



Connections

Exploring Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Planning

Having a reliable supply of clean drinking water is a priority for all communities. In the Santa Rosa area, the primary sources of drinking water are the Russian River and groundwater supplies. Because of increasing demand, strict regulations governing usage of river water and the uncertainties of the weather, it is important to insure that all our water resources are well managed.



A reliable supply of clean drinking water is a priority for all communities.

To enhance the current knowledge regarding groundwater resources within the county, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) initiated a five year cooperative study of groundwater resources within the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Basin in 2005. The cooperative study is being conducted by the USGS in partnership with Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA), the cities of Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Sebastopol and Cotati, the Town of Windsor and Cal-American Water Company.

As the USGS study is being finalized, SCWA is investigating the feasibility of pursuing groundwater management planning for the Santa Rosa Groundwater Plain, which covers an area of approximately 80,000 acres and is home to about half the popula-

tion of Sonoma County. This groundwater system provides numerous benefits to the region, including rural residential and municipal water supplies, irrigation water for agriculture, and baseflow to streams and surface water bodies. There are over 12,000 permitted water wells in the basin.

In California, there is not a statewide process for regulating or permitting groundwater usage. The water belongs to the state but property owners have a right to use the water beneath their land with the stipulation that they put the water to reasonable and beneficial uses and do not waste it. Approximately 150 to 200 groundwater management plans have been developed successfully in the state, including a program that is currently evolving in the Sonoma Valley.

Building on the progress of the Sonoma Valley Groundwater Management Plan, SCWA is taking pre-planning steps to lay the foundation for a phased groundwater management planning process in the Santa Rosa Plain. As part of these steps — developed to inform and involve stakeholders and the general public — a small, representative steering committee to guide pre-planning work has been created and a public outreach effort on the USGS technical study and the groundwater management planning process is underway.

The City of Santa Rosa encourages you to stay informed on this important issue. To learn more, you can visit the Water Agency website at scwa.ca.gov/srgroundwater/.

Source: Sonoma County Water Agency

Save Water Now, Save Money All Year

Most of the water we use in our homes and businesses is taken from the Russian River watershed, upon which fish and other wildlife also rely for their survival. It is extremely important that every drop of water we take from the water cycle be used as efficiently as possible to achieve its full benefits. By eliminating wasteful practices and using water wisely, you not only save water and protect our limited resource and the environment, you also save money.



If you turn off your irrigation system during the winter months, you can save water now and lower your water bill throughout the entire year.

