

Voice Your Opinion on New Director Division Boundaries

OMWD is governed by a five-member Board of Directors elected for staggered four-year terms, with each director being elected from a specific geographic area of our service area. California Elections Code requires special districts to adjust their division boundaries after each federal census so that the divisions are equal in population.

OMWD's board will hold several public hearings by which to receive public input regarding new director division boundaries. The first hearing is scheduled for December 15, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. Learn more at www.olivenhain.com/redistricting.

In this EDITION...

- New director division boundaries • California's ongoing drought
- New graph on bill statements • New bill due dates • 2021 - Year in review

California's Call for Voluntary Conservation

After a year of extreme heat and drought, California reported its driest water year, which is from October 1 through September 30, in terms of precipitation in a century. The Western Regional Climate Center calculated that a total of 11.87 inches of rain and snow fell in California in the 2021 water year, half of the annual average. The last time the state reported so little rain and snowfall was in 1924.

In October, Governor Newsom directed water agencies throughout the state to activate their Water Shortage Contingency Plans to preserve water supplies. OMWD had already activated Level 1 of our Water Shortage Contingency Plan, whereby customers are encouraged to take voluntary actions to reduce water waste, such as promptly fixing leaks, stopping runoff from inefficient irrigation, irrigating only during the night and early morning hours, and avoiding washing down paved surfaces.

Despite storms that occurred early in the new water year, statewide reservoir levels remain well below historical averages. California's State Water Resources Control Board may implement mandatory conservation measures in 2022, if necessary. OMWD is closely monitoring water supplies and statewide conservation efforts and will continue to keep customers updated.

For more information on the drought and ways to save water, visit www.olivenhain.com/drought.





Municipal Water District

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BOARD MEETING DATES

Please visit our website at
www.olivenhain.com for dates.

MISSION STATEMENT

Olivenhain Municipal Water District is
a multi-functioning public agency that
is dedicated and committed to serving
present and future customers in a
service-oriented manner by:

Water

Providing safe, reliable, high-quality
drinking water while exceeding
all regulatory requirements in a
cost-effective and environmentally
responsive manner.

Recycled Water

Providing recycled water and
wastewater treatment in the most
cost-effective and environmentally
responsive method.

Parks

Safely operating the Elfin Forest
Recreational Reserve and providing all
users with a unique recreational,
educational, and environmental
experience.

Emergency Management

Complying with policies and
procedures that adhere to local, state,
and federal guidelines for national
security and disaster preparedness.

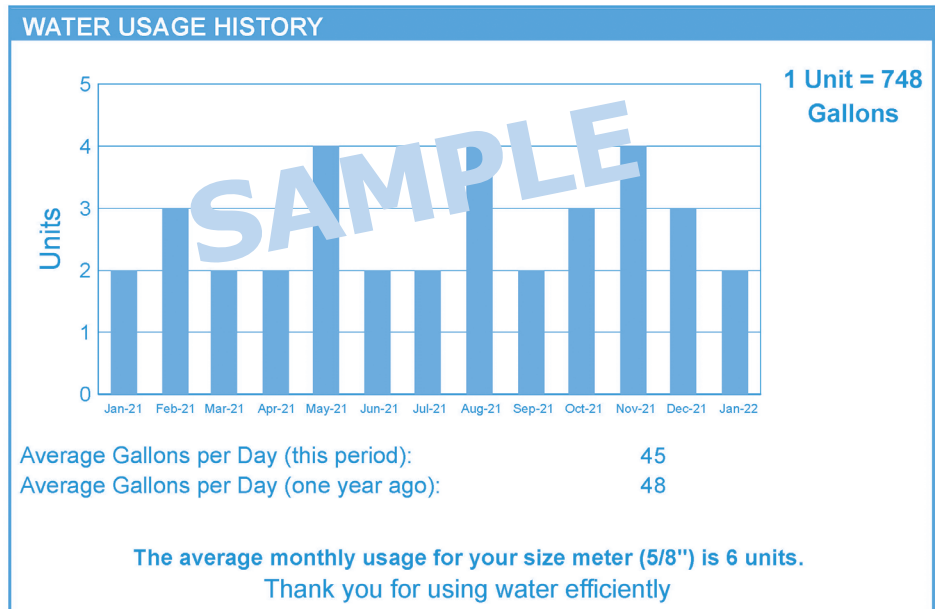
Sustainable Operations

Pursuing alternative and/or renewable
resources with the most sustainable,
efficient, and cost-effective approach.

New Look for Water Use Graph on Your Billing Statement

Based on your input, a new, more easy-to-read graph is now appearing on your water bill. The new graph shows your water usage for thirteen months so you can easily compare your consumption to the same time period as the previous year. It will also provide insight as to how your water use compares with your neighbors with the same size water meter.

What does your graph say about your water use habits?



OMWD Is Updating Its Billing Process to Improve Leak Detection and Provide Better Service

Bill Due Dates Will Change in January

OMWD currently has about 23,000 customer accounts. We typically read the meters for all of these accounts at the beginning of the month. Near the end of each month, Customer Service Representatives send bill statements to all OMWD customers.

