Soquel Creek Water District
Fiscal Year 2017–2018 Communications and Outreach Summary Report

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Dr. Tom LaHue, Vice President
Carla Christensen
Dr. Bruce Jaffe
Rachél Lather

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Dr. Bruce Jaffe, Alternate
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Communication Consultants who assisted in 2017–2018:
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Forest Design, LLC (Web)
ZunZun (School Assemblies)

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INTRODUCTION

In 2017–18, the District communications were guided by three over-arching goals developed by the District’s Public Outreach Standing Committee:

1. Increase public understanding and awareness of the water supply problem and the comprehensive nature of the District’s efforts including our action-oriented Community Water Plan

2. Build a relationship between District staff, leadership, and customers by clearly articulating a path forward to a safe and reliable water supply

3. Maintain and increase regular, consistent, and clear communication with customers through a variety of media and other methods

The Soquel Creek Water District (District) is a non-profit, local government agency and resource management organization committed to customer service, transparency and public engagement. The District services over 40,400 residents through 15,825 service connections from the City of Capitola to La Selva Beach.

The District has maintained a robust community outreach program for over a decade. We are recognized by community leaders, industry peers, and our customers for our openness and willingness to share information and seek input.

The District used a multi-layered approach to increasing and improving engagement with customers and others who share the Mid-County Groundwater Basin. This approach included increased coordination across District departments, collaboration with partner agencies, establishing new communication tools and expanding ongoing efforts.

Staff from every department within the District contributed to customer education, received public input, and improved stakeholder engagement under the leadership of the Board of Directors, the Public Outreach (PO) Standing Committee, and the General Manager.

This annual report provides an overview of the District’s Communication Tools and Public Outreach Programs for Fiscal Year 2017–18.
COMMUNICATION TOOLS

The District utilizes a plethora of tools to communicate to our customers, the community-at-large, and our employees.

DISTRICT WEBSITE

Our website is an important vehicle for transparency and customer engagement.

Over the past year, 35,756 people visited the site, generating 12,510 unique pageviews on our site.

WHO WERE THESE VISITORS?

- 47.4% male
- 52.6% female

WHAT DID THEY DO ON OUR SITE?

- The average visitor looked at 2.2 pages and stayed 1.5 minutes.
- 24% visited the homepage
- 13% visited billpay
- 2% visited career opportunities

WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?

- 64% from search engines
- 30% directly to the site
- 5% from referral from another website.
- 1% from a social interaction (email, social media, e-blast)
- 86% from the United States
MONTHLY E-BLAST

The District’s e-blast is sent out the first Wednesday of every month via MailChimp. E-blasts are available to view at soquelcreekwater.org/news/monthly-e-blast.

What’s On Tap - Quarterly Newsletter

The District’s publishes a newsletter four times a year. Every customer receives a copy via mail with their bill as an insert and is emailed electronically to those customers that are enrolled in e-bills. It is also included in our monthly eblast. Each issue highlights a project from each department as well as a customer or employee. It was downloaded from our website 115 times. Past newsletters are available on our website at soquelcreekwater.org/news/whats-tap-quarterly-newsletter.

2017 CONSUMER CONFIDENCE / WATER QUALITY REPORT

The District’s 2017 Consumer Confidence/Water Quality Report was designed in-house gain this year. It was sent out via MailChimp to all customers that have an email address on file. It had an open rate of 38% and in addition, 541 unique views on the website. A bill insert, notifying customers the report was available, was also sent out in customer bills. The current and past reports are available for download at soquelcreekwater.org/waterqualityreports.
PRESS RELEASES

The District’s published 11 press releases in Fiscal Year 2017-18 and sent them out via MailChimp. We averaged an open rate of 42%. We publish every press release on our website at soquelcreekwater.org/news/press-releases. Press Releases are often picked up and a story written in the Santa Cruz Sentinel Coastlines, the Patch and Times Publishing Group newspapers.

1. July 21, 2017: Soquel Creek Water District Invites Community to Informative Open House and Unveiling of Pure Water Soquel Mobile Educational Trailer

2. July 26, 2018: Soquel Creek Water District Temporarily Discontinues Use of One Well as it Studies Treatment Solution for TCP Contamination

3. September 8, 2017: Santa Cruz County Water & Environmental Agencies Sponsor Poster Contest to “Imagine a Day Without Water”

4. October 13, 2017: Winners Announced in “Imagine a Day Without Water” Poster Contest

5. November 15, 2017: Soquel Creek Water District Unveils Two New Videos

6. November 21, 2017: Soquel Creek Water District Certified as a Green Business

7. January 25, 2018: Soquel Creek Water District Awarded State Grant of up to $2 Million

8. March 20, 2018: Learning Center to Open at Soquel Creek Water District Office

9. April 27, 2018: Soquel High School Receives Water-Wise Garden Grant

10. May 29, 2018: Notification of Road Work on Clubhouse Drive

ADVERTISING
The District placed an advertisement every month in the Times Publishing Group (TPG) newspapers: Aptos Times and Capitola/Soquel Times. We also placed an advertisement in the TPG Coast Home and Garden Magazine that publishes in the Spring and Fall.

