



San Dieguito Water District

Currents

A Water Information Newsletter Published for Customers of San Dieguito Water District • Spring 2012

San Dieguito Water District Celebrates 90 Years of Serving the Community



On March 18, 1922, the establishment of a tiny irrigation district set in motion a stream of events that helped transform the area and propel an agricultural industry to become an economic engine for Encinitas. Having a reliable water supply attracted residents, businesses and tourists and provided amenities needed for a high quality of life.

*The agency's name, customer base, service area, infrastructure and programs have evolved, but San Dieguito Water District's unwavering commitment to our customers, community and the environment remains unchanged. We hope you enjoy this 90th anniversary commemorative issue of **Currents**.*

Bill O'Donnell, Interim General Manager

Pre-District Times ... a Dry Story

The history of our picturesque but arid Encinitas community flows through the history of its water. The average annual rainfall of 12 inches cannot alone sustain life and livelihood.

For thousands of years before the Spaniards arrived in 1769, Native Americans lived in the region. Because rainfall was limited and unpredictable, they practiced water management, building small dams to divert water for irrigation and capturing rainwater in large containers; thus creating the area's first water storage system.

With the arrival of Europeans, the lack of a steady water supply limited population growth and the farming economy. People relied on wells or bought the



Concrete trestle construction, Hodges Flume, June 24, 1918.

coveted liquid commodity from vendors who hauled the water from rivers, stored it in containers and delivered it by wagon.

By the 1880s, water for railroad operations was pumped by a windmill out of Cottonwood Creek into a large wooden tank. One large tank hardly sufficed to serve the needs of residents such as the Hammond family, which would fill a barrel at the tank, then push it up an incline to their home and hotel. Lack of an adequate water system inhibited population growth until 1918 when Hodges Dam, San Dieguito Dam and Hodges Flume were constructed by a private company.

In the early 1920s, as Prohibition turned the country dry, the community that would become "Little Oak Trees" – Encinitas – was poised to drink it up; water, that is.



San Dieguito Dam Site, 1917.

Notable Quotes

"If a guest wanted to take a bath, he was invited to go to the beach, where all was free, and a bathing suit was not necessary, for he would be the only one there."

— Ted Hammond, 1883, explaining water protocol at his family's hotel.

"Delinquencies amount to \$56,557, and a 34.5% delinquency rate."

— SDID newsletter, 1933. The Great Depression worsened the economic woes of the District, leading SDID to ask taxpayers for their help.

"Almost any flower that has been tried in the Encinitas area does well."

— San Diego Union Tribune late 1940s, highlighting the success of commercial agriculture, thanks to a steady water supply.

"It's important that we don't go back to the old habits of not using water efficiently. We could go right back into a dry period."

— Dana Frieauf, SDCWA Principal Water Specialist, Fall 2011, advising people to continue water-wise ways despite regional reservoirs returning to pre-drought levels.

"The water we save today can save tomorrow."

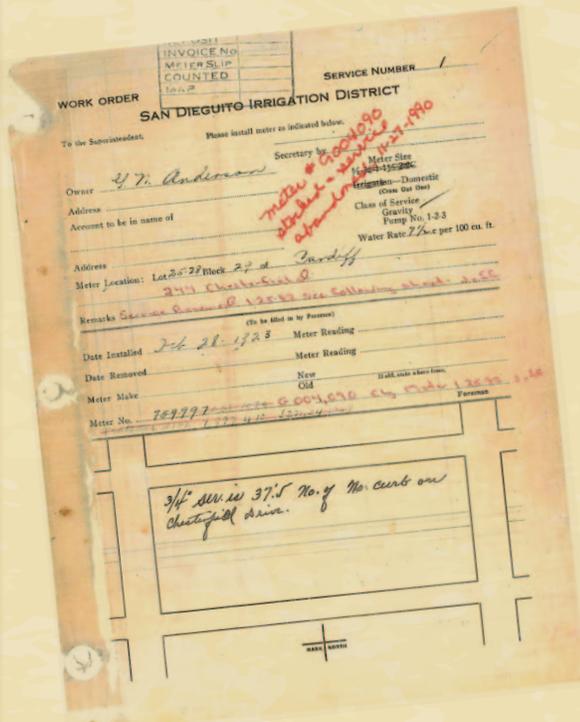
— SDWD's conservation program slogan



The District is Born

In 1922, the South Coast Land Company of Leucadia formed the San Dieguito Irrigation District (SDID). Growth was almost immediate as the Cardiff Irrigation District merged with SDID. During the District's first two decades, most of the water was used for irrigation.

