Lighting offer is limited to three incandescent holiday light strands per household per year.*

## Irrigation—Part II

It would be so nice if plants came with care labels that said "Water 15 minutes, twice a week," or "Water two hours once a month." Or if they could tell us, "Hey, I'm thirsty, I need a drink!" I can dream, can't I?

Plants do come with labels to describe their water needs. Some are "high," "medium," or "regular" water. Others are "low" water or "drought-tolerant." While those descriptors don't specify how much to water, they do help you know which plants to group together so you can customize the irrigation schedule for each zone or bed. You'll definitely save water, especially if you plant mostly low-water and drought-tolerant plants (that's a subtle hint). That still leaves the question of how much and how often to water.

Researchers have equations to calculate watering based variables such as climate, soil type, evapotranspiration (the rate that water evaporates into the air and that plants lose water vapor through their pores just like we lose water vapor in our breath). But the rest of us can use a straightforward approach I call "The Canary Test."

### The Canary Test

Test one watering zone at a time (a watering zone is a set of sprinklers or drip emitters that are connected to a single valve and run at the same time).

1. Pick a zone. Make sure you know which plants that zone waters.
2. Turn the zone off. Mark the date on your calendar.
3. Wait and watch for a canary. What's a canary? In the old days, miners took canaries with them into coalmines. Since canaries are very sensitive to odorless but lethal carbon monoxide gas, the miners knew to flee the mines when their canaries got sick. In your garden, the "canary" is the first plant to show signs of water stress. Watch for a plant whose leaves look a bit wilted – that's the canary. It might take several days or it might take several weeks, but eventually, you'll notice a canary in each zone.
4. Note how many days passed since you turned that watering zone off.
5. Turn the water on and let it run. Check the soil every 10 minutes for overhead sprinklers, every 20 minutes for rotating nozzle sprinklers, and every 30 minutes for drip irrigation. When you stick your finger into the soil and if it is wet both at the surface and as deep as you can feel, you've watered long enough. Write that down, too. If the soil is really hard, you may need to use a hand trowel or soil probe.
6. Repeat the process for each zone.

After a few rounds of testing, you'll know how often each zone needs to run and how long to run it each time.

Say for example, you noticed a canary in your herb garden after two weeks. When you watered, the soil was saturated after 20 minutes. Set your herb garden to water 20 minutes every 13th day (that's two weeks, minus one day). If it took seven days until you saw a canary in your perennial beds and an hour of watering to saturate the soil, then water the perennials for an hour every sixth day, and so on.

You'll soon realize that each zone needs to run on its own schedule and those schedules vary widely. Lawns may need to run ten minutes, three times a week, while fruit trees need an hour every two weeks.

Repeat the process each month to create a year-round watering schedule. In general, plants need the most water in the heat of summer, while winter's rains may be enough for you to turn the irrigation off for weeks or months. Ramp up irrigation in spring and ramp it down in fall.

Remember, the point is to encourage wet plant roots by watering deeply and thoroughly, and always for the same number of minutes. Vary the frequency, not the duration.

Whether you control your sprinklers manually or use an irrigation clock, adjusting your watering schedule to match your plants' needs both saves water and grows healthier plants.

# ADMINISTRACIÓN AMBIENTAL

## Conservando la Cuenca y la Tierra

Al crecer las áreas urbanas, existe una mayor presión para equilibrar el desarrollo con la conservación. Existen leyes a nivel estatal y federal para proteger a las especies en peligro de extinción, pero muchos coinciden en que la planificación de la conservación del hábitat es también necesaria a nivel local.

El Distrito de Agua de Otay ha participado en la planificación de la conservación del hábitat por más de una década. Recientemente, el Distrito ha considerado unir sus esfuerzos con la Sociedad de Agencias de Agua (JWA), una asociación entre la Autoridad de Agua de Sweetwater, el Distrito de Agua de Helix, y el Distrito Municipal de Agua de Padre Dam - para identificar los recursos valiosos en el sur del condado de San Diego que deben conservarse.

