

What's On Tap



AT THE SOQUEL CREEK WATER DISTRICT

Update on PUREWater Soquel

In January we received a grant of up to \$2 million dollars to help fund continued evaluation efforts for the District's proposed Pure Water Soquel Project. It would use advanced water purification methods to purify recycled water for replenishing the groundwater basin and protecting against seawater intrusion.

This funding is part of an \$800 million dollar funding source through the State Water Resources Control Board for projects which prevent and clean up contamination of groundwater that serves as a source of drinking water. Since groundwater is

currently our sole water supply and seawater contamination is already occurring along the coastline, the prevention of seawater intrusion from moving further inland is a top priority for the District, community, and the State. This \$2 million dollar grant (maximum amount for the grant award) is timely and extremely useful in supporting studies that are currently underway (such as water quality testing, groundwater

modeling, and environmental review) and furthering knowledge around groundwater recharge.

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"The award of this grant illustrates the state's recognition of the crucial work we're doing to protect the groundwater basin and our focus to make the most efficient use of ratepayers' money by leveraging it with state funding."

-Ron Duncan, District GM

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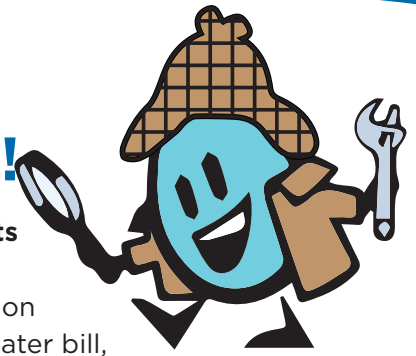
Next steps include release of the draft Environmental Impact Report in late Spring 2018. This will include a 45-day review period for public input and comments. No project will be decided on until the CEQA process is completed. For more information visit soquelcreekwater.org.

Remembering Laura Brown, District GM from 1995-2012



On December 23, 2017, Laura Brown, the District's General Manager from 1995-2012, passed away after defying the odds by leading a high quality and productive life following her diagnosis in early 2012 with a particularly aggressive and incurable form of cancer. Laura had an unwavering dedication and commitment to public service. Through the practice of lead by example, she fostered a sense of high-morale and job satisfaction within the employees; developed valuable and collaborative relationships within the community; and established an abiding legacy of high standards for professionalism in everything she did. One of Laura's greatest gifts to the District was the Well Master Plan that resulted in the construction of both the Polo Grounds Well and the O'Neill Ranch Well. We are immensely grateful for her leadership and direction through complex situations for the betterment of our community and the District.

Put on Your Detective Hat! It's Time to Check For & Fix Leaks!



While it may be hard to believe, about ten percent of homes nationwide have water leaks that waste more than 90 gallons or more per day! In the District's service area alone, this would mean several million gallons of water lost to leaks every year. Since our community's shared groundwater source is at risk due to historical over-pumping and seawater intrusion, we must work together to prevent leaks. In honor of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's tenth annual Fix a Leak Week, March 19-25, 2018, we challenge you to put on your detective hat to find and fix leaks.

Here are some clues to help you get started:

- 1. Check your January or February water bill.** Find the number of gallons used per day and divide by the number of people in your home. If you are using around 50 gallons per person per day, your home is water efficient and you likely do not have any leaks. Also, check your bills to see if there are any spikes in usage as compared to the previous month or year.
- 2. Read your meter.** Your water meter is the best tool you have for conserving water and monitoring for leaks. To learn how to access and read your meter, and how to use your meter to check for leaks, follow the instructions on our website (soquelcreekwater.org/read-your-meter).

- 3. Check your toilets for leaks.** Toilet leaks are a common cause of a high water bill, but are usually easy to identify. To check for a leaky flapper valve, simply drop a dye tablet into your toilet tank and wait about 15 minutes. If you see dye in the toilet bowl, the flapper valve is leaking. You can pick up free dye tablets at our office, or you can just use a few drops of food coloring. To check for a leaky toilet fill valve, take the tank cover off, place your ear close to the fill valve and listen. A low hiss means the fill valve is leaking and needs to be replaced. Sometimes both the flapper and fill valve are leaking. If your toilet is beyond repair, replace it with a qualifying ultra-high efficiency toilet and receive up to a \$300 rebate. For rebate details, see our website (soquelcreekwater.org/toiletrebate).
- 4. Call us to schedule a Water-Wise Housecall!** We can help you determine if you have a leak and offer advice on how to address it. If you have a leak but can't find it, you may need to hire a plumber or professional leak locator.

Thank you for taking the time to check for leaks and for promptly fixing them to help preserve our water supply!



