



Happy New Year: Local Water Updates

Happy New Year! We hope everyone had an enjoyable holiday season cherishing moments with their families, friends, and loved ones.

Water is our most precious resource, and we must maximize every opportunity to increase local water supplies for the region – whether that’s capturing stormwater to replenish the Orange County Groundwater Basin as water is pumped by local agencies and served to your homes and businesses or creating entirely new water supplies from scratch. Well, not entirely from scratch, but from highly purified wastewater that you help produce by your daily activities.

The Orange County Sanitation District (OC San) operates two wastewater facilities in our service area that treat wastewater from residential, commercial, and industrial sources. This wastewater travels through 396 miles of regional sewers to two treatment plants in Fountain Valley and Huntington Beach where it is treated and sent to the Orange County Water District (OCWD). There, it undergoes a three-step advanced purification process at the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS) to create ultra-pure water that increases local drinking water supplies.



December 12, 2022, marked an incredible milestone as the GWRS can now take 100% of reclaimable wastewater flows from OC San and recycle it into high-quality water that meets all state and federal drinking water standards, thereby maximizing water recycling efforts for the region. It will soon produce at its ultimate capacity of up to 130 million gallons of water a day, enough to serve nearly one million people.

Since 2008, the GWRS has purified highly treated sewer water that would otherwise be discharged into the ocean and has produced nearly 400 billion gallons of water. GWRS water accounts for approximately 35% of the District’s diversified water portfolio and gets pumped to

OCWD's recharge basins where it becomes part of our drinking water supply. It is also sent to injection wells along the coast to protect our basin from seawater intrusion.

Also in December, mother nature gifted southern California with several wet days, bringing in a total of 2.52 inches of rainfall, as measured at OCWD's field headquarters in Anaheim. Maximizing on this opportunity to enhance local water storage, we worked hard to capture as much water as possible as it eventually flows through the District's advanced aquifer recharge system, consisting of more than two dozen recharge basins, and naturally percolates into the Orange County Groundwater Basin, increasing drinking water supplies for 2.5 million people in the region.

While we're thankful for the rain we receive, it's not nearly enough to meet our water needs and that's why Orange County has always looked at other ways to increase local water supplies. For OCWD, this means sustainably managing the groundwater basin by protecting supplies and creating new ones. We've never taken our foot off the pedal and we're not stopping now. There's more we can do with new science, technologies and infrastructure that will protect water quality, maximize operations, and maintain a reliable water supply for our communities today and in the future.

We encourage you to stay engaged in local water issues as we navigate the exciting year ahead of us. Sign up for a [GWRS tour](#), catch one of our [water webinars](#), or visit our [website](#) for more information.

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