Aptos Times & Capitola/Soquel Times Ads

July 2017

August 2017

September 2017

October 2017

November 2017

December 2017

January 2018

February 2018

March 2018

April 2018

May 2018

June 2018
Coastal Home & Garden Ads

WATER WISDOM COLUMN

The District has a running monthly column in the Capitola/Soquel Times and Aptos Times. It is designed to deliver insightful perspectives on managing water.

The columns are also available to read at soquelcreekwater.org/news/water-wisdom.

- July 2017 - Spend July with Soquel Creek Water District
- August 2017 - The Importance of Water Infrastructure
- September 2017 - Imagine a Day Without Water is October 12
- October 2017 - H20: Humans vs. Earth
- November 2017 - It’s AND not OR
- December 2017/January 2018 - A Productive Year, a Positive Future
- February 2018 - District Receives $2 Million Dollar Planning Grant for Pure Water Soquel Project
- March 2018 - Many Layers of Groundwater Awareness
- April 2018 - The Impacts of Climate Change
- May 2018 - Stage 3 Water Shortage Still in Effect Due to Groundwater Overdraft Condition
- June 2018 - Community Water Plan Update: Water solution evaluations for the mid-county groundwater basin are underway after more than five years of community effort
BANNERS

Banners are an easy and eye catching way for the District to get messages out to our community. We had several banner campaigns this past fiscal year. First we did a series of Light Pole Banners that hung in Soquel Village for 6 months. We also rotated banners in front of the District Office. We also hung banners at other District locations periodically. We were also able to have two banners in Capitola Village for Earth Day and Fix-a-Leak Week.

Soquel Village Light Post Banners
District Office Banners

UP TO A $300 RESIDENTIAL TOILET REBATE
SoquelCreekWater.org/ToiletRebate

September/October 2017

Thank you for caring about our water supply

November/December/January 2017-18

MORE THAN JUST WATER.
Providing water for hot drinks since 1964.

February 2018

Leaks Can Run, but They Can't Hide

March 2018

Community Water Plan Learning Center
Now Open
Monday–Friday 10am–2pm

April/May 2018

District Office Banners

Capitola Village Banners

Leaks Can Run, but They Can't Hide
FIX A LEAK WEEK

SoquelCreekWater.org

**BILL INSERTS**

One bill insert was sent out this past fiscal year.

1. **2017 Water Quality Report** - sent in April/May

**PUBLICATIONS**

The District developed and designed a couple publications this past year.

- Accessory Dwelling Unit Infosheet
- Updated the District Fact Sheet

**ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU) REQUIREMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Conversion ADU</th>
<th>New Construction ADU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your ADU is considered a conversion ADU</td>
<td>- It is contained within the square footage of an existing home (e.g. family room) or</td>
<td>- Your ADU is considered new construction if:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- It is contained within the existing square footage of a legal structure on your property (e.g., detached garage)</td>
<td>• Square footage was added horizontally or vertically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO NEW SERVICE IS REQUIRED.</td>
<td>• It is not part of an existing home or structure on your property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Contained within an existing structure (constructed without permits)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FACT SHEET**

- **Customers Served**
  - The District provides water to 40,400 mostly residential customers through more than 15,800 connections in mid-Santa Cruz County.
  - Capitola is the only incorporated city within the District’s service area. Unincorporated communities include Aptos, La Selva Beach, Opal Cliffs, Rio Del Mar, Seascape and Soquel.
  - The District does not have any agricultural customers.

- **Conversion ADU Requirements**
  - Application Fee
  - Water Demand Offset Fee

- **New Construction ADU Requirements**
  - Application Fee
  - Water Capacity Fee
  - Meter Fee
  - Water Demand Offset Fee

**COMMUNITY WATER PLAN**

- The Community Water Plan is based on community input and serves as the District’s roadmap to meeting our goal of sustainability by 2040. This plan includes promoting water conservation and our water neutral development to reduce groundwater extractions; being proactive with our groundwater management program to protect our aquifers; and seeking new water supplies to meet our water needs.

**WATER FROM SOURCE TO CUSTOMER**

- Currently, all of the District’s water comes from two over-drafted groundwater aquifers underlying its service area; the Purisima Aquifer and the Aromas Red Sands Aquifer. The District operates and maintains 15 active wells, 2 standby wells and 18 storage tanks and delivers water to its customers through more than 166 miles of pipeline.
CAR MAGNETS

This past year the Outreach team with input from the Conservation department developed and designed magnets to go on all the vehicles of the District Fleet.

