

SUNSET GAP SEAWATER INTRUSION INVESTIGATION



Construction of Monitoring Wells in Seal Beach

ABOUT OCWD

The Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) was established in 1933 by an act of the California State Legislature to manage and protect the groundwater basin that underlies north and central Orange County. Nineteen cities and water agencies draw approximately 77% of their water supply from the groundwater basin. OCWD ensures the water it provides is safe to drink and meets or exceeds state and federal drinking water standards.

OCWD maintains a network of monitoring wells throughout the basin that provide groundwater levels and water quality data necessary to make informed decisions and implement actions to protect the basin from overdraft and contamination from seawater intrusion.

ABOUT THE INVESTIGATION

The Sunset Gap is a low-lying area near the coast in the cities of Seal Beach and Huntington Beach. It is one of four geologic lowlands along coastal Orange County that can provide an underground pathway for seawater to migrate into the aquifers which are tapped by city drinking water wells. This situation became apparent in 2015 when a City of Huntington Beach water supply well, located over three miles from the ocean, was rendered unusable due to increased salinity that corroded the well beyond repair.

In response to the loss of that well, OCWD has been actively investigating the sources and extent of seawater intrusion in the Sunset Gap. Activities have included the installation of nine groundwater monitoring wells, geophysical surveys inside the Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach (NWSSB), and development of a computer model that simulates groundwater flow in the Seal Beach-Huntington Beach areas.

OCWD's investigation thus far indicates that seawater extends beneath the NWSSB at a depth of about 300 feet below ground and could impact additional drinking water wells if control measures are not undertaken.

OCWD is currently running computer simulations to evaluate the possible location and design of a potential future seawater barrier (injection and extraction wells) to control seawater intrusion. Two such seawater barriers have been controlling seawater intrusion in the cities of Long Beach, Seal Beach, Fountain Valley and Huntington Beach since the 1960s and 1970s.

LOCATION OF NEW MONITORING WELL

To better understand the underground flow paths and extent of seawater intrusion, OCWD plans to construct up to 11 monitoring wells at five locations in the cities of Huntington Beach and Seal Beach. A pair of monitoring wells in Seal Beach will be located inside the Gum Grove park parking lot at the intersection of Heron Pointe and Seal Beach Blvd. Once the wells have been constructed, a 12-inch diameter secured vault that is flush with the ground will be installed to allow uninhibited traffic flow and parking.



WHAT TO EXPECT DURING CONSTRUCTION

OCWD's construction management team will closely monitor construction activities to minimize impacts to the community as much as possible. Please expect the following during this project:

- Construction is expected to begin in late summer or early fall and last approximately 6 weeks
- Construction work hours from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday – Friday
- Heavy equipment, trucks and drill rigs
- Increased truck/construction traffic
- Noise and possible dust

All construction activities will comply with City of Seal Beach noise and permit requirements. OCWD and the contractor will work closely with city engineers and inspectors during construction.

COMMUNICATING WITH OUR NEIGHBORS

OCWD is committed to keeping our neighbors informed about the construction, the activities and the schedule. We will continue to send notifications prior to and during construction and will be available to answer questions or address concerns throughout construction.

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

For further information, please call the OCWD Construction Hotline at 714-378-8244, email info@ocwd.com or visit www.ocwd.com/news-events/construction-updates.