

SCMU Review

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

No. 68 FALL 2019 SANTA CRUZ MUNICIPAL UTILITIES 212 LOCUST STREET, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060 (831)420-5220 scmu@cityofsantacruz.com

EXTRA! EXTRA! NO MORE WATER!



Message from the Water Director

CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT LIFE WOULD BE LIKE IF YOU WERE TO WAKE UP TO THIS HEADLINE? No, seriously — take a minute and envision what your day would be like without water.

No water, no coffee.

No water, no shower.

No water, no beer.

It's almost unfathomable, isn't it? Water is so fundamental to life that most of us can't conceive of a morning without it, much less an entire day.

This is what Americans are challenged to do on Wednesday, October 23:

Imagine A Day Without Water

Presented by Value of Water, a not-for-profit group, the goal for Imagine a Day Without Water is to build awareness of the essential value of water and hopefully, to build support for national reinvestment in water infrastructure.

Here in Santa Cruz, where we have water restrictions in five out of ten years, I reckon we might place a higher value on water than do communities with ample water supply. That said, I encourage you to take a few minutes on October 23 to imagine what your life would be like without access to reliable, clean and safe water. Oh, and did I mention that the aforementioned Santa Cruz water is delivered safely to you 24/7/365 for just two cents per gallon?

— Rosemary Menard, Water Director

The Future Is Now

IMAGINE A DAY WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

BEING ABLE TO IMAGINE A DAY WITHOUT WATER BECOMES more real with the impacts of climate change. In fact in Santa Cruz, our one water reservoir was under 60% full when the drought “ended” in 2016. (To give you some context, a full reservoir is about a year's worth of water, so 60% capacity doesn't stretch too far.)

Conversely, during the epic storms of 2017, our main water supply lines were so badly damaged in landslides that though we had a deluge of water, we had to ask customers to cut back use by 30% for several days because we were simply unable to convey water to the treatment plant. (We didn't receive close to a 30% reduction in usage; by the way, — read on to learn why that's so significant.)

Climate change is wreaking havoc on the Santa Cruz water system in a number of ways. There are obvious impacts, like drought, where there just isn't enough water to meet everyone's needs. But less obvious are impacts on the water system's ability to

operate predictably under unpredictable circumstances. Systems operate differently under different conditions (for example treating turbid river water during winter storms is different from the way summer water from our reservoir is treated,) so having a system that can easily adapt to rapidly changing conditions is critical.

With climate change, every year presents potentially changing conditions. For vulnerable water systems like Santa Cruz, this is exponentially challenging and underscores the urgent need for us to update our system so that we can reliably provide water to you under unreliable circumstances.

OUR CURRENT SYSTEM

Weather-dependent water supply

Limited treatment capabilities

Vulnerability to multi-year droughts

Vulnerable raw water pipelines

A SYSTEM PREPARED FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

An expanded supply portfolio and increased storage

Treatment infrastructure that can easily adapt to quickly changing water conditions and water quality regulations

Increased storage capacity

Replacement and relocation of critical back-bone raw water pipelines



No water, no bath — almost as inconceivable as an issue of the SCMU Review without a picture of a puppy in it.

THE FUTURE IS NOW

HERE IN SANTA CRUZ, WHERE WE HAVE WATER RESTRICTIONS IN FIVE OUT OF TEN YEARS, we suspect that

you don't need a special day to recognize the value of water. This is a community of all-star water conservationists, consistently topping the charts for lowest water users in the state. The upside to that is pretty obvious; we understand the fragility of our dependence upon local rainfall, and have willingly made life-style changes to embrace conservation as a way of life.

We've replaced our thirsty green lawns with water-wise native plants; we've installed water efficient appliances and devices in our homes; we've ditched water-wasting practices like hosing down driveways and watering during the heat of the day.

