Recycled Water System

Program Overview

Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) is widely viewed as an industry leader in recycled water. EMWD has used 100 percent of its recycled water supply for beneficial use in its 555-square mile service area, four out of the last five years. EMWD is one of the largest by-volume recyclers in the nation and one of the few agencies that achieves 100 percent beneficial reuse, which is a strategic objective established by the EMWD Board of Directors.

EMWD began marketing reclaimed water to local farmers for irrigation of feed and fodder crops in 1966. In 1991, EMWD received Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse funding through the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) to develop a recycled water backbone pipeline system, which greatly expanded its ability to deliver recycled water to a growing customer base. In the past decade, EMWD has received more than $10 million in USBR Title XVI funding to further expand its recycled water distribution and storage infrastructure.

EMWD has invested nearly $200 million in infrastructure improvements on its recycled water system with additional funding anticipated to be invested in projects set to break ground in the next five years. EMWD’s recycled water is currently delivered for use on agriculture crops; parks, schools, and other public landscaping areas; industrial facilities; and for environmental enhancement of wetland areas.

To help ensure year-round reliability, EMWD has invested in a number of storage facilities. These facilities include seasonal storage ponds throughout EMWD’s service area and five elevated storage tanks, strategically placed to optimize pressure and reliability. EMWD can currently store 2.3 billion gallons of recycled water. In the winter months, when demand is lower, those facilities are filled to capacity to help meet the increased demands in the hotter summer months. The Trumble Ponds are the largest recycled water storage facility in EMWD’s service area, with a capacity of 586 million gallons (1,800 acre feet). EMWD also has recycled water storage ponds in Perris, San Jacinto, Moreno Valley, and Temecula.
Future Uses

With significant urban development anticipated in the coming decade, EMWD is prepared to manage the corresponding increase in recycled water production. In addition to offering new development the use of recycled water to irrigate common areas and public landscaping, EMWD is securing the regions’ water future through Water Banking and is exploring the use of Purified Water Replenishment in an effort to expand existing groundwater reliability efforts. These future efforts would include advanced treatment, followed by groundwater recharge of the advanced treated recycled water. That water would then be used to recharge local groundwater basins to eventually be extracted for drinking water purposes, creating a sustainable and locally-sourced water supply for the region.

EMWD supports science-based policy decisions and infrastructure investments that will promote the long-term health and growth of its recycled water system. This includes the California WaterFix, which will help ensure a reliable source of high quality drinking water to the region. By investing in potable source water with lower total dissolved solids levels, salinity levels are subsequently reduced in the recycled water system that will help meet Basin Management Plan objectives and allow for the expanded application of recycled water, further reducing the need for additional imported water purchases.