

The Lens

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Montara Water and Sanitary District

MONTARA WATER AND SANITARY DISTRICT RECEIVES SILICON VALLEY WATER CONSERVATION AWARD

Since the Montara Water and Sanitary District (MWSD) purchased the local water system serving the Montara/Moss Beach community from a private company in 2003, the District's water conservation program has reduced the community's already low per capita water use in five years by sixteen percent, to just 69 gallons per person per day.

For its outstanding achievements in water conservation MWSD received the 2009 Silicon Valley Water Conservation Award in the Small Government/ Agency category. In his remarks accepting these awards, MWSD General Manager Clemens Heldmaier noted that the achievement was earned by the residents of Montara/ Moss Beach community.

In 2001 the voters of Montara and Moss Beach authorized the Montara Water and Sanitary District with more than an 80% vote to purchase the local water system. The former private owner left the system in disrepair and dire need of system improvements. Upon taking over the system in 2003, MWSD immediately began a system rehabilitation program, and also instituted a search for additional supplies of water.

Since 2003 MWSD implemented multiple water conservation methods including a customer rebate program, leak detection, repairs, District and consumer water audits, along with public information and education activities. With the current California water crisis in the forefront, it is imperative for all water systems to implement innovative solutions to encourage water conservation. MWSD is committed to cost-effective and environmentally sound water resource management. The successful implementation of our water conservation methods has been an example for small water systems throughout California and was topic of an article in the summer 2010 edition of "Source", a magazine of the American Water Works Association. MWSD has been consistently updating and implementing new methods for water conservation.

According to MWSD water records, the estimated demand in 2004 for Montara/Moss Beach residents was 82 gallons per day (gpd) per person. Through conservation efforts and water system improvements, consumer demand dropped 16% over a 5 year period to 69 gpd per person in 2008. Along with obvious economic benefits, the District's water conservation programs are designed to alleviate existing demands on local groundwater and surface water supply sources, promoting ecosystem health of nearby marine sanctuaries. MWSD strives to set an example, increasing awareness of water conservation on the Coastside.

In late 2003, MWSD established the existing water conservation program. The intent of the program is to encourage the replacement of water-inefficient fixtures through a customer rebate incentive. MWSD offers its customers a rebate of \$50 per Ultra Low Flush Toilet and \$150 per High Efficiency Washing Machine installed. It is estimated that 657 acre-feet (214 million gallons) of water can be conserved over the life of the new toilets (20 years) and washing machines (15 years). These anticipated savings will increase the reliability of the existing water supply and provide economic benefits to the District and its customers by reducing the costs of water, water heating, and wastewater treatment.

To minimize losses in the distribution system, the District employs a proactive leak detection program. In 2007, the District replaced all 1600 customer water meters with new meters, which

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are equipped with a radio-read device. These automated meters allow the District to assist water customers in their demand management and early leak detection. Leak detection alerts the District that water has been flowing through a meter for a 24-hour period, with no one-hour period of zero consumption. The District has implemented a supplemental leak detection program, reading every meter in the District each month, to inform customers of any potential problems. Furthermore, an aggressive program to replace mains demonstrating high leak rates has been implemented every year since 2003 to reduce water losses system-wide.

In order to better inform and educate the public, MWSD highlights conservation techniques in its newsletter and provides conservation kits containing tips on how to save water, free of charge to its customers. The District's website offers a drip calculator to measure and estimate water wasted due to leaky faucets. In addition, the District offers other conservation materials at MWSD's main office, including faucet aerators and an assortment of low-flow showerheads.

MWSD BRINGS CROSS-CONNECTION CONTROL PROGRAM IN-HOUSE

A cross-connection control program is a vital component to any municipal water agency that serves potable water to the public. The Environmental Protection Agency defines a cross-connection as “any actual or potential connection between the public water supply and a source of contamination or pollution”. These cross-connections—actual or potential—can consist of interconnections between a public water service supply line and a water supply of unknown quality to the water agency. One such example would be a privately owned well connected to a public water supply—intentional or not—via the internal plumbing of a premises. Other common examples include a garden hose submerged in non-potable liquids, or a submerged outlet of an irrigation system.

