

SCMU Review

(schmoo ri-vyoo) n. items of interest and information from your Santa Cruz Municipal Utilities

No.76 SPRING 2024 SANTA CRUZ MUNICIPAL UTILITIES 212 LOCUST STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060 (831)420-5220 scmu@cityofsantacruz.com

Happy New Year!



WE'VE BID FAREWELL TO 2023, AND WOW!

What a year it was. It started with immense storms that damaged our coast and threatened our infrastructure. This winter brought a few more storms, so I'm glad our team was there to work behind the scenes to ensure you got the water you

need. I've enjoyed reflecting on the incredible journey to safeguard our water system, and I'm excited for what's to come. This will be the last time I write to you, loyal SCMU Reviewers. I'm retiring and passing the reins to your new Water Director, Heidi Luckenbach. She's smart, passionate, and driven. She's also been with the Water Department for over 20 years, so she gets it. You're in good hands!



WHILE CHANGE IS ON THE HORIZON,

the Water Department's commitment to adapting and addressing the challenges of our time remains steadfast. The specter of climate change looms large, and as responsible stewards of

our water resources, we are actively preparing for the inevitable impacts it will have on our region.

Our vision for the future includes upgrading aging infrastructure, investing in advanced technologies, and engaging with you to ensure we're meeting your needs. The best part? The work has already started.

Join me in welcoming the promises of 2024. Thank you for the privilege of serving as your Water Department Director for the past 10 years.

Rosemary Menard,
Water Director 'til February 2024

HERE ARE YOUR DAM UPDATES

REMEMBER THE FALL 2017 ISSUE of the SCMU Review (No. 64), where we told you about the updates needed at the Newell Creek Dam Inlet/Outlet Works? Oh... you don't keep every issue of the SCMU Review organized neatly in a binder like we do? That's okay! We'll jog your memory.

THE NEWELL CREEK DAM was built in 1961 to store water in Loch Lomond. Loch Lomond is our only reservoir and is nestled between the redwoods in the San Lorenzo Valley and Santa Cruz Mountains. You won't find any lake monsters here... but you will find breathtaking views and a range of activities like our summertime Loch Walks and Newell Jewell boat rides.

In the dam is an inlet and outlet pipe used to pump water upstream to the Loch Lomond reservoir and transport water from the reservoir to the Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant. This system

is what we call the "Inlet/Outlet Works," and it needed replacing due to its age.

Updating the inlet/outlet works was complicated... but we did it!

As of December 15, 2023, construction is complete.

A team of staff and contractors tunneled around the dam and under the reservoir to connect to brand-new intake structures to replace the old infrastructure. Look at these photos of people in the tunnels. *So cool.*

> continues on page 2



A team of staff and contractors tunneled around the dam and under the reservoir to connect to brand-new intake structures to replace the old infrastructure.

> Your Dam Updates from page 1



This project is one of many vital projects we're working on to update old infrastructure and enhance our climate resilience to meet our future water needs.



Healthy Watersheds and Clean Drinking Water

SANTA CRUZ HAS A LONG HISTORY of proactive environmental stewardship and we're proud of that. Watershed protection became increasingly important in our operations in the late 90s with the 1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Endangered Species Act listing of several local species, including steelhead trout and coho salmon.

Did you know we are one of very few water agencies in California that gets all our water from inside our own county?

Since our water is local, our Watershed Team has an important job to do. The team oversees operations in five watersheds: Majors, Laguna, Liddell, Newell, and San Lorenzo. They lead exciting work like our Anadromous Salmonid Habitat Conservation Plan that could help recover steelhead trout and coho salmon in our waterways.

"Since 2001, we've had ambitious goals to bring back our local coho and steelhead populations," said Chris Berry, Watershed Compliance Manager. "These fish hold significant value for the residents and visitors of Santa Cruz and their health is a great indicator of the overall health of our watersheds and their ecosystems. I'm excited to get this initiative over the finish line and want to thank our fearless leader Rosemary for helping us bring this project from concept to reality."

A healthy watershed is pivotal for ensuring the quality and safety of our water. Protecting source waters from contamination is essential to a community like ours because we rely so much on our surface water. A healthy watershed can also help reduce the impacts of climate change. Healthy forests within our watersheds help absorb and store water *and* sequester carbon — a win-win for all of us.



Since 2001, we've had ambitious goals to bring back our local coho and steelhead populations.

