



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Gina Ayala, (714) 378-3323, gayala@ocwd.com

ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT HONORED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP BY JOHN MUIR ASSOCIATION

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. (May 3, 2017) – The Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) has received two John Muir Conservation Awards, one for Environmental Education and another for Public Agency. The awards were presented by the John Muir Association at its recent John Muir Birthday-Earth Day Celebration at the John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez, Calif.

The John Muir Awards help to encourage awareness, understanding and responsibility for wild places, encourage an environmental agenda—for individuals and organizations, and recognize and celebrate achievement of award recipients. Those honored have taken action for the environment, promoted a culture of environmental awareness and care and have encouraged behavior and action, attitudes and values-based learning for individuals.

“The Orange County Water District sees conservation as an essential component of its commitment to the community,” says OCWD President Denis Bilodeau. “We are dedicated to the creation, promotion and management of water education and conservation programs for individuals and families throughout Orange County, and we are a leader in natural resource management, carrying out environmental programs that also provide water supply benefits. OCWD is deeply honored to be given this award, which is named after one of America’s most iconic and profoundly impactful environmentalists.”

The District created and hosts many educational programs that include the Children’s Water Education Festival, OC Water Summit, facility tours and speakers bureau, its new H₂O Learning Center, and its recently revamped O.C. Water Hero Program.

The goal of OCWD’s water-use efficiency, outreach and education programs is to draw individuals’ and families’ attention to state and local water needs and crises, teach them useful and simple ways to reduce water consumption and respect this natural resource, and have them make life-long commitments to conserving water. Another goal is to share its water reuse technology with other cities, states and nations in a humanitarian effort and, in a spirit of collaboration, to help advance water reuse projects throughout California and other parts of the world. For its efforts, OCWD received the John Muir Conservation Award for Environmental Education.

-MORE-

OCWD: John Muir Awards
ADD 1-1-1

The District manages the Orange County Groundwater Basin and the District's rights to Santa Ana River (SAR) water that replenishes the basin. OCWD manages and protects the SAR watershed through removal of nonnative invasive species, habitat restoration and wildlife management. This includes the Prado Wetlands—the largest constructed wetlands in Southern California. It is located in the Prado Basin of Riverside County. The wetlands naturally remove nitrates from SAR flows. As part of the Santa Ana River Watershed Program, begun in 1997 to restore the natural functions of the river, OCWD developed a program to remove a water-guzzling and invasive grass. Removing this plant, *Arundo donax*, and replanting with native plants not only conserves precious water supplies, but also restores a more water-efficient, natural habitat.

Natural resource conservation programs conducted by OCWD have also brought back an endangered California songbird, the least Bell's vireo, and helped a threatened bird, the Southwestern Willow flycatcher. Additional environmental programs include restoration work supporting the endangered Santa Ana sucker fish and breeding bird territories. For these efforts, OCWD received the John Muir Conservation Award for a Public Agency.

Since 1978, the John Muir Association has honored those who continue John Muir's legacy of environmental stewardship and preservation.

About Orange County Water District (OCWD)

The Orange County Water District is committed to enhancing Orange County's groundwater quality and reliability in an environmentally friendly and economical manner. The following cities rely on the groundwater basin, managed by OCWD, to provide 75 percent of their water demands: Anaheim, Buena Park, Costa Mesa, Cypress, Fountain Valley, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Irvine, La Palma, Los Alamitos, Newport Beach, Orange, Placentia, Santa Ana, Seal Beach, Stanton, Tustin, Villa Park, Westminster and Yorba Linda. For more information, visit www.OCWD.com.

###