



Connections



New Recycled Water Studies Underway

Under the direction of the Board of Public Utilities (BPU), ongoing studies are being conducted to evaluate a range of solutions for expanding the current Subregional Recycled Water System. These new studies will help the System to continue to meet demand and be responsive to regulatory changes. As an adjunct to the Geysers Recharge Project and stepped-up water conservation efforts, these new options may include expanding urban landscape irrigation and identifying new alternative locations for releasing recycled water into or along the Russian River when necessary.

Urban reuse uses highly treated recycled water to irrigate parks, golf courses, business landscapes, and other public areas. This type of reuse is considered beneficial because it reduces the use of other water resources we rely on for our drinking water. Using recycled water for landscape irrigation also reduces the amount of highly treated reclaimed water that must be discharged (or released) into the Russian River.



Conserve, Recycle, Reuse
SANTA ROSA SUBREGIONAL WATER REUSE SYSTEM

Several areas in Santa Rosa are being studied to see if urban reuse would be feasible. The studies include interviewing businesses, schools, city parks, and residential developers who could irrigate their landscapes with

recycled water. The interviewing of potential customers helps determine the level of interest and the amount of water they may be able to use. Survey results and a final report will be presented to the BPU this fall.

Discharging (or releasing water) is still an essential element of the Subregional System because the amount of recycled water produced can vary significantly from year to year, due to varying weather conditions. When there is too much water and it can't all be sent to the Geysers Project to generate electricity, the system releases water to the Laguna de Santa Rosa, where it has done so for several years. But recent regulatory changes have made it uncertain if this practice can be continued at this location. Therefore, studies are underway to evaluate new locations and various methods for releasing a portion of the highly treated water into the Russian River when necessary. Regardless of where or how, it is important to note that there would be no increase in the total volume above currently permitted levels.

There are two types of discharge being looked at: indirect discharge (in which percolation through soil allows additional treatment before water reaches the River), and direct discharge (in which recycled water is released directly into the River through various methods). Discharge relocation related studies have been underway since spring of 2005 and will continue through at least the fall of 2006. These studies will help develop potential direct and/or indirect discharge options.

Future steps in the process will include identifying project alternatives, CEQA analysis and review, and identifying a preferred project by

2008. As these studies are completed, the study team will make periodic updates to the BPU, Subregional partners, and the Santa Rosa City Council. The public and potentially affected stakeholders will also have the opportunity to provide input.

Ratepayers can expect that rates will continue to increase over the next five to ten years as the BPU strives to keep the system in compliance with new government regulations. However, expanding the system because of population growth will not negatively affect current ratepayers because new growth will pay for itself as new ratepayers are added to the system.

Water Conservation

Even as we move away from hot summer weather, the City of Santa Rosa continues to be dedicated to integrating water conservation into future supply and demand solutions for both the water supply system and the wastewater treatment/reuse system. Our goal is to reduce water use by 2,500 acre-feet by the year 2010. Through incentive campaigns and residential and commercial rebate programs, the City of Santa Rosa has already achieved over 1.7 million gallons per day in water savings, moving us closer to achieving our water conservation goals.

Santa Rosa currently has many conservation incentives and rebates available to our customers. Residential and commercial customers can take advantage of a variety of rebate and incentive programs, ranging from our clothes washer rebates, sustained

continued on back

It All Started with a Love of Birds

In 1992, Denise Cadman's love of birds culminated in her enrollment in an ornithology course at Sonoma State University. A classmate told her about a position at the City of Santa Rosa and, as they say, "the rest is history."

Denise began work as a temporary, part-time maintenance worker with the City of Santa Rosa in 1992. Thirteen years later, Denise is the City's Natural Resource Specialist. Her three main functions are: management of the natural resources on City property, education and outreach, and water quality monitoring.

The City owns approximately



1,500 acres in the Laguna de Santa Rosa area. This acreage is loaded with Heritage Valley oaks, vernal pools,

riparian forests, wildlife and the Laguna flood plain. Denise makes sure that these resources are protected and enhanced while the City applies recycled water in a responsible fashion for agriculture. Over the years, her projects have included many different things from planting trees to removing invasive weeds. Denise also educates the citizen's of

Santa Rosa by conducting tours of the Laguna Treatment Plant, and the various City farms and wetlands. She also provides in-classroom presentations to local schools.

Denise enjoys her position because it gives her an opportunity to continually learn more about the environment. "This position has kept evolving and changing. It's been great! Every day is different. I've learned so much on the job that I can now apply and share with others." She says she's learned volumes about water and recycled water, the Laguna de Santa Rosa, and the special plant and wildlife communities in the area.

For more information about Laguna Treatment Plant tours or classroom presentations, please call Denise Cadman at (707) 543-3408.



Nearly half (or 11 million gallons per day) of the Subregional System's recycled water is sent to The Geysers, where it is pumped into underground steamfields and used to generate enough electricity for about 85,000 households.

About 10 megawatts of the new power generated (or enough to serve 15,000 households) is used to pump the water to the steam fields.

Since the Geysers Project began operating in December 2003, over seven billion gallons of treated wastewater have been used to recharge the steamfields, rather than being discharged into the Russian River.

The Geysers Recharge Project is recognized and lauded throughout the world. It has received the following honors for its unique approach to water reuse and the engineering feats that went into its planning and construction:

- Outstanding Environmental Analysis Document for 1997
- Helen Putman Award — Award of Excellence for Planning and Environmental Quality
- Project of the Year 2004 by the National WaterReuse Association
- Public Agency Environmental Responsibility Award, December 2004
- Honor Award from CELSOC Engineering Excellence Awards, January 2005
- Clair A. Hill Water Agency Award for Excellence from the Association of California Water Agencies, May 2005

Water Conservation continued...

reduction rebate, direct install toilet replacement program, and on-site water use surveys. For a complete list of current incentives or to request assistance in reducing your water use, please contact the Water Conservation Hotline at 707-543-3985 or visit www.SRcity.org/wc.

Web Resources

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

Geysers Recharge Project:

www.SRcity.org/GeysersProject

Incremental Recycled Water Program (IRWP):

www.RecycledWaterProgram.com

Recycled Water:

www.SRcity.org/RecycledWater

Santa Rosa Utility Department:

<http://ci.santa-rosa.ca.us/ut>

Water Conservation:

www.SRcity.org/wc