We take a lot of pride in being part of a community that is so mindful of their water use. After the governor declared the drought of 2014–2016 “officially” over, many communities around the state reverted back to water use levels close to what they were before the drought began. Not so in Santa Cruz. We continue to maintain exceptionally low use without much of a bounce-back since the end of the drought.

Here's the rub — where do we go from here? Where can we cut water from now? What fat can you cut from your water budget during the next drought?

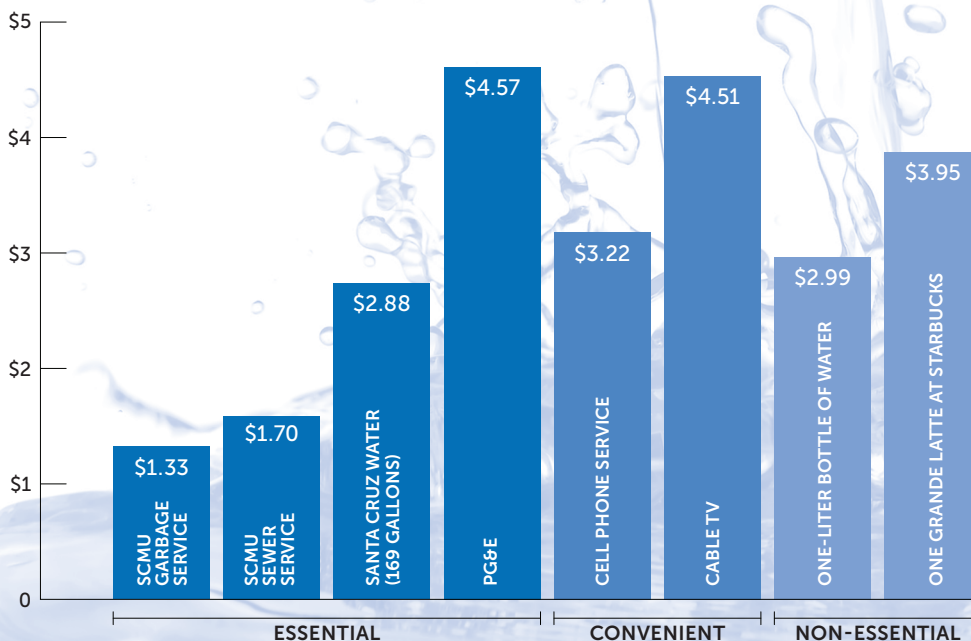
We had a bit of foreshadowing for this during the 2017 storms. One of our most critical water pipelines was severely damaged in a landslide during the storms, cutting off access to our main source of supply. As a result, we needed an immediate 30% reduction in water use in order to preserve the supply we still had.

We used every communication tool available to us to convey that message to the public. Every local and Bay Area TV news program reported our emergent need to cut water use. We did reverse 911 and Nixle calls. We used all social media channels and every local and Bay Area radio station. It was even on electronic freeway signs. In other words, the word was out — we needed the community to immediately, significantly cut back on their water use. And guess what — there was barely a dip in use.



Crew repairs critical pipe broken in 2017 storm

THE VALUE OF WATER: HOW DOES IT COMPARE?



While there may be many possible reasons people didn't cut back their use, the most alarming to us is that they simply may not have had much more to cut.

With irrigation systems likely turned off for the winter, customers would have had to cut their indoor uses. Was there 30% more to cut?

These are the kinds of scenarios that we lose sleep over at the Water Department. And why we are so adamant that our system be prepared for the extreme weather events that climate change will continue to send our way. Maybe imagining a day without water doesn't really feel possible. But imagining a day with 10, 20, or 30 percent less water than we have now may not be too far out of the realm of possibility.

HOW TO REDUCE YOUR HOLIDAY FOOD WASTE



DID YOU KNOW THAT EACH AMERICAN throws away about 300 pounds of uneaten food each year? And between Thanksgiving and New Year's, three times as much food is wasted as during other times of the year. About 204 million pounds of turkey meat is expected to be tossed away this Thanksgiving; most of this will end up in the landfill.