In 1923, a framework for the future was established when SDID contracted with San Dieguito Mutual Water Company to obtain an annual supply of 3,200 acre-feet of water from Lake Hodges. District voters approved a \$400,000 bond to construct a distribution system consisting of 7.5 miles of 26-inch, redwood stave pipeline plus booster pumps to lift the water to higher elevations.



San Dieguito Irrigation District, first meter installation.

Growing Pains

Over the next few years, San Dieguito Reservoir showed signs of a structural leak and Lake Hodges Dam was in need of repair. San Dieguito Mutual Water Company could not afford to make the necessary upgrades. Lake Hodges was sold to the City of San Diego on December 1, 1925.

The 1930s was an unsteady period that was worsened by the massive economic downturn of the Great Depression. A 34% tax delinquency in 1933 left the District unable to meet bond service and operating expenses. As a result, the District was refinanced in 1935.

On a positive front, the late 1930s brought infrastructure repairs, funded by the federal Works Project Administration, plus installation of pumping plants and construction of storage tanks; all of which helped meet the needs of the District's growing population.

Although World War II kept improvements to a minimum because pipeline materials were used for



Progress view. Lake Hodges Dam during construction, June 24, 1918.

the war effort, more domestic meters were added to the system, increasing the demand for potable (drinking) water. In 1940, a chlorine ammonia plant was built at the San Dieguito Reservoir to improve the quality of drinking water.

A Booming Bloom

The 1945 end of WWII signaled the beginning of a flourishing time. As Baby Boomers were born, commercial agriculture took root, leading to Encinitas' designation as Flower Capital of the World. The area was in year-round glory with poinsettias, camellias, avocados, citrus and other plants that added to the community's beauty, attraction and economy.

To keep pace with growth, SDID built the Lake Nunn Reservoir on Encinitas Creek in 1946 and continued an increasingly rapid pace of installing meters for both household and irrigation use.

In 1948, SDID joined the newly formed San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), which entitled the District to a proportionate share of water imported through the Metropolitan Water District (MWD).

Fast Forward

While the country moved into the era of Elvis, steady growth was music to the ears of the District's increasing population. The installation of a 30-inch mainline in 1950 marked a major upgrade to the antiquated original redwood mainline it replaced. In 1956, a one-million-gallon storage tank at Saxony and Puebla Streets was constructed. To accommodate an expanding staff, SDID moved into a new building at 59 East D Street in 1961.

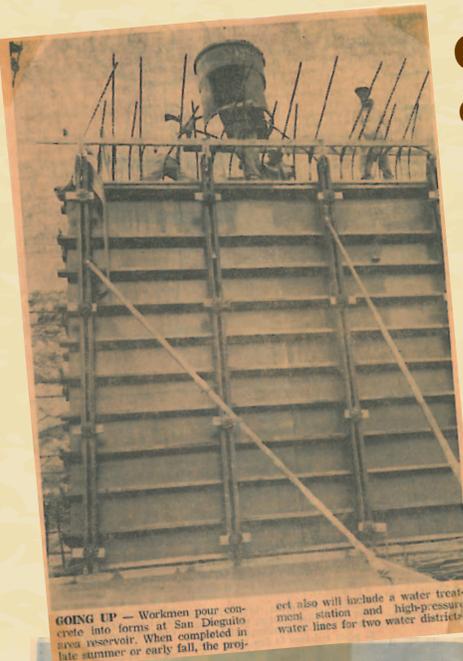
By 1964, the District maintained more than 100 miles of distribution line. To assure a reliable water supply for current and new residents, in 1965 SDID voters passed a \$3 million bond to fund the construction of the R.E. Badger Filtration Plant and a 13-million-gallon reservoir with Santa Fe Irrigation District (SFID). While these improvements were being constructed over the next five years, the District proactively redesigned its entire water distribution system to meet future needs.

