

# Water Matters



## Local Public and Private Water Purveyors Key to Region's Past and Future

With two major rivers and a generous groundwater basin, the Sacramento region is home to thriving communities and businesses. Water has played a key role in that prosperity, supporting everything from fertile farmlands to world-class recreation to high-tech industries.

Local water purveyors have been there at every important turn, developing groundwater wells and surface water supplies, building delivery systems and planning for the future. From early irrigation districts to multi-purpose municipal water districts, local water suppliers have helped manage the water resources that make the Sacramento region so livable.

There are more than 20 water purveyors serving the region today, providing an array of services from groundwater management to flood control to wastewater treatment.

Many trace their history back to the early 20th century, when local residents banded together to form irrigation districts to provide water to orchards and fields that dotted the area. Established under a relatively new state law, irrigation districts moved quickly to issue

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## Look What's New!

Check out the new design of SSWD's biannual newsletter. Along with the fresh title of *Water Matters*, formally *Water Talk*, is a brand new design. You will still find helpful articles packed with useful information, services available and upcoming events. Explore *Water Matters* today! 💧

## Public Water Purveyors

### What is a Special District?

Sacramento Suburban Water District (SSWD) is a special district, which is a local government agency created by citizens or local elected officials that provides a specific public service to a particular area. State law provides for the formation of special districts to meet common needs by providing services such as water, sewer, trash collection, fire protection, and parks and recreation. Elected officials who live within the community govern these districts. SSWD has five elected directors who represent a specific division within the District's service area.

Unlike cities or counties, special districts have a focused purpose. Though some have multiple functions, the vast majority of California's 3,400

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## Brown Envelope is Green

SSWD continues to expand on implementing its Sustainability Policy. Starting the end of October, District statements will be mailed in 100% recycled brown envelopes. So watch for a brown envelope coming with your November statement. Just one more way SSWD conducts its business with the environment in mind. It's good to be green with a brown envelope. 💧

## Have You Ever Seen Cloudy Drinking Water?



Drinking water sometimes can look cloudy when first taken from a faucet and

then clears up. The cloudiness could be caused by tiny air bubbles in the water similar to the gas bubbles in beer and carbonated soft drinks. After a short period of time, the bubbles rise to the top and disappear. 💧

(Source: *Plain Talk About Drinking Water* by Dr. James M. Symons)

## Seasonal Changes | Water with the Weather

As warm afternoons give way to cool evenings and brisk mornings, it reminds us to start making adjustments for the fall season. One very important adjustment is your outdoor watering schedule. Cooler temperatures means less water is needed for lawns and landscapes. Autumn outdoor watering changes include the following:

- Adjust irrigation timers to gradually reduce outdoor watering frequency. As the season changes, reset your timers to water two days or less per week.
- When watering manual, do not water more than two days per week. Use a timer to help you remember when to turn off the water.
- Be sure to turn your irrigation off when it's raining. Installing a rain sensor will turn your system off automatically.
- Renters, if you're not responsible for the irrigation, remind the property owner or landlord to make a seasonal adjustment.



Thank you for your water conservation efforts. Every drop counts! 💧



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special districts perform a single function such as water, wastewater treatment or fire protection.

Special districts localize the costs and benefits of public services. They allow local citizens to obtain the services they want at a price they are willing to pay.

A 2002 report by the California State Senate's Local Government Committee concluded that special districts have three distinct advantages:

- They can tailor services to citizen demand
- They can link costs to benefits
- They are responsive to their constituents

California special districts, such as SSWD, have earned a reputation as reliable local agencies capable of meeting the needs of their communities and planning for the future. More information on special districts is available at [csda.net](http://csda.net). 💧



## Did You Know...

Pet waste contains bacteria that can harm the environment and humans. Pet waste left on lawns, trails and sidewalks will wash into the storm drain system and into our local creeks and rivers. Here's what you can do:

- When walking your dog, always carry a plastic bag and pick up after your pet.
- Many local parks have pet waste stations that provide free plastic bags designed for pet waste.
- Dispose of pet waste in the trash.
- Never wash pet waste into a storm drain.

Thank you for being a responsible pet owner and helping keep our waterways clean. 💧

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## Contact SSWD

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bonds to acquire existing ditch companies and distribution systems and expand them as needed.

As the area grew in population, the districts evolved with the changing times. By the 1960s and '70s, urban water supply, including fire protection for structures, had replaced irrigation as the primary purpose for many water agencies, and their names were changed to reflect that fact. Some districts merged together, while other specialized in specific services and functions.

Though the majority of local water suppliers are public purveyors, some are private companies. All must comply with safe drinking water regulations and other laws to protect public health and the environment. Public water purveyors are governed by locally elected boards of directors, while private companies are regulated by the California Public Utilities

Commission, which must review and approve any rate increases to ensure that customers receive high quality water and wastewater service at a fair price. (See "Public Water Purveyors" on page 1.)

Whether public or private, regional cooperation has become a major focus for local water suppliers, mostly notably with the signing of the Water Forum Agreement, a landmark accord signed by 40 stakeholder organizations in April 2000 after six years of negotiations. The agreement is aimed at securing a reliable water supply for the region through the year 2030.

The agreement paved the way for the Regional Water Authority, the Sacramento Groundwater Authority and other partnerships aimed at stretching existing water supplies, protecting water sources and the environment, and providing for reliable and affordable water supplies in the future. 💧

## Can We Talk? | Speakers Bureau

Water is always in the news – especially in California. SSWD staff welcomes the opportunity to discuss current water issues with neighborhood associations, civic organizations, schools, clubs and community groups.



At your request, SSWD can provide a speaker to address your group on a variety of topics from water conservation to water meters.

Call Jan Gentry at 679.3974 to arrange for an SSWD speaker at your next meeting or function. This service is complementary. 💧



## Community Outreach Days

Come talk with staff as SSWD participates at these local events:

### Carmichael Founder's Day

**Saturday, September 25, 2010**  
 11:00 am to 3:00 pm  
 Carmichael Park  
 5750 Grant Avenue, Carmichael

### North Highlands Jubilee

**Saturday, October 16, 2010**  
 11:00 am to 3:00 pm  
 Freedom Park  
 (Freedom Park Drive near Watt Avenue)  
 North Highlands



Periodically check your bill insert (available online under "Publications") and the "Calendar of Events" at [sswd.org](http://sswd.org) for upcoming dates and locations of future Community Outreach Days. 💧



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