Conservation Pays with Our Ultra-High Efficiency Toilet Rebate!

Receive a credit of up to \$300 per toilet when you replace a 1.6 gallon per flush (or greater) toilet in your home with an Ultra-High Efficiency toilet that cuts your toilet water usage in half. All qualifying new toilets use 0.8 gallons per flush or less and have been tested and rated as high-performing by an independent third party. They have also been certified as WaterSense-approved by the U.S. EPA based on their water efficiency and quality performance. For details, toilet selection, and an application go to soquelcreekwater.org/toiletrebate.

Locally and Around the World The Future of Water

These past few weeks there has been a plethora of news stories about the dire water conditions in Cape Town. Cape Town, a coastal city in South Africa with a population of just over 4 million, is in the midst of an unprecedented three year drought. Sound familiar? The difference right now is Cape Town will possibly be the first major city in the world to run out of water. Currently residents are only allowed 23 gallons of water per person per day, but only about 54% of residents are actually hitting their target. Their city leaders will be enacting Day Zero, which will be when their dams reach a capacity of 13.5% and the municipal water supply is turned off for all but essential services like hospitals. Then residents will have to line up to receive their daily water ration.

This entire scenario sounds like something out of a dystopian novel. Could this happen here in California and especially here in Santa Cruz County? With climate change it very well could. A study published in *Nature Communications* provides compelling evidence that rain over California will diminish by as much as 15% in the next 20–30 years and more frequent droughts will likely occur. With more frequent droughts, California will also be facing more wild fires as the state gets drier and drier.



*Theewaterskloof Dam at a critically low water level.
Picture credit: Ayanda Ndamane/ANA Pictures*

The main take away from Cape Town is water supply diversification. Cape Town solely relied on surface water and rain to replenish their reservoirs. They are now trying to play catch up, hastily and expensively by building desalination plants and seeing if there is groundwater to be extracted.

As you know our only source of water is from an overdrafted groundwater basin. The District's Community Water Plan is our road map to a sustainable and reliable water supply for today and the future. We invite our customers to learn more about our Community Water Plan and the four supplemental water supplies under evaluation at our new learning center, opening March 20th. Drop on by the District headquarters Monday through Friday from 10am–2pm to walk through!

Standing Committee Members Wanted!

We are seeking applications from interested District customers to participate as public members on our three Standing Committees.

1. Water Resources Management and Infrastructure Committee
2. Public Outreach Committee
3. Finance and Administrative Services Committee

Each committee is comprised of two Board members and two public members. All public member committee positions are voluntary. Applicants must be customers of the Soquel Creek Water District.

Members of the public play a vital role in shaping the District and your willingness to contribute time and effort is greatly appreciated.

Applications are due April 30, 2018. For more information and an application please visit: soquelcreekwater.org/2018standingcommittee



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



One of the most important positions in the Soquel Creek Water District is that of the District Executive Assistant - Board Clerk. We are pleased that Karen Reese carries that title for our District.

The Executive Assistant - Board Clerk performs numerous duties in fulfilling her charge to provide support to the Board of Directors, the General Manager, and information to the public. The Board Clerk serves to support all matters requiring the review or

executive action of the governing Board as required by statute, regulation or resolution and records the minutes of public meetings, making them available to our customers and the general public. Karen provides members of the public with agendas, notices of public hearings, access to public records, and the opportunity to attend the open meetings of the Board of Directors, responding to phone, email, and letter requests from the public.

Karen has a strong connection to community and has volunteered for several local causes. She loves spending time with her grandchildren and has a keen interest in classic muscle cars. Her caring nature and eye for detail keep the public interest in the forefront of her work, insuring information on governance and Board activities is available to the public in a timely and accessible manner.

Cornwell Tank Recoat & Rehabilitation Project

The District operates 18 water tanks ranging in size from 115,000 gallons up to 1,200,000 gallons. All tanks are coated inside and out to protect the steel structure from corrosion. Just like a home, our water tanks need to be repainted periodically to ensure the integrity of the steel is maintained. The 500,000 gallon Cornwell Tank in Soquel has been in service for 23 years and is undergoing a complete repaint including safety and structural upgrades. The \$450,000 project began in November 2017 and is scheduled to be completed in March. Structural upgrades are also planned to ensure the tank will provide reliable water storage for decades to come. This project is very typical for water districts and the remaining 17 water tanks will undergo similar activities as part of the District's ongoing maintenance program. Maintenance and main replacements comprise 43% of the District's projects that were prioritized to be funded in fiscal year 2017/18.



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Other ways to connect with us!



The Cornwell Tank receiving new paint and structural upgrades.