



The newsletter of IRWD

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IRWD San Joaquin Marsh is a Hidden Oasis in Urban Setting



Supervising Wetlands/Wildlife Biologist Ian Swift standing near one of six Natural Water Treatment ponds at the IRWD Marsh.

When was the last time you visited the Irvine Ranch Water District San Joaquin Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary? Spring is the best time to visit this best kept secret in Irvine.

The Marsh is a reconstructed wetland designed to clean urban runoff from San Diego Creek before it reaches environmentally sensitive Upper Newport Bay. Besides enhancing water quality, the Marsh provides a home to some 230 species of birds and other wildlife in a park-like setting.

When customers first visit the IRWD San Joaquin Marsh, a comment frequently heard is "I've lived here for 20 years and never knew this was here!" That's one reason why the Marsh is referred to as one of Orange County's best kept secrets.

The Marsh contains more than 12 miles of meandering hiking trails on about 320 acres and is open 365 days a year, dawn to dusk. Its campus is also home to the Audubon House, and the IRWD Visitor's Center, both open to the public daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Visitors to the Marsh are encouraged to bring binoculars and cameras for bird watching. Many visitors have also reported seeing bobcats on the trails. Every spring, there is a new litter of kittens born. Bobcats should not be confused with the more dangerous mountain lions.

"Because the Marsh is not open to visitors at night," explains IRWD Biologist Ian Swift, "many of the nocturnal animals such as owls, bats, coyotes, skunks and raccoons will not be visible. However, on occasion, coyotes and skunks can be seen wandering the trails in the early morning or just before dusk."

Other mammals making their homes at the Marsh are opossums, long-tailed weasels, rabbits, ground squirrels, field mice and rats. The small rodent population is kept in check by the predatory animals and birds of prey.

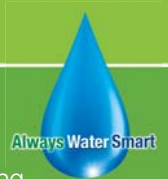
Visitors are reminded not to collect or disturb the wildlife including flowers or other plant materials, animals, birds, insects, rocks or any element within the entire San Joaquin Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary. However, harvesting of berries is allowed along Riparian View.

For more information about the Marsh and detailed directions on how to find this hidden oasis, visit www.irwd.com and click on Environment and San Joaquin Marsh. Admission is always free.

Did you Know?

Q: What causes a high water bill?

A: When you see water usage in the inefficient, excessive, and wasteful tiers appear on your water bill, it means that you are using more water than you're allocated. This may indicate that: 1) Your landscape is being over-watered; 2) You may have an ongoing or intermittent leak; or 3) You may need a variance (residential customers) to increase your allocation. Please visit www.irwd.com for our suggested watering schedule, for ways to check for leaks, and for instructions on how to obtain a variance.



How Urban Runoff Affects the Environment



Overwatering like this not only wastes water and money, it's also a major source of dry-season urban runoff.

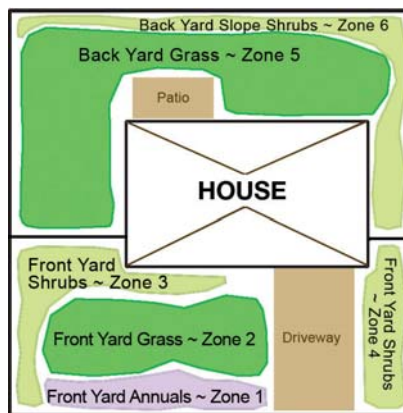
What is urban runoff? Urban runoff is comprised of any water that flows into storm drains when there are no storms. This could be water that comes off your yard due to over-watering, water from washing your car in your driveway, and any non-rainwater that enters the storm drain. Water running off the urban environment carries trash, fertilizers, pet waste, and other contaminants that pollute our local streams and ocean.

Urban runoff from the IRWD service area flows into San Diego Creek, eventually ending up in ecologically sensitive Upper Newport Bay and the ocean. It is important for IRWD customers to reduce urban runoff by properly watering their yards, checking for overspray and runoff, and taking their cars to commercial car washes that can recycle rinse water to preserve the quality of the ocean.

Take Control of Your Controller ~ Step 2

It is important to have an idea of what is being watered and where to optimize efficiency. Sketch out a map of your landscaped area and label the different watering zones in your yard.

- Identify each watering zone or station by manually turning on the water to each group of sprinklers.
- Make note of how many zones/stations you have on your map and how many you have on your controller.
- Ideally, shrub and turf areas should be watered in separate zones since they have different watering needs. Mixed zones lead to inefficient watering.
- Most controllers have more than one program (i.e., A, B, C). Use multiple programs to differentiate between turf and shrub zones, since their watering needs are different.
- Next month we will explain Step 3, which is how to use multiple programs and multiple start times to increase water use efficiency and reduce runoff. Questions? Call our Water Use Efficiency Dept. at (949) 453-5581 or email aws@irwd.com.



Sketch a map like this to identify the location and plant type for each of the zones in your landscape that are programmed by the irrigation controller to receive water.

Free Sprinkler Nozzles Still Available

It's your last chance to receive FREE water-efficient sprinkler nozzles. Residential customers* can sign up for our Free Sprinkler Nozzle Program through April 30th to receive up to 25 free Toro Precision Series Spray Nozzles, a \$100 value. Customers will receive a voucher through email, good for the number of nozzles they requested. The precision nozzles are designed to irrigate more



efficiently and help save water. Because they deliver water at a much lower rate, they allow water to soak into the soil instead of running into the gutters, helping to reduce runoff. Replacing your current nozzles with these water-efficient nozzles is as easy as replacing the cap on a water bottle. For more information and to sign up for your free nozzles, go to www.freesprinklernozzles.com.

(*Non-residential customers visit www.freesprinklernozzles.com for details.)

Customer Service Information

[IRWD Website Link & Social Media Channels](#) »

24 Hour Customer Service

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The mission of Irvine Ranch Water District, a public agency, is to provide reliable, high quality water and sewer service in an efficient, cost effective manner and environmentally sensitive way that provides a high level of customer satisfaction.

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IRWD Pipelines Newsletter

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