

MWSD Board of Directors

Scott Boyd, President
Term: 2003-2007

Bob Ptacek, President pro tem
Term: 2001-2005

Jim Harvey, Secretary
Term: 2003-2005

Paul Perkovic, Treasurer
Term: 2001-2005

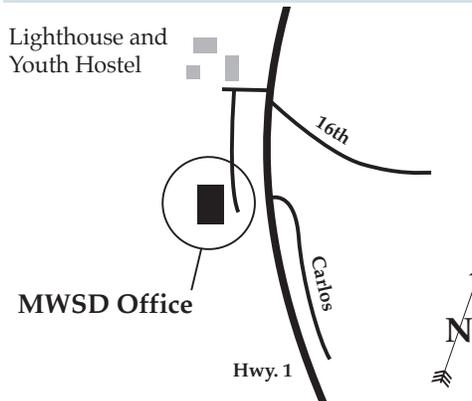
Kathryn Slater-Carter, Director
Term: 2004-2007

MONTARA WATER & SANITARY DISTRICT

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for agendas, news, district code, and our webcam

8888 Cabrillo Highway
P.O. Box 370131
Montara, CA 94037

Board meetings are held the first and third Thursday of each month, at 7:30 p.m., at the District Office (next door to the lighthouse)



Montara Water & Sanitary District
P.O. Box 370131, Montara, CA 94037

DISCOUNT COMPOSTING

Want to compost? We offer discounts on two different types of composting boxes. Please feel free to drop by our office to see them and to get specific information on the pricing.

APPLIANCE REBATES

\$150 for high-efficiency washing machines
\$50 for low-flow toilets
for more info, see MWSD.montara.org

TALKING TRASH *Mark Your Calendar*

Greenwaste pickup – 2nd Tuesday of every month is Greenwaste pickup – up to four 30-gallon cans. No bags or boxes or dirt, please.

Fluorescent lights – accepted at the recycling yard in Pacifica at no charge.

TV's – \$15 to \$40 depending on size.

Computer monitors – \$15.

All other computer & stereo equipment, VCRs, fax machines – Free.

SEACOAST DISPOSAL RECYCLING YARD

1046 Palmetto Avenue, Pacifica

8 a.m. – Noon & 1 p.m. – 4 p.m., Mon-Sat.

Call 355-8400 for details.

Styrofoam packing peanuts – call PACKING PEANUTS HOTLINE at 1-800-828-2214.

The Lens

Issue Number 12 Spring 2005

Montara Water and Sanitary District

WATER RATE REVIEW COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

The Board of Directors will hold a public workshop to review the way we structure water rates. The District assumed ownership of the water system in August 2003, and adopted the same rate structure then in use by the former owners, CalAmerican and Citizens Utilities.

Community Workshop
Thursday April 28
7:30 - 10PM
Farallone View

Last year at our public workshop, some of the attendees expressed interest in looking at rate structures. We will take a look at a new two-tier rate where those who use the most water pay a higher rate than those who use less.

We hope to bring you up to date on more of current District events, and we would like to hear from you. Please join us.

WHEN: Thursday, April 28, 2005
7:30 p.m. until 10:00 p.m.

WHERE: Farallone View Elementary School
Le Conte and Kanoff, Montara

GREENWASTE PICKUP 2ND TUESDAY EVERY MONTH

Spring is here and lots of us are working on our yards and gardens. Seacoast, the District's contracted waste hauler, provides curbside greenwaste pickup the second Tuesday of every month.

Each home is allowed four 30-gallon cans as part of our monthly service.

Do you have more than four thirty gallon cans? Call Seacoast at 650-355-8400 to arrange for pickup at a minimal charge.

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO REFUSES TO REDUCE PRICE OF AIRPORT WELL WATER

The District has three wells at the Half Moon Bay Airport that provide about 60% of the water consumed annually. The airport has been a source of water supply since about 1944 when the airport was first developed as a water source for the U.S. Navy Anti-Aircraft Training Base in Montara.

The pipeline and wells were bought by the Montara Elementary School District in 1948, and the remaining airport property was deeded to the County of San Mateo.

In the early 1970's, the County began to charge the owner of the water system, Citizens Utilities, \$40 per acre foot of water pumped from the airport wells.

continued inside...