Beginning in January, our new process will break up our 23,000 customer accounts into different billing cycles. By breaking our meter reading and billing processes into smaller and more manageable segments, we can run our processes several times over the course of a month rather than just once per month. We anticipate that this will reduce the time it takes between reading your meter and issuing your bill by more than half, and will provide you with more up-to-date consumption data.

Benefits

You will receive your bill closer to when you actually used the water, making it easier to see the impacts of your conservation efforts.

We anticipate a significant reduction in the time it takes between when we read your meter and send your bill. This gives you a more up-to-date reflection of your water use on your billing statement.



2021 Year in Review

Although the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact communities worldwide and drought conditions worsened in California, OMWD celebrated the following accomplishments in 2021.



Fiscal Responsibility

- OMWD water rates remain in the lower half among San Diego agencies.
- Fitch Ratings, a global rating agency that offers independent credit opinions, reaffirmed our “AAA” bond rating with a stable outlook. AAA is the highest possible rating assigned by Fitch, and OMWD is one of only a handful of Southern California water agencies that have achieved this rating, which results in significant savings for our ratepayers in financial transactions.
- Taking advantage of low interest rates, OMWD refinanced sewer bonds to save ratepayers approximately \$250,000.
- OMWD was awarded \$500,000 for our Advanced Metering Infrastructure expansion project from the US Bureau of Reclamation. AMI technology regularly transmits meter reads directly to our office, drastically reducing labor and fuel costs.

Legislation and Regulations

- OMWD opposed Assembly Bill 1434, which proposed lowering residential indoor water use requirements to 40 gallons per person per day. For reference, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency, an average bathtub uses about 70 gallons, and a standard washing machine uses 20 gallons per load. This bill will be considered again in 2022, and OMWD will continue to oppose it.
- OMWD continues to lead the North San Diego Water Reuse Coalition, a group of North County water and wastewater agencies seeking to expand the use of recycled water. Coalition partners were awarded \$6.1 million in funding from US Bureau of Reclamation’s Title XVI program for recycled water projects, of which OMWD will receive approximately \$871,000.

Reliable Water Sources

- OMWD completed a pilot study on the possibility of developing a local water supply through groundwater desalination using grant funding awarded by California’s Department of Water Resources. In 2022, OMWD will commence a sustainability and economic analysis for the project.
- To ensure high-quality recycled water, OMWD completed several replacement and upgrade projects at our 4S Ranch Water Reclamation Facility, including a state-of-the-art ultraviolet light disinfection system.
- OMWD is a leader in distribution system water loss prevention and implements many proactive measures to minimize water loss, including cathodic protection, valve replacement, leak detection, and meter replacement. Through preventative maintenance and our proactive approach to repairs, water loss decreased in 2021, and according to State Water Resources Control Board guidelines, our water loss is about the lowest that is economically feasible to achieve.



Pilot Study Test Well



UV Treatment System

Awards

- Our 4S Ranch Water Reclamation Facility is California Water Environment Association’s Plant of the Year for both the San Diego Section and statewide competitions.
- The Government Finance Officers Association honored OMWD with its Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 20th consecutive year. In order to receive this award, a governmental agency must publish a budget document that meets program criteria as a policy document, as a financial plan, as an operations guide, and as a communications device.
- OMWD received the California Society of Municipal Finance Officers’ Operating Budget Excellence Award. The budget demonstrated how OMWD continues to offer a high level of service despite rising wholesale water costs, increasing regulatory demands from Sacramento, and uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.
- American Public Works Association’s San Diego and Imperial Counties Chapter named our 4S Ranch Water Reclamation Facility’s Ultraviolet Disinfection System Project as its Project of the Year. APWA also recognized our Unit AA Pipeline Emergency Repair with an Honor Award.



Congratulations to Our Plant-of-the-Year Operators

Continued from page 2

For example, under OMWD's current process, you won't see the impact of turning on your irrigation system in early April until your May 31 billing statement. By segmenting customers, we anticipate reducing this time by more than 50 percent.

You will experience improved response times. Currently, all customers receive their bills at the same time, meaning that call volumes increase significantly at times, such as immediately after bills are issued and just prior to the due date. By sending bills throughout the month, customer inquiries will be more evenly distributed throughout the month, allowing Customer Service Representatives to provide you with responsive service with decreased wait times.



What to expect?

With your January 2022 billing statement, you will see a new due date and a period of consumption that's a little longer than usual. **If you pay your OMWD bill using your bank's online payment system, please be sure to update the transfer date in your payment profile to reflect the updated due date.** No action is necessary for those customers who have set up automatic payments directly with OMWD, although you will see a different draw date.

Rest assured, your statement is based solely on your confirmed water consumption and all service charges are prorated to ensure there are no duplicative charges.

After the initial transitional billing statement, your February bill will return to featuring a typical month-long consumption period that will begin and end at different parts of the month, depending on your account. Bills will still be due 25 days after the statement is issued.

In summary, this new process will be able to help you identify excess water use sooner and allow us to be more effective in serving you. OMWD encourages you to let us know if any questions arise about the new process.

To learn more about this improved process, please visit www.olivenhain.com/serveyoubetter.