WORD SEARCH

Our Water, Our Future

T	R	E	D	L	E	G	G	E	D	F	R	O	G
B	A	F	K	C	A	Q	K	W	X	S	Y	P	E
B	S	U	S	K	P	G	L	Z	O	T	R	B	U
T	O	N	M	A	J	O	R	S	F	N	N	V	W
Q	P	B	M	X	N	G	W	R	G	N	V	W	A
D	P	K	W	B	S	L	I	D	D	E	L	L	T
L	L	C	O	H	O	T	O	V	B	J	X	E	E
A	G	R	S	R	W	Z	E	R	A	E	A	X	R
G	S	E	B	Z	N	A	B	E	E	W	W	U	S
U	X	T	U	R	B	E	M	D	L	N	A	Q	H
N	G	C	F	H	O	K	W	E	Y	H	Z	A	E
A	D	X	S	L	K	U	S	E	M	E	E	O	D
F	U	T	A	J	W	A	F	U	L	I	L	A	E
L	O	C	H	L	O	M	O	N	D	L	Y	U	D

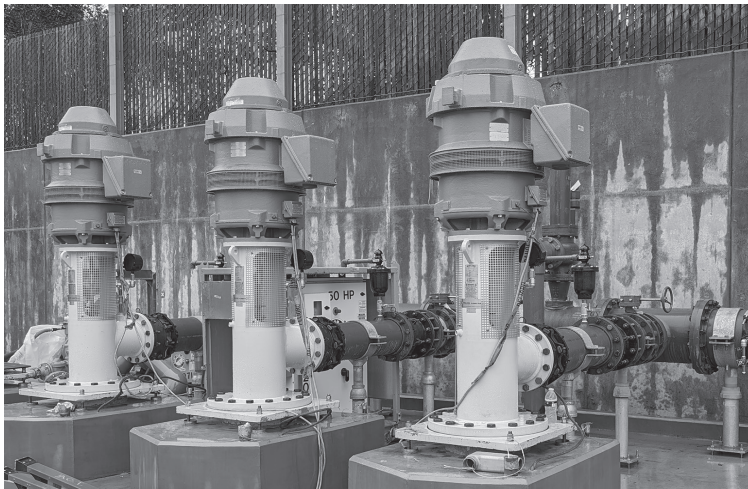
LOCHLOMOND
LAGUNA
COHO
LIDDELL
STEELHEAD

NEWELL
REDLEGGEDFROG
SANLORENZO
WATERSHED
MAJORS

Can you find these water-related words in the puzzle above?

Words may appear horizontally, vertically or on the diagonal.

Title 22/ Recycled Water Facility Nearly Done!



CURRENTLY, OUR WASTEWATER Treatment Facility's secondary effluent flows out to Monterey Bay through an outfall pipe. When our recycled water facility is completed, some of the effluent will be diverted to the pump station pictured above. Water from the pumps will feed effluent to two systems: Pure Water Soquel's Chanticleer Advanced Water Purification Facility and our City of Santa Cruz Title 22 reclamation system. The pumps will automatically respond to a demand for water in both systems, using our new tall communications tower to send and receive signals between the facilities.

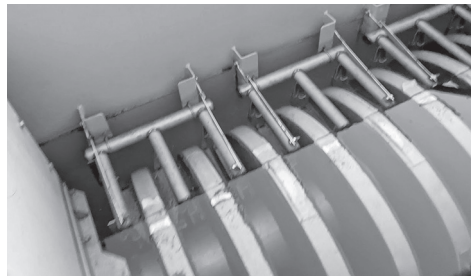
The recycled water facility will provide a supplemental water supply for the community and prevent seawater from contaminating groundwater.

It will also provide over 200,000 gallons per day of Title 22 tertiary water for use at the Wastewater Treatment Facility. Eventually, it will provide water for off-site City of Santa Cruz use as well.

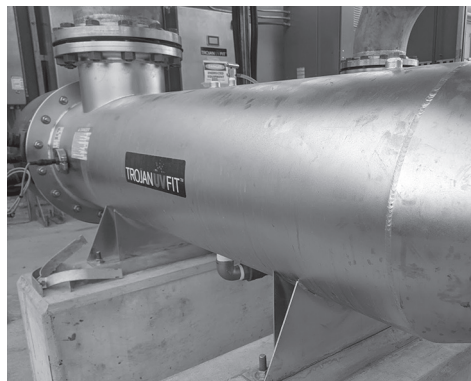


THE TITLE 22 RECLAMATION SYSTEM will utilize a three-stage process to remove contaminants. The first stage is a pair of **automatic self-cleaning strainers** that remove the largest particles of solids. There is plumbing in place

to allow possible future expansion of the system with a third strainer.



The second stage is a **disc media filter**. Water passes through double-sided fabric discs, removing finely divided solids. Multiple sets of fabric discs allow the filter to backwash itself in stages while maintaining continuous operation.



The final step in the Title 22 water reclamation process is **disinfection by UV light**. Pictured above is the reaction vessel that houses the high-intensity UV lamps. Disinfecting with UV and adding a minimal amount of chlorine bleach will create reclaimed water that is safe for irrigation both inside and outside the treatment facility and safe for human-body contact.

All of the equipment has been installed. We are now in the final commissioning phase before project completion!

The Real Cost of "Free" Stuff

SIDEWALKS ARE OFTEN LIVELY WITH PEOPLE coming and going and all kinds of activity. Some activities are appropriate; others are not in keeping with the overall goals of unhindered passage and litter-free streets.

