

# The

# Current

# FLOW

News for customers of  
Las Virgenes Municipal Water District



Issue #2 - 2013

## What's In This Issue:

- ✓ JPA Files Suit
- ✓ Enviro-friendly
- ✓ Spring Irrigation
- ✓ Pump Stations
- ✓ California Native Plants
- ✓ The Missing Piece
- ✓ What's a Part Per Million?

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## JPA Files to Block Costly and Ineffective Malibu Creek Standards

The Las Virgenes – Triunfo Joint Powers Authority (JPA), which operates the Tapia Water Reclamation Facility has filed a petition with the United States District Court seeking to overturn a U. S. EPA directive to establish stringent new water quality standards for Malibu Creek. If established as proposed, the standards will require construction of over \$160 million in new wastewater treatment facilities.

The proposed standards arise from a 2010 consent decree reached among the EPA, Heal the Bay and Santa Monica Baykeeper (represented by the National Resources Defense Council). The EPA only released its draft document in mid-December, with a cutoff for comments set for January 25, rushed by an impending March 24 deadline.

“Ratepayers need to have a voice if they are to bear these costs,” said Michael McReynolds, who serves as Chair of both the JPA and of the Triunfo Sanitation District Board of Directors. “The JPA Board is firm in its belief that not only has the legal process been mishandled, but there is inadequate scientific evidence to support the desired outcome would be achieved.”

Charles Caspary, JPA Vice Chair and President of the LVMWD Board added, “We remain committed to providing cost-effective wastewater treatment services for our customers, while serving as a responsible environmental steward for the Malibu Creek watershed.”

The JPA has been actively engaged with water quality issues in its service area; updates on this topic can be found at [www.LVMWD.com](http://www.LVMWD.com).



## LVMWD GOES GREEN

Spring brings so many “green” reminders, from the new leaves on the trees and plants to our celebrations of Earth Day, Arbor Day and more.

Over a period of years, LVMWD has made a major commitment to enviro-friendly programs and practices, including-

- ✓ Extensive use of recycled water,
- ✓ Shifting of high-demand power processes to off-peak periods,
- ✓ A composting facility that creates high-quality biosolids for community use,
- ✓ A growing fleet of hybrid and clean-diesel vehicles,
- ✓ More efficient pumping equipment,
- ✓ Recovering energy from biosolids gasses,
- ✓ Investigating the feasibility of solar power generation,
- ✓ Recycling of used materials, such as scrap metals and batteries. ♪



# SPRING IRRIGATION "TUNE-UP" TIPS

**If you never adjust your irrigation controller, chances are you're wasting a lot of water. Why?**

Many irrigation controllers come "pre-set" from the factory with generous default settings (for example, 10 minutes per zone, maybe even more than once per day) to protect the owner's landscape from damage due to under-watering, assuming the controller was simply installed and turned on with no further adjustments. Unfortunately, many homeowners never change these settings as "they seem to be working ok," but they can be quite wasteful and costly.

Water-wise gardeners know that your lawn and garden's watering needs change throughout the year. For example, cool, moist "June-gloom" weather requires much less water than those hot "dog days" of August. A properly-run irrigation schedule ramps up and down through the year. Modern weather-based irrigation controllers (WBICs) can make these adjustments for you and some models include sensors that shut down the system during periods of wet weather. WBICs cost more and take some time to set up but unlike simple controllers, they can help pay for themselves over time. There are also rebates available on some WBICs, check the details at [www.LVMWD.com](http://www.LVMWD.com) under Conservation.

Your spring "tune-up" should also include an inspection of each sprinkler head for proper flow and aiming. Remember that some sprinkler zones require less water, other such as turf, may require a longer watering time. If you are watering every day, try cutting back to every second or third day; your plants will "tell" you if you've cut back too much. Also look around control valves for signs of leaks or dampness in the surrounding soil.

If you're not sure how to set your controller, or if you lost the manual that came with it, write down the model number and check the manufacturer's website. Most brands provide a "support" page with the information you'll need.

Importantly, if you have a landscape maintenance contractor, be sure to discuss your desire to save water with that person. Many contractors believe you judge their work based on lush, green plants and increase the settings on controllers.





Finally, be sure to change the back-up battery found in most irrigation controllers. It's there to protect your settings in case there's a power failure. However, if the battery is dead and there's a power loss, most controllers go back to those costly "default" settings. A new battery is cheap insurance that your water-saving settings will remain in place. 💧



## Understanding Water

### WHAT'S A "PART PER MILLION"?

Sometimes you'll see water quality standards measured in "parts per million" or "parts per billion". But what does that mean? Below is a handy chart that may help you better visualize the proportions in terms of some ordinary items.

ITEM	PART PER MILLION	PART PER BILLION
Linear Measure 	1 inch in 15.78 miles	1 inch in 15,780 miles
Time 	1 minute in 1.9 years	1 second in 31.7 years
Money 	1 cent in \$10,000	1 cent in \$10 million
1 drop of water 	1 drop in a half-full bathtub	1 drop in an Olympic swimming pool

-Source: U.S. EPA; Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation

## Delivering Value and Reliable Service

# PUMP STATIONS MAKE IT HAPPEN

When you turn on the tap, water comes out. How does that happen? For most LVMWD customers, water is delivered by pump stations that provide the pressure to bring water to your neighborhood. Pumps in these stations also deliver water to the storage tank that serves your neighborhood for normal and emergency water use. Pumps may be driven by electric motors or gas-powered engines. If your home is at a higher elevation, chances are the water streaming from the shower head went through two or more pump stations.

