



City of Santa Cruz Water Department and Soquel Creek Water District scwd² Desalination Program

Monthly Project Update – February 2009

Entering 3rd Year of Drought Conditions – A Brief Update on Current Water Situation

The City of Santa Cruz depends on surface water supplies and because we are in the midst of a third consecutive dry/critically dry year, drought conditions could worsen. Much will depend on rainfall during the next 2 to 3 months, but the chances of achieving even average rainfall and runoff for the year diminish daily. San Lorenzo River flows are far below normal and among the lowest on record for the month of January. Average flows are 19 cubic feet per second (cfs) compared to a long-term average of more than 300 cfs. The city's North Coast sources, which along with the San Lorenzo River provide 75 percent of the City's supplies, are also flowing at very low levels. A recent article on our drought situation was published in the Santa Cruz Sentinel by Genevieve Bookwalter on January 31, 2009. To see the article, visit www.santacruzsentinel.com/ci_11597933.

Soquel Creek Water District relies on wells within its service area for all its water supply. In the mid-1990's, coastal groundwater levels began to drop and they have not recovered, despite the fact that over the past four years District customers use less water than they did 20 years ago. While groundwater levels have stabilized in most areas of the District, early signs of seawater intrusion are present in the La Selva Beach area and low groundwater levels are affecting District wells in the Seacliff area. In preliminary findings for the 2008 Annual State of the Basin Report, the District's hydrologist concluded that further pumping reductions are required basin-wide. A recent model for determining groundwater level goals shows that the District's entire coastline is not adequately protected against seawater intrusion. The 2008 Annual State of the Basin report is expected to be published in March and will be available for public review.

Water Shortage Contingency Plan

A public hearing will be held to receive input on the updated Water Shortage Contingency Plan on Feb. 10 in the City Council Chambers. This report by the Santa Cruz Water Department is the first comprehensive review and update of the Plan since the early 1990's. The project grew out of the City's 2005 Urban Water Management Plan, which recognized changes in regional conditions and local water supply planning during the previous decade, and identified the need to better prepare for future water shortages. A copy of the Plan is available at: <http://www.ci.santa-cruz.ca.us/wt/conservation/WaterShortageContingencyPlan.pdf>

What Does Desalinated Water Taste Like?

This is one of the most frequently asked questions on the public tours of the seawater desalination pilot plant and samples of the desalinated water will be available in February. Water dispensers at the Pilot Plant (Long Marine Laboratory) and the lobbies of Soquel Creek

Water District (5180 Soquel Dr., Soquel) and City of Santa Cruz Water Department (212 Locust St., Santa Cruz) will have desalinated water for sampling. Stop by, taste some desalinated water, and fill out an on-line survey at www.scwd2desal.org.

Next Pilot Plant Tour is Feb. 11, 2009

The next tour of the Seawater Desalination Pilot Plant at UCSC's Long Marine Laboratory is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 11 at 10 a.m. Space is limited for the free tours. Please call 831.475.8501, x153 for more information or visit www.scwd2desal.org.

Desalination Program Informational Meeting on April 22, 2009

On Wednesday, April 22, 2009, we will be hosting an Informational Meeting at the Seymour Center from 6:30-8:30 p.m. to discuss the preliminary findings of the Desalination Pilot Plant Project and schedule for the potential full-scale desalination plant. More information is available at www.scwd2desal.org.

Project Information

For more information, please visit our project Website at www.scwd2desal.org or call (831) 475-8501 x153. These monthly project updates will be emailed on the first Wednesday of the month. Please share these updates with others. If you would like to have Project Updates emailed directly to you, please email your request to melanies@soquelcreekwater.org.

Melanie Mow Schumacher, PE
Soquel Creek Water District
scwd² Public Information Coordinator
831.475.8501 ext 153
melanies@soquelcreekwater.org

You received this email because your email address has been entered into the email distribution list of individuals who are interested in the scwd² Desalination Program. If you do not wish to receive emailed updates, you may unsubscribe by emailing melanies@soquelcreekwater.org and typing "Unsubscribe" in the subject line.

**Please consider the environment before printing this email. **