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ORANGE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT CELEBRATES 90 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATIVE GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT

FOUNTAIN VALLEY, Calif. (June 22, 2023) – The Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) Board of Directors commemorated the District’s 90th anniversary, a momentous occasion reflecting decades of service and programs to sustainably manage the Orange County Groundwater Basin.

Throughout its rich history, OCWD has played a vital role in managing the basin, which provides 85% of the water supply for 2.5 million people in north and central Orange County. Guided by its commitment to sound planning and investment, high standards for water reliability, exceptional water quality, environmental stewardship, sound financial management, and transparency, OCWD has proactively implemented initiatives to protect and increase local water supplies.

“Since 1933, OCWD has been at the forefront of water management and we have remained steadfast in our mission to provide a safe and resilient water supply to the communities we serve,” said OCWD President Cathy Green. “This anniversary recognizes our history of innovation and commitment to finding solutions that address current and future challenges.”

OCWD manages and replenishes the groundwater basin, ensures water reliability and quality, prevents seawater intrusion, and protects Orange County’s rights to Santa Ana River water. Due to OCWD’s successful management of the basin over time, the annual output has doubled, allowing the District’s 19 cities and retail water districts to pump more groundwater, which is less expensive and more reliable than imported sources.

Over the years, OCWD has achieved several notable accomplishments. These include completing the world’s largest potable reuse project, the Groundwater Replenishment System (GWRS), that produces 130 million gallons of pure water a day; increasing stormwater capture behind Prado Dam; proactively addressing groundwater contamination, including the emergence of new contaminants such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS); and enhancing recharge capabilities and groundwater storage for the region.

OCWD enters its 90th year committed to ongoing innovation and sustainability. The District continues to invest in research and development, explore emerging technologies and share best practices and lessons learned with others. Through educational and outreach programs, investments in infrastructure, and efficient management strategies, OCWD has emerged as a visionary leader in the industry.

“Reaching this significant milestone is a testament to the dedication and hard work of everyone at OCWD, past and present,” said Mike Markus, OCWD general manager. “OCWD strives to be a

model for agencies across the world, showcasing the importance of collaboration and smart planning.”

To commemorate this milestone, the OCWD Board of Directors formally recognized the anniversary at its June 21 board meeting, the District launched a series of social media posts throughout the month to educate the community on its robust history and published a 90th anniversary edition of its [history book](#).

For more information about OCWD, please visit www.ocwd.com.

The Orange County Water District manages the local groundwater basin that provides 85% of the water supply for 19 cities and retail water districts in north and central Orange County, serving 2.5 million people. Guided by its commitment to sound planning and investment, high standards for water reliability, exceptional water quality, environmental stewardship, sound financial management, and transparency, OCWD has proactively implemented initiatives to protect and increase local water supplies. OCWD replenishes the basin, prevents seawater intrusion, and protects Orange County’s rights to Santa Ana River water. For more information about OCWD, please visit www.ocwd.com, like @OCWaterDistrict on Facebook, follow @OCWDWaterNews on Twitter, follow @OCWD on Instagram, and follow Orange County Water District on LinkedIn.

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