A gallon of water weighs 8.34 pounds. To provide the right pressure through all your water fixtures, it is typically lifted 100 feet above the home. The average home uses about 685 gallons per day, so imagine the energy you'd need to manually carry that water up a 100-ft ladder! Pumps are selected to perform this lifting in the most efficient manner. LVMWD's pumps need to have adequate horsepower, so that they don't run continuously. They can then be turned off when electricity costs more, typically in the afternoon on hot, sunny days. Pump

stations may have two or more units to meet daily demands and there is usually a backup unit. Having a spare is important in case a unit fails; it also allows District crews to perform preventive maintenance without interrupting water service.

LVMWD has 24 pump stations positioned across its 122-square mile service area. Instruments monitor the pumps, providing round-the-clock information to District operators. Pumps also have protective devices that shut them down to prevent internal damage and water loss if there is a blockage or a break in a water main. Operators are automatically notified when events like these occur.

The cost of operating, maintenance and replacements needed for these pump stations is included in your water service bill.💧



## LVMWD Salutes Hilton Foundation's LEEDS Platinum Headquarters



cooling towers. Water-saving fixtures are also in use throughout. Altogether, the new features greatly reduce the demand for imported potable water.💧

The new Hilton Foundation headquarters building, located at 30440 Agoura Road, has earned the coveted "LEEDS Platinum" designation for its many energy-efficient features. The new campus includes a commitment to water efficiency, not only using recycled water for landscape irrigation but also used for flushing toilets and in the air-conditioning system's

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*You may direct communications to LVMWD Board members by sending e-mail to: [board@lvmwd.com](mailto:board@lvmwd.com)*

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*Board meetings are scheduled at 5 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. See website for meeting and agenda information.*

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Customer Service -  
818.251.2200

After hours emergency -  
818.251.2100

Construction Hotline -  
818.251.2180

Rancho Las Virgenes  
Composting Facility

**Free Compost Pickup  
Saturdays 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Rebate Information  
[www.LVMWD.com](http://www.LVMWD.com) ~ Conservation

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Potable Water  
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Wastewater Treatment  
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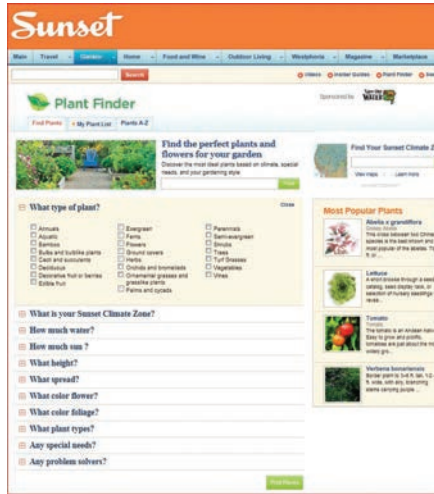


4232 Las Virgenes Road  
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[www.LVMWD.com](http://www.LVMWD.com)

# At Your Service...

## Sunset Magazine Plant Finder Tool On-line

Sponsored by Save Our Water, Sunset's Plant Finder is a large database of plants and descriptions that can be searched based on climate zone, yard size, and other special needs. Recently updated, the database includes 1,000 new additions from the revised The New Western Garden Book. Before you make planting decisions or a major landscape project, visit the site at [www.sunset.com/plantfinder](http://www.sunset.com/plantfinder).



## THE MISSING PIECE

How much does a single gallon of water weigh?

Send your response to:

**THE MISSING PIECE**, LVMWD, 4232 Las Virgenes Road, Calabasas, CA 91302, or submit your answer electronically by sending an e-mail to [dlow@LVMWD.com](mailto:dlow@LVMWD.com) with **"Missing Piece"** in the subject line. **Please include your mailing address in case you are a winner!** Prizes awarded monthly to ten winners randomly selected from the correct responses. Watch for the answer in the next issue of *The Current Flow*.

Previous issue's **MISSING PIECE** answer:

What is the range of sizes of water lines in LVMWD's service?

Answer:

4" – 48"

## California Natives

The plants that covered the sloping hills of "old California" are still excellent choices for home landscapes. These excellent water-wise selections are well suited to our naturally arid climate.

### *Malosma laurina*

Good for erosion control, this highly drought-tolerant plant is so hardy, it will regrow after fires. Plant away from structures. Spring blossoms are white. 8-15'h x 10-20'w

### Laurel Sumac<sup>11</sup>



### Catalina Currant<sup>27</sup>



### *Ribes viburnifolium*

May also be called Evergreen Currant; a good ground cover under native oaks and other trees. Red flowers appear in the spring with fragrant foliage. 3-4'h x 6'w

### *Galvesia speciosa*

This shrubby vine has a long blooming season, sporting bright red tubular flowers. Good for dry and shady conditions. Attracts hummingbirds. 3'h x 6'w

### Catalina Snapdragon<sup>47</sup>



### Elegant Clarkia<sup>44</sup>



### *Clarkia unguiculata*

An annual (sow seeds in the fall) in sandy soil. Keep moist from seeding to flower. Erect reddish stems, the flowers are attractive to bees. 1-4'h x 1'w

For more information, go to [www.LVMWD.com/Conservation/Native Plant Guide](http://www.LVMWD.com/Conservation/Native%20Plant%20Guide) or check out the Garden and Landscape Classes. To find a local retailer to purchase native plants, go to BeWaterWise (<http://www.bewaterwise.com/retailers.html>).

**Photo Credit:** <sup>11</sup> Charles E. Jones, <sup>27</sup> Steve Matson, <sup>44</sup> Jean Pawek, <sup>47</sup> Neal Kramer