

# THE PIPELINE

News from the Ventura County Public Works Agency

April 2014

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**From the  
Director's  
Desk**

**Jeff Pratt,**  
Public Works  
Agency Director



Dear Colleagues,

It's easy to get a little jaded about water conservation. However, the stark reality is that our water resources are limited. Don't think what you do doesn't matter. It does.

This month's issue reminds us that it's the responsibility of each and every one of us to do our part to conserve water. Small adjustments can have a big impact. The way we use water today affects how much will be available for our future.

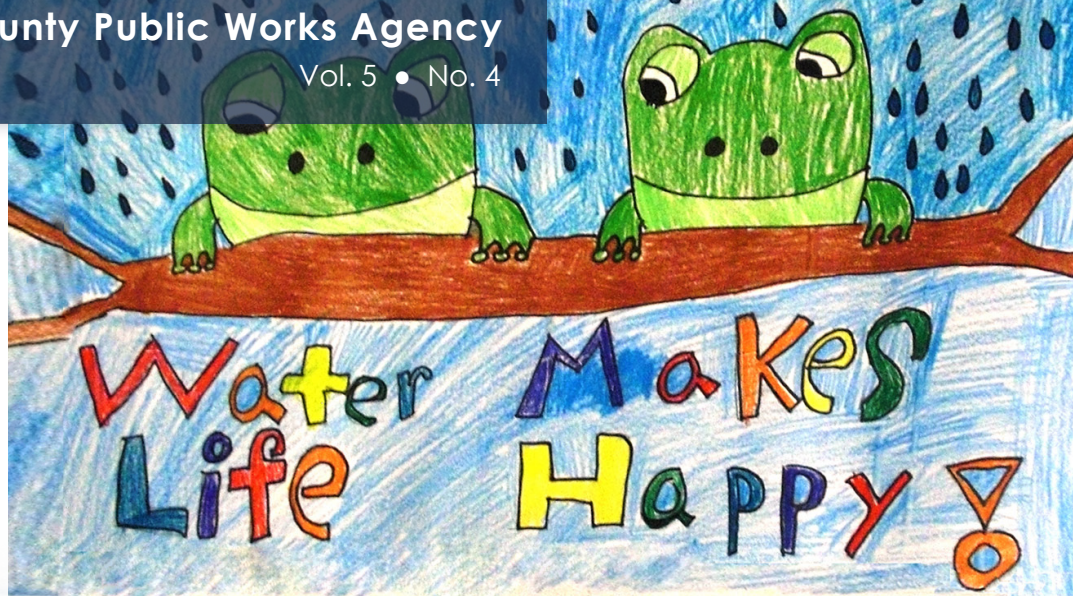
As public works professionals, we may think we know all about wise water use, but we can all do better. As the drought continues, so does the need to use this resource differently than we did in the past. Learn more in this issue.

If you don't know your green thumb from the rest of your fingers, then the article on xeriscaping is one you won't want to miss.

Children have a unique way of getting right to the point. Their imaginative artwork tells it all with this year's poster contest theme, Water is Life.

All the Best,

Jeff Pratt  
Director



*Drawing by Victoria Gentry*

## Water is Life

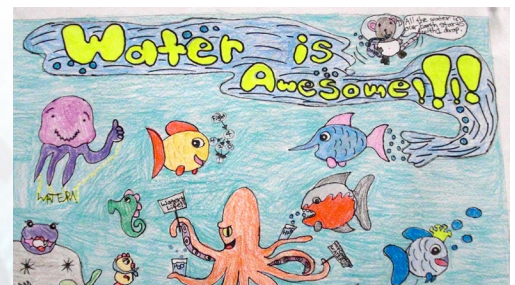
### Moorpark Students Win Water Awareness Poster Contest

**T**his month we are proud to share inspiring works of art from our local youth that remind us all of the importance of water conservation. Each year, Ventura County Public Works Agency's Water and Sanitation Department, in conjunction with Calleguas Municipal Water District and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, sponsor a Water Awareness Poster Contest, for which students from all over Southern California submit posters reflecting a "Water is Life" theme.

