

MRWPCA UPDATE

MONTEREY REGIONAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY www.mrwPCA.org Since 1977
Dedicated to Meeting Northern Monterey County's Wastewater and Recycled Water Needs

MRWPCA and MCWD Sign Memorandum of Understanding Agreement Opens Door for Wider Use of Recycled Water

In June of this year, MRWPCA and the Marina Coast Water District (MCWD) signed a joint agreement that sets the stage for the Regional Urban Water Augmentation Project (RUWAP). The first component of the project will be recycled water to meet non-potable water demand at the former Fort Ord golf courses and California State University Monterey Bay. (Desalinated water would be added at a future time.) In addition to Fort Ord area demands, 300 acre-feet of recycled water would be set aside for the Monterey Peninsula.

Recycled water produced at the Agency's water recycling facility will be piped along General Jim Moore Boulevard (pictured below) to Del Rey Oaks. The distribution system will be constructed and operated by MCWD. From there, other Peninsula communities will be able to tie into the system.

The recycled water distributed by the RUWAP will be used for irrigation, such as for the existing golf courses in Seaside, and other non-potable applications.

MRWPCA is developing the construction documents for the pump station and pipeline facilities located at the regional treatment plant. MCWD is developing the construction documents for the backbone pipeline, tanks and pump station. Funding for the project has not yet been secured, but efforts are underway to obtain construction funds from a combination of sources, including stimulus grants, federal funding and loans.



Tomorrow's Environmentalists Students Programs Ensure Our Future

Lauren Johnson (top photo) from Santa Catalina Lower School and Claire-Virginia Westerkamp (below) from York School were recognized for their projects in the annual Monterey County Science and Engineering Fair at MRWPCA's April board meeting. Their project titles—"Holding Back the Tide: Sassy Strawberry Salinity" and "A Water Pollution Solution"—follow MRWPCA's goal to reuse and protect one of the world's most valuable resources—water. As the students discussed their projects and answered questions at the board meeting, it was apparent they were talking about something that really was of great interest to them.

MRWPCA offers students opportunities that encourage them to study environmental issues and water reuse through an internship program, job shadowing participation and support of the annual science fair.

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Maintenance Emphasizes Preventing Breakdowns

John Serrato is approaching 20 years as a maintenance mechanic at MRWPCA. As with all mechanics, he says listening is an important skill. "Often, we can tell when something isn't quite right just by the sound of a pump or engine when it's running," he states. "But we don't rely on our senses alone. All equipment is now entered into a computerized system that generates work orders when it's time to perform preventative maintenance on a particular piece of equipment."

And there's a lot of equipment, including piping and electrical circuitry, to maintain. To look after the 25 pump stations and the Regional Treatment Plant, which treats well over 20 million gallons of wastewater per day for approximately 250,000 customers, MRWPCA currently employs 14 mechanics. Previously, the maintenance staff "specialized" and were assigned to the field (the pump stations and pipe system) or the plant. "We now have a cross-training program," John reports. "In the near future, all mechanics will be equally available for either type of work."

After nearly two decades, John says he still looks forward to going to work. "I feel fortunate. We have a group of highly skilled mechanics and managers who never hesitate to go out of their way to help each other." When he does take a vacation, he enjoys reading or taking short trips with his wife and values spending time with his children and grandchildren. And his mechanic skills come in handy when he volunteers his services for local churches."



MRWPCA's recycled water facility has a proven record of producing safe, reliable water, which is being used to irrigate edible food crops. Currently, projects are being studied to expand the use of this valuable resource to fill other needs in the County.

Recycled Water Update

Facility Meets Production for Peak Agricultural Months

Through August, recycled water production totaled 9,793 acre-feet for 2009. That's less than the 11,241 acre-feet produced by this time last year. "We didn't have the demand for water from the growers this year because of the rains," states James Dix. "After a February start-up, we shut down the facilities temporarily, then restarted in March. But we've now just completed the peak demand and production months of June through August. Everything is running well, and we're continuing to produce a lot of water."

Turning Wastewater into Safe Water

What We Do

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 operates the 30 million gallon-per-day treatment plant and water recycling facility, located two miles north of Marina. It also maintains 28 pump stations, 35 pressure-vacuum stations and approximately 32 miles of pipeline that transports wastewater to the treatment plant. (City sewer systems are maintained independently by each city.)

After treatment, the recycled water is used to irrigate edible food crops in the northern Salinas Valley. Reducing the need to pump water from wells is part of a regional effort to slow seawater entering the underground aquifers.