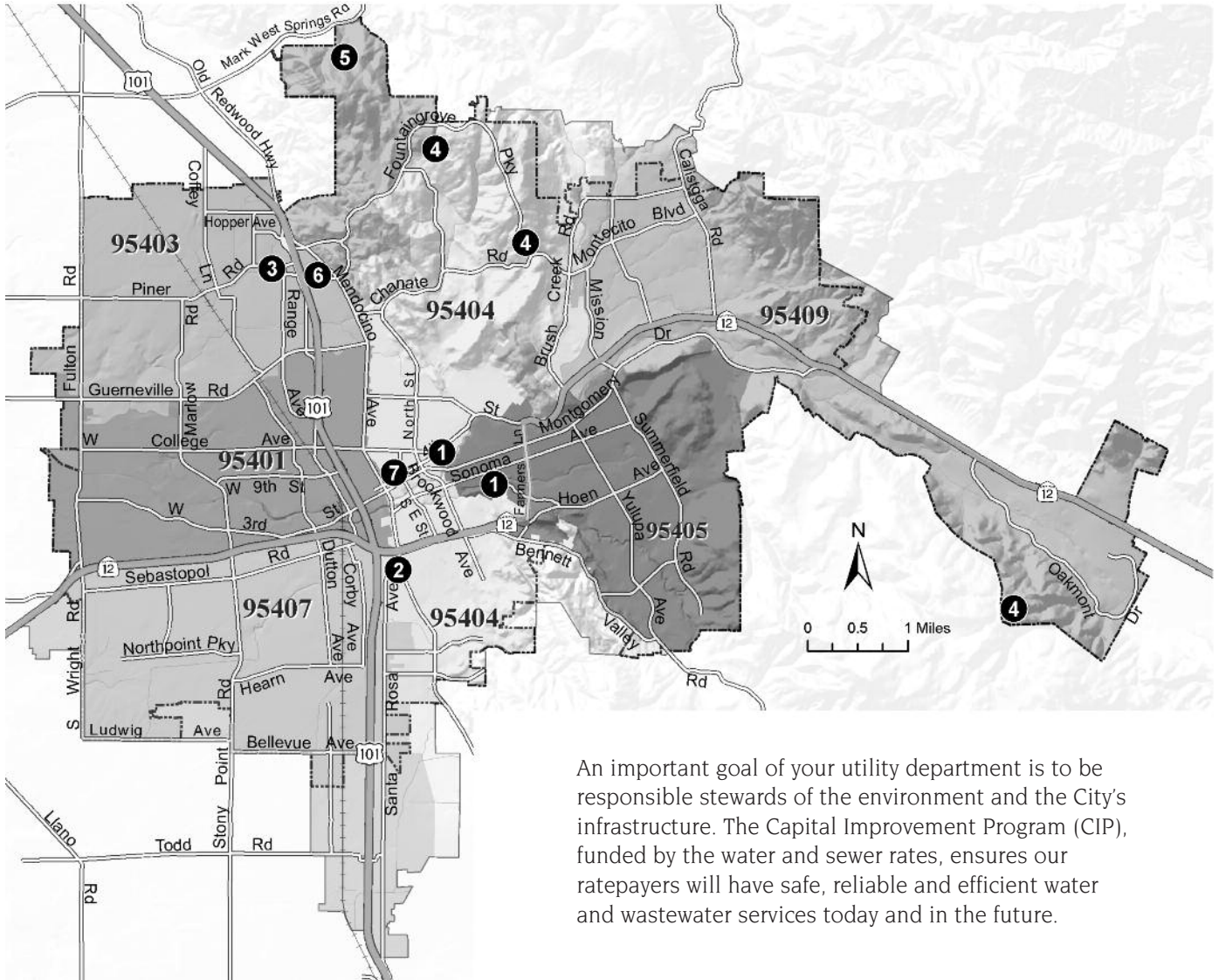
Santa Rosa typically receives much more rainfall in the winter than plants need to stay healthy, so there is no need to irrigate during these months. By turning off your irrigation system now, you not only eliminate waste and save money on your current bill, you also save money all year long by achieving

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Water and Sewer Capital Improvement Projects in Construction — January through March 2011



An important goal of your utility department is to be responsible stewards of the environment and the City's infrastructure. The Capital Improvement Program (CIP), funded by the water and sewer rates, ensures our ratepayers will have safe, reliable and efficient water and wastewater services today and in the future.

This map shows capital improvement projects that will be under construction during the first quarter of 2011.

The map reflects projects that are estimated to occur during the period January through March 2011 and, due to varying factors, are subject to change without notice. The data represented has been generated from Utilities Asset Management.

#	Project Description
1	Bishop Dr, Brookside Dr, Brookwood Ave, Coddling Dr, Hoen Ave and Third St Sewer and Water
2	Earle Street Sewer Replacement - Hwy 101 to Santa Rosa Avenue
3	Range Ave Water Main Installation - Russell to Piner
4	Water Tank Seismic Upgrades and Improvements
5	Skyfarm "A" Sewer Lift Station Wet Well Modifications
6	Manhole Replacement - Russell Ave Freeway Crossing
7	3rd St From B St to E St Sewer and Water Improvements

Did You Know?

Homeowners are responsible for the maintenance and repair of their sewer lateral. And damage from sewer backups are not typically covered by homeowner insurance policies.

The City of Santa Rosa is responsible for maintaining the sewer main, usually located in the street, which collects wastewater from each property. However, the entire sewer lateral, located from the house to the City's sewer main, is the property owner's responsibility. If the sewer lateral becomes blocked by roots, grease or paper products, it can cause a sewer backup. Sewer backups can cause substantial damage and most standard homeowner insurance policies do not cover damage from sewer backups. Sewer backup coverage is available from most insurers for a nominal cost.

