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Sea Ranch Sanitation Zone

Spring 2018 News, Vol 6, Issue #1

Sea Ranch tri-party update

The Tri-Party Agreement is an agreement between the Sonoma County Water Agency (Water Agency), the Gualala Community Services District (GCSD), and the Sea Ranch Golf Links. Effluent from the Sea Ranch Sanitation Zone (SRSZ) North Treatment Plant is sent to the GCSD treatment plant where it is treated to tertiary standards and used to irrigate the Sea Ranch Golf Links. The permitting process to renew GCSD's waste discharge requirements is currently underway. Once that process has been completed, the SRSZ North Treatment Plant will effectively no longer treat wastewater and instead send wastewater to the GCSD for treatment. The North Treatment Plant would no longer require a permit to treat the wastewater. The combined raw wastewater flows from Sea Ranch and Gualala would provide the GCSD treatment plant with more optimal flows for its operation. The SRSZ Central Treatment Plant, which began operation in 1971, is designed to treat average daily dry weather flows of up to 27,000 gallons per day. Treated wastewater from the SRSZ Central Treatment Plant is used for irrigation.

Career Pathway Program

In July, 2017, the Water Agency and Sonoma County Human Services Department began a pilot program through the Sonoma County Youth Ecology Corps (SCYEC). The new SCYEC Career Pathway Program (CPP) began with six young people working on a six-month Water Agency Stream Maintenance Program crew. The crew worked on creek restoration projects, playing an integral role in maintaining critical flood control infrastructure projects across the county. In January, the crew began the second half of the program, working in individual placements in the Water Agency and for Sonoma County Regional Parks. Three of the six Water Agency CPP participants decided to continue their work with the Stream Maintenance Program, while one each is working with the Water Transmission Mechanics, the Water Education group and with Wastewater Collections.

"I didn't know jobs like these even existed before coming to the Water Agency" said Mario Luna, an intern in the Wastewater Collections section. Mario has been learning and assisting the maintenance crew responsible for conducting video surveys for over 110 miles of pipeline throughout the county. Crews check for cracks, leaks, root intrusion and grease buildups. "I am working towards getting my collections certificate and will hopefully find a career in the water industry."

A new CPP crew began in January 2018 and will work in the field for six months, transitioning to individual placements in the summer. While CPP participants work at the Water Agency and other county departments, they are employed by the non-profit Conservation Corps North Bay.

How Your Sanitation Zone Budget Works

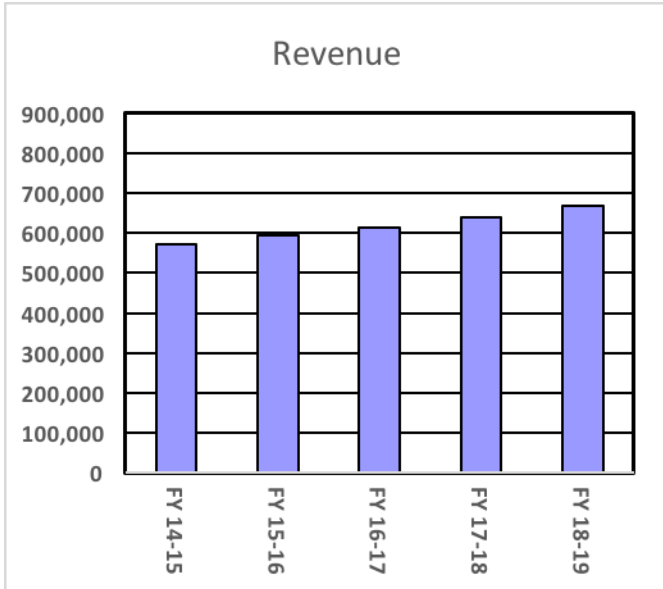
The Water Agency strives to operate and maintain sanitation facilities in an environmentally responsible and fiscally prudent manner. As part of its financial duties, the Water Agency each year publishes proposed changes to sewer service fees in accordance with Proposition 218. The fiscal year for the districts and zones begins July 1 of each year and runs through June 30 of the following year, so the information in this notice is for the period from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. A five-year capital plan is prepared for the zone based on the need for replacement of aging collection systems and other assets necessary to process the wastewater according to regulatory requirements. Budgets take into account current maintenance and operations costs, any bond or loan repayments, and the necessity to maintain sufficient financial reserves to cover unexpected damage or system failures. Budgets are developed using estimates for these items and for revenues. For some systems, the revenues generated from user fees are not sufficient to keep pace with the rate in which equipment is wearing out. For such systems, fee increases are set incrementally above the rate of inflation to generate a reliable source of funding to replace worn out equipment before it fails.

