

# What's On Tap



AT THE SOQUEL CREEK WATER DISTRICT

## Infrastructure is a Top Priority

**Infrastructure reliability is a top priority for the District, especially when it comes to the backbone of our distribution system.** Soquel Drive runs through the core of our service area, serving as a significant transmission main to convey water from the east end of the District (41st Ave. in Capitola) all the way to Freedom Blvd to the west.

In the last six years, the aging cast iron water main from Soquel Village to Cabrillo College has been replaced; however, there is still more work to be done. Over the next two years, Phase III of the

project will replace approximately 7,400 linear feet of 40-50 year old pipeline. This water main is subjected to pressures over 100 psi and this aged cast iron can crack and rupture (see right). Staff has responded to over fifteen main breaks along the stretch between Haas Dr. and Ledyard Way in Aptos.

The project is estimated to cost \$4M and scheduled to begin in Nov 2018. Construction is anticipated to last 15-18 months.



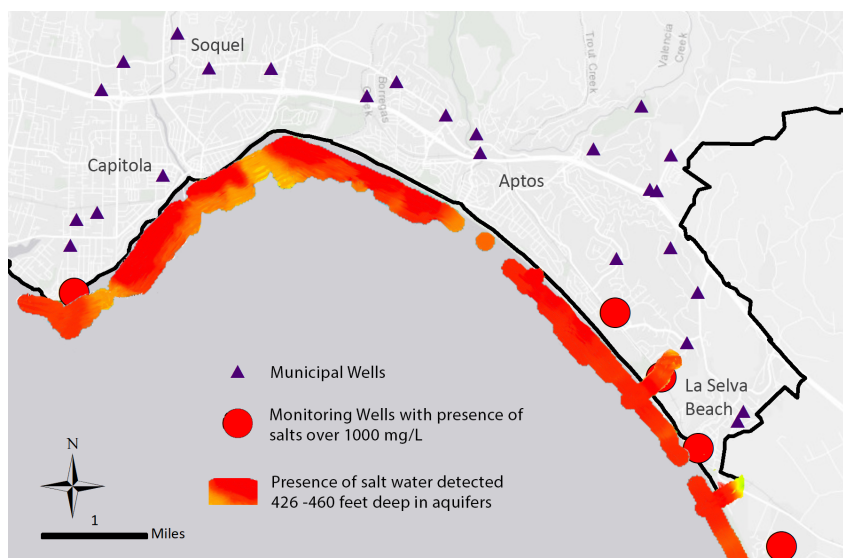
*Old cast iron pipe.*



*Phase I of Soquel Drive Main Replacement (from Main St in Soquel to Cabrillo College).*

## The Science is In

**In May 2017, the Mid-County Groundwater Agency commissioned a hydrological investigation using an innovative, leading-edge airborne technology and analysis.** The results, published in March 2018, verified that seawater contamination is significant at both the north and south ends of the District and showed us that seawater intrusion is very close to shore in areas we did not previously have data. Unless additional water supplies are obtained it is probably only a matter of time before saltwater reaches into and contaminates water wells operated by the District and private well owners.



## Update



### **Pure Water Soquel:**

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for this purified recycled water project is expected to be released in late June 2018 and will include a 45 day comment period and public meeting.



### **River Water Transfers**

The water quality study to evaluate blending river water into our long-standing groundwater-only infrastructure is nearing completion. The concluding report is anticipated to be presented to the Board at their July 17th meeting.



### **Storm Water Capture**

Analysis is underway to estimate the average volume of stormwater that can be collected at two locations on Seascape Golf Course, and the amount that would result in recharge. This information will be presented to the Board at their June 5 meeting.



### **Desalination**

Deep Water Desal, the private company pursuing a proposed desalination project that the District is following, is currently addressing compliance regulations that would apply under the State's Ocean Plan Amendment. EIR is anticipated at the end of 2018.

**For more information, visit [soquelcreekwater.org/cwp](http://soquelcreekwater.org/cwp)**

# The Finance of Water

**There are few subjects that can put you to sleep faster than an in-depth discussion of public finance.** But understanding the finances behind how water gets to your home or business allows you to make better decisions about how you use your water. Customers who are well informed help guide the Board and employees of Soquel Creek Water District to make better decisions on your behalf. In a series of articles on the Finance of Water, we will try to give you a better understanding of your water rates, how we develop our annual budget, and the tools we use to inform the public on our financial performance.

Our District's primary source of revenue comes from money collected from ratepayers for water service. We also have a small amount of money that we collect from customers putting in new homes or subdivisions, and a modest bit of interest that we earn on money held in reserves, but most of the money we collect is from customers.