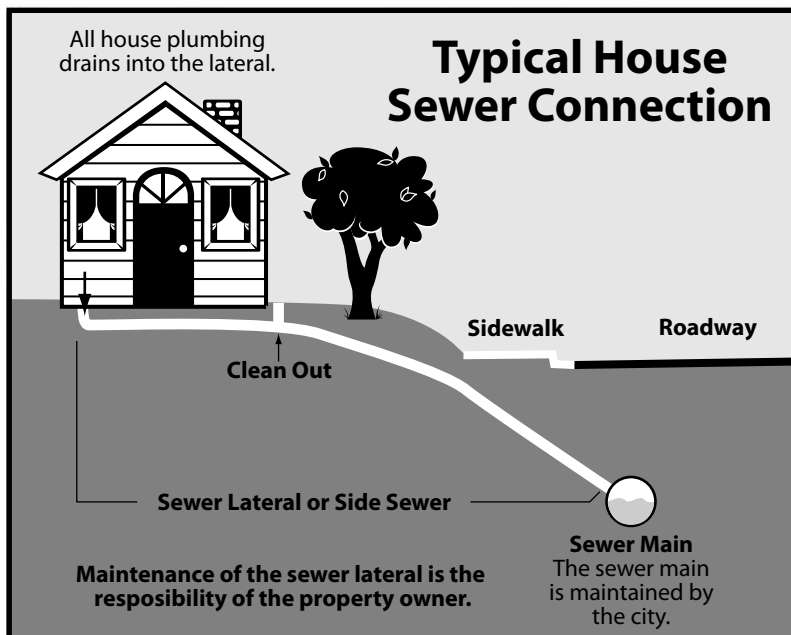
Many homeowners may not realize that they are responsible for the maintenance and repair of their entire sewer lateral to the City's sewer main. The sewer lateral is owned and maintained by the property owner, including any part that extends into the street or public right of way. A cracked or deteriorated sewer lateral or one filled with tree roots can also allow groundwater to seep into the sewer collection system and puts additional strain on the wastewater treatment plant.

To prevent sewer lateral problems:

- Do not dispose of grease down the drain. Flushing with hot water will just push the grease farther down the lateral before it hardens. Instead, pour grease into a sealable container with an absorbent like paper waste and discard with your other garbage.
- Do not dispose of paper towels, disposable diapers, cloth of any kind, or feminine products in the sewer system. These products do not deteriorate as quickly as toilet paper and will cause a very difficult (expensive) clog in the sewer lateral.
- Replace your sewer lateral if you have periodic blockages due to tree roots. Roots find any small opening in sewer lines and may eventually constrict the lateral, causing a backup.
- Correct illegal plumbing connections that put extra strain on the sewer system. Roof downspouts, French drains and sump pumps that are directly connected to the sewer system add water into the sewer system. This water must be treated like wastewater and raises treatment costs. These water sources can also deposit sediment in the sewer lateral, which may eventually contribute to a sewer backup.

Sewer lateral maintenance, like roof maintenance, is an important factor in keeping your property functioning and livable. Don't let a sewer backup be a

drain on your home or finances. Perform periodic sewer lateral maintenance, dispose of items correctly and consider adding insurance coverage for sewer backups.



Solar at Brown Farm

The City of Santa Rosa owns 486 acres of seasonal wetlands located near the City's Laguna Treatment Plant. This area, known as Brown Farm, contains two creeks, valley oaks, the Brown Farm Wildlife Area and three natural areas that the City helps preserve. Brown Farm also includes recycled water storage ponds, where recycled water is stored during winter and spring months, to provide several local farms with irrigation during the summer months in order to grow multiple hay crops in a single season. By providing recycled water for irrigation, drinkable water is preserved for other uses.



With the City's current conservation and preservation efforts at Brown Farm, it seemed to be the perfect location to install a solar photovoltaic (PV) system. A PV system would provide the City with renewable, clean, non-polluting energy to pump recycled water from the ponds to the farms.

In October, One Sun Inc., completed construction on the 75 kilowatt ground mounted PV system. It is estimated that this system will provide at least 65 percent of the energy needed on site, reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 27 tons per year and save approximately \$12,000 in energy costs per year at current prices. As energy costs continue to rise, the City's savings will increase, thus allowing the Utilities Department to stabilize a portion of operating costs, which in turn benefits our water customers.

