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Water Replenishment District Celebrates 50 Years of Groundwater Stewardship

Since 1959, WRD has Provided 40% of the Region's Water to 10% of the State's Population

Lakewood, Calif. – Today, the Water Replenishment District (WRD or District) is celebrating its 50th anniversary. For half a century, the District has protected and replenished groundwater to the 420 square mile basins since November 17, 1959. The District was created to replenish the basins of the Los Angeles Coastal Plain that were at risk of catastrophic collapse, putting in peril a resource that supplies water to 43 cities in south Los Angeles County.

The District is responsible for managing two of the most heavily used groundwater basins in the state of California and plays a significant role in providing 40 percent of the region's water supply to 10 percent of the State's population.

Since the District's inception, more than 8 million acre-feet of groundwater has been replenished into the basins, nearly one million more acre-feet of groundwater than was present when the District was formed.

As southern California continues to face unprecedented water challenges, WRD has worked to address them through the Water Independence Now (WIN) program. WIN is a suite of projects that will eliminate the need for imported water for groundwater recharge in the region.

Already, WRD is taking bold steps to implement WIN through the Groundwater Reliability Improvement Program (GRIP). GRIP is an extraordinary multi-agency project that will help "drought proof" the region. GRIP is anticipated to replace 21,000 acre-feet of imported water within WRD's service area.

Sure to be one of the biggest milestones in WRD's 50-year history is the April 2009 historic partnership between West Basin Municipal Water District and the District. This agreement aims to supply 100% recycled water for seawater barrier protection at the West Coast Barrier, making the first seawater barrier system in the world entirely reliant on recycled water by 2012. The project will save 5.5 billion gallons of drinking water each year, enough to serve 136,000 people for one year.

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Earlier this year, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation awarded nearly half a million dollars in federal stimulus funds for the preliminary design of the final expansion phase of the Leo J. Vander Lans (Vander Lans) Advance Water Treatment Facility. Currently, Vander Lans provides 50% of the highly treated recycled water that is injected into the Alamitos Barrier to protect the groundwater aquifer against seawater intrusion. Once the expansion is completed, the Vander Lans facility will double its water recycling capacity and will supply nearly one billion gallons of recycled water a year.

“Every turn of the tap tells a story about the formation of WRD. As we celebrate our 50th anniversary we want residents and business of the area to understand the significance of the areas water supply and the important role that we have in providing clean, safe and reliable water. We want people to know our history and have a greater appreciation for the foresight that our founders had for the future of the region,” stated WRD Board President Albert Robles.

“For half a century, WRD has been leading the way towards water self-reliance for the region. The fact that our founders envisioned this 50 years ago is a testament to our innovative planning, strong public partnerships and visionary leadership. Increasing our capture and conservation of storm water and recycled water for groundwater replenishment will prepare the District to meet an uncertain water future,” said WRD General Manager Robb Whitaker.

This year, WRD will be recognizing two of the District’s longest partnership with the Louis J. Alexander Award, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County. Sponsors of the event include Aquarium of the Pacific, California Water Service Company, GCG Rose & Kindel, HDR One Company, K&L Gates, Long Beach Water Department, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Meyers Nave, Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, Southern California Edison, and West Basin Municipal Water District.

For more information about the Water Replenishment District please visit www.wrd.org.

Created by voters in 1959, WRD is a regional groundwater management agency that protects and preserves the quantity and quality of groundwater supplies for 10 percent of the State’s population residing in southern Los Angeles County.

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