



El Toro Water District · Winter 2023

# WATER VIEWS

SERVING THE PUBLIC, RESPECTING THE ENVIRONMENT



Department of Water Resources engineers take measurements in a Jan. 3 snow survey in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

## WINTER STORMS HELPED, BUT WE'RE NOT OUT OF THE DROUGHT YET

Winter storms brought some welcome relief to El Toro Water District's service area and all of California. Current drought conditions have improved from the extreme and exceptional conditions, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. However, one wet winter cannot make up for the last three years of record dry conditions.

### Quick Facts

- ETWD relies 100% on imported water for drinking water. Years of drought have impacted our water supplies from the California State Water Project and the Colorado River.
- After historic dry conditions caused California to deplete the state's reservoirs, key state and federal water reservoirs are beginning to fill back up.
- Statewide, the snowpack rose to 205% of average as of February 1, 2023.
- Snowpack on the Colorado River is above average, and the snowmelt will increase the reservoir levels of Lake Mead and Lake Powell, but it will not make up for the decades of drought that region has been facing. The Colorado River is still in a shortage and is projected to be in a shortage for at least the next five years.
- ETWD's recycled water program has saved over 3 billion gallons of drinking water that would have been used to irrigate landscape.
- Continued infrastructure investments will be important to increase local supply. ETWD continues to evaluate opportunities like recycled water expansion projects, advanced water treatment and direct potable water reuse.



Low water conditions persist at California reservoirs, including Lake Oroville, shown here on Jan. 12.

### How You Can Help

We all need to continue to use water as efficiently as possible while adapting to the changing climate and preparing for future dry seasons.

## DISTRICT EARNS EXCELLENCE IN FINANCIAL REPORTING AWARD

The District is committed to fiscal responsibility and transparency to our community. For the sixth consecutive year, we earned the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting – a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada.

Current financial information is always available to our customers at [etwd.com/governance/financial-statements](http://etwd.com/governance/financial-statements).



AWARD WINNER  
Certificate of Achievement  
for Excellence in Financial  
Reporting

## EL TORO WATER DISTRICT

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# CONVENIENT ONLINE BILL PAY

El Toro Water District's online bill pay system allows you to pay your bill and access these great features 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Visit [etwd.com](http://etwd.com) and select "View/Pay Your Bill" on the left-hand side to learn more. First-time users will need to set up a username and password to access and use the new system. Quick pay will be available to those who just want to pay their bill without logging in.



**VIEW HISTORY AND USAGE**



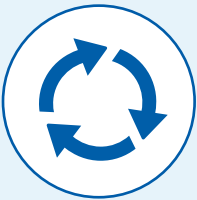
**MAKE PAYMENTS ONLINE CONVENIENTLY AND SECURELY**



**START, STOP, TRANSFER SERVICE OR SERVICE CALL**



**PAY MULTIPLE ACCOUNTS AND SERVICE LOCATIONS**



**SIGN UP FOR AUTOMATIC PAYMENTS**



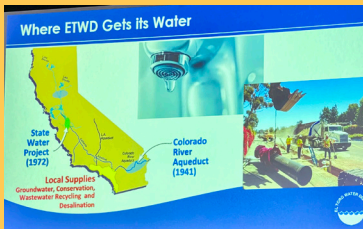
**MANAGE YOUR ACCOUNT, PHONE NUMBERS, ADDRESSES AND BILL PREFERENCES**



For additional information, please visit [etwd.com](http://etwd.com) and select "View/Pay Your Bill" on the left-hand side.

Customer Service is also available to answer questions at **(949) 837-0660**.

*\*Convenience fee applies to all payments made through the ETWD payment portal and by phone.*



## CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

District staff spoke with community members to share information about ETWD and provide tips for using water wisely at several recent local events, including:

- Water Recycling Plant tour for the Laguna Woods Village Third Mutual Board of Directors
- H2O for HOAs workshop
- City of Lake Forest Leadership Academy Utilities Night
- South County Disaster Preparedness Expo
- Annual Lake Forest Elf Yourself 5K
- ETWD staff and retirees also donated holiday gifts, including toys and comfort items, to Miracles for Kids.



# WINTER LANDSCAPE CHECKUP

For a full list of available residential and commercial rebates, visit [etwd.com/conservation/water-conservation-shortage-stages](http://etwd.com/conservation/water-conservation-shortage-stages).

For questions, please call Customer Service at (949) 837-0660 or email [district@etwd.com](mailto:district@etwd.com).

## Keep your landscape healthy and save water



Wet winter weather means you can turn off your irrigation system and only water as needed.



