



---

**Media Contact:**

Kimy Wall | 951-296-6933 | [wallk@ranchowater.com](mailto:wallk@ranchowater.com)

---

**EDITORIAL FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 25, 2022

**Teaming up with NASA:  
Rancho Water's launch into space-age technology**

In a residential neighborhood in Temecula, California, a homeowner waters their freshly planted lavender at 6:00 a.m. As the water seeps into the ground, the water meter slowly advances and registers real-time water consumption in an app created by the Rancho California Water District (Rancho Water) to help customers budget and track their water usage. At the same time, thousands of miles above Earth, satellites from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) can monitor the same neighborhood – tracking soil moisture, evapotranspiration, and other data critical to addressing the statewide drought.

In a time when technology has become part of our daily lives and the Western region of the United States is trying desperately to reduce the impacts of an ongoing drought, water agencies are harnessing new technologies to address water challenges. Water agencies, like Rancho Water, are looking to the skies, not only for rain and snowfall, but for satellites that can collect much-needed data used to forecast future water supplies. Thankfully, NASA is a partner in this effort.

Recently, Rancho Water's General Manager Robert Grantham participated in a panel discussion with Mark Davidson, Private Sector Engagement Lead for NASA Western Water Applications Office, and Craig Miller, Western Municipal Water District General Manager. On December 2, 2021, during the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) Conference, the panel presented satellite imagery and discussed some of the environmental tools that NASA is developing. These tools will help to better predict and forecast snowpack, precipitation, and river stream flows. This global technology offers our local water districts a great opportunity to refine and more accurately forecast future weather patterns. This is, of course, important for short-term planning during single dry year events. However, it also offers insights into longer-term trends, allowing the water industry to make smart long-term capital and water supply decisions and investments.

Some of the technology presented during the panel discussion is already being utilized by Rancho Water. "We are proud to be on the leading edge of technology," said Grantham. "The data that NASA is making available to the water industry will enable us to further advance our own programs. For example, we pioneered software that allows our customers to track their water usage in real-time and then correlate that to outdoor watering needs." He continues, "We are also better able to detect leaks and provide feedback to our customers in a way that allows them to save money and reduce water losses, which benefits our whole community."

The District developed custom technology, MyWaterTracker, to provide its customers with an easy to use, digital platform that enables customers to visually see and track their water use on a day-by-day basis. Customers can easily access the tracker from their mobile devices or in their online account for a real-time update. In addition, Rancho Water tracks evapotranspiration (ET) data and directly correlates that to each customer's monthly water budget. The ET data tracks the loss of water from a vegetated surface through the combined processes of soil evaporation and plant transpiration, or the amount of water that is lost and needs to be replaced. With that knowledge, Rancho Water adjusts customers' outdoor budget so that enough water is available to keep landscapes healthy, but not overwatered.

Rancho Water Board President Carol Lee Gonzales-Brady expressed her excitement about the collaboration and added, “The groundbreaking technology that NASA is developing will directly benefit Rancho Water customers and our entire region as we strive to achieve our strategic goals. Through this partnership, shared data will assist us in modeling, planning, and budgeting appropriately for future investments in water conservation, storage, and conveyance opportunities.”

Rancho Water understands the crucial need for collaboration across the water industry. The information that NASA is developing will allow the industry to collectively better forecast water supplies, improve irrigation practices and crop management, and make informed decisions on water transfers. Grantham noted that this technology also provides a significant opportunity to support smaller and more rural water agencies within California.

“By developing tools for the benefit of our community and customers, we can do so in a collaborative way, which will reduce costs and make those tools available to the water industry at-large,” said Grantham. “This is just one way that larger agencies support smaller ones. It is something that we are very proud of because it is a meaningful way to address our collective water concerns. These challenges extend well beyond our own service areas.”

The local community is at the forefront of Rancho Water’s mission – providing high quality, safe water for the community. Not only is it important for Rancho Water to understand and use the collected data, it is equally important to make this information available to the residents, business owners, and agriculture managers in the area. By educating the public, Rancho Water empowers them to aid in the long-term sustainability of our water sources. NASA agrees. One of their main goals is to make usable, practical applications, which allow the stakeholders to realize the value of these programs and assume ownership of the process and products.

For the homeowner diligently watering his plants, NASA may seem like an unattainable federal government agency that is more focused on reaching for the stars than the ground beneath their feet. However, with new projects that go hand-in-hand with Rancho Water’s technology, it is clear that the agency responsible for putting a man on the moon is eager to save the precious resources on the planet we call home.

###

**About Rancho California Water District:** *The mission of Rancho Water is to deliver reliable, high-quality water, wastewater, and reclamation services to its customers and communities in a prudent and sustainable manner. Rancho Water is a local, independent Special District, organized on August 16, 1965, servicing approximately 150 square miles and about 45,000 service connections in Temecula, Murrieta, and parts of unincorporated Riverside County.*

