

# pipeline



WINTER 2014

A NEWSLETTER FOR CUSTOMERS OF THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT



## Projections Show San Diego's Water Supplies are Sufficient for 2014

### NO WATER-USE RESTRICTIONS PLANNED

Healthy reservoir storage levels, strong regional water conservation efforts and growing water transfers from the Colorado River mean customers will have sufficient water supplies for 2014 even if dry conditions persist. That assessment was presented to the San Diego County Water Authority's (Water Authority) Board of Directors in October 2013.

The past two years have been dry across California, and 11 of the past 14 years have been dry in the Colorado River Basin. A third year with limited rain and snow would draw down several key reservoirs going into 2015, but for now the region is not anticipating the need for extraordinary conservation measures or water shortages in 2014. Nevertheless, water suppliers will closely monitor winter and early spring weather, particularly in the Sierra Nevada and the Rocky Mountains, where the bulk of the San Diego region's water supplies originate. The National Weather Service is giving equal chances for wet, dry and normal conditions over the next three months. About 75 percent of the state's average annual precipitation falls between November and March.

The Los Angeles-based Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), the region's largest water wholesaler, has reported it has adequate reserves and doesn't expect to impose allocations in 2014, even though imports from the State Water Project are expected to be low due to poor hydrological conditions and regulatory restrictions. At the start of 2013, MWD had about 2.7 million acre-feet of water storage reserves, not counting more than 600,000 acre-feet of emergency storage. It expected to drawdown 500,000 acre-feet from storage to meet demand through the end of 2013. That will leave at least 2.2 million acre-feet of storage reserve, about 20 percent more than it had when the last drought began in 2007. (An acre-foot is approximately 325,900 gallons, or roughly enough to serve two typical families of four for a year.)

A significant hedge against shortages is the conservation-and-transfer programs that are part of the Colorado River Quantification Settlement Agreement of 2003. In 2014, these transfers will provide San Diego with approximately 180,000 acre-feet of Colorado River water. These water transfers ramp up to 280,000 acre-feet in 2021, enough to support more than a half-million typical single-family homes. Water from a major desalination facility is also set to come online in 2016, making another 56,000 acre-feet available annually.

Dry spells are part of living in California and the people of San Diego County have invested heavily in infrastructure improvements, conservation and new water supplies to protect our economy and quality of life. The cost of making these improvements is a fundamental reason why water costs have risen in recent years. But because the people of San Diego have made these investments, our water supply is much more reliable and the we are in far better shape to withstand extended drought today than we were just a few years ago. Severe drought in other parts of our state is still a concern, but statewide advisories do not necessarily apply to San Diego County and our own local water situation. Still, all customers should continue to do their part to conserve and be mindful of waste, and as your water supplier, we will continue to be vigilant to protect your water supply now and into the foreseeable future.

## Otay Recognized for Sound Management and Fiscal Practices in Operations

Otay Water District has received the "District of Distinction" accreditation by the Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF). The SDLF recognized Otay for demonstrating a strong commitment to practicing sound policies in the areas of governance, board conduct, district finances, transparency, reserve management, and continuing education for board members and staff. This is the first time Otay has received this biannual accreditation.

The district also received the SDLF's District Transparency Certificate of Excellent for having demonstrated sound transparency practices including posting on the district website of board meetings scheduled and agendas, the current district budget, financial audits, and a list of compensation for board members and staff, or a link to the State Controller's webpage with the data.

SDLF is an independent, non-profit organization formed to promote good governance and the best practices among California's special district through certification, accreditation and other recognition programs. Otay is honored to receive this recognition from the SDLF because it's an affirmation from a respected third party of Otay's longstanding commitment to transparency and accountability.



## Save More Water and Money in the New Year

Otay currently has rebates for the following devices through June 30, 2014 (or until funding is exhausted):

- \$165 for high efficiency clothes washers
- \$50 for high efficiency toilets
- Up to \$140 for a "Smart" or weather-based irrigation controllers (less than one irrigated acre) or \$25 per irrigation station (for residential sites of 1+ acres)
- \$4 per head for rotating sprinkler nozzles
- \$75 for rain barrels (up to 4)
- \$80 for rain sensor attachments to irrigation controllers
- A \$1.50 per square foot rebate to replace existing irrigated turf grass with water-wise plants  
*Visit [turfreplacement.watersmartsd.org](http://turfreplacement.watersmartsd.org) for details*

Please visit [www.socalwatersmart.com](http://www.socalwatersmart.com) to download an application to receive rebates for high efficiency clothes washers, high efficiency toilets, rain barrels, rain sensors, rotating sprinkler nozzles and "smart" controllers.

