



Commemorating Groundwater Awareness Week 2022

It is an exciting time of the year—the weather is changing, days are becoming longer, and Spring arrives! An additional reason to celebrate, one that is very close to our hearts at the Orange County Water District (OCWD) is National Groundwater Awareness Week, an annual observance established last century (1999) to highlight the responsible development, management, and use of an essential resource - groundwater.

“Spring” of course, is also a joyous water term: “A natural discharge point of subterranean water at the surface of the ground or directly into the bed of a stream, lake or sea.” We generally identify a spring to be a treasured source of clean, clear, fresh water!

The [National Ground Water Association \(NGWA\)](#) and the [Groundwater Foundation](#) announced that Groundwater Awareness Week takes place March 6-12, 2022 and what better way to start the month off than to highlight this critical drinking water resource?

Groundwater is water that soaks into the soil from rain or other precipitation and moves downward to fill cracks and other openings in beds of rocks and sand. According to NGWA, of all the freshwater in the world (excluding polar ice caps), 95% is groundwater! Surface water (lakes and rivers) only make up 3% of total freshwater. Over 44% of our country’s population depends upon groundwater as the primary water source.



Did you know that 2.5 million people in north and central Orange County rely on the local groundwater basin as their primary source of drinking water? The OCWD manages a healthy groundwater basin which provides 77% of the water supply to 19 local cities and water districts, who then pump the water and provide it to your homes and businesses. Located right beneath our feet, the basin holds billions of gallons of water from a variety of sources such as the Santa Ana River, stormwater, imported water from northern California and the Colorado River, and recycled water from the [Groundwater Replenishment System \(GWRS\)](#).

You read that right. We take highly treated wastewater, purify it beyond drinking water standards and inject it back into the basin. About one-third of the water we annually recharge back into the groundwater basin is new water we create through the water recycling process. In 2023, a final expansion to the GWRS will help the facility produce a total of 130 million gallons of water a day – that’s enough to serve 1 million people daily!

In Orange County, our groundwater basin is a special source of water supply that we manage sustainably so there is enough water to both serve your daily needs and remain available for future generations. We not only want to ensure there is ample supply, but that the water is of the highest quality when it is served to you. OCWD's Philip L. Anthony Water Quality Laboratory performs more than 400,000 analyses of approximately 20,000 water samples each year to verify that water supplies in Orange County meet state and federal drinking water standards.

You can help keep our groundwater safe, too. There are many factors that can have a harmful impact on the quality of our local water sources ranging from industrial and household chemicals, oils, and other pollutants to the pesticides we use in our own backyards. By thinking about the little things that you do on a daily basis that could have a negative effect on the environment and local water sources, and making thoughtful choices and changes, you will help us keep our amazing groundwater basin clean, safe, and reliable.

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