

NORTH RIVER ROAD SEWER PROJECT

If you have been travelling on North River Road over the last few weeks you have probably seen our crews working with a contractor to clean and inspect the 15" sewer pipe that runs under that street. The size and number of trucks needed to perform the work required that we place flagmen along the road and we could only allow traffic in one direction at a time.

Crews used truck-mounted equipment specially designed to clean the sewer pipe. A high pressure water nozzle blasted accumulated grease and debris from the walls of the pipe and conveyed it to a location where a super-sized vacuum sucked the debris out through a manhole. The debris was dumped in a hopper and hauled off to a landfill for disposal.

Once the pipe was clean, a waterproof video camera was inserted into the line to send a video picture back to the operator console mounted inside the truck. There inspectors monitored the progress of the camera, carefully watching for cracks, water intrusion, roots, or other signs of trouble.

The work was necessary to assess the condition of the existing pipe and to help determine the ultimate flow capacity. In addition, locations that showed an indication of groundwater flowing into the pipe will be repaired since our cost of treatment is partially based on the volume of water we send to the Oceanside treatment plant. Every gallon of groundwater we prevent from flowing into our sewer is one less gallon of water we have to pay to treat.

So, if you have been stuck in traffic on North River Road while our crews were performing this work we apologize for the inconvenience. Rest assured that the maintenance work was necessary and will hopefully help reduce our operating costs in the future.

INCREASING WATER HARDNESS

You may have noticed that the quality of your water has changed a bit over the past year. Notice more spots on your glassware lately, or have you noticed a need to flush salts away from your grove's root zone? That is because the water we are receiving from the Metropolitan Water District is quite a bit "harder" this year than in the past. Why? Well, the water we normally get from Northern California and the State Water Project is relatively soft water; it is usually blended with harder water from the Colorado River so we get lower level of hardness. Because of the drought and pumping restrictions in the Delta, we are receiving only a fraction of our water from the north.

There are different definitions for water hardness, but for our purposes we are speaking of Total Dissolved Solids, or TDS. TDS is comprised of inorganic salts like calcium, magnesium, potassium, sodium, bicarbonates, chlorides and sulfates. Water is a good solvent and picks up impurities easily. So, when the near-pure runoff from the snowpack in the Rockies flows downhill towards the Mexican border it dissolves a lot of minerals along the way. One look at the Grand Canyon offers proof that there have been a lot of solids dissolved over the years.

In 2007 the average levels of TDS in our water was 495 milligrams per liter (one milligram per liter is about one part per million). In contrast, this year the level is closer to 630 milligrams per liter. An elevated TDS concentration is not considered a health hazard. The TDS level is a secondary drinking water standard and is regulated because it is more of an aesthetic issue rather than a health hazard.

However it does pose special problems to our agricultural consumers who have to make sure their irrigation practices do not result in a buildup of salts in their soil. If you are a grower and have concerns regarding the elevated TDS you should seek advice from your grove manager or irrigation professional.

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**Water Supply and Pricing
Situation**

Over the past six months we have been providing frequent updates regarding the ongoing drought and the availability of water for the coming year. On April 14 the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) will vote on two very important matters; water rates and mandatory water rationing for residential customers.

The staff at MWD has proposed water rate hikes of up to 34 percent to be effective as early as this year. Obviously rate increases of that magnitude will have a significant impact on our water rates, and on you, the consumer.

At the same meeting the MWD Board will consider whether or not to impose mandatory rationing on domestic water customers. The MWD staff recommendation is for a cut of between 10 and 15 percent.

We know this is important information and will announce MWD's decision in next month's newsletter. Please make sure to look for the update!

Plant of the Month

This month's California Friendly plant is the French Lavender, Lavandula Dentate. It isn't a true California Native (hence the name) but it is drought friendly and it is also on the suggested list for defensible fire safe planting for the County of San Diego. The plant grows to about three-feet high by five-feet wide, so plan accordingly. It has beautiful lavender flowers that are prominent in the spring and summer months, and the flowers do attract bees.

The complete list of approved fire safe plants for San Diego County can be found at <http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/dplu/docs/SuggestedPlants.pdf>.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE VACANCY

RMWD is currently seeking one new community volunteer to fill a vacancy on its Communications Committee.

This Committee is responsible for matters of internal and external communications including: positive public image; positive staff relationships; community outreach; media relations; water conservation programs; intergovernmental relations; and other public relations programs.

If you are interested in volunteering to serve on the RMWD Communications Committee, please contact Dawn Washburn at (760) 728-1178 Ext. 129.

Also, if there are any items of particular interest you would like to see in the newsletter, please email us at communications@rainbowmwd.com.



**EMPLOYEE
CERTIFICATION**

In March, Kenny Diaz, Meter Services, achieved his Water Treatment Operator I certification.

Congratulations, Kenny!



**DROUGHT STATUS AND MANDATORY
CONSERVATION
FOR APRIL 2009**

<u>CUSTOMER CLASS</u>	<u>CONSERVATION LEVEL</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
Domestic	Voluntary 10%	
SAWR	Voluntary 10%	
IAWP	Mandatory 30%	Don't forget your new allocation started with the January bill. Check your allocation each month on your water bill