### TURF REMOVAL REBATES AVAILABLE

After taking advantage of the turf removal rebate program, this Chula Vista family is now saving water, money, and has a beautiful new water-conserving landscape. You can take a tour of Otay's 2013 Landscape Contest winner's garden by visiting our YouTube page at [www.youtube.com/user/OtayWaterDistrict](http://www.youtube.com/user/OtayWaterDistrict).



For information about how to apply for the turf replacement rebate program, please visit <http://turfreplacement.watersmartsd.org/>.

# Bill Payment Options

## Otay Water District Accepts Payment through a Variety of Sources

- **Online Payment through your Own Financial Institution:** Otay accepts payment made through your financial institution's bill pay service. We typically receive payment electronically within 24 to 72 hours.
- **Pay by Mail:** You can mail your payment directly to the Otay Water District at P.O. Box 51375, Los Angeles, CA 90051-5675.
- **Online Payment through Otay's website:** Web payments can be made online 24/7 at no charge. Using our online services, customers can make a one-time payment, schedule future payments or setup automatic payment for their monthly bill. Customers may also sign up to receive paperless billing through this site. From the Customer Service menu, choose the Pay Your Bill Online option. Payment can be made using a bank account or debit and credit card from VISA and MasterCard.
- **CheckFreePay locations:** Customers can pay their bill at CheckFreePay locations, including Wal-Mart, Kmart, and select Postal Annex stores throughout the country. Customers have the option for 3 day or next day payment delivery. Fees for this service range in cost from \$0.88 to \$2.50. For more information and to find a location in your area, please visit [www.checkfreepay.com](http://www.checkfreepay.com) or contact an Otay Customer Service representative at 619-670-2222.
- **Pay by Phone:** Debit and credit card customers can pay their bill 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. Call us at 619-670-2222. Have your Otay Water District account number ready when using this feature. In addition to Visa and Mastercard debit/credit card payments, our credit card service accepts Discover and American Express. There is no charge for this service.
- **Pay in Person:** Otay's business office is open Monday— Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at 2554 Sweetwater Springs Blvd., Spring Valley. A 24-hour drop box is also available to our customers at our business office.

For more information on any of these Bill Payment options, please contact a Customer Service representative at 619-670-2222.

## WIPES CLOG PIPES

### Disposable does not mean flushable!

Pre-moistened bathroom wipes labeled or marketed as "flushable" or "disposable" should not be flushed down the toilet. Why? These products are made of fibers that do not break down easily or dissolve after being flushed. Their presence in the wastewater system can cause pipeline clogs or septic system failures. Items include:

- disinfecting wipes
- mop refills
- towelettes
- baby wipes
- paper towels

Because pre-moistened wipes do not break down like toilet paper, they can clog sewer pipes and cause messy and costly repairs for homeowners. These products also clog public sewer pipes and pump station equipment, potentially leading to sewer spills. In fact, flushed wipes are overtaking solidified cooking grease as the most common and costly cause of sewer pipe clogs in many areas of the U.S.

Save yourself and your wastewater utility from costly repairs. Put wipes and cooking grease in the trash, not the toilet!

### 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**

Jose Lopez, Division 4  
[jlopez@otaywater.gov](mailto:jlopez@otaywater.gov)

**Vice President**

Mitch Thompson, Division 2  
[mthompson@otaywater.gov](mailto:mthompson@otaywater.gov)

**Treasurer**

David Gonzalez, Division 1  
[dgonzalez@otaywater.gov](mailto:dgonzalez@otaywater.gov)

**Board Member**

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

**Board Member**

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



For more class information and prices  
visit [www.thegarden.org](http://www.thegarden.org)



February 1, 2014 — 10:00 am - 12:00 pm:

**TOSS THE TURF-REMOVE YOUR LAWN**

Less Grass, Less Water, More Fun! Learn from an expert! A short course in turf removal, tips for soil evaluation, tuning up your irrigation system and water smart landscapes. Members Free, \$10 Non-Members

February 1, 2014 — 10:00 am - 12:00 pm:

**FREE HOME COMPOSTING WORKSHOP**

In partnership with the County of San Diego and the Water Conservation Garden, the Solana Center for Environmental Innovation is providing a FREE composting workshop. Learn the basics of composting, how to compost with worms, and how to save water in the process! Compost bins will be sold at the end of the workshop with subsidized prices for Unincorporated County residents so don't forget to bring cash or a check. To register for this workshop, please call the Solana Center at (760) 436-7986 ext. 222, or visit <http://www.solanacenter.org/forms/water-conservation-garden-composting-workshop-feb-1>

February 5, 2014 — 10:00 am - 12:00 pm:

**HOW TO HIRE A LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL**

Join Ms. Smarty-Plants™ a.k.a. Pam Meisner, as she walks you through the ins and outs of which professional to hire; architect, designer or landscaper and how to make changing your landscape from a daunting task to a doable one. You will also learn money saving tips and common pitfalls to avoid. Members please register online, but do not pay for this class. Non-members, please register online and complete the payment processing. Members Free, \$10 Non-Members

**GARDEN TOURS**

**Weekend Tour Schedule:** Docent-led tours of the Garden are held every Saturday at 10:30 a.m.

**Specialty Tours:** Specialty Tours are offered on select Saturdays at 10:00am covering a variety of gardening topics. Please visit our calendar of events to view offerings. Specialty tours are offered in addition to the general garden tours held each Saturday at 10:30am.

**Too Big, Too Much**

For the last year, I've been watching new neighbors redo their landscape. Their project is hard to miss. The side yard abuts a busy street that is the main thoroughfare through my community.

Their property is quite exposed and the constant sound of traffic surely makes their backyard noisy so I understand the rationale for planting hedges as a sound and visual barrier on either side of the street-side fence. Inside the fence they planted a row of tall *Pittosporum* shrubs. Outside the fence is a row of olive trees.

The problem is that they allowed anxiety to overrule good sense. After three or four years, the *Pittosporum* will reach their mature size of eight feet wide, yet they are planted only four feet apart. The olive trees, at least a dozen in all, are planted about five feet apart, yet grow 30 to 35 feet wide in about 15 years. Those dozen young olives are growing in the space of two or three mature olive trees at most. The olives are six or eight feet tall now and their crowns are already touching.

What does the future hold? By next year, they'll be pruning to keep the plants from growing into each other. Since there is only a wood fence and a few feet of dirt between the *Pittosporum* and olive trees, olive branches will soon start growing into the *Pittosporum* hedge, too.

Pruning will help for a few years. After that, I'm sure they will call an arborist and his or her crew to cut down plants. Are you seeing dollar signs? The owners purchased six times as many trees and twice as many *Pittosporum* as they needed. They will invest large sums of money for constant pruning and cutting. They'll be watering, fertilizing and caring for plants destined for a short life, simply because there wasn't enough room to start with.

The wasted resources and dollars are one part of the picture. The surplus trees took years to grow to planting size. They would have been better used in a permanent location. And the green waste from pruning and cutting will be trucked to the recycling facility, processed, and trucked elsewhere.

This is the definition of an "unsustainable" garden. Before that eventuality, ongoing cutting and pruning will keep the plants from reaching their mature sizes and shapes. The aesthetic the owners had in mind will never be achieved.

I've seen this kind of situation many times and not just with trees and shrubs. When we buy plants in one or five or even 15-gallon containers, it's hard to imagine how big those plants will grow. It's like having a newborn baby. Thinking of that tiny infant as a six-foot-tall adult is inconceivable. Yet, we know that one day, that baby will be all grown up.

With people, we look to the parents' height and girth to estimate that of their offspring. With plants, the mature height and width are usually on the plant tag. Absent a tag, the information is online. Do be aware, however, that size estimates depend on where the plants were test grown. We have a long growing season, so it's not unusual for a plant to be significantly larger here than wherever it was tested.

Whether you have a three-foot by three-foot space or a 20 by 20-foot space, do your homework first. Research the mature sizes of every plant you have in mind. Measure the space to see if the plants will fit. If not, pare down your list or select different plants.

Think about it this way – it's far easier to add plants to a spare garden bed, than to cut down or dig out extra plants from an overly crowded space. Besides, a bed of well-placed, well-spaced, mature plants looks far better than a bed with too many, too big, too hacked, and too much.

## Proyecciones muestran Suministros de Agua de San Diego serán Suficientes para el 2014

### NINGUNAS RESTRICCIONES SOBRE EL USO DEL AGUA ESTÁN PREVISTAS

Niveles de almacenamiento de depósitos sanos, esfuerzos regionales de conservación de agua y el aumento de traslados de agua del río Colorado significa que nuestros clientes tendrán un suministro de agua suficiente para el 2014, aun si persisten las condiciones de sequía. Esa evaluación fue presentada a la Junta Directiva de la Autoridad del Agua del Condado de San Diego en octubre del 2013.