FINDING MORE WATER

In our ongoing efforts to find more water, the District has been drilling a series of test wells in a variety of locations around the District. Our water supply study, done jointly with the State Department of Water Resources, identified wells as both the most promising and least expensive approach to finding more water. By relying on locally-available resources, wells also offer self-sufficiency.

The most promising well so far sits on 11 District-owned acres next to the Alta Vista Water Storage Tank and Treatment Plant. The test well is about 750 feet deep and the water quality is good. We may be able to pump as much as 150 gallons per minute, but further analysis is required.

Next, we'll conduct an environmental review to ensure that pumping doesn't adversely affect water levels in the valleys below. If there is an impact, we'll have to carefully monitor and control the rate, time and duration of pumping to minimize the impact.

We continue to pursue many of the variety of water sources identified in the supply study.

Inside

More system improvements
Water treatment at the airport
State outsources tax increase
Energy study

Appliance rebates
Cleaning & televising sewers
Costly leaks
Updating District boundaries
Discount composting boxes
Desalination

Talking trash
District information
Rebates



Hitting water at the Alta Vista well

WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

Project	Status
Water and sewer pipeline replacement	1st St, Hwy 1–Kanoff: completed 5th St, Hwy 1–Main: completed 6th St, Hwy 1–Main: completed
Airport Well #3 – Improve production Remove mineral deposits Replace pump and motor	Contract awarded
Wagner Well – Improve production Remove casing, re-drill Replace pump and motor	Contract awarded
Portola Tank access road	Washouts filled, road restored
Drake and Wagner Well electrical improvements	Largely completed
Alta Vista Test Well	Drilled, pump-tested, environmental review next

IMPROVING OUR SYSTEM

The following are a few of the projects that have either recently been completed or are underway:

Water and Sewer Pipeline Replacement — the water pipeline replacements were identified in 1991 by Citizens Utilities and CalAmerican, the former owners, but never done. The contract for this work has been awarded to Andreini Brothers of Half Moon Bay, and so far the following have been completed:

1st Street—Highway 1 to Kanoff Avenue
5th Street—Highway 1 to Main Street
6th Street—Highway 1 to Main Street

Airport Well No. 3 — contract has been awarded to Maggiora Brothers Drilling to treat this well with chemicals to remove the mineral deposits which have accumulated and reduced productivity. The pump and motor will be replaced because they are beginning to fail.



Installing a 12" steel casing in the new Alta Vista well

Wagner Well — contract has been awarded to remove the deteriorating well casing and re-drill the well to restore production back to previous levels. The pump and motor will be replaced.

Portola Tank Access Road — this road was impassable because of washouts. It has now been restored and survived the heavy rains very well with a few minor changes required before the job is completed.

Drake and Wagner Well Electrical Improvements — the work to improve electrical reliability, intrusion alarm and back up power has been substantially completed.

State Loans and Grants — our effort to obtain loans and grants to offset the cost to improvements in the airport treatment system met with resistance from the State since we do not own the land. The County owns the land, and the District uses the land under a licensing agreement.

ENERGY STUDY

The District has entered into an agreement with ChevronTexaco to evaluate our energy usage for sewer and water facilities and recommend ways those costs may be reduced. Under the agreement they do not charge for the study if we implement energy saving projects, such as solar energy or variable speed motors. These projects would be paid for out of energy savings. The District will also review the feasibility of using radio-read water meters which would reduce labor costs for reading meters by using a radio receiver to collect water meter readings instead of a person manually reading each meter.

WATER TREATMENT AT THE Half Moon Bay Airport

We are installing a treatment system at one of the District's wells located at Half Moon Bay Airport. Using a pair of ion-exchange vessels, we'll remove nitrates from the well water and then pump it into the distribution system.

The District contracted with USFilter to furnish and deliver the vessels, install piping and equipment, conduct trial runs, and swap out vessels periodically for maintenance.

This will improve not only the quality of the water being served, but the quantity as well. Previously we had to produce less water so that we could blend it to meet water standards. Now we will remove nitrates outright, and will be able to serve more water because we won't need to blend.

The installation and approval process by the California Department of Health Services (DHS) is nearing completion. We expect to see the system operational in April, following testing and final acceptance by DHS.