Growing Up and Outward

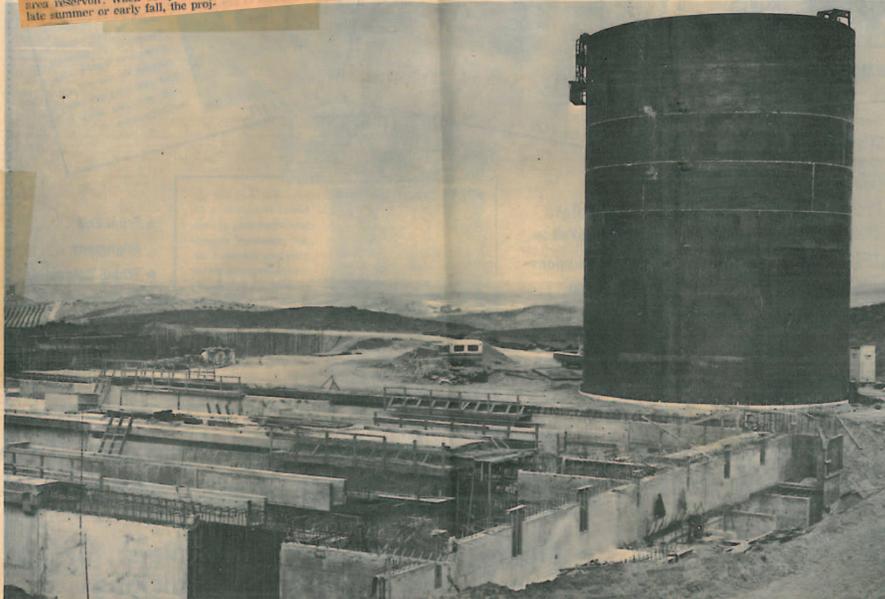
As the 1960s turned into the 1970s, the District's growth spurt continued. In 1969, SDID and SFID purchased the San Dieguito Reservoir. The Badger Filtration Plant was completed in 1970 and a 2.5-million-gallon underground reservoir was built under Oak Crest Junior High ballfields in 1975.

Recognizing that it had evolved far beyond a mere irrigation district, SDID changed its name in 1975 to San Dieguito Water District (SDWD). Over the next several years, SDWD continued to install meters and add infrastructure.

Left: San Dieguito Reservoir, 1968 construction. Below: R.E. Badger Filtration Plant, 1969 construction.



GOING UP — Workmen pour concrete into forms at San Dieguito area reservoir. When completed in late summer or early fall, the project also will include a water treatment station and high-pressure water lines for two water districts.



WATER TREATMENT PLANT — The new joint water treatment plant to be shared by Santa Fe Irrigation District and San Dieguito Irrigation District is half completed, and is expected to be operational by the end of the year. Already completed and in use at the site is a 13,800,000 gallon underground reservoir. The storage tank shown here will be 80 feet tall when completed and will store clean filtered water for back-flushing the filter system which is located in the foreground. The plant will have a capacity of 27,000,000 gallons of filtered and treated water daily. Stan Mills, manager of SDID, says that district water customers will have better water than is available to most of Southern California when the plant is put into operation.

Surmounting Challenges, Seizing Opportunities

In 1986, the five communities of Old Encinitas, New Encinitas, Leucadia, Cardiff and Olivenhain incorporated as the City of Encinitas. SDWD became a subsidiary district of the City, serving the many residents and businesses in coastal Encinitas.

Although the District had provided well for its customers, Mother Nature was beyond everyone's control. In 1987 she had a most unwelcome surprise: four years of drought. As a result, SDWD soon required customers to cut water use by 30%. In Spring 1991, with a 50% cut on the horizon, the "Miracle March Rains" poured down seven inches of water on a parched landscape, averting severe water restrictions.

The experience had an enduring effect, pushing conservation to the forefront of people's minds and actions. In 1991, SDWD adopted a Water Conservation and Emergency Water Management Program so it would be prepared to handle future droughts. It also initiated educational outreach activities, which have increased over the past two decades to make residents aware of the necessity of conservation.

To meet the demand brought about by the development of Encinitas Ranch, a 7.5-million-gallon reservoir was constructed underneath the Encinitas Ranch Golf Course in 1998. The District further diversified its supply in 2000 by using recycled water provided by the San Elijo Water Reclamation Plant. The highly treated water is used to irrigate many areas, thus helping to conserve the District's potable water supply.

Reservoirs and recycling helped, but were not enough on their own to battle the next drought.

In 2008, the District declared a Level I Drought Alert, urging voluntary conservation measures. This was followed by a May 2009 Level 2 Alert with mandatory 8% water-use restrictions. Restrictions were lifted in May 2011 due to above average rainfall across the state and snowpack in the Sierras.

