

On Tap

Winter 2009



Recycled Water Plays an Important Role in Water Supply

Did you know that more recycled water is used for irrigation and industrial purposes on a per capita basis within the Contra Costa Water District's service area boundaries than within the boundaries of any other Bay Area water provider?

It's true. Almost 10 percent of the demand for water within the District's boundaries is met with recycled water from the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District in Martinez and the Delta Diablo Sanitation District in Antioch. In other words, of all the water used annually by CCWD's 550,000 customers, 6,100 gallons per person is recycled and reused for industry and irrigation. This allows more of the area's high-quality water supply to be saved for drinking water.

Used for Industry & Irrigation

Recycled water is conveyed in "purple pipe," which you may have recently seen being installed in various locations around the county. Isolated in its own purple pipelines, recycled water is kept separate from drinking water and delivered to industries, such as power plants, and to irrigation systems for golf courses, ball fields, parks, median strips and agricultural land.

The District supports recycling efforts because recycled water is an important component of the District's water-supply portfolio. To that end, the District cooperates with local water recyclers and has formed partnerships with businesses, cities and wastewater agencies to facilitate the development of cost-effective, environmentally sound recycled-water projects.

Pros & Cons

While recycling plays an important role in meeting the area's demand for water, the District takes care to consider all of the pros and cons when reviewing a proposed recycling project.

High cost is one of the downsides of water recycling, mostly due to the costs of building and operating specialized treatment facilities, the considerable amount of energy needed for recycling, and the installation of miles of purple pipe. State and federal grants, however, can cover some construction costs, making projects affordable for communities, and the District has been very successful at obtaining grants to support recycling projects within its boundaries.

Energy use is another potential concern. The energy-intensive treatment processes used to recycle wastewater and pump it to customers can require more energy than what is currently used to treat and distribute Delta water. This is an important environmental factor because most electricity is produced by energy plants that emit greenhouse gases. When considering a recycling project, the District carefully compares the costs and benefits of the project to other alternatives, such as water conservation, water transfers and desalination. For example, water conservation always saves energy and water and reduces the creation of wastewater. A water-recycling project, on the other hand, may or may not generate similar benefits.

The District has a long history of supporting recycled-water projects and including recycled water into its water-supply planning. For example, in 1993, as part of the Los Vaqueros Reservoir Environmental Impact Report, the District's Board of Directors set a goal to ensure that 3 billion gallons of water would be recycled annually within the District's boundaries by 2025. That goal was met and exceeded in 2008, 17 years early.

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Purple pipe is used to isolate recycled water.

CCWD Board of Directors:

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Recycled Water Plays an Important Role in Water Supply *(continued)*

When District staff works on long-term plans to address the region's future water needs, recycled water is a key component of those plans. Today, there are a number of recycling projects proposed within the District's boundaries. These include projects that would serve new industries, golf courses and other development. They would raise the total amount of water recycled annually within the District's boundaries to 6.3 billion gallons by 2019, roughly 20 percent of the overall water demand.

The planned development of the Concord Naval Weapons Station presents the most significant opportunity for well-designed, fully integrated and cost-effective recycled-water use within the District's service area. The District applauds the City of Concord's efforts to make the new development a model community that includes state-of-the-art integrated water planning and water recycling. Through collaboration with the City and the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, conceptual agreements are already in place that will maximize conservation and ensure that recycled water is available throughout the new development for multiple uses.

Other near-term projects include expanding recycled water service in Pittsburg, Antioch and Concord, and serving recycled water to new industrial developments being considered for the shoreline in East County.

As a steward of the environment and a water provider dedicated to meeting the needs of its customers well into the future, the District is committed to incorporating recycled water into the overall water supply in the most cost-effective and environmentally sustainable manner possible.

Drought Update: Conservation is Still Needed

In 2009, residents of Central and Eastern Contra Costa County did an excellent job of saving water. Overall summertime water use was reduced by about 20 percent, as compared to summertime water use in 2005, 2006 and 2007. This overall reduction surpassed the 15 percent goal set by the Contra Costa Water District's Drought Management Program.

With summer far behind us, you should have stopped watering your landscape

by now. If you have an automatic sprinkler system, the timer should be turned off. If there is an extended drought this winter and your landscape shows signs of stress, you should water manually only as needed.

It is extremely important for everyone to conserve water throughout the winter. Even if we have normal precipitation in the first half of 2010, it's unlikely that enough snow and rain would fall on the state to undo the last three years of drought. If we have another dry year, the state's water shortage will intensify, as will the need for water conservation.

The water we conserve today is water that stays in reservoirs and ensures flexibility during the summer months if dry conditions persist.

The District offers a variety of incentives and services to help you conserve water. For more information about the District's water supply and free conservation services, visit www.ccwater.com or call **(925) 688-8320**.

Have Fun! Visit the Los Vaqueros Watershed

The Los Vaqueros Watershed just south of Brentwood has become well-known as a great place to fish. But did you know it is also the perfect place for an invigorating hike, a challenging bike ride, a peaceful picnic or a relaxing horseback ride?

With a full-service marina, an engaging interpretive center, and 55 miles of trails traversing nearly 20,000 acres of open space, the Los Vaqueros Watershed offers a wide assortment of recreational opportunities. The reservoir is stocked with game fish and rental boats are available at the marina. The interpretive center, open on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, offers fun programs and is staffed by knowledgeable naturalists.

Because the reservoir stores drinking water, body contact sports (such as swimming) are not permitted and only the marina's rental boats are allowed.

You can find out more by visiting www.ccwater.com/losvaqueros or by calling **(925) 688-8000** to have a Los Vaqueros Visitors Packet mailed to you.

Save a Stamp! Use the Internet to Pay Your CCWD Bill

If you receive your water bill directly from the Contra Costa Water District, you can now pay it over the internet using a Visa or MasterCard credit or debit card.

Just go to www.ccwater.com and click on Customer Service to find the link that will lead you to our privacy statement and our secure service provider for bill payment. To complete your transaction, you will need your CCWD account number and service address. You will also be asked for your e-mail address so that your receipt can be e-mailed to you.

When you use the on-line bill payment service, please allow two business days for your transaction to be processed. If you need assistance, please call CCWD at **(925) 688-8210** during business hours.