



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT RECEIVES SOCIETY OF ENVIRONMENTAL TOXICOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY AWARD FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. (November 5, 2018) - The Orange County Water District (OCWD; District) received the 2018 Stephen J. Klaine Environmental Education Award from the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) for the District's environmental educational programs. The award was presented during SETAC's 39th annual meeting in Sacramento.

"We are deeply honored to be recognized for our contributions to the environment from such a prestigious group," stated OCWD President Denis Bilodeau. "Orange County Water District's educational programs aim to engage our audiences, young and old, in a greater dialogue about water to benefit the planet."

OCWD is dedicated to the creation, promotion and management of water education and conservation programs throughout Orange County, California. It has several programs for students from grade school through university, for professionals in the water industry, for civic leaders, and for the general public.

Among the District's many environmental programs, the OC Water Hero downloadable game is designed to make water conservation fun while helping children gain knowledge and develop effective water-use efficiency habits that will last a lifetime.

More than 7,000 grade school students participate each year in the Children's Water Education Festival for third, fourth and fifth graders who learn about water and the environment through hands-on educational activities. The event is presented by OCWD, the Disneyland Resort, National Water Research Institute, and the Orange County Water District Groundwater Guardian Team. Topics, taught by more than 60 leading experts in their fields, include water resources, watersheds, wildlife and natural habitats, biology, chemistry, and recycling at this unique event.

In 2018, District staff gave about 150 offsite presentations to community leaders and groups and conducted nearly 200 onsite presentations and tours of District facilities, which are ongoing programs. OCWD's interactive, museum-like H2O Learning Center, which is part of the onsite tour, was developed and opened in August 2016 to educate and inform visitors about water quality and OCWD's international and local leadership, so visitors can understand and have confidence in the District's management and innovation and the purity, reliability and cost-efficiency of the water that OCWD provides—including reused water.

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The annual O.C. Water Summit, co-presented by OCWD, the Disneyland Resort and the Municipal Water District of Orange County, teaches individuals, and business, community and civic leaders the origins of the region's water, and provides information about water supply crises and water quality challenges and possible solutions. Topics include state and local control to protect water quality, unintended consequences of water-use mandates, taxing California's water, and the unique legal issues brought on by conservation mandates.

This past year, staff from OCWD and the Orange County Sanitation District were the first to bottle advanced purified water in the Western Hemisphere and take it on the road from San Diego to Sacramento to educate audiences about the reliability and quality of this new source of water. Taking Groundwater Replenishment System water on a bottled water tour allowed people who might not otherwise be able to visit the plant, be able to taste it for themselves and get over the "yuck" factor. The "yuck" factor has been a major reason why advanced purified water projects never get off the drawing board, yet these projects could be the most impactful in supplying California with ample drinking water.

The goal of OCWD's environmental 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, respect this natural resource, and have them make life-long commitments to conserving water. Equally important, these programs provide knowledge about alternatives to supplement Mother Nature by way of water reuse and they provide palatable and useful information to spur the acceptance of water reuse projects.

Additionally, the District shares its water reuse technology with other cities, states and nations in a humanitarian effort and, in a spirit of collaboration, to advance current knowledge for the betterment of all.

The Stephen J. Klaine Environmental Education Award (formerly the SETAC/Menzie Environmental Education Award) recognizes an individual, group or organization for significant contributions to environmental education. The award is named in honor of Steve Klaine, who touched the lives of so many with his dedication to environmental science, teaching and mentoring of students during his 30-year career and this award pays tribute to his efforts. The Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry is a non-profit, worldwide professional society composed of individuals and institutions engaged in the study, analysis and solution of environmental problems; the management and regulation of natural resources; environmental education; and research and development.

About 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 approximately 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 about OCWD, please visit www.ocwd.com.

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