The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

NEWS RELEASE

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COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TACKLE GLOBAL, LOCAL WATER ISSUES THROUGH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WORLD WATER FORUM

Eighteen grants totaling nearly $180,000 awarded by Metropolitan, Bureau of Reclamation, Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County

Taking on issues as diverse as developing a low-cost water purifier for rural Guatemala to improving the quality of urban runoff, students from 15 California colleges and universities today received grants to research, develop and communicate water-use efficiency technology and conservation practices that can be cost-effectively implemented locally or globally in water-stressed regions.

U.S. Rep. Grace F. Napolitano (D-Norwalk) joined Timothy F. Brick, chairman of Metropolitan Water District's Board of Directors; William Steele, area manager of the Bureau of Reclamation; and Michael Selna, assistant chief engineer/assistant general manager of the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, in announcing Southern California World Water Forum grants totaling nearly $180,000.

During ceremonies at Metropolitan's headquarters in downtown Los Angeles, grants of up to $10,000 were awarded to teams from the Art Center College of Design, Pasadena; California State Polytechnic University, Pomona; California State Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo; California State University, Northridge; Golden West College, Huntington Beach; Occidental College; Pasadena City College; San Bernardino Valley College; San Diego State University; Santa Monica College; University of California, Los Angeles; University of California, Riverside; University of California, Santa Barbara; University of Redlands; and the University of Southern California.

"As honorary chair of the Southern California World Water Forum, I'm excited to be able to support students who are doing serious research into solutions for our long-term water supply," said Napolitano, who chairs the House Water and Power Subcommittee and co-chairs the House Water Caucus.

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"Securing a reliable water supply, improving conservation and expanding research into new technologies for generating clean, safe water have been my priorities since I was first elected to Congress," Napolitano added.

The World Water Forum is co-sponsored by Metropolitan, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, the American Society of Civil Engineers, Friends of the United Nations and Water For People. (See accompanying list of schools and projects.)

Metropolitan's Brick noted that the district's current education programs strive to educate students from kindergarten to college about the importance and fragility of water in Southern California.

"World Water Forum benefits cross over on many levels," said Brick, who was joined by Metropolitan board Vice Chair Anthony Fellow and MWD General Manager Jeff Kightlinger at the ceremony. "It fosters new ideas for water-efficiency technology and re-energizes the engineering field with young and talented students who are inspired to tackle some of the world's water problems."

The grants presented today mark the second cycle of sponsorships awarded by the World Water Forum. In 2004-05, 12 grants were awarded to students at eight colleges and universities.

Along with the issues dealing with Guatemala and urban runoff, students sponsored in this round will undertake a variety of other projects and issues, such as developing a GIS-based suitability model for Rwanda's rural water supply and removing silica from inland brackish water. The 18 sponsored projects were chosen from a record 40 submissions—more than double the number of proposals submitted in 2004-05—by an evaluation panel that included engineers, educators, communication specialists, scientists, and water-resource managers. Completed projects are due in January 2009.

Steele of the Bureau of Reclamation acknowledged the importance of "finding and developing the water leaders and managers for tomorrow."

"Reclamation supports the World Water Forum because the program's intent is to challenge college and university students to look for next creative ideas that could lead to the next breakthrough in water conservation," Steele said. "The other part of the program is directed toward finding ways to help people in developing countries have access to safe and clean water supply to sustain life. Both of these are excellent reasons for our support of this creative and innovative way to engage students in the real issues of our world."

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With safe drinking water scarce in much of the world, Selna said the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County support the World Water Forum and its goal of stimulating the creativity of the next generation in solving water-related problems.

"The Sanitation Districts strive to protect public health and the environment through cost-effective wastewater and solid waste management solutions and maximize the conversion of waste into resources such as reclaimed water, energy, and recycled materials," Selna said. "The World Water Forum provides an outstanding opportunity for students to contribute their fresh ideas on how to accomplish these goals."

The United Nations estimates that more than one billion people worldwide do not have sustainable access to safe drinking water, and 2.6 billion do not have access to adequate sanitation. In response, the U.N.'s General Assembly has proclaimed 2005-2015 as the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life," which includes a commitment by all 191 member nations to reduce by half the proportion of people unable to reach or afford safe drinking water.

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The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a cooperative of 26 cities and water agencies serving 18 million people in six counties. The district imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies, and helps its members to develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage and other resource-management programs.

College	Amount	Project Name
Art Center College of Design	$9,800	Providing Access to Clean Water in Rural Guatemala - A Proposal for a Low-Cost Solar Water Purifier
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	$10,000	Bio Sand Filtration and Curriculum for Public Schools
Cal Poly Pomona	$10,000	Fostering Water Awareness and Conservation at Locke High School
California State University, Northridge	$10,000	Aquifer Analysis of the South Las Posas Basin
Golden West College	$10,000	Mobile Water Education Project
Occidental College	$10,000	Study of Ground Water and Nanofiltration Membrane Processes In Mali, Africa
Pasadena City College	$10,000	Strategy To Improve Water Quality of Urban Run-Off
San Bernardino Valley College	$10,000	Gray Water to Green Trees
San Diego State University	$9,900	Disinfection of Secondary Effluent Using Surfactants Immobilized on the Surfaces of Minerals
Santa Monica College	$10,000	Water Conservation Through Public Service Announcements in Los Angeles
University of California Los Angeles, Engineers Without Borders	$9,000	Rainfall Collection Near Chocantariy, Guatemala
University of California, Riverside	$10,000	Silica Removal From Inland Brackish Water
University of California, Santa Barbara, School of Environmental Science	$10,000	Training on Sustainability for Local Experts in Peru
University of Southern California, Engineers Without Borders	$10,000	Potable Water For Indigenous Lencas Village of Corral de Piedras, Honduras
University of Southern California, Civil and Environmental Engineering	$10,000	Let The Games Begin! Water Education using Board Games
University of Southern California, Civil and Environmental Engineering	$10,000	Design Of An Instant Hot Water System To Increase Water Conservation
University of Southern California, School of Policy, Planning & Development	$10,000	Green Alley Design: Creating A Menu Of Water Conservation Options
University of Redlands, College of Arts And Sciences	$10,000	Developing a GIS-Based Suitability Model for Rural Water Supply In Rwanda