Budget Approval

After the proposed budgets and rates are developed, the budgets are available for public review at libraries throughout the county and at the Water Agency office located at 404 Aviation Boulevard, Santa Rosa. They are also available online. Typically, this happens at the end of March. In addition, notices of the proposed rates are mailed to the owners of the properties in the districts and zones at that time. The public can protest rate increases up to the date of the rate hearings, which are typically held in mid-May at the Board of Supervisors chambers. (A protest form and rate hearing information are available on pages 6-7 of this notice).

Budget Summary Revenue

The primary source of revenues are the user fees charged to the zone ratepayers and collected on property tax bills sent out by the Sonoma County Tax Collectors Office. Additional revenue sources include grants, interest on fund balances and new connection fees.

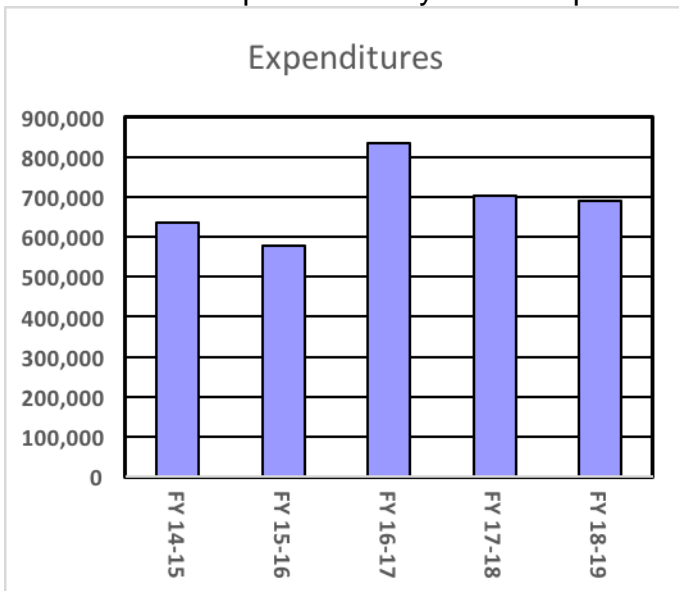


Expenditures

Your zone spends money to:

- Operate the wastewater collection and treatment facilities;
- Maintain and repair zone facilities;
- Repay bonds, other debt and miscellaneous liabilities that may occur as a result of operation; and
- Replace aging infrastructure or make capital investments needed to comply with water quality standards and regulations.

Your zone also spends money to accomplish the capital projects needed in the zone.



Spring 2018 Public Tours

Wastewater Treatment Plant and Recycled Water Production Tours

The Water Agency is pleased to host free public tours of the Russian River County Sanitation District and the Sonoma Valley County Sanitation District. Come learn where wastewater goes after it goes down the drain or toilet, how wastewater is treated, and how wastewater is recycled and reused as a new resource after treatment.

Sonoma Valley Wastewater Treatment Plant Tour

Saturday, April 7th, 2018 – 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (SPANISH)

Saturday, April 28th, 2018 – 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (ENGLISH)

Russian River Wastewater Treatment Plant Tour

Saturday, May 5th, 2018 – 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (ENGLISH)

Tour registration is required. To learn more and to register, please visit <http://www.sonomacountywater.org/tours>. Registration will be confirmed via email. Children must be 12 years old to attend a tour and must be accompanied by an adult.

