

# MRWPCA UPDATE

MONTEREY REGIONAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY

Since 1977

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



*Farmlands in northern Monterey County use recycled water for irrigation.*

## The Hard Facts About Soft Water

### Water Softener Users Can Help Protect Our Water Supply

**T**hough MRWPCA's water recycling facility cleans wastewater exceptionally well, sodium chloride (table salt) cannot be removed in the tertiary treatment process. The recycled water produced at the facility irrigates farmlands in northern Monterey County, which previously had been irrigated with water drawn only from our aquifers. Now that our aquifers are not being depleted, our water supply is actually increasing.

During the past year, levels of sodium chloride (table salt) present in our recycled water has soared. Since sodium chloride damages plants by restricting their root absorption, it has become a significant threat to our water supply.

Though only one out of five households in Monterey County use water softeners, those that do discharge tons of salt down their drains every day.

#### *How You Can Reduce Sodium*

If you have a water softener, please consider the following tips:

- Investigate using water softener alternatives such as an exchange service or water conditioners, which are listed on our website [www.mrwPCA.org](http://www.mrwPCA.org)
- Replace "timer-controlled" water softeners with technologically advanced "demand-type" units that only regenerate water when needed, rather than on time schedule.
- Use potassium chloride in your water softener instead of sodium chloride. Check our website for local vendors. (Potassium is a nutrient important for plant growth and also for healthy diets.)
- Purchase an efficient water softener that uses fewer pounds of salt per gallon of water treated.

If you have any questions, please call MRWPCA's Source Control Division at 883-1118 or 424-1108.

*Did You Know? For an average family of four using a water softener, approximately 40 pounds of sodium chloride (table salt) are discharged into the wastewater sewer each month.*

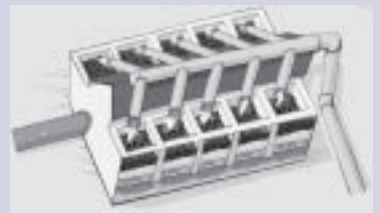
## Recycling Our Wastewater

### How Tertiary Treatment Works

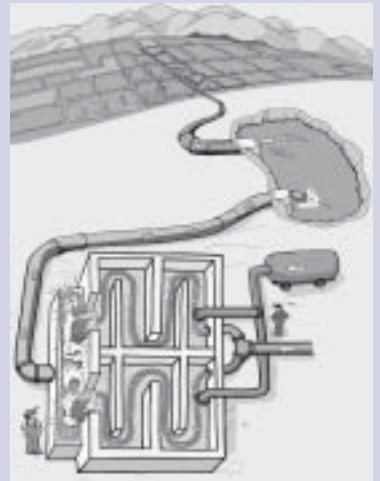
In 1997 MRWPCA enhanced its wastewater treatment processes by adding tertiary treatment. Previously, all of the secondary treated wastewater was discharged through an outfall pipe extending two miles into the bay. With the additional tertiary processes, the recycled water produced complies with stringent water standards and is safe for crop irrigation. The additional tertiary processes are:



**Flocculation Basins** in which chemicals are added that clump remaining organic contaminants that are not collected during the secondary treatment;



**Filters** in which solids that were formed in the flocculation basins are trapped in filtration beds;



**Chlorine Contact Tanks** in which the wastewater is disinfected; and **Storage Pond** in which the recycled water is held before being piped to farmlands in northern Monterey County.



*Being Able to Smell the Sea Breeze*

## Odor Control Remains a High Priority

The Monterey Pollution Control Agency operates 28 wastewater pump stations in the various communities it serves. Several of the stations are in public areas, such as along the bike trail in Pacific Grove. Containing and eliminating unpleasant odors is a continual process.

"The field maintenance staff works diligently to eliminate any 'fugitive emissions' from the pump stations," states Vince Pellerin. "We use the latest products and technology to treat both the air stream and the wastewater to prevent bacterial growth, which is the source of odors."

Equipment is inspected daily, odor-prevention chemical levels

are checked several times a week and, to determine the continuing effectiveness of longer-lasting chemicals, samples are sent semi-annually to a laboratory for analysis.

The result of all the attention to odor control is that MRWPCA receives very few inquiries regarding fugitive emissions.

"It's been over a year since anyone has called about odors," Vince says, "and when we do get a call, we often find that the source of the odor isn't from a pump station but from decaying seaweed, a dead sea lion on the shore or a nearby storm drain that has a high concentration of bacterial decay."

[www.mrwPCA.org](http://www.mrwPCA.org)

## Visit Us Online

We are continually expanding and updating our website. So, if you haven't visited us recently, you'll be in for a surprise. New features include:

- Archives of "MRWPCA Update," the customer newsletter, are now available.
- A download page has been added to for visitors searching for specific documents.
- Visitors can now use an online form to request tours and presentations.
- A calendar has been installed that provides information on Board meetings, presentations and special events (such as MRWPCA participation at various community events).

## 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'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.)

## Customer Payment Update

### Discounts Offered

To save you time and money, MRWPCA is pleased to provide advance payment discounts for customers. When you prepay your bill a year in advance, you receive a 5 percent discount. Prepayment information is printed on each bill you receive.

### Payments Can Be Made Online

Now you can pay your MRWPCA bill online. Visa, MasterCard, Discover and American Express cards are accepted. (A small convenience fee is charged for the service.) For information, visit [www.mrwPCA.org](http://www.mrwPCA.org)

For more information about either of these programs, call Customer Service at (831) 372-2385 or from Salinas 449-6366 or 722-9288.