

# MRWPCA UPDATE

MONTEREY REGIONAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY

Since 1977

Dedicated to Meeting Northern Monterey County's Wastewater and Recycled Water Needs



General Manager Keith Israel fields reporters' questions during the

*CNN Came But Left Without a Story*

## Recycled Water Proves to Be One of the Safest Water Sources for Crop Irrigation

During the recent spinach recall, CNN sent an investigative team to MRWPCA's treatment plant to see if they could find a link between the spinach contamination and the recycled water used to irrigate edible food crops in Monterey County. But after spending a few hours touring the facility and reviewing its operational procedures, the reporters left without a story.

"Not one federal or state investigator made a visit to our plant during the crisis," reported MRWPCA General Manager Keith Israel. "I'm sure they are aware of the extensive data and studies done over the years confirming the safety of our recycled water and showing that it has continued to exceed all of the California Department of Health Services' (CDHS) requirements all of the time since the facility began operation in 1998. With the world's strictest criteria for irrigation water used for edible

crops, CDHS requires seven total coliform tests per week. MRWPCA samples 31 times per week and tests each sample for both total and fecal coliform. If the water-quality standard isn't met, the facility is equipped with a system that automatically reprocesses the water until it is met.

During the facility's nine years of operation, E. coli has never been detected and there has never been an adverse occurrence caused by the water produced. Using objective analysis, the water is far safer than most other water sources and has been approved for recreational reservoirs; it's "gulpable."

The national WaterReuse Association states, "There has never been a verified illness caused by recycled water in California." In fact, recycled water has been used for at least 35 years without incident to irrigate

*Thanks to You, It's Working*

## Sewer Grease Is on the Decrease

Since the "don't pour your cooking fats, oil and grease down the drain" program began several years ago, "we have seen a noticeable decrease in the amount of grease coming into our wastewater pump stations," reports Lead Field Maintenance Mechanic Bret Boatman.

Cooking oil and grease, which cool and congeal on the inner walls of sewer lines, have been the leading cause of almost every recorded sewer spill into the Monterey Bay.

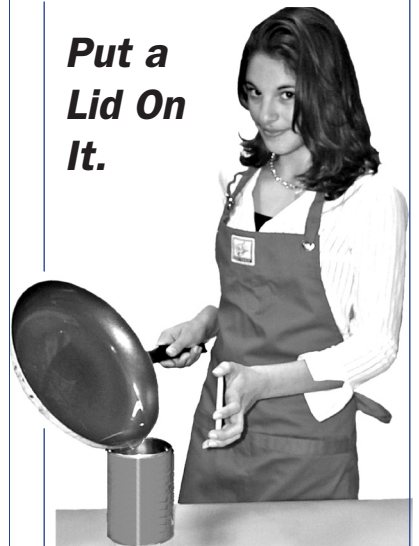
To safeguard the Bay against sewer spills:

- Pour all cooking oil and grease into a resealable can or bag and place them into the garbage. (Garbage disposals don't remove grease.)
- Scrape grease, butter and food scraps from pans and plates into the garbage.
- Use sink strainers.
- Take turkey fryer oil to your local landfill collection facility (residential only).
- Tell your family and friends.

For more information about cooking grease and oil disposal, contact Community Relations Specialist Karen Harris at (831) 645-4604 or 422-1001.

# GREASE

**Put a  
Lid On  
It.**



Fall 2006



### *The First Time Around*

## Lab Gets It Right

The MRWPCA Laboratory is a busy place. In addition to testing wastewater and recycled water, lab analysts sample incoming chemicals used in the treatment processes, periodically check irrigation wells for seawater intrusion and monitor water quality at the City of Salinas wastewater storage facility. "We also calibrate and maintain our equipment," says Silvia Burnett, lead analyst.

The State of California Department of Health Services performs audits on the tests conducted in the lab. "We've received the highest certification in the Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program," reports Silvia. Results for the major tests can be viewed at [www.mrwPCA.org](http://www.mrwPCA.org).

Silvia lived in Peru before joining MRWPCA in 1997. "I haven't been back," she says. "This is my home. Most of my relatives live here. It's a challenge getting all 20 of us together, but we try to do that at least once a month and always on birthdays."

## We're Here to Serve You

The Monterey Regional Water Pollution Control Agency is responsible for treating wastewater for Del Rey Oaks, Monterey, Pacific Grove, Salinas, Sand City, Seaside, Boronda, Castroville, Moss Landing, Marina, the former Fort Ord, and unincorporated areas of northern Monterey County. MRWPCA's facilities include a 30 million gallon-per-day treatment plant and water recycling facility located two miles north of Marina, as well as community pumping stations and transport piping to the treatment plant. (City sewer systems are maintained independently by each city.)



### *Peak Volumes Increase*

## 2006-2007 Water Recycling Season Comes to a Close

Due to the late winter rains, the current water recycling season began April 21, a day later than last year and the latest start since operations began in 1998. Still, this year the facilities produced more water during the peak months (June through October) than last year – 9,055 acre feet in 2006 compared to 8,579 acre feet in 2005.

## Save Time and Postage with Automatic Payment Service

If you would like to take advantage of MRWPCA's automatic payment service: 1) Sign and return the coupon below with your payment. 2) Pay with a check from the account to be used (with this, we can instruct your bank to automatically deduct your payment every two months). If you have any questions, give us a call at 372-2385 or 449-6366.

I authorize MRWPCA and my financial institution to initiate entries to my  checking  savings account for wastewater fees. This authority will remain in effect until I notify you of cancellation in writing. I can stop payment of any entry by notifying my financial institution three days before my account is charged. I can have the amount of an erroneous charge immediately credited to my account up to 15 days following issuance of my financial statement or 60 days after posting, whichever occurs first. This amount deducted will equal the balance owed.

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Signature

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Date