

Our Drinking Water, Our Watersheds, Our Responsibility

What is a watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that drains water into a lake or a river. Everything that is on the land, whether a natural feature or a human activity, is part of the watershed.



El Capitan Watershed and Reservoir

What is a reservoir?

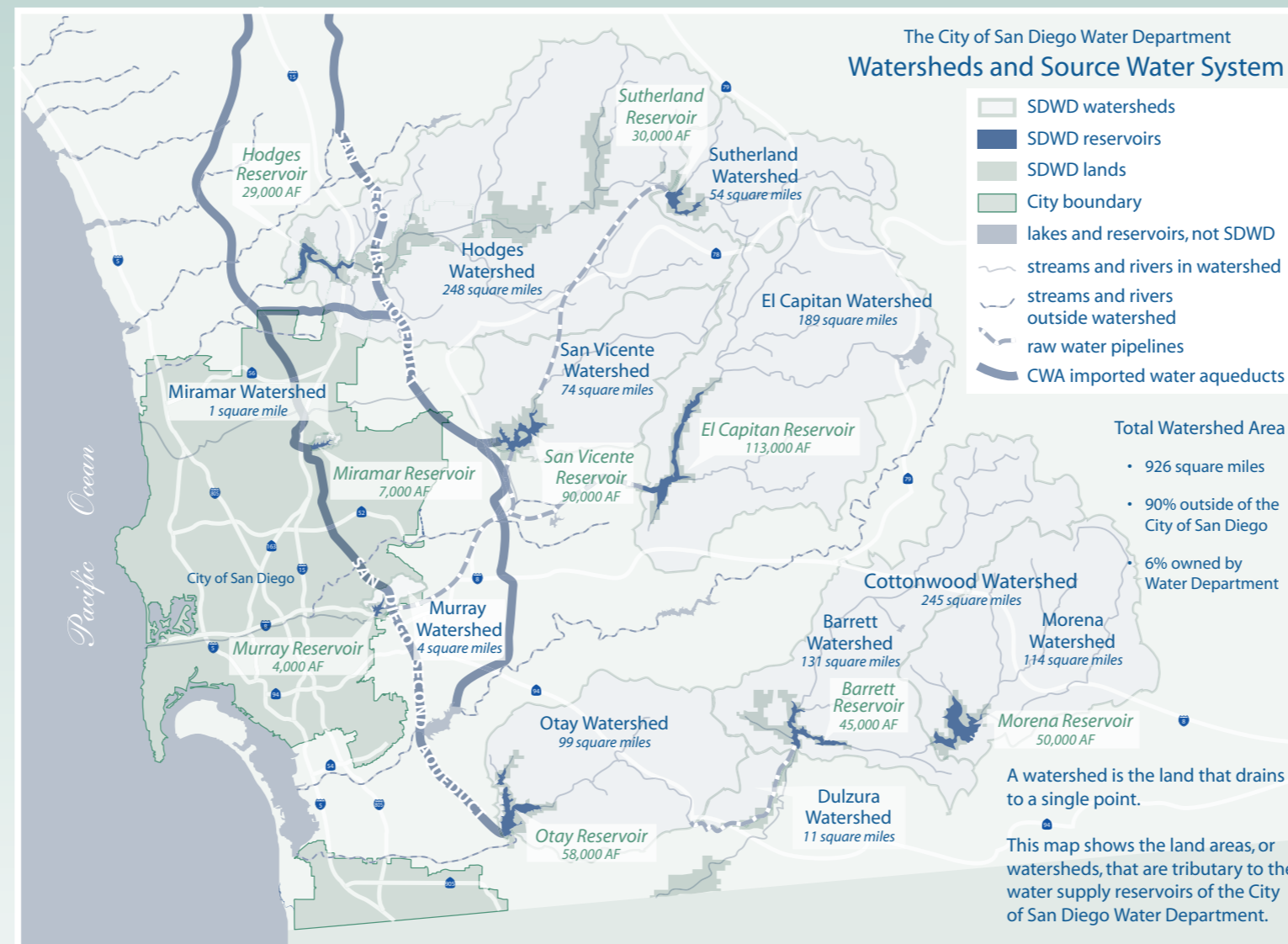
Reservoirs are more commonly known as lakes. In the San Diego region, all of the reservoirs (lakes) are man-made features built to supply water to our communities. These reservoirs capture runoff from rainfall and also store water imported from hundreds of miles away.

While capturing runoff, the reservoirs also become "accumulators" of anything that is picked up or carried by the runoff. Pollutants, sediments, and other materials from the watersheds end up in the reservoirs.



Otay Dam and Reservoir

The San Diego Water Department operates a system of nine water supply reservoirs throughout San Diego County.



Which watershed do you live in? What reservoir is near you?

Why protect our watersheds and reservoirs?

Our water supply reservoirs have multiple uses, such as:

- Drinking water
- Irrigation
- Recreation (boating and fishing)
- Wildlife food and shelter

Each of us lives, works, or plays in the watersheds. What we do in our everyday lives can have an effect on the watersheds, the reservoirs, and the quality of our drinking water.

Protection of Our Drinking Water Sources: The Multiple Barrier Approach

A tiered strategy of multiple barriers provides protection at every stage of water movement, from source to tap. Each method of protection acts as a barrier to safeguard drinking water from contamination. The barriers include:

- Source Protection at Watersheds and Reservoirs
- Treatment: Filtration, Disinfection, and Testing
- Distribution System: A closed, secure system of pipes to distribute the water to consumers



Alvarado Water Treatment Plant



Backflow Pipe at Alvarado Water Treatment Plant

How can you protect our watersheds?

Help prevent pollution and contaminants from getting into our drinking water at its source.

- Pick-up and dispose trash and pet wastes properly
- Use less fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides on landscaping
- Adjust irrigation schedules to prevent over-watering
- Recycle used oil at appropriate facilities
- Participate in clean-up events



Lake Murray

How does the Water Department protect our watersheds and reservoirs?

- Uses efficient and low emission motors on rental and patrol boats
- Educates nearby residents about how activities at their homes can affect water quality
- Provides Source Water Protection Guidelines For a copy, check out www.sandiego.gov/water
- Works with other government agencies to influence land use practices
- Patrols reservoirs and watershed lands
- Uses best management practices on construction sites
- Informs travelers using watershed boundary signs



Protecting water sources is vital to providing healthy and safe drinking water for our communities.



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