SACRAMENTO "OUTSOURCES" TAX INCREASE

ERAF no laughing matter

Governor Schwarzenegger and the California Legislature outsourced taxation recently, but in a way which just shifts tax burdens around. Afraid to take the heat for raising taxes at the State level to balance their budget, they have taken **\$2.6 billion** dollars *more* from cities, counties, and local special districts such as the Montara Water and Sanitary District. This is in addition to the money they've been taking since the 1991 budget crisis.

In an elaborate shell game, your local property tax money is being taken away from the agencies that have long depended on that tax money for providing your local services. Sacramento has taken this money, which, in our case, would have paid for sanitary district business, and diverted it into an Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF) earmarked for local school districts. The trick is that it then gets counted as if it came from Sacramento, thus reducing the amount the State owes to the local schools under voter-mandated Proposition 98.

By depriving districts like MWSD of a significant source of revenue, this shift amounts to a tax increase. This year it will cost MWSD about \$218,000. That's approximately \$120 per household. The District has worked hard to reduce expenses and draw on reserves this year to make up for this sideways taxation from Sacramento. Even so, higher sewer service charges may be necessary.

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TAX... continued from previous page...

When you see that increase in your property tax bill next year, remember Sacramento. They are responsible for the higher fees that people from districts all over the state will be paying.

COUNTY... continued from front page

Citizens eventually sued the County, maintaining that the water rights were owned by Citizens Utilities and not the County. The County won the lawsuit, forcing Citizens to pay for the water used (with interest) for the prior two years.

In 2001 the County began to greatly increase the rates charged the District, to the point where, in 2003, they went up to \$382 per acre foot. That's an 855% increase. Rates are scheduled to go even higher next year.

So, once the District assumed ownership of the system, we began to negotiate with the County to reduce the rates to a more reasonable level. We produced a variety of data that showed that the average cost of water sold to other water districts was far lower – about \$150 per acre foot.

Even this is too high when you consider that the District must treat the airport water in order to meet State water quality standards. (see article on water treatment on facing page).

Unfortunately, after meeting for over a year with the County and attempting to resolve the overcharging – they still have not reduced the rate. The ten-year agreement entered into between the County and the former owner, California-American Water Company, remains in effect. The District continues to work to reduce these costs.

SERVICE BOUNDARIES

The District is working with the County of San Mateo Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) to conform our water service boundaries to those long used by the former owners, California American Water Company/Citizens Utilities.

These boundaries were adopted by the Public Utilities Commission long ago and were in effect for many years before the District purchased the water system.

Our application seeks to annex the vacant land south of the Half Moon Bay Airport. The environmental review documents have been sent to local agencies for comment as a necessary step before submitting the application to LAFCo.



A stream gauge helps measure flow as part of a larger project to monitor water resources

LEAKY TOILET? COSTLY!

A leaky toilet or faucet can waste 50-100 gallons of water a day. Not only do you buy the water, you pay to have it cleaned at the sewage treatment plant.

How can you test for a leaky toilet? Put a few drops of food coloring into the tank (not the bowl), wait 15 minutes, and check for color in the bowl. If you've got color, you may need to replace the flapper valve.

Visit MWSD.montara.org to use our leak calculator.

SEWER CLEANING AND TELEVISIONING PROGRAM

The District is completing the third year of a three-year program to televise and clean all of the District's sewer lines. We televise the lines to determine the condition of sewer mains.

Seeing actual conditions in the pipes lets us see what needs the most attention, and allows us to better prioritize repairs and maintenance. It has a direct benefit in helping us have the information to develop a better capital replacement program.

The District had previously based its capital improvement program on a televising that was done over ten years ago. Once all this new data is analyzed, we will update our capital improvement program.

When you see an SPS truck working in our streets, you're seeing our contractor performing this vital work. SPS is based in Santa Rosa, CA.

These pictures show some of the kinds of problems we can spot with the camera system. In addition to roots and cracks, it can also help us find offset joints, grease deposits, and more before they become bigger problems.

DESALINATION GRANT

The District applied for a grant from the State of California for a feasibility study on the development of wells on District coastal property out of which salt water would be pumped, treated and used as potable water. Near-shore wells have the potential advantage of being able to draw water out without affecting marine life.

The State let us know that we made the first very-preliminary cut, but the State must still cut at least another 50% of the projects to keep within their available funding.

What the Camera Sees...



Finding cracks underground



Tree roots in a pipeline