Two different messages were developed:

- The blue magnets advertise all of our rebates available at the District.
- The dark grey magnets specifically advertise the high efficiency toilet rebate.
EDUCATION TRAILER

On July 20, 2017, at the District Open House, the District unveiled our mobile education unit. Its goal is to educate the public on water reuse, our community water plan, basin overdraft, and seawater intrusion. This past year the Trailer attended 26 events, schools or stakeholder groups. 972 people were directly reached (668 adults and 304 youth.) 3555 people were indirectly reached by walking by and seeing the trailer from afar. We also received the National WateReuse Award for Education and Outreach.
LEARNING CENTER

The District received a Bureau of Reclamation Title XVI Grant to create a Learning Center about the Community Water Plan and Pure Water Soquel. The old board room was converted into the Learning Center. The Learning Center is designed to be self-guided, and takes visitors on an interactive journey to explore “Our Path to a Reliable Water Supply.” The Learning Center was debuted on March 20, 2018. Since the opening approximately 540 people have walked through. It is open from 10–2pm, Monday through Friday.

People enjoying themselves at the grand unveiling of the Learning Center on March 20, 2018.

Two panoramic pictures of the Learning Center.
SOCIAL MEDIA

The District maintains five social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, NextDoor, Vimeo (videos), and Livestream (live video). Facebook and Twitter are used to promote District activities (events, meetings, contests) as well as to educate and share information and articles about water. NextDoor is used to inform our District customers of meetings, construction projects that might impact where they live, events, and contests. Vimeo is an ad-free platform where we house District developed videos. Lastly, we use Livestream to broadcast our Board Meetings live we hold at the Capitola Council Chambers. Viewers are also able to watch past meetings on Livestream. You don’t have to wait for CTV to post it.
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Effective communication depends on the involvement of the entire organization. At any time an employee of the District may be asked a question about the District as they go about their daily lives, simply because they work at the District. Therefore, every District employee is an ambassador for the organization. Employees at all levels should be aware of the District’s Mission, Values, Organizational Goals, and the Community Water Plan.

Employee Intranet

An intranet is an easy and effective way to communicate with employees. Important dates, green tips, staff birthdays and anniversaries, HR Forms, Accounting Forms, Safety and Emergency Response materials are all linked to the intranet. Its a one stop shop for important information for employees.

All-Staff Meetings

All-Staff meetings are held 3-4 times a year. These meetings provide an excellent avenue for managers to communicate goals for the organization, for Communication/Outreach staff to educate colleagues on timely issues, and for employees to ask questions to build their knowledge.

Staff Tours

August 24, 2017 - Tour of Pure Water Monterey

November 8 & 15, 2017 - Tour of District wells, tanks, and pump stations

MID-COUNTY GROUNDWATER AGENCY (MGA) OUTREACH

District staff sends out a monthly e-blast for the MGA on the second Thursday of the month. The list is comprised of 650 subscribers and has an average open rate of 32.4%.

The Outreach team also helps with meeting reminders, website updates and graphics.
OUTREACH PROGRAMS

Outreach to our community and customers, as well as feedback from them, is extremely important to the District. We strive to be an accessible community partner to help them understand our local water supply.

WATER WISE COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERIES  The District developed a four-part community education series in early 2017 to educate our community on a variety of topics (water supply production, water quality, water conservation, basin overdraft, seawater intrusion, and regional management efforts) and gave the community the opportunity to tour District facilities. Two events were completed in the 2017-18 year and two in 2018–19 fiscal year.

Open House • July 20, 2017

We had over 50 people attend our Open House and Education Trailer Unveiling. We conducted an online survey following the event. 60% of attendees were very satisfied and 40% were satisfied with the event. 80% felt the event was just the right amount of time and all attendees said they would likely attend a similar event.

Here are a few comments about the event from attendees:

“Liked the atmosphere, the food and the children’s area. Also very helpful to have staff and management there for questions. Thanks!”

“Well done, interesting exhibits and knowledgeable and friendly staff.”

“Everyone was so welcoming and friendly. Furthermore I learned a great deal about OUR Water District.”

“Workday events are difficult to work into busy schedules...reccommend weekend events also.”

Imagine a Day Without Water • October 12, 2017

Imagine a Day Without Water is a national event. We participated and parked the Education Trailer at Rancho Del Mar Shopping Center to engage with people as they shopped. We also had a display of the winning posters from the Imagine A Day Without Water poster contest.
Imagine a Day Without Water PopUp Art Exhibit• October 20, 2017

The Museum of Art and History partnered with the District to host a Pop-Up Art Event of the winning posters. The event featured the winning posters, a table with the water infrastructure of the past and the future and conservation information. Poster winners were presented their prizes in a ceremony.

