

California Department of Water Resources NEWS

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May is Water Awareness Month in California

California's water supplies are plentiful this spring, as the State prepares to observe Water Awareness Month during May.

Water Awareness Month helps educate Californians on water issues and encourage wise use of water resources.

"Water plays a crucial role in the daily lives of Californians. It is vital for human health, environmental vitality and economic progress," said David N. Kennedy, Director of the Department of Water Resources.

DWR operates the State Water Project, one of the world's major water and power systems, providing water to about two-thirds of California's population of more than 32 million.

Careful management of water is a necessity in California, even in wet years because precipitation--a primary water source--is unpredictable year to year, while population and water needs keep growing.

Thanks chiefly to heavy precipitation from January and February storms, California enjoys better than average water supply conditions this year. For the second consecutive year, the State Water Project will provide 100 percent of the water requested by its 29 long-term contractors.

Slogan of the 1996 observance is "Use Water Wisely --- It's a Way of Life." Water Awareness Month will focus on four aspects of water use: industry, drinking water, the environment and agriculture. The State Water Project provides water for all of these water uses.

For Water Awareness Month, DWR will host or take part in a series of special events dramatizing the variety of water uses in California. Here is the list of events:

May 2 - Tour for senior citizens, tour coordinators and travel writers at Vista del Lago Visitors Center, Pyramid Lake, in Los Angeles County. Located on a bluff with a panoramic view of the Lake, Vista del Lago is the largest water information and education center in California. It features multimedia exhibits and displays showing how the State Water Project meets the water needs of two-thirds of California's population, and illustrating the importance of water to California's people, environment, agriculture and industry. (The May 2 event is open by invitation only.)

May 9 - Ribbon-cutting ceremony for new visitor area at DWR's A.D. Edmonston Pumping Plant near Bakersfield. The visitor area has been modernized and new displays added at the SWP plant where water is pumped nearly 2,000 feet up and over the Tehachapi Mountains. Activities for 120 elementary school children will include fishing.

May 11 - Free public tours of Hyatt Powerplant beneath Oroville Dam, key Northern California storage facility for the State Water Project.

May 17 - Walk for Wellness for senior citizens at Oroville Dam. Sponsored by a local hospital, this event features a scenic walk across the crest of Oroville Dam, tallest dam in the United States.

May 18 - Fishing Derby at O'Neill Forebay, just east of San Luis Reservoir, a major storage reservoir near Los Banos. O'Neill Forebay is located near I-5 along State Highway 152. Trophy size striped bass often are caught at O'Neill Forebay. San Luis Reservoir is the largest off-stream reservoir in the United States.

May 24 - Walk for Wellness for senior citizens at Oroville Dam. Sponsored by a local hospital, this event features a scenic walk across the crest of Oroville Dam, tallest dam in the United States.

Fans of California minor league baseball will be interested to learn that nine teams will take part in special events during May to focus attention on water awareness. The nine teams are: Bakersfield Blaze, Adelanto High Desert Mavericks, Lake Elsinore Storm, Lancaster JetHawks, Modesto A's, San Bernardino Stampede, San Jose Giants, Stockton Ports and Visalia Oaks.

Information to help Californians conserve water in their homes and businesses is available from DWR's State Water Information Center in Sacramento at (916) 653-2980.

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The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs. The State Water Project provides water to two-thirds of California's population.

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