The dangers of cross-connections become a real threat to the public health when conditions of sub-atmospheric pressure occur within the water system. These conditions could occur in the instance of a water-main break, fire-flow demand, pump failure, or any other circumstance causing loss of pressure. Backpressure is another way that non-potable water can enter the supply system in instances where water pressure on the customer’s side exceeds that of the supply side. One example of this would be a booster pump on a customer’s property to increase water pressure.

The appropriate ways to keep water due to cross-connections from entering a public water system is by using either a physical separation between the customer’s internal piping and the water supply source or by mechanical means as in the usage of an acceptable back flow prevention device. These back-flow prevention devices are typically located on the customer’s side, right after the water meter. The State of California requires annual testing of the devices.

MWSD has always had a cross-connection control program in place, but the responsibility was delegated to the San Mateo County Department of Public Health. Recognizing the deficiencies and limitations of the County’s program, General Manager Clemens Heldmaier decided that current staff—who are formally trained and certified through American Water Works Association for cross-connection control—should handle the task. “By bringing this program in-house the District will save money and the revenue generated by this program can be put directly back into the water system” said Heldmaier.

Customers who own back-flow prevention devices will also enjoy the convenience of MWSD keeping track of the annual certification records of back-flow devices as well as scheduling and performing the certification test. Fees for the certification testing will be competitively priced with current market rates. “Because we are conducting the back-flow device certifications ourselves, we will know for certain that they are being tested properly which enhances the safety of our potable water system” according to District Superintendent Jeff Page. The District will also reevaluate the County data base and conduct site surveys on properties with potential risk of cross-contamination. All current owners of back-flow prevention devices will receive further information about the changes to the program.



This picture shows a typical back-flow valve installation.

WATER SAMPLING CITATION

The minimum number of routine total coliform samples taken monthly at Montara Water and Sanitary District (District) is defined in Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations, based on either the population served by the District or the number of service connections in the system. The monthly population served by the District and the number of system service connections both require a minimum of 6 samples per month, taken at different locations within the system. The District has routinely sampled 6 locations per month since March 2009, after the Bacteriological Sample Siting Plan (Plan) was developed to satisfy the Total Coliform Rule and approved by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

In September 2009 the District sampled 5 locations in the distribution system, and the sample missed in September was re-sampled one week later, in October 2009. Although this missed sample was not an emergency and has no implications of poor water quality, it has warranted a citation from CDPH. As our customer, you have a right to know about this occurrence. The District has completed all of the necessary actions to maintain compliance with CDPH. If you have any further questions regarding this matter please feel free to contact Jeff Page at (650)728-3545 or mwsd@coastside.net.

WATER METER MONITORS

If you are concerned about a potential leak, or are simply wondering about the consumption of a specific machine or activity in your home, MWSD has a couple of ways to help you.

In 2006, MWSD installed an automated meter reading system (AMR) to 1) reduce meter reading time by 90% and 2) have the ability to get accurate usage readings by time of day. Before AMR, readings took 1 week per month, now just 4 hours.

In addition, MWSD also has individual water meter monitors that can be set up to allow a resident to see exactly how much water specific activities consume.

It takes very little time for MWSD staff to install a specific meter that will allow a resident to determine water usage precisely. Please feel free to take advantage of this opportunity; just give us a call and our staff will be happy to assist you.

MWSD STAFF PARTICIPATE IN FARALLONE VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL'S OCEANS WEEK 2010

MWSD staff members Julian Martinez and Jeff Page recently participated in Farallone View's annual Oceans Week event. This event highlights the importance of our oceans, its ecology, and the need for humans to be responsible stewards to preserve it. Given to the first through fifth graders, Julian and Jeff's presentation offered an introduction to the hydrological cycle. A working model of the cycle that was shown to the kids incorporated a small ocean, a cloud simulation using ice to spur condensation, a heat lamp to function as the sun, various hills, rivers and lakes along the terrain, and ultimately run-off back to the ocean. "The visualization of the process helped the kids to really grasp what was

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going on, and they were able to quickly identify how it relates to our local landscape here along the coast-side" according to Jeff.

