The Padre Dam Municipal Water District (MWD) provides water, wastewater, reclaimed water, and park and recreation services within the City of Santee, a portion of the City of El Cajon, and the surrounding unincorporated communities of Lakeside, Crest, Harbison Canyon, Blossom Valley, and Alpine.

The predecessor to the Padre Dam MWD—the Rio San Diego MWD—was formed in 1955. In 1976 the Santee County Water District was dissolved, service responsibility transferred to the Rio San Diego MWD, and Rio San Diego renamed Padre Dam MWD. In 1985, the Crest Public Utility District was dissolved and the District’s service responsibility transferred to the Padre Dam MWD. In 1986, service responsibilities for the dissolved Alpine Highlands Water District was also transferred to the MWD.

The District is a member agency of the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) and imported SDCWA water is the sole source of the MWD’s water supply. Prior to 2006, the District served as wholesale water supplier for the Lakeside and Riverview Water Districts. The 2006 Upper San Diego River Reorganization: (1) dissolved the Riverview WD; (2) transferred service responsibility to the Lakeside WD; and (3) detached Lakeside WD territory from the Padre Dam MWD. Lakeside WD subsequently joined SDCWA and Padre Dam MWD ceased its wholesale activity.

Padre Dam MWD has operated a wastewater collection and treatment system since 1960. The District is a member of the San Diego Metropolitan Wastewater JPA (METRO) and approximately 60 percent of district wastewater is transferred to METRO for treatment at the Pt. Loma facility. The remaining 40 percent is treated to tertiary levels and discharged into the district-owned and developed Santee Lakes. The Santee Lakes recreational area offers camping, fishing, and related recreational activities.

LAFCO approved a sphere-of-influence for the Padre Dam MWD in 1985 that is larger than the district boundary. Per the 2007 sphere affirmation, a Special Study Area was designated for 473 acres that includes the Sycuan Indian Tribe. This is also designated as a Special Study Area in the Otay Water District sphere. After the necessary planning approvals, the study areas will be resolved.