

Connections



Santa Rosa Continues to Expand Recycled Water Program

The Geysers Recharge Project, which started operating in December 2003, added sufficient discharge capacity to the Subregional System to meet population growth plans that were in place at the time the project was selected. Since then, several Subregional System partners have modified their general plans. At the same time, new water quality regulations are placing increasingly stringent restrictions on the discharge of recycled water into the Laguna de Santa Rosa, a tributary of the Russian River.

As a result, in March 2004, the City of Santa Rosa adopted the Incremental Recycled Water Program (IRWP) Master Plan to expand the current Subregional Water Reclamation System to meet resource demands and be responsive to regulatory changes.

The IRWP Master Plan includes five components: Geysers expansion, agriculture irrigation, urban reuse, water conservation, and discharge relocation. It will be implemented, as needed, between 2005 and about 2020. The first steps are to study urban reuse and discharge relocation options.

Urban Reuse

A detailed study has been underway to determine the location, size, and timing of a project to add more urban reuse to the system. Urban reuse is defined as taking highly-treated recycled water and using it to irrigate urban landscaping such as parks, golf courses, commercial areas and street medians. Recycled water can also be used in fire suppression systems and for industrial processes. Water recycling is beneficial because it reduces demand on other water resources such as groundwater,

the Russian River, and its tributaries.

Expansion of reuse projects prior to 2012 is being considered to serve planned population growth within the Subregional System service area. In mid-August 2006, the City will consider moving forward with a phased plan to reuse up to 1000 million gallons per year of recycled water in urban areas, which would save up to 1000 million gallons per year of precious drinking water.

Discharge Relocation

In order to meet regulatory requirements imposed on the City by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, the City of Santa Rosa is reviewing options to relocate its discharge point from the Laguna de Santa Rosa to the Russian River. While the amount of the annual discharge will not change, all or a portion of the discharge would be relocated prior to 2010. In April 2006, the Santa Rosa Board of Public Utilities (BPU) directed City staff to continue planning a Discharge Relocation Project as part of the IRWP Master Plan.

Santa Rosa currently discharges to the Laguna de Santa Rosa, but the higher and faster flows in the Russian River (relative to the Laguna flows) make relocating all, or a portion, of the discharge to the River the most feasible method of complying with new and anticipated regulations.

Discharge will continue to be an essential element of the Subregional Water Reclamation System because the amount of recycled water produced varies substantially from year to year due to local weather conditions. But weather-related increases in recycled

Irrigation Efficiency is the Key to Summer Conservation

Water use efficiency is always needed. Water is a finite resource that cannot be created. Nature's water cycle is a process that provides water more slowly than we demand. Because of this, 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 benefit. By constantly implementing water conservation measures, we can ensure that waste is being eliminated, we are receiving the full benefit from every drop, and we are reducing our demand so our region can continue to use water within the limits of our supply.

During the summer months, water use efficiency is particularly important. Landscape irrigation drives summer water use to more than twice that of winter months. During these months of peak water demand, you can help improve your irrigation water use efficiency by remembering to:

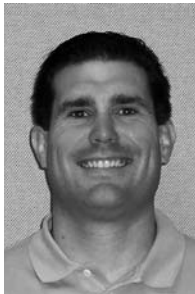
- Run your irrigation system in the pre-dawn hours, to reduce the amount of water lost to evaporation.
- Use repeat start times and short run times for each station. For example, apply 15 minutes of irrigation in three 5-minute applications, separated by one hour each. This will allow more water to soak into the ground and reduce runoff.
- Check the schedule on your irrigation controller once a week for maximum efficiency. Changing the programs to match water needs of your plants even

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Your Utilities Department at Work for You

Ensuring Water Quality for Santa Rosans



Jason Tibbals is the Utilities System Supervisor for the Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) section of the Utilities Department. Jason began working construction during high school and

although he enjoyed the work, being out of a job every winter was unacceptable. He had relatives that worked for local cities and their steady work and job security were appealing to him. He applied with the City of Santa Rosa in 1991 and started out as a Utilities System Operator, working his way up to Supervisor two years ago.

I&I occurs when clean groundwater and/or stormwater enters the sewer system. Inflow is stormwater that enters the sewer system when rain gutters or sump pumps are improperly connected to the sewer system. Infiltration is groundwater that seeps into cracks in the sewer pipes or manholes. The most important goal of the I&I crew is to eliminate this unnecessary flow to the

Laguna Treatment Plant.

The I&I crew uses a special camera to film the inside of the sanitary sewer system which allows them to identify inflow and infiltration occurrences. Another tool they use is a smoke test. If improper connections exist, the smoke will rise up from that area and alert the crew. They also work with Police, Public Works and Industrial Waste to find illegal connections or discharges to the system.

Jason has been awarded his California Water Environmental Association Grade 4 certification, as well as the California Water Distribution System Grade 3 certification. Studying and taking these tests require countless hours of personal dedication. Jason says that all this hard work is worth it when it allows him to “find a solution to a customer’s problem, or to make changes that are beneficial to the City.”

If you have information regarding illegal dumping or illegal connections to the sewer system, please call (707) 543-4200.

“Recycled Water” continued...

water production are considered unreliable for reuse options such as the Geysers Recharge Project and urban and agricultural irrigation projects. The people using this recycled water — energy companies, farmers and other irrigators — need to know the water will be available when they need it and not subject to weather variations.

The City of Santa Rosa is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to evaluate alternatives for relocating the discharge point of excess recycled water. It is anticipated that the BPU will authorize project-scoping meetings to be held in August 2006.

Additional Storage

The Geysers Recharge Project is a weather-independent use of recycled water, while urban and agricultural reuses are not. Since urban and agricultural reuses are also key to the success

of the overall recycled water program, additional recycled water storage ponds are necessary because more recycled water is produced in the winter when it cannot be used for irrigation. By storing the recycled water, it can be used in the spring and summer months when there is a greater need for irrigation. Storing the water also makes it a more reliable resource, which will encourage more uses of it, helping to increase demand for recycled water and lessen demand on potable water supplies. Therefore, identifying areas for additional storage ponds remains an ongoing component of the IRWP Master Plan. For more information on all the project components, visit the project Web site at: www.SRCity.org/IRWP.



“Irrigation Efficiency” continued...

once or twice a month can make a positive impact on plant health, and your water bill.

- Reduce the amount of irrigation in the later summer months. Plants need the most water in July. As we enter into the fall months, even when the weather is hot, shorter days mean plants need less water.
- Call Turf-Time at (707) 543-3466 for suggested weekly lawn watering requirements. Turf-Time is updated on a weekly basis, and watering requirements are based on actual plant needs and current weather conditions.

The Water Conservation Program offers programs and information that can help you improve your outdoor water use efficiency. You can pick up free shut off hose nozzles and Water Wise Gardening CD’s, which provide information on low water use plants. The Water Conservation Program also provides free home “Check-Ups,” where expert staff will come to your home, review your current water uses, and make recommendations for improving your water use efficiency. For more information on 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.

Recycled Water:

www.SRCity.org/RecycledWater

Geysers Recharge Project:

www.SRCity.org/GeysersProject

Water Conservation:

www.SRCity.org/WC

Incremental Recycled Water Program (IRWP):

www.SRCity.org/IRWP