Frequently, we see garage sales that spill onto the sidewalk. After the sale, unsold treasures of yesteryear can become today's junk left out in hopes of prompt disappearance. Passersby are known to rummage through boxes and other leftovers, scattering debris.

Furniture and other items labeled "Free" may start out on a front lawn and then mysteriously migrate down the street where past ownership becomes foggy, and the responsibility of disposal becomes someone else's problem. Unfortunately, that problem is becoming more widespread and ultimately costly to Santa Cruz residents.



CITY CREWS HAUL AWAY IMPROPERLY DISCARDED ITEMS UP TO TEN TIMES A DAY!

This extra work costs staff time, vehicle upkeep, gas, and disposal costs, which can lead to higher refuse rates for residents.

Our streets and sidewalks are the backbone of our transportation system. Skateboarders, cyclists, pedestrians, and those with disabilities need to be able to move, unhindered, down our thoroughfares — let's keep them clean and open so that we can all get where we're going safely!

Wondering what to do?

Don't leave "Free" items out on the sidewalk! Encourage your neighbors to utilize the following alternatives as well:

- > **BULKY ITEM PICK UP!** Call Customer Service at 831/420-5220 to schedule a pickup. Account holders are eligible for up to four bulky items collected per year at NO charge.
- > **FIND A TAKER!** FreeCycle, Next Door and Craigslist are all great and free online options to connect your items with someone who wants them.
- > **DONATE!** Useable items in good condition only. Your junk is not necessarily others' treasure.



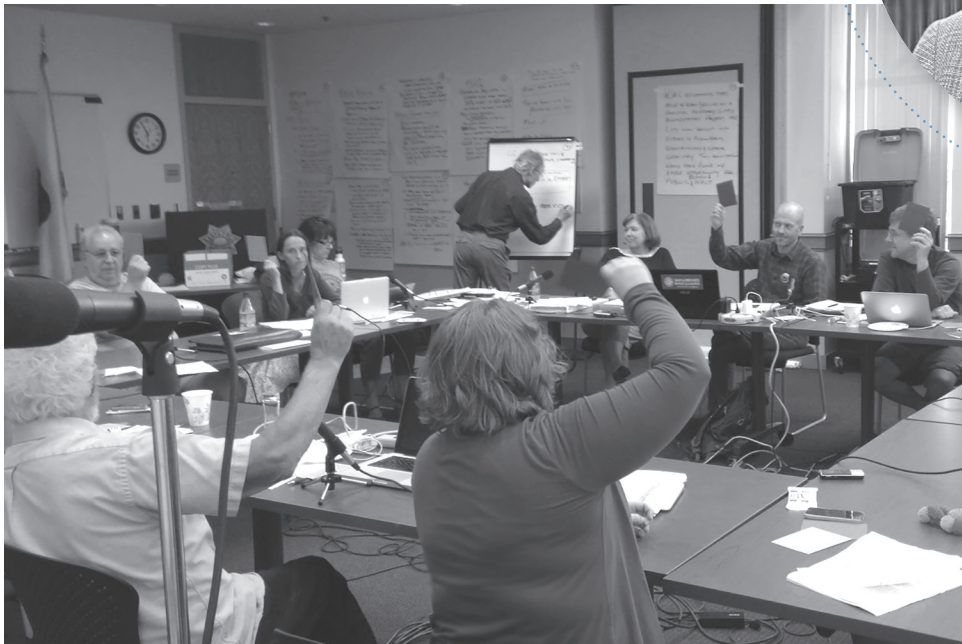
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ROSEMARY'S LEGACY:

Getting to Yes

YOUR SANTA CRUZ WATER DEPARTMENT has always been composed of dedicated people who are there to ensure you get safe, reliable drinking water. There are skilled operators, brilliant engineers, precise lab technicians, and dependable field crews, but Rosemary Menard brought exceptional experience when she joined the team in 2014. She brought the ability to negotiate tough issues and achieve win-win outcomes for all of us.



Rosemary knows how to get to yes while welcoming a diversity of opinions. She even received an award for this skill from Water Finance and Management in 2022. It's a skill critical to managing our water supply in a changing climate and preparing for the future. You can be proud of her decisions because Rosemary's vision embraced all the values of Santa Cruz.

A perfect example is the success of the Water Supply Advisory Committee — or WSAC (say it with me: wah-sac). People were convinced WSAC wouldn't agree on *anything*. Well, here's a photo of each member holding up their "green cards" in agreement on the final recommendations to secure our water future.



Rosemary, with her team, got the 14-member committee to agree on keeping controversial solutions, like seawater desalination, on the table to meet our future water needs.

Thanks, Rosemary, for all the Water Department wins over the years!

- * Crucial financial planning to invest in our aging infrastructure and "climate-proof" it.
- * Managing water for people and fish. The natural water cycle is vital to a sustainable water supply, including protecting our beloved wildlife.
- * Testifying to the United States Senate about the importance of keeping our water affordable and why the federal government should help people who need it pay.