Fourth-grade students Victoria Gentry and Sol Chavez of Mountain Meadows Elementary School in Moorpark, California, were selected as the 2013 winners. Victoria was honored in front of student artists, teachers,

and parents for her creative poster titled, "Water Makes Life Happy," and her poster was chosen to be featured in the 2014 Metropolitan Water Awareness Calendar. Sol is the recipient of the Department's Perpetual Water Awareness Trophy for her colorful poster titled, "Water is Awesome!!!" Her trophy will be on display at the school until a winner is chosen next year.

We hope this inspires each of you to learn more about how you can do your part to conserve and preserve our water!



*Drawing by Sol Chavez*





*with Susan Pan,*  
P.E., Manager of the Planning, Design and  
Construction–Water and Sanitation Department



**I**n this issue we are talking with Susan Pan, P.E., the Manager of the Planning, Design and Construction–Water and Sanitation Department, to take an in-depth look at the desalination project as well as other innovative ways to maximize our resources during the current drought. Join us as we learn more about recycled water, desalination, and the new resource and education office/lab to help our community understand the drought's impact on the environment, water rates, and conservation efforts.

**Q** What are the current water supply conditions in Ventura County? How does this compare to drought conditions in the past?

**A** Ventura County Waterworks District No. 1 for the Moorpark area receives about 69% of its water supplies from Sierra Northern California via the State Water Project, 28% from local groundwater wells, and 3% from recycled water. We are in the third year of drought, and the amount of precipitation we received this year thus far is near the historical driest record. The state's first snowpack survey of 2014 registered about 20% of average water content, or a

mere 7% of average through April, which typically marks the peak of the snow season. Storage levels in key State Water Project reservoirs started the year at a precariously low level: Lake Oroville is at 36% of capacity and San Luis Reservoir is at 31% of capacity. In January of this year, Governor Brown declared that our state is in a drought emergency. The California State Department of Water Resources recently announced that there will be unprecedented zero percent allocation for Southern California, including Ventura County, in 2014. We are essentially relying on approximately 12 months of water supply stored in the various reservoirs in Southern California.

**Q** Can local farmers and communities use recycled water to water their crops and landscape? How will this help conserve our water supplies and save costs?

**A** During this drought emergency, water conservation and maximized utilization of local water resources will be the key management strategy. Local farmers as well as large landscape water users can use recycled water for crop and landscape irrigation. Recycled water is treated wastewater and is permitted under State laws Title 22 for agricultural and

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landscape irrigation. Ventura County Waterworks District No. 1 is designing the Recycled Water Phase IV project, which will extend our recycled water-distribution system to irrigate the Rustic Canyon golf course and the common landscape areas along the water line route in the City of Moorpark and the Moorpark Country Club Estate. The project will provide about 450 acre feet per year of local water supply, and the recycled water cost is about 75% of the potable water cost. An average family uses about 0.5 acre feet of water per year. We are also expanding the Piru Wastewater Treatment Plant to provide recycled water to the local farming community. It will provide about 250 acre feet per year of local water supply.

**Q** Are there any local farmers who are participating in using the recycled water? Are there certain types of crops that will thrive better with recycled water?

**A** We currently have three large citrus growers in Moorpark participating in using the recycled water. We continue to work on the public outreach program and to promote recycled water use. Recycled water contains nutrients, which is good for plant growth. While our recycled water meets the state requirements for unrestricted recycled water use, the salt level in our recycled water makes it more suitable for higher salt-tolerant plants such as citrus trees and row crops than lower salt-tolerant plants such as avocado trees.

**Q** We have been hearing a lot lately about the importance of desalination plants in California communities. Can you share with us how big of an impact the desalination plant in Moorpark will have on local water supplies and rates?

**A** The groundwater in the Moorpark area is relatively high in salt concentration and is

causing problems with the agricultural growers as well as the residential users. The planned Moorpark brackish desalination plant will be able to remove salt from the pumped local groundwater and produce high quality water for human consumption and agricultural use. It will also be able to improve the groundwater quality and allow the groundwater aquifer be recharged with fresh rainfall runoff. If the project is approved by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, the planned facility will be able to provide up to 5,000 acre feet per year of local water supply.

