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WaterLines

March 2011

www.MNWD.com

Spring Forward to Water Efficiency

As winter begins its transition to spring, the weather will soon become warmer and our water habits will start to change. It's natural for Moulton Niguel Water District customers to use more water in the warm spring and summer months than during winter and fall, but it remains critical all year long to use only the water you need, because our region doesn't have any water to waste.



MNWD customers use more water during spring and summer, but efficiency remains critical year-round.

Spring is the perfect time each year to review your watering practices, and these three simple steps can help you become more efficient with your water use:

1. Tune-up your sprinklers

Make sure your timer is set to only water three days per week, since the default setting typically waters plants more than they need. Also, replace any broken sprinkler heads and adjust the spray so there is no overlap and to avoid watering your patio or sidewalk. It's also a good time to make sure your timer's back-up batteries are in working order, so your settings remain in place if there's a power outage.

2. Add California-Friendly plants to your garden

As you begin to replant this year's garden, make sure to add in California-Friendly flowers and shrubs. The plants come in a wide variety of attractive colors and sizes, and use very little water. Visit www.MNWD.com to learn more.

3. Check for leaks as part of your spring cleaning

One leaky toilet can waste up to 78,000 gallons of water in one year. That's enough to fill several swimming pools! Make sure to look for leaks inside and outside of your home as you spruce things up for the warmer months ahead.

You can supplement these water savings with even more conservation tips found at www.MNWD.com. You can also call us at (949) 831-2500. We're here to help.

Water Efficiency Update

Since July, MNWD customers have conserved

13.8%

We are **required** to conserve

20%

Are you using more than you need?

Water Conservation Tip of the Month

Upgrade your bathrooms with water-efficient showerheads. They're inexpensive, easy to install and can save up to 750 gallons per month.

Visit www.MNWD.com or call (949) 831-2500 to learn other easy ways to save.

Strong Start to State's Rainy Season May Soon Fade

After a promising start that brought several straight weeks of heavy rain to South Orange County, the second half of California's rainy season is predicted to turn dry, prompting Governor Brown to maintain California's state of drought emergency.

In early February, the snowpack in the Sierra Nevada Mountains was 199 percent of normal, compared to just 81 percent of normal at that time last year. The welcomed precipitation helped temporarily double the volumes of several key reservoirs in Northern California, which provide water to the southern portion of the state. But a lot of the precipitation merely returned those parched reservoirs to normal levels. Plus, the water in those reservoirs isn't guaranteed to reach the customers who need it due to court rulings and pumping restrictions that limit the amount of water that can be delivered to Southern California to protect habitat and fish species in the Sacramento Delta.

Even with California's rain, years of drought in the Upper Colorado River Basin continue to threaten a valuable component of our supply. These factors mean we must continue to be as efficient as possible and make every drop count to meet our needs now and in the years to come.



MNWD Accounting Department Stretches Dollars for Our Customers

It may seem counterintuitive that the MNWD department that tracks revenues from customer bills actually saves customers money. But in fact, the District's Accounting Department has saved our customers millions of dollars in recent years.

MNWD's Accounting Department manages the District's finances, which includes overseeing incoming revenues and outgoing expenses to ensure MNWD operates within our budgets. The team also manages the District's investments and bond sales. Carrying forward the Board's fiscally conservative vision, the Department's strategic short-term and long-term investments provide revenue to fund many critical infrastructure projects as we go, rather than having to borrow money. The team has also helped MNWD achieve a AAA credit rating – the highest available for a public agency – which has helped the District take advantage of lower interest rates when financing infrastructure projects. These combined efforts will save MNWD customers millions of dollars as the projects are built over the coming years.

The Accounting Department leads MNWD's efforts to partner with other local agencies on regional infrastructure projects as well, saving millions through cost sharing on the Upper Chiquita Reservoir, Baker Treatment Plant and Irvine Ranch Interconnection. The team also ensures that all of the products and services necessary to deliver safe and reliable water service are obtained at competitive prices.

