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Agencies cooperating to refurbish reservoir for recycled water

As drought conditions worsen in California, the San Elijo Joint Powers Authority is partnering with the San Dieguito and Olivenhain Municipal water districts to expand water recycling in north San Diego County.

The three districts' cooperation in the planning and building of recycled water infrastructure dates to the early 1990s. Today, the agencies are planning a \$2.2 million rehabilitation of the Wanket Reservoir. The San Dieguito and Olivenhain water districts built the 3-million-gallon reservoir in 1974.

The concrete tank, which overlooks the Encinitas Ranch Golf Course east of Quail Gardens Drive, was last used to store potable water in 2008, as water conservation efforts and more-efficient indoor plumbing rendered the tank unnecessary.

However, the tank will provide needed storage for recycled water for irrigation and industrial uses by customers of the Olivenhain and San Dieguito districts. As state authorities call upon Californians to conserve, recycled water reduces demands upon potable water while expanding the diversity and resiliency of local water supplies.

"With the entire state under an official drought emergency, increasing recycled water reliability is more important than ever," said Olivenhain Board President Larry Watt. "This cooperative effort leverages existing infrastructure to accomplish this, while utilizing grant funding to reduce fiscal impacts to ratepayers."

Budgeted by San Elijo Joint Powers Authority for \$2.2 million, the planned rehabilitation is substantially less expensive than building a new tank and less disruptive to the community and environment. State and federal grant funds are expected to cover \$750,000 of the project's costs.

"The San Elijo JPA, Olivenhain and San Dieguito water districts have a collaborative mindset," said Michael Thornton, General Manager, San Elijo Joint Powers Authority. "That creates a win-win solution for ratepayers while building local, sustainable water supplies."