This isn't the case for every water agency. Some water agencies are part of a city or county and receive some money from that government's general fund. Some water agencies receive property tax revenue. Revenues from water rates is what enables us to provide reliable, clean water 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The District is not a part of a city or county and is not regulated by the Public Utilities Commission (which oversees privately owned utilities). It is a special district of the State of California—a form of local government that is designed



to fulfill a very specific public role such as water service. The District and all of its operations are governed by five board members that are elected locally by customers. These board members must live in the areas served by the District, so it's truly a case of customers serving customers. Many District employees are also customers. This type of local focus ensures that the needs of the customer are the heart of everything we do. When our District raises water rates, the board members and employees are impacted as well. And no, there is no discount for employees. As a public agency, we have a mandate to be fair and equitable, meaning our customers, board members and employees all pay the same rates and receive the same level of service.

So how do we set water rates? District staff does not do this work alone due to the complexities involved. We hire an independent financial consultant who specializes in rate setting to develop our rates to be fair and equitable.

***Our next article in the series will discuss how water rates are developed in California, and specific steps the District is taking to evaluate the way we bill customers for water service.***

# Landscape Beautification Workshop Helps Save Water at Soquel High!



## The “Reimagine your Landscape” workshop was held on May 12, 2018.

The grass lawn around the flag pole at Soquel High School, previously watered with overhead sprinklers, was converted to drip irrigation, sheet mulched and replanted with colorful drought tolerant plants. Thanks to all the students in the Agriculture and Natural Resources program, the Green Gardener class, and the workshop participants, the area is now a Monterey Bay Friendly Landscape. This program recognizes gardens that help save water, reduce chemicals, and prevent storm water runoff.

The landscape makeover was made possible through a Water-Wise Garden Grant from Soquel Creek Water District and the Water Conservation Coalition (WCC) of Santa Cruz County. The workshop was coordinated and led by Sherry Bryan of Ecology Action, designed by Douglas Landscape Design and Tom Bentley, the Soquel High teacher for the Agriculture and Natural Resources classes.

The new landscape will provide a lasting demonstration garden for the community and save water!

## Free Water Wise Housecalls

**Free water wise house calls are available to all Soquel Creek Water District customers.** Our trained surveyor will show how you are using water and where you might be able to save more. This personalized use analysis includes a thorough assessment to:

- Evaluate the efficiency of your irrigation system
- Provide you with a personalized irrigation schedule, if appropriate
- Identify irrigation leaks, broken or mismatched sprinkler heads, high pressure, and other common problems that may lead to water waste
- Check your toilets for leaks
- Measure showerhead and faucet flow rates

If your irrigation timer is causing you problems, our surveyor can quickly and easily show you how to program the timer to avoid water waste and high bill surprises. If not set properly, irrigation run times can waste shocking amounts of water.

Customers can receive free faucet aerators, shower heads and other items and will learn about rebates on clothes washers, toilets, shower heads, hot-water recirculating systems, and more that will help you save water and money! Typical house calls last about 15 to 20 minutes for an average-size home. Take advantage of this program and become the master and commander of your water use. To set up an appointment, call Roy Sikes at 831-475-8501 x146.



# Public Service Employees Make a Difference

**Those who choose public service as a career are fortunate enough to make an important, positive impact within the community they serve and often live.** The District is proud to employ a hard-working and dedicated staff, motivated by their desire to serve others and their communities.

Celebrated since 1985, Public Service Recognition Week (this year May 6-12) is a nationally recognized time set aside to regard the women and men who serve our nation as federal, state, county, local government, and special district employees. Throughout the world, public servants use this

occasion to educate others about the work they do and why careers in public service matter.

We want to honor our employees for their commitment to ensure your water and water service, is the best it can be. *"I regularly hear people say that 'public service is a calling,' and I wholeheartedly believe it. We are pleased to have a dedicated group of folks who feel 'called' to strive for a better society through our local water community,"* said Ron Duncan, General Manager. *"We have incredible, steadfast examples of commitment, compassion, service and accountability."*

## Consumer Confidence/Water Quality Report

**Your 2017 Soquel Creek Water District Consumer Confidence/Water Quality Report is now available.** In 2017, we continued to meet or exceed all safety and water quality standards, as we have for many years. Read our 2017 Consumer Confidence/Water Quality Report to learn about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to the standards.

Visit [www.soquelcreekwater.org/waterqualityreports/2017wqr.pdf](http://www.soquelcreekwater.org/waterqualityreports/2017wqr.pdf) to access the report. You must have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer to view the report. If you would like a paper copy of the report mailed to you, please call Carla James at 831-475-8501 x138, or email [carlaj@soquelcreekwater.org](mailto:carlaj@soquelcreekwater.org).



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

Other ways to connect with us!



watersavingtips.org to view the winning videos from this year's Monterey Bay Area wide Save Water video Contest. It was sponsored by the Conservation Coalition of Santa Cruz County and Monterey County Water Awareness Committee.'" data-bbox="419 686 944 916"/&gt;