

## How to reach us

If you have questions, comments or would like more information on water issues, please contact us or visit our web site.

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EMAIL: [custserv@soquelcreekwater.org](mailto:custserv@soquelcreekwater.org)  
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WEB SITE: [www.SoquelCreekWater.org](http://www.SoquelCreekWater.org)  
[www.WaterSavingTips.org](http://www.WaterSavingTips.org)

Soquel Creek Water District is a non-profit, local government agency with a locally elected Board of Directors. The District provides water supply and water resource management to more than 45,000 customers within a 17-square mile area of mid-Santa Cruz County.

The Board of Directors meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month at 7:00PM at the District's office at 5180 Soquel Drive. Meetings are open to everyone and comments from the public are heard at each meeting.

*Board of Directors*  
Bruce Daniels, *President*  
Dr. Thomas LaHue, *Vice President*  
Dr. Don Hoernschemeyer  
Dr. Bruce Jaffe  
Daniel F. Kriege

Laura D. Brown, *General Manager*

**What's on Tap** is an in-house publication printed bi-monthly for the customers of the District. Forward your comments to the editor at the address above.



## Protecting the public drinking water supply

Have you ever noticed an odd-looking pipe assembly like the one shown in the picture below and wondered what it was? This is a backflow device, and it is one of the ways to protect the public water supply from contamination. Backflow is the term used to describe the “backward flow” of water into the water supply system. A backflow device acts as a physical barrier to water flowing in the wrong direction from a potentially contaminated state back into the water system.

State law requires water suppliers to protect their water systems from contamination or pollution. The District's engineering department has a comprehensive program to provide drinking water protection, including a component that performs “cross-

connection control surveys” of various facilities. These surveys and detailed plan review of new construction enable a determination of the backflow prevention necessary to protect the water system.

Since the early 1980's, the District has required backflow devices to be installed on services for industrial, certain commercial, large irrigation customers, and other properties when there are activities involving contaminated water. Additionally, backflow



State law requires water suppliers to protect their water systems from contamination or pollution through the use of backflow prevention devices.

prevention is required where there is potential for water to flow back into the system once it has passed through the meter. Backflow devices must be tested at least once each year to ensure they are working properly.

With cooperation from customers, a comprehensive backflow/cross-connection control program helps to keep the water distribution system free from health hazards.

For more information regarding our cross-connection program, contact our Engineering Department at 475-8500.



# What's ON TAP

## At the Soquel Creek Water District

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## Customers respond to emergency

Thank you to all customers who responded to emergency requests to discontinue all non-essential water use during two simultaneous main breaks on September 22. The neighborhoods most affected were in the Soquel/Maplethorpe area off Fairway Drive, but all customers in Soquel and Capitola were asked to discontinue all non-essential water usage for the day. The cause of the main breaks has been investigated and corrected. The District has an Emergency Response Plan that includes notifying customers of an

emergency. Our thanks to Radio station KSCO for broadcasting the emergency notice and the 911 Call Center for notifying District customers. Additionally, our thanks to Pacific Underground Construction, Santa Cruz Underground and Paving, and E&S Trucking for assisting us during the emergency.

*In the event of a District-declared water emergency or natural disaster, tune in to radio station KSCO, AM 1080, for updates and to hear when water use restrictions have been lifted. You can also check the District's web site.*



Crews made emergency repairs to restore water service in the Soquel/Maplethorpe area off Fairway Drive.

# Water wisdom for the landscape and garden

Adapted from Sunset Magazine, "How to Water Your Garden" ©2000

Did you know that the average Santa Cruz County resident uses about 30 percent of their water for landscape and garden irrigation? A lot of that irrigation water runs off or evaporates without being used by the plants. Smart watering leads to better landscaping and saves water for future generations.

The biggest culprits to water waste in the landscape are:

**1. Automatic irrigation timers that are not adjusted for wet weather:** Let the rain water your landscape - make a note on your calendar to consider shutting off the timer in November.

**2. Not aiming right:** Sprinklers shouldn't water sidewalks. Planning and installing the right sprinkler

heads for your garden's shape and size can save thousands of gallons of water each year.

**3. Watering in the heat of the day:** Up to 30 percent of water applied in the middle of the day can be lost due to evaporation.

In addition to avoiding these water wasters, there are many other ways you can save thousands of gallons of water each year.

Know your soil and water appropriately. Your soil type determines how long and how often you should water.

**Clay soil** absorbs water slowly so use low-flow emitters and irrigate longer than you would with other soil types.

**Loam soil** holds together but has space for water to be

absorbed. Leave some time between watering.

**Sandy soil** drains quickly.

Water the plants more often with less water. Compost and mulch around plants can help hold the moisture longer. Use higher flow emitters for shorter periods of time.

Avoid runoff by creating basins around plants 3-6 inches deep to allow the water to soak into the root zones. Create terraces on slopes to prevent runoff.

Converting from spray to drip irrigation can save a typical landscape in this region about 10,000 gallons a year by applying water directly to the plants' root zones.

Group plants according to water needs, and use mulch to cool the soil and reduce evaporation.

Reduce your lawn size or replant with grasses that require less water. A typical 1,000 square foot lawn in the Santa Cruz area needs about

3,000 gallons of water per month in summer.

Leaks in irrigation lines can disappear into the landscaping.

To check for leaks, watch for any movement on the water meter when the whole system is off.

## Water meter replacement program

After a recent trial period, the District has decided to replace all water meters over the next four years. The new meters can detect most types of leaks and are read electronically while driving by. Before your meter is replaced, we will deliver a door hanger notifying you that the meter change will happen within the next couple days. We also check to make sure no water is being used before we change the meter.

Here are some important reminders regarding meter boxes:

- ◆ Keep the meter box area

clear of plant growth and debris.

- ◆ Trim plants above the meter box to a minimum distance of three feet.
- ◆ Avoid parking cars over the meter box.
- ◆ When doing construction in your yard, please contact the District about work over the meter box.

Please only shut off water at the house valve and do not attempt to operate the water shut off valve on the meter, as inadvertent damage may occur. We provide 24-hour service to our customers. If you need emergency service,

please contact us at 475-8500 and follow the prompts if you are calling during non-business hours.

Your cooperation in this regard helps the District provide efficient and reliable service with respect to meter reads and situations which require emergency response.



Maintaining appropriate clearance around the meter box allows District staff to read, service, and repair the meter.

## Droplets

The City of Santa Cruz Water Department and the District offer free tours of the Seawater Reverse Osmosis Desalination Pilot Plant at Long Marine Laboratory on the second Wednesday of each month at 10:00 AM.

Space is limited and reservations are recommended. Contact Melanie Schumacher at (831) 475-8501 x 153 or by email at [melanies@soquelcreekwater.org](mailto:melanies@soquelcreekwater.org) for reservations. For more information, please visit our website: [www.scwd2desal.org/tours.html](http://www.scwd2desal.org/tours.html)