En los últimos dos años ha existido una sequía a través del estado de California. De los últimos 14 años, 11 han sido de una gran sequía en la Cuenca del Río Colorado. Un tercer año con una cantidad de lluvia y nieve limitada resultaría en niveles bajos de embalses importantes entrando al 2015, pero por ahora la región no está anticipando la necesidad de medidas extremas de conservación ó la escasez de agua en el 2014. Sin embargo, los proveedores de agua seguirán de cerca el clima de invierno y primavera, sobre todo en la Sierra Nevada y las Montañas Rocosas, donde la mayoría de los suministros de agua de la región de San Diego se originan. El Servicio Meteorológico Nacional está pronosticando probabilidades tanto de sequía como de lluvia y condiciones normales en los próximos tres meses. Alrededor del 75 por ciento de la precipitación promedio anual del estado cae entre los meses de noviembre y marzo.

El Distrito Metropolitano de Agua del Sur de California, ó MWD por sus siglas en ingles, quien es el mayor proveedor de agua de la región ubicado en Los Angeles, ha informado que tiene reservas adecuadas y no espera imponer asignaciones en el 2014, aunque se espera que las importaciones procedentes del Proyecto de Agua del Estado sean bajas, debido a las malas condiciones hidrológicas y las restricciones regulatorias. A principios del 2013, MWD tenía alrededor de 2.7 millones pies acre de reservas de almacenamiento de agua, sin contar los más de 600,000 pies acre de almacenamiento de emergencia. Anticipaban utilizar 500,000 pies acre de almacenamiento para satisfacer la demanda hasta el final del 2013. Eso dejaría al menos 2.2 millones pies acre de reserva en almacenamiento, que es un 20 por ciento más de lo que se tenía al principio de la última sequía en el 2007. (Un pie acre representa alrededor de 325,900 galones de agua, más o menos lo suficiente para servir aproximadamente a dos familias de cuatro personas durante un año.)

Una cobertura significativa contra la escasez de agua son los programas de conservación y transferencias que son parte del Acuerdo sobre la Cuantificación del Agua del Río Colorado del 2003. En el 2014, estas transferencias proporcionarán a San Diego aproximadamente 180,000 pies acre de agua del Río Colorado. Estas transferencias de agua incrementarán hasta 280,000 pies acre en el 2021, mismas que serán lo suficiente para proveer agua a más de medio millón de viviendas unifamiliares. El agua de una importante planta de desalinización también está lista para entrar en funcionamiento en el 2016, resultando en otros 56,000 pies acre de agua disponibles anualmente.

Los periodos de sequía son parte de la vida en California y los residentes de San Diego han realizado grandes inversiones en mejoras de infraestructura, conservación y nuevas fuentes de agua para proteger nuestra economía y calidad de vida. El costo de hacer estas mejoras es una razón fundamental por la cual el costo del agua se ha incrementado en los últimos años. Debido a que los residentes de San Diego han hecho estas inversiones, el suministro de agua es mucho más fiable hoy en día y estamos en mejores condiciones para soportar una sequía extendida en comparación a años anteriores. La severa sequía que existe en otras partes de nuestro estado es de gran preocupación, pero los avisos estatales no aplican necesariamente al condado de San Diego ó a nuestra situación del agua local. Sin embargo, es muy importante que todos nuestros clientes continúen haciendo el esfuerzo de conservar y no desperdiciar el agua. Como su proveedor de agua, seguiremos vigilando la situación del agua local para proteger su suministro ahora y en el futuro.

## Otay es Reconocido por su Buen Manejo y Prácticas Fiscales en sus Operaciones

El Distrito de Agua de Otay ha recibido la acreditación "Distrito de Distinción" por la Fundación de Liderazgo de Distritos Especiales (SDLF) por sus siglas en inglés. La SDLF reconoció a Otay por demostrar su compromiso al practicar políticas razonables en las áreas de gobierno, conducta de la Junta Directiva, finanzas del distrito, transparencia, manejo de reservas, y educación continua para sus miembros de la Junta Directiva y de su personal.

Esta es la primera vez que Otay recibe esta acreditación, misma que se entrega cada dos años. La SDLF también otorgó al Distrito el Certificado de Excelencia por sus prácticas de transparencia que incluyen avisos en su página oficial acerca de las juntas programadas y sus agendas, el presupuesto actual del distrito, auditorías financieras, y una lista de compensaciones para los miembros de la Junta Directiva y su personal, ó un enlace a la página oficial de la Controlaría del Estado con esta información.

La SDLF es una organización independiente, no lucrativa, que fue creada para promover la buena administración y las mejores prácticas de distritos especiales de California a través de la certificación, acreditación, y otros programas de reconocimiento. Otay se honra en recibir este reconocimiento de parte de la SDLF ya que es una afirmación por un tercero respetable del compromiso que tiene Otay de trabajar con transparencia y responsabilidad.



FOLLOW OTAY WATER ON... / SIGA AL DISTRITO DE AGUA DE OTAY EN...



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT CALL 619.670.2222 OR GO TO WWW.OTAYWATER.GOV