Keep checking back on the <http://www.sonomacountywater.org/tours> website for Russian River water supply walking tours, which will be announced in the summer of 2018. Tours will be available in Spanish and English

Questions? Please contact Sophie Porcelli at (707) 524-6430 or Sophie.Porcelli@scwa.ca.gov.

Water Rebates in your Zone

Sanitation Zone water saving rebate programs available

As a sanitation customer, you have some water saving tools at your fingertips! Please take advantage of the following water saving programs which are offered on a first-come, first-served basis while funding lasts:

Clothes Washers: Receive up to \$125 back on the purchase and installation of a new, qualifying high-efficiency clothes washer (HEW). Rebates are available for all Energy Star Most Efficient listed clothes washers except those containing silver ion technology.

Toilet Rebates: Get up to \$150 back on the purchase and installation of each new, qualifying high-efficiency toilet (HET) from the List of Qualifying Models. Download rebate application forms and learn more at <http://www.sonomacountywater.org/rebates> or call (707)547-1918.

No FROG, no clog

No Fats, Rags, Oils, Grease (FROG) down the drain or in the toilet. These materials clog sewer lines and damage pumps and motors that move wastewater. Instead, pour excess grease, fats, and oils into a tightly lidded container and freeze for disposal with your household garbage. Put food scraps into the trash or compost bin, rather than into the drain or garbage disposal.

There is no such thing as a truly flushable wipe! They do not break apart in the sewer, instead they clog. This is starting to become a “pain in the drain.”

Don't Rush to Flush... No Drugs Down the Drain!

While the Water Agency's wastewater treatment system removes most pollutants, it is becoming clear that trace amounts of pharmaceuticals linger. These contaminants may be harmful to aquatic life and are proving to have negative consequences on the environment. Medications cause harm not only when they are flushed down the drain, but also when they are thrown into the trash. They become easy access for drug abuse and accidental poisoning of pets and children, and if the medication makes it to a landfill it may leach indirectly into the water system.

The Water Agency's Safe Medicine Disposal Program allows for the safe disposal of unused and unwanted medications. For more information and a list of drop-off locations visit <http://www.safemedicinedisposal.org/>.

We thank you for your help!

SEWER LATERAL CORRECTION

A diagram similar to this showing a typical residential sewer lateral was published in the Fall 2017 sanitation newsletters. However, the diagram failed to properly label as “Illegal” the downspout that is tied into the sanitation sewer line. Downspouts from roof gutters are not allowed, nor are any other connections other than a building's indoor plumbing fixtures. We apologize for the error. (Image shows illegal connection from downspout and rain gutter to drain connected to building sewer.)

Proposition 218

**Sonoma County Water Agency
Sea Ranch Sanitation Zone**

Notice of Public Hearing Regarding Proposed Sewer Service Fee Increase

Date, Time, and Place of Public Hearing

On May 22, 2018 at 2:20 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, in the Board Meeting Room, 575 Administration Drive, Room 102A, Santa Rosa, California, the Board of Directors (Board) of the Sonoma County Water Agency (Agency) will conduct a public hearing to consider increasing the annual sewer service fee (Sewer Fee) to be collected on account of sewage collection and treatment services provided by the sewer system of the Sea Ranch Sanitation Zone (Zone) to property within the Zone.

If approved, the increased Sewer Fee and rate structure modifications will become effective on July 1, 2018.

The Sewer Fee will be imposed on each parcel upon which is located one or more structures which are connected to the system and the Sewer Fee will be collected on the general property tax bill administered by Sonoma County. Payment of the Sewer Fee will be the responsibility of the owner of the parcel.