Fun Facts and Stats

METERS

After the first four water meters were installed in 1923, the number of meters skyrocketed to 973 in 1930. The number increased steadily thereafter as shown in the graph below.



CONSERVATION

Thanks to conservation efforts encouraged by SDWD and enthusiastically followed by customers, SDWD's daily gallons per day has decreased dramatically, from 237 in 2000 to 150 in 2010.

DROUGHTS

For decades prior to the District's formation, area residents were at the mercy of rainfall. Even with assurance of a water supply, droughts continued to affect the District. During the 1947 drought, residents were prohibited from irrigating from Saturday night until Monday morning. Violators were fined \$5. An extended drought between 1987-1991 necessitated massive water-use restrictions. Drought returned between 2008-2011.

Right: 1942 SDID Progress Report, Bomb and Air Raid Instructions.

AIR RAID INSTRUCTIONS

Summary

WARNING: The official air raid signal will be a series of blasts on the air horn—3 seconds on—3 seconds off—for a period of 2 minutes; in addition at night all street lights will be extinguished.

ALL CLEAR: All clear will be indicated by a 2-minute continuous signal on air horn.

WHAT TO DO

1. Extinguish outdoor lights; screen indoor lights.
2. Stop traffic.
3. Stay where you are if under shelter.
4. Pedestrians—seek nearest shelter.
5. Motorists—park cars (lights out and car locked) and seek shelter.
6. Keep emergency first aid kit handy in homes and in car.
7. Avoid use of telephone unless absolutely necessary.
8. Don't turn off gas except when building is damaged, in which case cut off the supply at the meter.
9. If there has been bombing within the District with possible damage to water mains, provide a small amount of storage by filling bathtub or other receptacles for emergency use. Stop all irrigation to conserve water by closing the valve at the meter. Do not cut off your domestic supply lines unless damaged.
10. **Loss of Pressure:** Damaged or broken water mains may cause a loss of water pressure to your property. You can determine any loss of pressure by turning on the nearest water faucet and observing the force of the stream. In such event be sure to shut off the gas supply to all water heaters or water-cooled lights or by shutting off the entire gas supply at the meter. You may continue to use your gas range providing the main gas service has not been cut off.



Committed to our Customers and the Environment

Today, with five board members and 25 employees, SDWD maintains 170 miles of pipeline, two reservoirs totaling 10 million gallons, more than 11,400 water services, 15 pressure-reducing stations and a pump station.

Water-use efficiency has been recognized as a key element in the “flow” chart of supply and demand. Knowing that we live in a semi-arid region and that the majority of our water is imported from afar, SDWD

From 1922-2012, it has been our pleasure to serve you.

has provided water-saving devices and incentives, free water audits and ongoing education to children and adults.

From its inception, the District has been dedicated to providing a reliable supply of water to an ever-growing population. To accommodate the District’s diversified economy, the board, management and staff focus on planning for, creating and maintaining infrastructure that will continue to meet our customers’ needs. It is a pleasure to serve you. 



Conservation Activities On Tap for Spring

Don't miss these educational and entertaining events and opportunities.

For more information, contact conserve@sdwd.org or visit www.sdwd.org/conserve.

Turf Removal Program

Ongoing. Jump ahead of the style curve by changing out unused lawn areas for beautiful water conserving plants and get a \$1/square foot turf removal rebate. www.socalwatersmart.com for residential properties; www.mwdsaveabuck.com for commercial properties.

California Friendly Landscape Contest

Submission deadline: April 6th. www.landscapecontest.com.

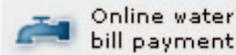
Encinitas Garden Festival and Tour

April 21; 10am-4:30pm. Visit SDWD’s information booth before or after enjoying outstanding landscapes. www.encinitasgardenfestival.org



Connect with Us

- Visit our new and improved, and easy-to navigate website at www.sdwd.org.
- Sign up for e-alerts at www.encinitasca.gov to receive *Currents* and other City publications “hot off the press.”
- Like us at www.facebook.com/SanDieguitoWaterDistrict.
- Have your water bill sent directly to your email. Enroll at cashier@sdwd.org.
- Have recurring payments automatically deducted from your credit card or checking account. Sign up at www.sdwd.org.
- Have you accomplished a water-wise project, small or large, by yourself or with a professional landscaper? If you’d like your beautifully smart renovation to be featured in a future publication, please email water@sdwd.org.



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