Million Dollar Grant Provides Funding for Western’s Groundwater Storage Project

Inland Empire one step closer to a local, sustainable water supply as drought continues

Riverside, Calif. – A $1 million grant from the Bureau of Reclamation’s WaterSMART program was recently awarded to fund the Arlington Basin water quality improvement project. This funding moves the Inland Empire one step closer to a local, sustainable water supply as the drought continues to plague California.

“This week, we had to curtail our customers’ outdoor water use by 30 percent due to the state mandated water restrictions, so the $1 million grant for the Arlington Basin project, which provides local water for our customers, is needed now more than ever,” said Western Municipal Water District’s General Manager John Rossi. “This project, as well as additional regional reliability projects, will put us on track to reduce the amount of water we receive from imported, uncertain sources hundreds of miles away.”

The grant was awarded this week and will go towards funding a portion of the planned improvement project. The project includes the construction of a groundwater recharge basin in the Arlington Basin, which is located in the western area of Riverside near the 91 Freeway heading toward La Sierra, and a new production well in the western portion of the basin. Once the project is complete, groundwater quality will improve as well as the water supply availability in the basin.

Recharging the basin provides a local, reliable source of groundwater for production at Western’s Arlington Desalter. The desalter treats the basin’s groundwater and currently produces nearly 5,400 acre-feet – or 1.8 billion gallons – of drinking water per year for the communities of Norco and Corona. This project will allow the desalter to produce an additional 1,800 acre-feet per year while continuing to sustain groundwater levels in the basin. One acre-foot of water provides enough water annually for approximately two average-size households.

Western continues to manage ratepayer funds prudently by applying for grants to assist with the cost of project. To date, 30 percent of the $10 million project has been covered through $3 million in matching grant funds from local, state and federal agencies. The project is anticipated to begin construction in late 2015.

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Western Municipal Water District provides water supply, wastewater disposal and water resource management to the public in a safe, reliable, environmentally sensitive and financially responsible manner.