



Thankful for Local Water Resources

'Tis the season of giving thanks, and in our industry, we are thankful for a safe, reliable water supply. We are fortunate that California prioritizes the safety and delivery of high-quality water to our communities, and we take that mission to heart in Orange County.

In north and central Orange County, water comes primarily from the Orange County Groundwater Basin. Managed by the Orange County Water District (OCWD), this basin spans more than 300 square miles and is pumped by 19 cities and local water retailers, including the City of Fullerton, who serve it to a collective 2.5 million people.

The basin provides up to 85% of the region's water supply, with the other 15% being supplemented by imported water from northern California and the Colorado River. The basin is a carefully managed resource ensuring that as water is pumped out, water is replenished back in, resulting in a constant supply that flows to your homes, schools, and businesses.



The groundwater basin stores water from a variety of sources – Santa Ana River water, intermittent stormwater, natural rainfall, imported water, and recycled water produced by the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS), the world's largest water reuse facility located on OCWD's campus in Fountain Valley.

Due to decades of sound planning and investments in infrastructure, OCWD has more than doubled the basin's annual output. This means we are increasing local water supplies and continuing to find new and innovative ways to replenish the basin through projects like the GWRS, which earlier this year completed its final expansion. With the facility built-out to its capacity, it can now recycle 100% of local wastewater flows and produce up to 130 million gallons of high-quality water a day – enough to serve nearly one million people.

OCWD captures stormwater behind Prado Dam through a long-standing partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The District has been working cooperatively with the Corps for decades to carefully store water behind the dam. This water can be held back safely and strategically released at rates that can be captured through the District's recharge system. All this water eventually percolates into the groundwater basin and gets pumped out and served to you.

Lastly, protecting our water supplies is our utmost priority and we work hard 24/7/365 to make sure we provide high-quality water that meets all state and federal drinking water standards. This is done through rigorous water quality testing programs, state-of-the-art technology and lab analysis, and proactive monitoring to address any potential issues or emerging concern or changes in regulatory standards.



This would not be possible without our amazing partners including Orange County residents and businesses and the many public and private entities who collaborate with us to enhance water supply for the region. From making smart water choices to supporting necessary water infrastructure investments to the retailers who distribute water—we all play an important part in making sure we have a reliable, high-quality water supply.

Let's all be thankful for the many programs we have in place that protect and increase our local drinking water supplies. Wishing you a joyful holiday season ahead!

In collaboration with Orange County Water District staff, this article was provided by Orange County Water District Director Bruce Whitaker, who represents Division 10, which covers the city of Fullerton. Contact Director Whitaker at BWWhitaker@live.com.