For additional information on the Utilities Department's solar energy and greenhouse gas emission reduction projects, please contact the Project Development Team at 543-4200 or visit our website at srcity.org/environmentalprojects.

a lower sewer cap, which is calculated during the months of December, January and February (see the back of your utility bill for details).

Another way to save water and money is to check for and repair leaks, which are the biggest single cause of high utility bills. A leaking toilet can waste up to 200 gallons per day! Here are just a few ways to eliminate water waste due to leaks:

- Check your meter to see if the low flow indicator is spinning.
- Place a dye tab in the toilet tank and allow it to sit for 15 minutes without flushing. If dye appears in your toilet bowl, you have a leak.
- Make sure your faucets and showerheads aren't dripping.

If you have a leak, fix it right away. The longer you wait the more money and water you waste.

Additionally, you can save water and money by taking advantage of incentives and rebates that the City of Santa Rosa Water-Use Efficiency Program offers. To help reduce indoor water use, the program provides free low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators and rebates for replacing washing machines with qualifying high-efficiency washing machines.



Fix leaks right away. They are the biggest single cause of high utility bills.

To improve your water-use efficiency outdoors, the Water-Use Efficiency Program provides rebates for installing rain water harvesting systems, removing non-functional turf and replacing it with low-water-use alternatives through the Green Exchange Rebate Program, and

Your Utilities Department at Work for You

The Wastewater Collection Cleaning Crew



Everyone likes a clean home. But do you realize how important it is to have clean sanitary sewer lines? Sanitary sewer overflows and

backups can cause health hazards, damage homes and threaten the environment. The most common cause of overflows is sewer pipes becoming blocked by grease or foreign materials. The wastewater collection system is comprised of 580 miles of underground pipe that transports wastewater to the Laguna Treatment Plant. If it goes down a toilet, shower or sink drain, it goes into the sewer system.

Chris Playle is a Senior Utilities System Operator who has been with the City of Santa Rosa for 11 years and is one of the employees responsible for maintaining the wastewater collection system in accordance with the City's Sanitary Sewer Management Plan (SSMP). The SSMP requires that every inch of the City's collection system be cleaned during each five year period to help prevent blockages and overflows.

Chris was recently part of a team that revised the cleaning programs and

adjusted maintenance schedules to enhance productivity. He oversees a crew whose day-to-day operations consist of using high velocity hydro flushing and mechanical rodding equipment to clean the sanitary sewer system. They also respond to emergency sanitary sewer spills and clean-ups. Chris has a Grade II Water Distribution Operator Certificate, a Grade I Wastewater Collection Certificate and a Class "A" California Driver's License. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Studies and Planning with an emphasis in Water Quality Technology and says that having a general understanding of underground construction terminology and practices is very helpful.

What Chris likes best about his job are the "customer service aspects the job provides and my co-workers." Chris says that customer service and public health are priorities in his division; he believes that the dedicated employees and proactive approach to maintaining the City's wastewater collection system are what keep the sanitary sewer lines functioning properly.

For more information about the City of Santa Rosa Utilities Department, please visit our website at srcity.org/ut.

providing weekly lawn watering information through our Turf-Time line at (707) 543-3466 and website at srcity.org/turftime. In addition, the Water-Use Efficiency Program offers a rebate for installing graywater systems and will be offering a free, two day Graywater Class for Santa Rosa Utility customers in March. For additional information or to register for the Graywater Class, call the Water-Use Efficiency Hotline at 707-543-3985 or visit srcity.org/wue.

Remember — by turning off your irrigation system in the winter months, checking for and repairing leaks, and taking advantage of water-use efficiency incentives and rebates, you can save water and money!

Web Resources

Visit these websites to learn more about issues mentioned in this Update.

Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Planning:

scwa.ca.gov/srgroundwater/

Water-Use Efficiency:

SRCity.org/wue

Turf-Time:

SRCity.org/turftime

Environmental Projects/

Brown Farm:

SRCity.org/environmentalprojects

Santa Rosa Utilities Department:

SRCity.org/ut

Twitter:

twitter.com/SantaRosaWater