Los distritos de agua actualmente protegen y administran las tierras públicas y las cuencas hidrográficas. Ahora, estamos trabajando juntos para proporcionar manejo adicional para proteger las especies amenazadas y en peligro de extinción y el hábitat del cual dependen.



La región de San Diego ha sido un líder en la planificación de conservación del hábitat desde el inicio de su Programa de Conservación de Especies Múltiples (MSCP) en 1990. El MSCP permitió que se llevara a cabo desarrollo en áreas designadas y creó un sistema de conservación del hábitat de alta calidad que asegurara la supervivencia de especies sensibles. Reglamente a nivel nacional y estatal proporcionará guías generales para la conservación y manejo de comunidades ecológicas, pero también depende de las jurisdicciones y organismos locales encontrar soluciones a nivel regional y subregional.

Los distritos de agua siguieron los pasos de la MSCP iniciando con sus propios esfuerzos de planificación. La planificación de la conservación del hábitat a menudo implica el desarrollo de un Plan de Conservación Natural de la Comunidad (NCCP) y un Plan de Conservación del Hábitat (HCP). El desarrollo de estos planes cumple con requisitos estatales y federales, y garantiza la protección de especies múltiples. La NCCP y el PCH designan zonas biológicamente importantes para la mitigación de modo que las agencias puedan desarrollar y mantener la infraestructura de agua y satisfacer las necesidades de sus clientes, mientras cuidan el medio ambiente.

La historia de administración ambiental del Distrito de Agua de Otay, incluye la protección de los recursos biológicos sensibles como la perlita californiana, el tecolote occidental, y el cactus de barril que se encuentran dentro de nuestra área de servicio. El Área de Manejo de Hábitat (HMA) de San Miguel, adquirida en 1995, conserva más de doscientos acres de tierra.

La conservación requiere la cooperación entre organismos como el Departamento de Pesca y Caza, El Servicio de Pesca y Vida Silvestre de los Estados Unidos, los grupos ambientales y ciudadanos interesados. La coordinación con otros distritos de agua en el sur del condado de San Diego servirá para fortalecer la planificación de los esfuerzos regionales de conservación, garantizando un proceso eficiente para proyectos esenciales y las operaciones de agua.

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### Distrito de agua de Otay

## Estado del Suministro de Agua

#### SEQUIA – NIVEL 1 ESTADO DE VIGILANCIA

Medidas voluntarias para detener los residuos. Reparar las fugas rápidamente. Lavar su auto con una cubeta y una manguera con boquilla de cierre automático.

#### SEQUIA – NIVEL 2 ESTADO DE ALERTA

Restricciones obligatorias del uso del agua.

#### SEQUIA – NIVEL 3 ESTADO CRITICO

Ninguna construcción de anexos o desarrollos nuevos. Límites estrictos de la cantidad de agua utilizada para el riego y otros usos que no incluyen proyectos de salud pública.

#### SEQUIA – NIVEL 4 ESTADO DE EMERGENCIA

Alto al riego de jardines Ninguna construcción de anexos o desarrollos nuevos.

### El Distrito de Agua Otay continúa en Estado de Vigilancia de Sequia-Nivel 1 para su área de servicio.

El Distrito de Agua Otay agradece a sus clientes por conservar agua y por su apoyo del uso de agua reciclada. Debido a sus esfuerzos por conservar agua e inversiones en la infraestructura de agua reciclada, los clientes de Otay están evitando medidas estrictas y obligatorias para la conservación del agua.

Gracias por su apoyo y continúen con el buen trabajo!

En los próximos meses, el Distrito de Agua de Otay y el JWA llevara a cabo un taller público para escuchar sus ideas y comentarios. El objetivo de este esfuerzo es crear un programa de conservación global y beneficioso para que los recursos biológicos puedan complementar el sistema regional de conservación.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT CALL 619.670.2222 OR GO TO [WWW.OTAYWATER.GOV](http://WWW.OTAYWATER.GOV)