



WRD Assistant Hydrogeologist Benny Chong demonstrates how he takes water samples from a well located near the San Gabriel River Spreading Grounds in Pico Rivera. Chong is pictured with students from the WRD's Educational Partnership Program. The students attended a WRD sponsored field trip which included visits to a water treatment facility, the spreading grounds and the Whittier Narrows Nature Center.

**MISSION**

*"To provide a sufficient supply of high quality groundwater in the Central and West Coast Basins through progressive, cost effective and environmentally sensitive basin management."*

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# the Source



I N F O R M A T I O N U P D A T E S W I N T E R 2 0 0 3

## Board Appoints Robb Whitaker New G.M.

### Court Rules in Favor of WRD

The California Supreme Court has decided against reviewing an appellate court decision which held that the Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD) has the authority to manage the Central Groundwater Basin.

"The Supreme Court's decision to deny review means that the Court of Appeal's decision serves as governing law in the Central Basin," said WRD Attorney Ed Casey. "The Supreme Court's decision strongly supports the replenishment and conjunctive use activities that the WRD has carried out in the Central Basin for the past 40 years."

Last June, a California State Appellate Court agreed with Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Reginald Dunn's ruling to deny private water companies and groundwater purveyors control over available groundwater storage space in the Central Basin. The Southern California Water Company argued in its recent petition that the Supreme Court should not allow the Court of Appeal decision to stand as the governing law. But the state's high court disagreed.

In the ruling, the appellate court unequivocally held that "the storage space in the Central Basin is a public resource." The decision states that a 1965 Central Basin judgment did not grant the groundwater pumpers separate rights to all of the Basin's storage space. The court held that the pumpers' right to extract groundwater from the Central Basin does not create a corresponding right to store water in the Central Basin. Additionally, the ruling stated that the WRD's management authority included conjunctive use.

*continued on page 2*

Robb E. Whitaker, who has been in the field of water resources engineering for more than 20 years, is the new general manager of the Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD).

He was recently appointed to the position by the WRD Board of Directors. Whitaker, born and raised in Long Beach, will be responsible for the daily operation of the WRD, an agency responsible for managing and safeguarding groundwater in the Central and West Coast Basins. These basins extend 420 square-miles throughout southern Los Angeles County and are among the region's most reliable natural water resources.

Whitaker, who has served as assistant general manager/district engineer at the WRD, said he is enthusiastic about the new challenges.

"I look forward to providing input to our Board of Directors to develop and implement sound and reasonable water policy, ensuring that the WRD continues to meet its mission of providing and protecting the groundwater in this region"

A WRD employee for the past 12 years, Whitaker brings to his new position a wealth of experience and knowledge, ranging from water distribution infrastructure, water supply forecasting and groundwater basin management.

During his tenure at the WRD, Whitaker developed the Safe Drinking Water Program, a project that provides treatment facilities for groundwater producers with wells affected by contamination. To date, 11 facilities are operating and another four are either in design or in construction. The program has returned approximately 5.5 billion gallons of water per year for pumping once again.

He also conceived a concept to utilize water from the 105 Freeway that is presently being wasted to the ocean and developed the concept of utilizing physical barrier systems as an alternative to expensive injection wells



**Robb Whitaker**

to deter seawater intrusion.

Whitaker received a B.S. in Civil Engineering with an emphasis in Water Resources from the University of Southern California. Before joining the WRD, he worked at the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power in the Water Operations Division and the Aqueduct Division. A professional civil engineer, he is a member of the Association of California Water Agencies, the Association of Ground Water Agencies, the American Water Works Association, the National Ground Water Association, and the American Society of Civil Engineers.

The WRD, established by voters in 1959 to protect the groundwater quality in the Central and West Coast Basins, serves nearly four million residents. The people in the service area use about 81.5 billion gallons of groundwater annually, which amounts to more than a third of the region's total demand for water.

### In this issue

- 2 Cerritos Woman Wins Water Bottle Label Contest
- 3 Public Invited to Attend Free Groundwater Tours
- 3 Water Saving Tips



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## Lupe Allen of Cerritos Wins Water Bottle Label Contest

Lupe Allen of Cerritos has entered many contests over the years but never won the top prize. That helps explain her excitement when she received a recent telephone call from the Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD).

"I was so surprised when you (WRD) called," she said.

Allen was one of more than 70 participants who entered the WRD Water Bottle Label Contest. The public was asked to come up with a slogan for the label that included the word "groundwater." A WRD panel reviewed the entries and selected her slogan as the best. Her winning slogan is "groundWater woRth Drinking." The capital letters in her slogan, WRD, stand for the Water

Replenishment District. Allen was honored at a WRD Board meeting and received the top prize: a case of bottled groundwater, which will be bottled by the Long Beach Water Department. Her slogan will be printed on the labels. The water will be used as a District promotional item and distributed at various WRD events.

