Diversion of Wastewater is Another Step Toward Drought-proofing the Region

Western and City of Riverside collaborate to increase recycled water flows

Riverside, CA – Optimizing the use of local water resources in the upper Santa Ana Watershed was the emphasis for a unique project that will divert wastewater, roughly 500,000 gallons a day, from the Orangecrest area for irrigation reuse. At last night’s Riverside City Council Meeting, the Western/Riverside Wastewater Diversion Project was approved unanimously.

“This project, which creates more recycled water, helps drought-proof the region and saves the ratepayers on their bills, is a big benefit for the community,” explained Western’s General Manager John Rossi. He further explained that the project reduces sewer rate pressure on city of Riverside residents that receive sewer service from Western; it will also give the city of Riverside roughly $70,000 per year of additional revenue.

City of Riverside Public Works Director Kris Martinez, was equally excited about this collaborative effort. “Without the project, locally generated wastewater is treated and released into the Santa Ana River, benefitting downstream users without compensation,” she said, adding that the diversion to Western is temporary until the city of Riverside has the ability to utilize the water to meet recycled water demands, likely a few years away.

Project benefits of approximately $300,000 will be shared equally between two agencies. The project helps to offset costs by as much as four percent for Western wastewater customers.

The wastewater will be diverted from Orangecrest neighborhoods to the Western Water Recycling Facility, which is located near the March Air Reserve Base off of the I-215 Freeway. The water reuse product from the facility is used by the Riverside National Cemetery and Archie Old Golf Course along with other entities, such as local growers, schools and parks.

Western has been aggressively working to increase flows into the facility after losing a large wastewater contributor in 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.