WATER EDUCATION

School Assemblies  The District sponsors water education assemblies for schools in our service area (Soquel, Capitola, Aptos and La Selva Beach). This past year, featured performers were ZunZun and one show by Rock Steady Juggling. Each school can choose up to two free shows per school year. Assembly shows present lessons about water conservation, pollution prevention, watersheds and the hydrologic cycle through their unique crowd pleasing stage shows.

13 Assembly Programs were presented at the following schools: Mar Vista, Opal Cliffs, Soquel Elementary, Tara Redwood, Main Street, Twin Lakes, and Valencia elementary schools. Approximately 2,300 students attended.

School Programs  The District provides free field trips, water awareness classroom presentations, and materials to schools and parents in the District’s service area.

Water Education Curriculum Workshop for Teachers • January 27, 2018

8 K–12 Classroom Presentations at the following schools: Rio Del Mar, Main Street, Mar Vista, and Montessori elementary schools, Aptos and Soquel High Schools. 630 students attended.

1 School Field Trip to a well. 32 students from Tara Redwood School attended.

Environmental Science Class  CWP presentation at Cabrillo College • October 18, 2017
Community Workshops  The District collaborates on a variety of workshops for Santa Cruz County residents. These workshops cover water-saving techniques and conservation principles to help preserve and protect our most valuable resource.

- **2 Greywater Workshops** • October 14, 2017 & March 10, 2018 • Cabrillo College Extension
- **Turf Removal Workshop** • May 12, 2018 • Soquel High School

Save Water Video Contest  In partnership with the Water Conservation Coalition and the Monterey County Water Awareness Committee, the District co-sponsored the 4th annual high school and college video contest with the theme of saving water and preventing water pollution.

- **53 videos were submitted**
- **8 video teams won** recognition for their videos
- **6 videos were shown** throughout the summer on TV (KION, KSBW, Estrella and Telemundo channels) and at the Regal Santa Cruz 9 and River Front theaters before the movie previews.

COMMUNITY FAIRS AND SHOWS
Throughout the year the District attends and participates in community events.

- **Santa Cruz County Fair** • Sept 13–17, 2017
- **Monterey Bay Water Works Association BBQ & Vendor Show** • September 14, 2017
- **Aptos Fire Station Open House** • October 15, 2017
- **Capitola/Soquel and Aptos Chamber of Commerces’ Business Showcase** • February 21, 2018
- **Farmers Market** • March 17, 2018
- **Earth Day Santa Cruz** • April 21, 2018
- **Soquel Village Sip and Stroll** • April 21, 2018
- **Touch-a-Truck** • April 29, 2018
- **iSpy Science** • May 19, 2018
PROJECT COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The District educates our customers and community about current and potential projects that the District is pursuing through workshops, meetings and presentations.

Pure Water Soquel Scoping Meeting •
July 12, 2017

23 Community Water Plan one-on-one meetings with 29 individuals

5 Community Water Plan Presentations to community and government groups

2 Coffee Talks at Pacific Coffee Roasting and Surf City Coffee in Aptos

Coffee Talk
2018–19 FISCAL YEAR STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

Our primary goal in the District Strategic Plan is to establish excellent relationships and communication with our customers, key stakeholders, and the community to build trust in our agency. There are three primary strategies—with multiple activities—that we will employ to meet our outreach goal for 2018–19.

**Increase public understanding and awareness of the water supply problem and the comprehensive nature of the District’s efforts**
- Schedule the Pure Water Soquel education trailer for 10 events
- Invite 2 groups to tour the Community Water Plan Learning Center
- Conduct 15 one-on-one meetings with community leaders about the Community Water Plan
- Give 15 presentations to various groups and entities about the Community Water Plan
- Host a Water Wise Academy to educate District customers on how the District runs
- Host a Water Harvest Festival

**Build and develop collaborative partnerships (community, non-profit organizations, and other agencies)**
Continue collaboration with the following organizations:
- California Regional Environmental Education Community and Santa Cruz County Office of Education
- Coastal Watershed Council
- Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County
- Monterey Bay Waterworks Association
- Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County
- Santa Cruz County Water Conservation Coalition
- Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency
- Water Awareness Committee of Monterey County

**Maintain and increase regular, consistent, and clear communication** through a variety of methods.
- Maintain and update website with timely and accurate information
- Continue to operate three standing committees
- Properly notice all Brown Act related meetings
- Continue to film Board meetings at the Capitola Council Chambers and have them available online