**Q** Can you share with us what will be featured in the new resource and education office/lab?

**A** We are excited about starting construction of the new office/laboratory building at the Moorpark Wastewater Treatment Plant this summer. The building is designed to meet LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Gold certification. The solar photovoltaic panels mounted on the building roof top can generate all of the electricity used by the building, which makes the building energy-net-zero or doesn't require any electricity from the Edison company. There will be dual plumbing systems; the landscape and the toilets will use recycled water and the rest of the plumbing will use potable water. The landscape is designed to demonstrate that recycled water can be used to irrigate varieties of flowers, shrubs, and fruit trees. While the building is mainly for the office and laboratory, it will also be a resource and education center. We understand the importance of public education regarding recycled water: to learn about how wastewater is treated and that it is safe to be recycled and reused. We welcome schools and the public to take tours of our treatment plant facilities and to watch the educational videos about the treatment processes and the beneficial recycled water use.





# The Beauty of Xeriscaping



## Drought. Fog. Hot, dry winds.

Living in Ventura, we experience a wide range of weather conditions but, no matter what, rain always seems to be at a minimum. So how can we still have beautiful gardens without a lot of watering? The answer is xeriscaping.

Xeriscaping is often a misunderstood word, creating a vision of prickly cacti in a desert-like landscape. But nothing could be further from the truth. To xeriscape simply means to landscape with slow-growing, drought-tolerant plants to conserve water and to reduce yard trimmings. This ultimately means less yard work. Are you in yet?

## Here are some basic tips to help you create a xeriscape you'll love.

- 💧 Do your research. Check to see which drought-tolerant plants work best in your climate zone—there are many beautiful specimens to choose from.
- 💧 Design a landscape plan that conserves water. Group plants together with similar moisture needs, eliminating the potential for over watering.
- 💧 Use organic soil amendments.
- 💧 Apply mulches to reduce water evaporation and prevent erosion.
- 💧 Experiment with different turf areas. Today there are many attractive ground-cover options that can enhance your garden's beauty. You don't have to eliminate your lawn altogether, but grass is an extremely thirsty plant. Use it sparingly.
- 💧 Choose the correct watering system. A drip system can help reduce over watering. Choose appropriate times of the day to water and be sure to check for water leaks.

### **xe·ri·scape**

'zi(ə)rə,skāp,'zerə-/

verb

xeriscaping

1. landscape (an area) in a style which requires little or no irrigation.

Indigenous plants are naturally accustomed to local climates so they make great choices for xeriscaping. But you're certainly not limited to planting only California natives. Many other "Mediterranean" climates like Southern Europe, North Africa, South Africa, Western Asia, and Australia have colorful drought-tolerant plants native to their regions. They also work beautifully here.

## 6 reasons to switch to a xeriscape garden

1 Conserves water and lowers water bills

2 Provides lots of attractive planting options

3 Presents minimal pest & disease problems

4 Thrives with little fertilization

5 Requires low pruning and maintenance

6 Saves valuable landfill space



# use **WATER WISELY!**

Here are a few **EASY** tips to **REDUCE WATER USE....**

There are **MANY WAYS** you can do your part to **CONSERVE WATER**, our most precious natural resource.

**DID YOU KNOW** the 2 biggest users of water in most homes are **LANDSCAPE IRRIGATION & TOILETS?**

**DID YOU KNOW** the average Californian uses **196 GALLONS OF WATER PER DAY?**



Use energy-efficient washers and dryers & wash only full loads



Limit showers to five minutes & install a low-flow shower head



Use a broom, not the hose to clean patios, driveways, and sidewalks



Use water from a bucket to wash your car & save the hose for rinsing



Run the dishwasher only when full & soak dishes before washing them



Cultivate plants that thrive in semi-arid climates & use mulch



Install drip irrigation



Fix leaking faucets, pipes, hoses, toilets, etc.



Do not use the toilet for trash disposal



Use water-saving nozzles



Water the lawn & garden in the early morning or evening



Turn off the water while shaving, washing & brushing your teeth



## Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

April 25, 2014 at 10:00 am

*Calleguas Creek Project*

164 Via Rosal in Camarillo, CA

Come out to celebrate the completion of Calleguas Creek Project.

## National Public Works Week Recognition Day

Tuesday, May 20th 8:30 am-2:00 pm

Hall of Administration at the Government Center

**JOIN US** for our Open House featuring:

- Coffee, Cookies & Popcorn
- Department Display Booths
- Equipment Show and Tell
- Recyclable Arts and Crafts
- Contest Giveaways

**DON'T MISS OUR UPCOMING EVENTS!**



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