SAWPA is a Watershed Agency Focused on Regional Water Issues

Formed originally in 1968 as a planning agency, the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) was created to help resolve interagency conflicts and address regional water issues in the Santa Ana River watershed. SAWPA tackles issues related to water supply reliability, water quality improvement, recycled water, wastewater treatment, groundwater management, and brine disposal.

SAWPA's Role

SAWPA Manages One Water One Watershed Program

SAWPA serves as the program manager, grant applicant, primary grantee, and grant administrator on behalf of local project sponsors participating in the OWOW Program. SAWPA is responsible for submitting required reports and managing invoices and grant disbursements from the state. SAWPA provides final direction, review, and approval for all decisions made for the program through the OWOW Steering Committee and OWOW Pillars.

SAWPA Supports its Member Agencies and Other Organizations with Water Planning

SAWPA is a Joint Powers Authority of five member agencies that supports water resources planning: Eastern Municipal Water District, Inland Empire Utilities Agency, Orange County Water District, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, and Western Municipal Water District. SAWPA seeks to create and facilitate partnerships with and between organizations pursuing shared interests and overall watershed sustainability. Our regional leadership provides a model of collaboration and cooperation utilizing integrated solutions. SAWPA's Mission is to:

- Facilitate communication
- Identify emerging opportunities
- Develop regional plans
- Secure funding
- Implement projects
- Build projects
- Operate and maintain facilities

The One Water One Watershed Program is one of our success stories – additional information about SAWPA programs can be found at www.sawpa.org.

Learn More and Contact Information

For the latest information on SAWPA’s water use efficiency tools, please visit:

www.sawpa.org/water-use-efficiency/

www.CAWaterLibrary.net

Contact Mark Norton at mnorton@sawpa.org

What is One Water One Watershed (OWOW)?

OWOW reflects a comprehensive view of the watershed and water issues encompassing all sub-regions, political jurisdictions, water agencies, and non-governmental stakeholders in the watershed. It is one in which all types of water (imported, local surface and groundwater, stormwater, and wastewater effluent) are viewed as components of a single water resource linked to land use and habitat supporting natural hydrology in the watershed.

One Water One Watershed Plan

OWOW is part of the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Program which promotes collaborative planning and water resources management. The OWOW IRWM Plan for the Santa Ana River watershed was written using a “bottom up” approach to ensure that key discussions of major water resource issues, concerns, problems, goals, objectives and potential solutions originated and were fully vetted at the stakeholder level. The OWOW Plan focuses on the Santa Ana River Watershed IRWM Funding Area, one of 11 throughout the state. The Steering Committee and OWOW Pillars work together to develop the OWOW Plans and coordinate IRWM efforts in the region. The 11-member Steering Committee is composed of representatives from counties, flood control districts, private sector, and environmental and regulatory communities and is supported by the 10 OWOW Pillars working groups comprised of watershed-wide technical experts.

What is Prop 84 IRWM Funding?

Prop 84 IRWM provided $1 billion in grant funding for integrated and regional water resources projects throughout the state. Funding was distributed through four rounds.

Drought Round

In 2014, California's Governor declared a drought state of emergency after facing water shortfalls in the driest year in recorded state history. During the Drought Round, SAWPA was awarded approximately $12.8 million in Prop 84 IRWM grant funding and used $10.5 million in local match to provide drought relief and reduce inefficient water use. These funds assisted participating retail water agencies to reduce their water use in accordance with 2015 mandates.

Projects and Tools created through the SAWPA Drought Round include:

- Web-Based Water Consumption Reporting and Customer Engagement
- Conservation-Based Water Rates
- Turf Removal and Retrofit in Highly Visible Areas
- Aerial Imagery
- Customer Parcel Water Budget Tool
- Retail Water Agency Meter Geocoding and Business Type Classification

Project Agreement 22: The committee was established by the SAWPA Commission on October 17, 2014 to implement the Drought Round and long-term water use efficiency programs in the Santa Ana River watershed in the future.

The Drought Round contract runs from June 2014 --> December 2019.
The Drought Round was developed to implement water use efficiency for the two watersheds, the Santa Ana River and Upper Santa Margarita. Over 37 water agencies participated.

### Highlights of the Drought Round

#### Aerial Imagery

To create individual residential customer water budgets, SAWPA collected three inch high resolution color imagery in 2015 to conduct an analysis of vegetated landscapes including measurements of irrigated turf, shrub and trees, as well as non-irrigated landscape aggregated at the parcel level. This data can be used by retail water agencies to implement conservation-based rates and water use efficiency programs that target inefficient water users by comparing customer budgets to their actual water use.

#### Customer Parcel Water-Budget Tool

This web-based tool allows retail agencies to compare water budgets based on efficiency standards to customers actual water usage. Agencies can click on customer parcels to access information on land use, landscape area, and the past 12 months of estimated outdoor budgets. The tool also creates charts that allows agencies to easily communicate this information with their customers.

#### Conservation Based Water Rates

Funding from the Drought Round supported the evaluation and implementation of conservation-based water rates (also known as budget-based rates) for nine agencies. The funding was provided in two phases for each agency. 50% of the available grant funding was made available for agencies if they did a formal evaluation of the rate structure. If their governing board decided to adopt the rate structure, they had access to remaining 50% of the funding.

Agencies partnered with SAWPA to:

- Reduce agency costs to investigate/implement the rate structure.
- Access technical assistance and public relations documents that answer customer questions on the rate structure.
- Access to staff contacts and expertise from water agencies throughout the region that have adopted the rate structure.

#### High Visibility Turf Removal and Retrofit

The SAWPA member agencies, the Municipal Water District of Orange County and Rancho California Water District used Drought Round grant funding for turf removal rebates to incentivize highly visible turf conversion project on homeowner association, church, commercial and public agency properties. These highly visible projects are located in heavily trafficked areas in order to showcase the visual aesthetic of drought tolerant landscaping. The rebates provided varied but were generally $2 to $3 per square foot of turf removed. The grant funding was matched with local funding from the agencies, as well as funding from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

#### Conservation Area

Turf removal is an effective method of lowering water rates and also providing water savings to the region. Through the Drought Round, SAWPA and member agencies have converted almost 5 million square feet of turf to drought-tolerant landscaping. Before and after of turf removal can be seen above.

### Drought Round Overview

#### Who Participated?

The 2014 Drought Round focuses on reducing water use in the Santa Ana River and Upper Santa Margarita Watersheds. The flight path notes the urban area mapped at a 3-inches per pixel resolution in 2015.

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Aerial imagery data was used to measure the amount of irrigated and irrigable vegetation in the watershed. This is done through vegetation classification and calculating the irrigated area through an analysis of the color imagery.

NEW LEGISLATION PASSED IN 2018

MAKING WATER CONSERVATION A WAY OF LIFE IN CALIFORNIA

Senate Bill 606 and Assembly Bill 1668 were enacted in May 2018 to implement permanent water use reporting and agency-wide targets for urban water suppliers. Tools developed by SAWPA through the Drought Round can help agencies comply with these regulations.