



ORANGE COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT | WWW.OCWD.COM
ORANGE COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT | WWW.OCSAN.GOV

Media Contacts:

Jennifer Cabral, (714) 593-7581 or jcabral@ocsan.gov

Gina Ayala, (714) 378-3323 or gayala@ocwd.com

GROUNDWATER REPLENISHMENT SYSTEM FINAL EXPANSION RECEIVES AWARD FROM CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF SANITATION AGENCIES

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. (August 28, 2023) – The Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS) final expansion project won the 2023 Capital Project Award at the annual California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA) conference.

A joint project of the Orange County Sanitation District (OC San) and the Orange County Water District (OCWD), the GWRS was recognized for the completion of its final expansion, which recycles 100 percent of OC San’s reclaimable wastewater flows and produces up to 130 million gallons of water a day (MGD), enough to serve nearly one million people.

“From what was once the “unthinkable” – purifying wastewater into drinking water – is now the model for water reuse, and it is happening right here in Orange County,” said OC San Board Chairman Chad P. Wanke. “We are proud that the GWRS has again made history with the final completion that recycles all our agency’s reclaimable wastewater flows. Thank you, CASA, for this recognition.”

The GWRS takes highly treated wastewater that would otherwise be released to the ocean and purifies it using a three-step advanced treatment process consisting of microfiltration, reverse osmosis, and ultraviolet light with hydrogen peroxide. The result is high-quality water that is pumped to recharge basins in Anaheim where it naturally percolates into the Orange County Groundwater Basin, managed by OCWD, and becomes part of the drinking water supply for 2.5 million people in north and central Orange County. GWRS water is also sent to injection wells located along Orange County’s coast to create a seawater intrusion barrier that protects groundwater supplies.

Operational since January 2008, the GWRS began producing 70 MGD and increased production to 100 MGD after an initial expansion was completed in May 2015. In March 2023, the final expansion was complete, and the facility has produced more than 400 billion gallons of water and counting.

“The completion of the GWRS reflects a decades-long effort to invest in a more resilient water supply,” said OCWD Board President Cathy Green. “We appreciate the ongoing partnership we have with OC San and look forward to continued collaboration in the future.”

Reaching this milestone of recycling 100 percent of OC San’s reclaimable wastewater flows enhances the efforts to protect public health and the environment by reusing this valuable resource. In addition to reducing the volume of treated wastewater released into the ocean,

GWRS water improves water quality in the basin and offers a more cost-effective and energy-efficient alternative than importing water from northern California or the Colorado River.

Over the years, GWRS water has become a primary source used to refill the groundwater basin and has enabled OCWD's 19 cities and local water retailers to pump more water from the basin and become more locally sustainable.

For more information, the public is invited to book a [facility tour](#), watch an [on-demand tour video](#), or visit the [GWRS website](#).

The Orange County Water District manages the local groundwater basin that provides 85% of the water supply for 19 cities and retail water districts in north and central Orange County, serving 2.5 million people. Guided by its commitment to sound planning and investment, high standards for water reliability, exceptional water quality, environmental stewardship, sound financial management, and transparency, OCWD has proactively implemented initiatives to protect and increase local water supplies. OCWD replenishes the basin, prevents seawater intrusion, and protects Orange County's rights to Santa Ana River water. For more information about OCWD, please visit www.ocwd.com and follow @OCWaterDistrict on social media.

OC San is a public agency that provides wastewater collection, treatment, and recycling for approximately 2.6 million people in central and northwest Orange County. OC San is a special district that is governed by a 25-member Board of Directors composed of 20 cities, four special districts, and one representative from the Orange County Board of Supervisors. OC San has two operating facilities that treat wastewater from residential, commercial, and industrial sources. For more information on OC San please visit www.ocsan.gov. Follow @OCSanDistrict on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and Orange County Sanitation District on LinkedIn.

###