The efforts of the Accounting Department's nine members were recognized last year by the California Society of Municipal Finance Officers, which awarded MNWD the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for our Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

It takes a highly trained and dedicated team to meet the needs of our customers at the lowest possible cost. MNWD's Accounting Department is very efficient, and works to stretch every dollar to ensure you a sustainable water supply at a fair price.

Dishes Still Dirty? It's Not the Water

Detergent makers remove grime-fighting compound to protect the environment.

When MNWD customers open their dishwashers these days, their plates and glasses may not look quite as clean as they used to. The water the District serves our customers hasn't changed, but the detergent you use to wash those dishes has.

Last summer, with little fanfare, detergent makers across the country reworked their formulas to remove phosphates, which were thought by some to harm the environment. Phosphates strip food and grease from dishes, and also prevent food from getting reattached during the wash. With the new phosphate-free detergents, customers must now wash or rinse their dishes before they put them in the dishwasher, which unfortunately uses more water.

MNWD recommends our customers be efficient with this added water use. Fill a shallow basin with soapy water instead of letting the water flow, and with a little extra elbow grease, those dishes should sparkle just like before.

California-Friendly Plant of the Month:

New Jersey Tea Plant

New Jersey is the Garden State, so what better place to look for the newest addition to your water-wise garden? The New Jersey Tea Plant was first made popular during the Revolutionary War as a tea substitute. It's now used across the nation as an attractive, woody shrub with white flowers that grows up to three feet tall.



The New Jersey Tea Plant grows well in dry and drained soil, with full or partial sun. It also doesn't take much water to keep this shrub thriving, which is why it's so California-Friendly. For best results, soak the seeds overnight in hot water before planting. The New Jersey Tea Plant is a spring bloomer, so there's still time to get it into your garden before the change in season.

New Jersey Tea Plant *Ceanothus americanus*

Season:	Spring - summer
Size:	1.5 ft. - 3 ft.
Color:	White flowers with light green leaves
Water:	Low
Sun:	Full or partial sun

California-Friendly Landscape Workshops

Please join us for one of our FREE landscape workshops to learn the California-Friendly way to a beautiful landscape that uses less water and saves you money.

You'll learn:

- How to pick the right plants
- How to manage your sprinkler system for efficient irrigation
- The proper way to fertilize and maintain your water-wise garden

**Saturday, March 19, April 9 & May 7
8 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

MNWD Operations Facility
26161 Gordon Rd., Laguna Hills

COST: Free

These workshops include refreshments. Space is limited and reservations fill quickly. For more information or to RSVP, please call (949) 831-2500.

Conserving Water is Easy

Follow these steps to use less water

What You Can Do	How Much You Can Save
Install a smart sprinkler controller	40 gallons per cycle
Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks	150 gallons each time
Check your sprinkler system for leaks, overspray and broken sprinkler heads	500 gallons per month
Place organic mulch throughout your garden to reduce evaporation	Hundreds of gallons per year
Water your lawn only when necessary. If you step on the grass and it springs back, it doesn't need water.	1,100 gallons per watering cycle
Replace thirsty shrubs with California-Friendly plants	Hundreds of gallons each year per plant
Wash your car with a bucket and a hose equipped with a shutoff nozzle, or at a commercial car wash that uses recycled water	Up to 500 gallons each time

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For meeting dates and agendas, visit www.MNWD.com.

WaterLines is a monthly publication to keep water users in the Moulton Niguel Water District informed about water-related issues and events. Please send any comments or suggestions to MNWD, 27500 La Paz Road, Laguna Niguel, CA, 92677, or call us at (949) 831-2500. www.MNWD.com.

Our Meeting Calendar Has Changed

MNWD's 2011 committee meeting schedule has changed. The community relations, investment, and personnel and salary committees will now meet on a quarterly basis. The Board of Directors meetings and all other MNWD committees will continue meeting each month. Please visit www.MNWD.com to view the amended schedule.

Water Awareness Day 2011

Hundreds of local families learned how much fun water education can be at last year's Water Awareness Day celebration. This year's event will be even bigger and more interactive. Check back in next month's *Waterlines* for a date and location. You won't want to miss out.

**Conserve Today: Save Water. Save Money.
Protect the Environment.**