

## Pasadena Star-News

### Water recycling advances

#### Pipeline to irrigate parks, private lawns

By Jennifer McLain, Staff Writer

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Thousands of acres of parks and golf courses across the San Gabriel Valley rely on expensive and precious drinking water for irrigation.

But officials at the Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District, headquartered in El Monte, are trying to change that by installing pipelines that will bring recycled water to public and private lawns.

"This project is significant at several levels," said Assemblyman Mike Eng, D-El Monte. "It will save energy, it will free up drinking water so we don't have to import it, and ... it will build on the public's acceptance of recycled water."

The third phase of a nearly \$45million recycled water project that will bring water from bathrooms to local parks, cemeteries, schools and golf courses broke ground last month in Whittier Narrows.

In total, there are four phases that extend from Whittier to Walnut, and rely on a combination of agencies for funding and planning, such as the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, the Rowland Water District and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts.

Upper San Gabriel water district, which has taken the lead on these projects, buys imported water and sells it to five cities and four water agencies throughout the San Gabriel Valley.

The \$9 million third phase will bring a mile-long pipeline from South El Monte through Rosemead, and will deliver recycled water to Norman's Nursery, four schools, Whittier Narrows Golf Course and to Zapopan Park.

"These kinds of projects will save our water supply," said Upper San Gabriel water board President Leon Garcia. "We don't want to use our (drinking) water to irrigate."

An ongoing drought and a decrease in the imported water supply from the Colorado River and Northern California have forced many water agencies in Southern California to call on their consumers to change their water consumption habits or else face fines.

The recycled water project, which has already been implemented in Rose Hills Memorial Park and portions of Whittier Narrows, is expected to save billions of gallons of water that could be used for drinking water.

When all four phases are completed, more than five billion gallons of drinking water will be conserved each year.

Recycled water also will help reduce energy consumption and cut back on carbon dioxide emissions.

The project has waste water traveling from homes and businesses into reclamation facilities run by the sanitation district, and then are pumped back into pipes that take recycled water to the designated locations.

In the Whittier Narrows phase alone, it is estimated that it will provide about 1.6 billion gallons of recycled water for irrigation in the San Gabriel Valley. It will also save nearly \$14 million in operating expenses and nearly 65 billion gallons of drinking water over the project's life cycle.