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April 2014

What’s On Tap

AT THE SOQUEL CREEK WATER DISTRICT

Aptos Village Project Completes Water Conservation Requirements, Water Service Approval Granted

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The project also met requirements to save water by replacing hundreds of old residential and commercial toilets in existing buildings in the District with high-efficiency toilets as part of the “water demand offset” requirements. By exceeding water efficiency standards in the new development, the Aptos Village project will serve as a conservation showcase for other urban projects.

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March 2014
Shifting Pumping Away from the Coast

AS A COASTAL COMMUNITY solely reliant on groundwater we are at risk, and seeing the first signs, of seawater intrusion. If our aquifers continue to be pumped at their current level seawater can invade and contaminate public and private wells, making them useless for supplying drinking water. To safeguard our groundwater resource, the District’s long term goal is to raise groundwater levels at the coast.

One of the ways the District does this is by managing our pumping of wells further inland, where there is less risk of seawater intrusion. In 2011, the District approved developing five new inland wells. These new wells will not add to the overall amount of water we’re pumping, but rather allow redistribution of pumping inland.

In the fall of 2012, the first well was brought on-line at the Polo Grounds County Park in Aptos. Also around that time, the O’Neill Ranch Well was drilled near the intersection of 41st Avenue and Soquel Drive.

Beginning this month, construction will start on the O’Neill treatment plant to remove contaminants from the water to ensure the water delivered to you meets all state and federal water quality requirements. The 5 million dollar project includes new pipeline from 41st Avenue to Porter Street, new pumping equipment, a control building, an emergency back-up generator and filtration equipment. Work on Soquel Drive will be limited to the hours of 9 am to 3:30 pm to reduce traffic impacts. This project is expected to be completed in February of 2015 and will produce up to 650 gallons per minute of high quality drinking water.

The District is managing our pumping of wells further inland where there is less risk of seawater intrusion.

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Short and Long-term Water Reduction Programs

OUR DISTRICT IS FACING a challenging water shortage issue that will require both short-term actions and long-term solutions. Right now, the District Board is requesting that customers voluntarily reduce their water use by 20%, consistent with what Governor Brown has asked Californians to do in the face of the current drought.

We are also developing a long-term Water Use Reduction Program for District customers that will last for several years – even after the drought ends. All of our plans recognize our customers’ ongoing conservation efforts and will focus on helping high users meet new water use goals.

The purpose of the water reduction program is to save a sufficient amount of water to slow down seawater intrusion and permanently secure long-term water supplies. The project is being designed so it produces water savings in a cost effective manner that is fair and equitable to customers, focuses on reductions in outdoor potable water use, and provides support to customers.

The Board has been holding discussions since January to develop this water use reduction program with input from staff, technical experts and community members. Our goal is to begin implementing the program in the Fall of 2014. We will continue to provide more information and direction as the program is fully developed.
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what will the new long-term cutbacks look like?

While we are still working through the details, each District customer will likely be allocated a monthly water budget based on the number of people in the household. If the water budget is exceeded then financial penalties would be assessed. Businesses and other organizations will have their own guidelines or budgets. The District is committed to helping our customers meet these goals and will be providing substantial customer outreach and support, rebate packages and incentives.

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The yard signs available to promote water cutbacks

Soquel Creek Water District is partnering with other local water agencies to promote water conservation and reductions in use, both indoors and outdoors. As a District customer, if you would like to have a free yard sign to display at your home or business, please contact Melanie Schumacher at (831) 475-8501 x153 or melanies@soquelcreekwater.org.

District customers can pick up free water-saving devices such as faucet aerators, low-flow showerheads, toilet flappers, and automatic shut-off hose nozzles at the District office.

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what is WDO?

The Water Demand Offset Program is an innovative approach to planned development that requires developers to offset their anticipated water use by 200% by reducing existing customer’s use elsewhere in the District. This “win-win” program means that new development actually leads to less water use District-wide. Since the WDO program’s inception in 2003, developers have paid for and offset new uses by installing over 3,000 toilets in our existing residential homes, businesses, and schools.

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Artists renderings of the Aptos Village Green and the surrounding commercial and residential units.