She learned about the contest by reading the WRD newsletter, the Source.

"After reading the story in the newsletter, I decided to enter the contest," she said. "We have pretty good water here in Cerritos and it's water worth drinking. Then I thought, this is

too easy and I entered the contest."

Allen said she told her husband, Ron, that she won the contest after she received a call from the WRD. "He was very surprised," she said. "I guess it was just my time (to win a contest)."

Allen and her husband have lived in Cerritos for the past 30 years. She is a teacher at a Catholic school and her husband works for the Los Angeles County Department of Agriculture in South Gate. They have two children, James and Christina, both recent graduates of USC.



Pictured from left are Adeline Yoong, Assistant to the General Manager, Lupe Allen, and Robb Whitaker, General Manager.

### Court Rules in Favor of WRD

As a general principle, the appellate court decision shows that available underground storage space should be managed as a public resource through a local, yet centralized public authority, Casey said.

WRD officials remain committed to working with groundwater basin stakeholders to optimize this resource for the benefit of the public.

Through surface spreading operations, pumping water into the seawater barrier wells, groundwater cleanup and reclaimed water projects, the WRD has restored more than 250,000 acre-feet of water to the basin. Under the Court of Appeal decision, these and other beneficial use programs and projects will continue to operate in the Central Basin.

## Public Invited to Attend Free Groundwater Tours

In a continuing effort to keep the public informed about water, the Water Replenishment District of Southern California (WRD) offers free groundwater tours throughout the year for the public. These tours offer the public a firsthand look at water treatment facilities and groundwater projects throughout southern Los Angeles County.

Tour participants initially receive an overview of the operations of the WRD, an agency responsible for managing and replenishing two of the most utilized groundwater basins in Southern California. These basins - Central and West Coast Basins - provide more than a third of the water used by the nearly four million people living in the WRD service area.

Tour visits include a trip to the San Gabriel River or Rio Hondo spreading grounds. These large ponds of water are located in an area known as the Montebello Forebay.

Participants also get a chance to

visit the Robert W. Goldsworthy Desalter in Torrance, a WRD project that removes salt from the groundwater, and the Leo J. Vander Lans Water Treatment Facility in Long Beach, a state-of-the-art plant that helps to protect the groundwater basin from seawater intrusion.

Each tour begins at 9 a.m. and will last approximately six hours. The tour, which is limited to 50 adults, begins at the WRD office located at 12621 East 166th Street in Cerritos. A complimentary lunch is provided and each participant will receive WRD written materials and promotional items. Participants are advised to wear casual clothing and most importantly, a comfortable pair of shoes. Reservations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis.

For tour dates and registration information, please call the WRD Public Affairs Office at (562) 921-5521 or visit the WRD website at [www.wrd.org](http://www.wrd.org).



### Student Wins Drawing Contest

South Gate student Caroline Monroy captured the top prize in the WRD's T-shirt drawing contest. Her design was printed on a blue shirt and given to students in Caroline's classroom. South Middle School is one of several schools involved in the WRD's Educational Partnership Program. Pictured from left are Assistant Principal B. Terhune (Terry) Beebe, Caroline Monroy and Teacher Patrick Yoon.

## Water Saving Tips

Fresh water may seem cheap and abundant, but minimizing wasteful practices remains an important necessity. So it makes good sense to begin a progressive program of water conservation now, before it's too late. Here are some tips:

- ◆ Repair dripping faucets by replacing washers. One drop a second wastes 2,700 gallons of water a year.
- ◆ Install a toilet displacement device to cut down on the amount of water used for each flush.
- ◆ Take shorter showers.
- ◆ Replace your showerhead with an ultra-low-flow version.
- ◆ Stick to full loads for automatic dishwashers and clothes washers, or set the water level for the size of load.

- ◆ Do not waste water waiting for it to get hot. Capture it for other uses such as plant watering or heat it on the stove or in the microwave.
- ◆ Don't let water run while grooming (brushing your teeth, washing your face or shaving).
- ◆ Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissues, insets and other similar waste in a trash container rather than the toilet.
- ◆ Position sprinklers to water lands on the lawn and shrubs and not on paved areas. If you have an automatic sprinkler system, purchase a rain sensor device or switch which will override the irrigation cycle of the sprinkler system.

The WRD Board of Directors and Staff wish you a Happy Holiday Season and a Prosperous New Year!