

# Water Conservation

A WAY OF LIFE IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

## FACT SHEET

The Water Authority is a public agency serving the San Diego region as a wholesale supplier of water. The Water Authority works through its 23 member agencies to provide a safe, reliable water supply to support the region's \$142 billion economy and the quality of life of 3 million residents.

### Overview

Conservation is a way of life in the San Diego region, due to a combination of leadership from the San Diego County Water Authority, its 23 member agencies, and commitment from area residents and businesses. Urban per capita water use is actually lower than it was in 1990. That is when the Water Authority and other water agencies first put in place conservation Best Management Practices, or BMPs, under a statewide program to reduce urban water use. Since then, the Water Authority has been recognized as an aggressive, innovative leader in conservation for developing and implementing effective policies and programs.

### Regional Water Use Down

Between fiscal 1990 and fiscal 2004, the population in the Water Authority's service area grew by 19 percent. Yet water use in 2004, a year with lower than normal rainfall, only increased by 11 percent. These water savings can be attributed to water conservation programs managed by the Water Authority and its member agencies, coupled with San Diegans' strong commitment to water conservation. In fiscal 2004,

the Water Authority's conservation programs saved more than 42,200 acre-feet. One acre-foot is equal to about 326,000 gallons of water, the amount of water used by two typical households in a year.

Water conservation measures are expected to reduce total urban demands by approximately 10 percent in 2020, with an estimated savings of 93,200 acre-feet of water a year.

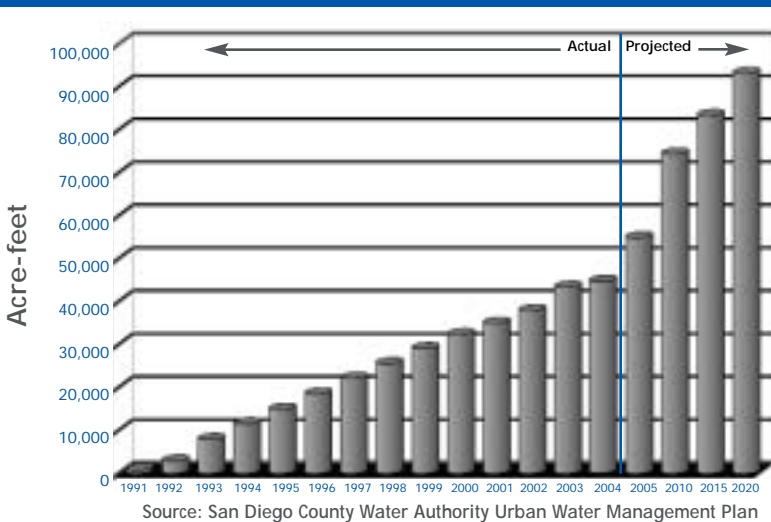
### Conservation Programs Key

The Water Authority has conceived, developed and administered several major urban and agricultural water conservation programs. The agency invests more than \$1 million each year in conservation programs. Water conservation programs operated by the Water Authority and its member agencies have saved approximately 322,000 acre-feet over the past 14 years.

These programs include:

- an ultra-low-flush toilet (ULFT) incentive program, which in the past 14 years installed more than 487,900 ULFTs in San Diego County homes;
- a water-saving showerheads incentive program that installed more than 600,000 water-saving showerheads over that same 14-year period;
- a residential high-efficiency clothes washer incentive program, one of the Water Authority's newest and most innovative strategies. More than 33,200 high-efficiency clothes washers that use 40 percent less water and 55 percent less energy have been installed;
- a commercial-industrial-institutional hardware incentive program that has saved approximately 7,200 acre-feet of water through the installation of plumbing and cooling fixtures, and coin-operated high-efficiency clothes washers in business establishments;
- an agricultural audit program through which the Water Authority works with agricultural

### CONSERVATION SAVINGS



users (who are already among the most efficient in the country) to increase crop production while maintaining highly efficient irrigation standards;

- a special voucher program resulting in the installation of 200 waterless urinals, including 54 at the San Diego Zoo and the San Diego Wild Animal Park. These urinals will save 40,000 to 50,000 gallons of water per year, per urinal;



Drip irrigation is a great way to save water and reduce urban runoff.

- special programs that provide incentives. These include X-ray film water recirculating systems, multiloop coin-operated clothes washers, dual-flush toilets, weather-based irrigation controllers, irrigation system efficiency upgrades and installation of artificial turf on public sports fields; and

- assistance to member agencies in developing a new water budget program, for irrigation-only accounts, that identifies the amount of water

actually needed based on size and local weather conditions at a site.

### Conservation is a Way of Life

The Water Authority has also developed a comprehensive school education program that presents the Water Authority's conservation message to more than 100,000 area students and teachers each year.

The Water Authority's school education programs include:

- an innovative, captivating magic show that teaches more than 50,000 elementary school students each year about local water resources and the need to conserve water;
- classroom presentations that each year reach more than 10,000 third-, fourth- and fifth-grade students throughout the county;
- xeriscape gardening workshops for teachers at the Water Conservation Garden, where they learn about low-water-use gardening and how to set up a garden in their schools; and

- development and sponsorship of the award-winning Splash Science Mobile Lab (operated in partnership with the San Diego County Office of Education). The Splash Lab is a fully staffed mobile science unit that brings a "field trip" to more than 15,000 elementary students throughout the county each year.

### Recognized as Industry Leader

The Water Authority maintains a long-standing commitment to implementing innovative water conservation measures throughout the region and the state that make it a recognized leader of the water industry.

The Water Authority:

- is an original member of a coalition of agencies that developed the BMPs for urban water management;
- received the 2000 California Urban Water Conservation Council Excellence Award for Statewide/Institutional Innovations; and
- received the 2001 Governor's Environmental and Economic Leadership Award for energy conservation with its high-efficiency coin-operated clothes washer program.

The Water Authority also sponsored a variety of water conservation bills and legislation including:

- AB 1561 (Kelley) signed into law in 2002, setting new efficiency standards for residential clothes washers sold in California;
- AB 2717 (Laird) signed into law in 2004, sets a process to identify new opportunities for urban landscape conservation;
- AB 2470 (Kehoe) signed into law in 2004, under which the real estate industry provides information on local water conservation programs to prospective property buyers; and
- AB 2572 (Kehoe) signed into law in 2004, requiring urban water suppliers to install, by Jan. 1, 2025, water meters on all remaining unmetered service connections in the state. The bill requires a supplier to charge each customer for actual water deliveries recorded by all existing meters (volumetric pricing) by 2010.



San Diego County  
Water Authority

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