Reasons for the Sewer Fee and Use of the Funds Collected

The Sewer Fee is imposed to recover the Zone's cost of providing sewer service, including: (a) to finance the ongoing operation and maintenance costs of the system; (b) to pay the capital replacement program costs of the system, which provides for the long-term replacement of system facilities as they wear out; and (c) to maintain sufficient reserves. The Zone's Sewer Fee is reviewed annually to determine if adequate revenues are being collected for these purposes.

Sewer Fee Increase

Effective July 1, 2018, the Zone proposes to increase the Sewer Fee to \$1,159 per year per "equivalent single-family dwelling" (ESD), an increase of \$42, or 3.8% versus current year. A standard single-family home constitutes one ESD. Parcels which have other uses (for example, apartments and commercial buildings) will be assigned a number of ESDs using standard equivalency factors which estimate the probable quantity and quality of sewage effluent normally generated by such uses in comparison to a single-family home.

The increased Sewer Fee has been calculated by dividing the annual costs of providing wastewater treatment and collection service by the estimated number of ESDs to arrive at the Sewer Fee per ESD of \$1,159, and for parcels having more than one ESD assigned, the Sewer Fee is calculated by multiplying the number of ESDs assigned to the parcel times \$1,159.

Each customer with a sewer connection will be charged an annual Sewer Fee calculated as follows:

$\$1,159 \text{ per ESD} \times \text{Number of ESDs}$

The draft proposed budget for fiscal year 2018-19 describes the total annual expenses in detail and is available for review at the Sea Ranch Sanitation Zone, c/o the Sonoma

County Water Agency, 404 Aviation Boulevard, Santa Rosa, California 95403, and the Sonoma County Regional Libraries in Santa Rosa (Main & Northwest), Windsor, Healdsburg, Cloverdale, Guerneville, Sebastopol, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Rincon Valley, Sonoma, and Forestville (El Molino High School).

Further Information Available Prior to the Hearing

At the hearing, the Board will consider adoption of an ordinance which will establish the increased Sewer Fee. A copy of the ordinance is on file and available for review at the Sonoma County Water Agency, 404 Aviation Boulevard, Santa Rosa, CA 95403. In addition, the following persons may be contacted at the Agency at (707)526-5370 for further information and/or obtaining copies of the draft proposed budget for fiscal year 2018-19:

Kathy Badger, Administrative Aide
Lynne Rosselli, Administrative Services Officer II

Protest Procedure

This notice has been mailed to you because records of the Sonoma County Assessor list you as an owner of one or more parcels within the Zone which will be subject to the Sewer Fee while connected to the system. In the event you have sold property you may have owned within the Zone, please send this notice to the new owner.

Either prior to or at the public hearing, property owners, or tenants who are directly liable for the payment of the Sewer Fees, may submit written protests respecting the Sewer Fee. At the public hearing, the Board will consider all written protests which have been received by the prescribed deadline. In order to be considered, a written protest must be made on the attached form. Only one protest will be counted per parcel. Only protests signed by the current owner(s), or tenant(s) directly liable for paying the Sewer Fee, will be allowed and must be received no later than the following deadlines:

- If submitted by mail, they must be received (NOT postmarked) no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, May 21, 2018, at the mailing address on the form.
- If hand delivered, they must be delivered no later than the close of the public hearing on May 22, 2018, to:

Clerk of the Board
Board Meeting Room, as set forth in the opening paragraph

Date of this Notice: March 30, 2018

Rate Protest Form

Note: In order to be considered, any protest must be on this form

Written Protest

I am the parcel owner of the property located at the address on the back of this form, or a tenant that is directly liable for paying the sewer service fee for the property. I am submitting this form to protest the proposed sewer rate increase.

Additional Comments:

Use opposite side or attach additional sheets if needed.

Signature of Property Owner Required

Print Name

Sea Ranch Sanitation Zone
c/o Sonoma County Water Agency
404 Aviation Blvd.
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

<http://www.sonomacountywater.org/SRSZ>