Take a few minutes to inspect your irrigation system for leaks, broken sprinkler heads or damaged drip lines.



Consider investing in a “smart” controller that will automatically calculate how much water you need for each watering session.



Adjust your sprinkler heads to ensure water doesn't run off your property.



Take advantage of residential rebates for qualifying devices and upgrades while they last! Here are just a few of the available options:

<b>Soil Moisture Sensor Controller</b>	<b>Up to \$150</b>
<b>Rotating Sprinkler Nozzles</b>	<b>Up to \$2 per nozzle*</b>
<b>Drip Irrigation</b>	<b>\$0.75 sq. ft. up to 5,000 sq. ft.*</b>
<b>Rain Barrels and Cisterns</b>	<b>Up to \$50 per rain barrel and \$250 – \$350 per cistern*</b>
<b>Turf Removal</b>	<b>\$4 sq. ft. up to 5,000 sq. ft. annual maximum*</b>

\* Please note that limits and restrictions apply.



## BEHIND THE SCENES AT ETWD

### Introducing Steve Wingen

Please meet Steve Wingen, ETWD's Cross-Connection Control Specialist. He manages the District's Backflow Prevention Program, as well as the Recycled Water System's Rules and Regulations as they pertain to your HOA and public recycled water use throughout the distribution system.

A permit issued by the State Water Resources Control Board and the County of Orange Department of Environmental Health gives ETWD the ability to distribute recycled water to dedicated irrigation systems to certain areas in the District. With that permit comes regulatory requirements the District must follow. Physical inspections of the coverage areas being one of them.

You might see Steve on one of the many inspections he does at or around your residence. Steve inspects for violations of unauthorized use and/or connections. These can include direct connection by a resident's property to the HOA commercial recycled water irrigation system. Another may be a residential built irrigation system set up within or adjacent to the HOA commercial recycled water irrigation system.

Recycled water in ETWD is designated for dedicated irrigation systems only. Therefore, inspections are made to ensure that potable drinking water and dedicated irrigation systems are not cross-connected. Tests, which include shutting off one or both of these systems, occur routinely.

At times during the inspections, access to more private areas, such as patios and courtyards, is needed to verify completely all is in order. Please stop to say hi if you see Steve on an inspection. Steve has over 30 years of experience at ETWD and is happy to answer any water related questions!





## KEEP WIPES OUT OF THE PIPES

Follow this simple rule to keep your system reliable and protect your home and our community:

 **ONLY FLUSH THE THREE P'S – PEE, POOP AND (TOILET) PAPER.**

Wipes are convenient, but unfortunately, they are not flushable – even if they are labeled “flushable” or “disposable”! Flushing wet wipes, such as baby wipes, surface cleaning wipes, cosmetic wipes, etc. down the toilet creates nasty clogs and fatbergs (collections of grease and debris floating in the wastewater) that can cause sewer system backups and spills that can damage your home and our environment.

WHAT TO FLUSH: THE 3 P'S



PEE



POOP



PAPER



WIPES



ETWD Public Affairs Manager Sherri Seitz accepts the Award of Excellence from OCPRSA President Patricia Conover on behalf of ETWD at the PROTOS Awards ceremony on Oct. 6, 2022.

## ETWD EARNS COMMUNICATIONS AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

ETWD earned an Award of Excellence from the Public Relations Society of America's Orange County Chapter (OCPRSA) for our Water Views customer newsletter. OCPRSA named ETWD a winner in its annual PROTOS Awards competition, which highlights the greatest standards of communications practices by showcasing the strategy, creativity and work from agencies and brands from nearly every industry in the region.

The ETWD Water Views newsletter is part of ETWD's ongoing commitment to customer outreach and transparency. We enjoy using the newsletter to keep our customers updated and provide helpful information and tips. Thank you for reading ETWD Water Views!

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Mike Gaskins

### VICE PRESIDENT

Jose Vergara

### DIRECTOR

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### GENERAL MANAGER

Dennis P. Cafferty

The Board of Directors meeting takes place on the fourth Thursday of the month, and the Engineering and Finance Committee meets on the Monday before the Board of Directors meeting at 7:30 a.m. in person and via Zoom teleconference.

We encourage you to join us. Meeting agendas are posted on our website and include teleconference access and instructions. Learn more: [etwd.com/governance/meetings-agendas-minutes](https://etwd.com/governance/meetings-agendas-minutes)

ETWD delivers drinking water, recycled water and wastewater services to customers in the City of Laguna Woods and portions of the cities of Lake Forest, Mission Viejo, Laguna Hills and Aliso Viejo

Have questions? Call us at (949) 837-7050 or email us at [district@etwd.com](mailto:district@etwd.com).