Here are a few tips to help guide you away from holiday food waste:

Be realistic: The fear of not providing enough to eat often causes hosts to overcook. Instead, plan out how much food you and your guests will realistically need, and shop accordingly. Use the "Guestimator Tool" at savethefood.org.

Plan ahead: Plan your menu and create a shopping list before going to the grocery store to avoid impulse buys or purchasing quantities that may not be used right away and end up spoiling.

Know portion sizes: If turkey is on your menu, allow 1 pound of uncooked meat per person from an 8–12 pound turkey. Larger birds have a larger proportion of meat to bones, so $\frac{3}{4}$ pound per person should be sufficient — and you'll have leftovers.

Plan for leftovers: Cook creatively and repurpose food into other meals for less waste after the holiday. Check out recipes like Easy Leftover Turkey Pot Pie on EasyHomeMeals.com.

B.Y.O.C.

Bring Your Own Container
for leftovers



A BETTER WAY THAN THROW AWAY

THE NEW STATE "BYO" BILL, AB619, allows temporary food facilities at events to serve customers in reusable containers rather than single-use plastic. The bill also clarifies existing health code laws to ensure that the public can bring reusable containers to restaurants for take-out or leftovers.

AB619 expands consumer choice, helps local businesses, advances California's goal to reduce landfill waste and plastic pollution, and helps create a cultural shift where customers can feel free to bring their own containers.

Low sewage producer? Save money on your utility bill!

Keep your water consumption low from November through April and, if you qualify, you will receive a significant discount on your monthly sewer charge for a 12-month period. The reduced rate will apply to the subsequent May through April statements.

SCMU offers this low sewer rate to residential customers who average 2.25 CCF* or less during 4 of the 5 service periods from your December bill through your April bill.

Here's an example for how you can achieve a low sewer rate:

| Service period: | Dec. bill (Nov – Dec) | Jan. bill (Dec – Jan) | Feb. bill (Jan – Feb) | Mar. bill (Feb – Mar) | Apr. bill (Mar – Apr) | average |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| | 2 | 5 [†] | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2.25 CCF |

*customers will not be eligible for this rate if their average is over 2.25 CCF

[†] the month with the highest use is deleted from the average





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FAST FACTS ABOUT WATER'S VALUE



- Cheers! It takes 32 gallons of water to make one glass of wine; beer is 90–95% water.
- Is your car a gas-hog? What about water?! Forty thousand gallons of water are used to produce an average car.
- Next time you're bar-b-queing, feast on this: twelve-hundred and thirty gallons of water yields one beef steak.
- If you're still wearing your Grateful Dead T-Shirt from the 70's, you're conserving water! Because it takes 713 gallons of water to make one new T-Shirt. (It takes about 1,800 gallons of water to make a pair of jeans to go with your T-Shirt.)
- An average apple uses 19 gallons of water to grow. So an apple a day uses how much water per year?
- Have a shoe fetish? It takes over 2,000 gallons of water to make one pair of shoes.
- The average football stadium urinal is used 160 times during the course of one game and can consume up to 40,000 gallons of water per year.
- If football's not your thing, the National Hockey League collectively uses more than 300 million gallons of water each season — it takes 12,500 gallons to make ice for each skating rink.

Sources: Value of Water, US EPA Watersense

2018 Water Quality Consumer Confidence Report Now Available

THE CITY OF SANTA CRUZ WATER DEPARTMENT is pleased to report that your drinking water meets or exceeds all United States Environmental Protection Agency and State Water Resources Control Board – Division of Drinking Water health standards.

The 2018 Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) is now available; this report contains important information about the source and quality of your drinking water.

To view the 2018 Consumer Confidence Report and to learn more about your drinking water, please visit www.cityofsantacruz.com/ccr2018

If you would like a paper copy of the 2018 CCR mailed to your mailing address or would like to speak with someone about the report, please call (831) 420-5220.

Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua potable. Tradúzcalo o hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.