The icing on the cake for the presentation came in the form of a fun game the kids played in which they had the opportunity to become water drops and travel through the various processes of the water cycle. They collected candy along the way from stations that represented each stage of the process which only added to their excitement. The idea was to see the kids having fun and learning at the same time.

Before each class left the presentation, the kids were reminded how precious and limited our water resources are. They offered good suggestions as to how to conserve water such as turning off the tap when brushing their teeth, using a broom instead of a water hose to clean walkways, and nicely reminding parents, neighbors, and siblings to conserve water when they see it being wasted.



Jeff Page and Julian Martinez with model of hydrological cycle.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM

There are many items that are considered household hazardous waste. Look for precautionary statements on product labels such as poison, danger, warning and caution to assist you in determining if an item is household hazardous waste.

Recology of the Coast's Recycling Yard, accepts household hazardous waste by appointment Monday - Saturday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Please contact San Mateo County Household Hazardous Waste to schedule an appointment at (650) 372-6200.

For all other items, contact the San Mateo County Household Hazardous Waste Hotline at (650) 363-4718 or visit the San Mateo County Household Hazardous Waste Program.

The County of San Mateo accepts the following household hazardous wastes:

- Art and hobby supplies
- Paint thinner
- Fluorescent tubes
- Pesticides
- Furniture and metal polishes
- Photographic chemicals
- Household cleaners
- Pool chemicals
- Oil and latex-based paints

As part of the transition to Recology as our solid waste and recycling service folks have noticed some changes. MWSD is in discussion with Recology of the Coast about changes to rates and services. If you have comments or concerns please send them to MWSD via e-mail, leave a brief phone message, or drop us a note. The Recology of the Coast website for Montara and Moss Beach is:

http://www.recologyofthecoast.com/service_area_customers.htm

As a courtesy Recology of the Coast will now allow customers to mix all recycling, except hazardous waste material, in an amount not to exceed 3 recycling bins. Cardboard should be tied in bundles as usual.

Composting bins are available to order from MWSD - come on down to our office to view one and get an order form. It is no longer possible to leave green waste at the recycling yard in Pacifica. Greenwaste pick up is every other week on your regular recycling and trash day; you can have up to four 30 gallon containers.

Our next drop off day at Farallone View school is November 13th. This is the final drop off day for 2010. You can drop off all recyclable items, the list is available at:

http://www.recologyofthecoast.com/service_area_customers.htm

Remember that you can arrange for pick up of bulky items by calling 355- 8400 to make arrangements. You have received tags for bulky items, if you need more tags, please come down to MWSD to pick up a spare tag.

Recology is the only provider of debris box service for Montara and Moss Beach. Orders for debris boxes can be taken over the phone with either VISA or MASTERCARD. Construction and demolition recycling documents can be provided upon request. Calls by noon can have same day delivery.

Recology now accepts Visa and MasterCard for payment as well as letting you set up paperless billing online at www.recologyofthecoast.com

MWSD looks forward to working with you on the path to Waste Zero! Let's make our area as pristine as possible by reducing, reusing and recycling our resources by increasing recycling in all our homes and business!

Remember: No paper = no waste!

Montara Water & Sanitary District
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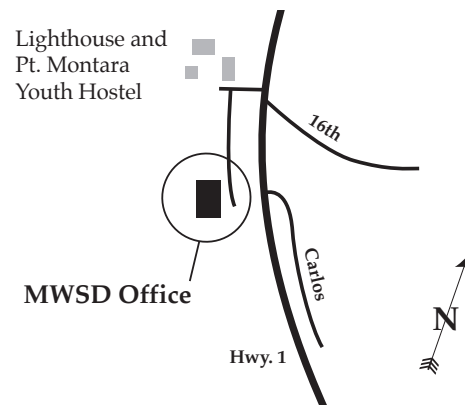
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Board meetings are held the first and third Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the District Office at 8888 Cabrillo Highway, Montara, CA



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

JUDY GROMM

Coming from a background of working in local schools, Judy has taken over the position of District Clerk at MWS D. A Bay Area native, she grew up in San Francisco and Millbrae, and has lived on the coast for almost 40 years. A devoted mother and grandmother, Judy is settling into the multi-faceted administrative role that is so critical to the District's smooth functioning. Thanks Judy!

