

# SCMU Review

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

NO. 51 APRIL 2011 SANTA CRUZ MUNICIPAL UTILITIES 212 LOCUST ST., SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060 (831) 420-5220 scmu@cityofsantacruz.com

## Regional Desalination Program and Supplemental Water Supply Project



**T**HE CITY OF SANTA CRUZ HAS SPENT the last several decades evaluating a myriad of water supply alternatives, including various reservoir projects (Zayante Creek Dam and Glenwood Dam), development of interties between the water distribution systems of various agencies, development of additional groundwater supplies, and wastewater reclamation. Over the last ten years the City has been working with our neighboring water supplier, Soquel Creek Water District, to investigate the possibility of a shared new water source to complement the region's existing surface and groundwater supplies. Having evaluated many water supply alternatives, both agencies concluded that desalinated seawater, in conjunction with conservation and water-use restrictions during drought, would provide a reliable and flexible water supply to meet long-term needs while providing for public health and safety.

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## OUR CURRENT WATER RESOURCE CHALLENGES

**D**ESPITE THE WET WINTER, THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA CONTINUES to face long-term water supply challenges and our coastal community is no different. Our customers' commitment to conservation is long-standing, (resulting in some of the lowest per capita water use in the state); however, our local water supplies are insufficient to respond to drought conditions, overdrafted groundwater basins, and new increased water demands for endangered species.

Most of our water comes from surface water taken from the San Lorenzo River and North Coast streams and springs. We share these sources with a number of aquatic species, some of which, like the coho salmon and the steelhead trout, are threatened. The Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires us to have a plan in place to ensure that their habitat is not impacted negatively by our water use.

### PROTECTION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES MEANS LESS WATER FOR CITY SUPPLIES

For the past ten years, the City of Santa Cruz has been developing a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) that is required under state and federal Endangered Species Acts (ESA). The HCP evaluates the impacts to endangered fish such as coho salmon and steelhead trout, and defines how it will avoid or minimize those

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## Radiation Concerns

**T**HE ONGOING RADIATION LEAK AT THE FUKUSHIMA nuclear power plant in Japan and drinking water vulnerability is a concern for some Santa Cruz water customers, and not all information on the internet is credible. Two trustworthy websites regarding radioactivity in drinking water are: California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Division of Drinking Water and Environmental Management and UC Berkeley Nuclear Engineering Department.

“According to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Japan’s nuclear emergency presents no danger to California.”

“CDPH is working closely with our state and federal partners, including NRC, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Energy, FEMA Region IX, and the California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA).”

The City of Santa Cruz Water Quality Laboratory will begin CDPH required radioactivity monitoring in November 2011 for four consecutive quarters (11 raw water sources and the treated drinking water from two water treatment plants). Based on health and safety information available at this time, we do not anticipate having to adjust the start of our required radioactivity monitoring unless we are instructed to do so by CDPH.

**CDPH FAQ ON RADIATION**  
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/RadiationFAQS2011.aspx>

**EN ESPAÑOL, INFORMACIÓN SOBRE LA RADIACIÓN:** <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/Informacionsobrelaradiacion.aspx>

**CDPH AIR SAMPLING RADIATION MONITORING REPORT APRIL 12, 2011**  
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Documents/CDPH-RHB-RadReport-2011-04-12.pdf>

**UC BERKELEY NUCLEAR ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT** (Air, food, milk, rain water and tap water results):  
<http://www.nuc.berkeley.edu/UCBAirSampling>

## CURRENT WATER RESOURCE CHALLENGES FROM PAGE 1

impacts by establishing an agreed-upon amount of water that is needed to protect their habitat. An approved HCP is required before the City can obtain federal permits to continue to divert water from the main water sources: the San Lorenzo River, Newell Creek and North Coast streams.



## Key Issues

 The City needs an Incidental Take Permit to continue to take water from local streams that contain endangered fish.

 A Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) must be approved that includes a conservation strategy to protect endangered species by providing an agreed-upon amount of water that can be taken from local streams.

 The HCP will reduce the amount of water the City can take from local streams, and a supplemental supply, such as the proposed desalination project, will be needed to implement the plan.



The proposed plan would result in the following: 1) less of the high quality surface water would be available for the City’s drinking water system and 2) there would be increased requirements for monitoring and restoration of the habitat associated with the water sources.

### INCIDENTAL TAKE PERMIT REQUIRED WITH THE HCP

The various studies for the HCP have evaluated how much water flow is needed in streams, and during what

times of the year, to protect the fisheries habitat during all freshwater life phases (such as migration, spawning and rearing) within a range of hydrologic year types (critically dry to wet). The result is that more water must remain in the streams to protect the fish habitat.

An Incidental Take Permit (ITP) is required if activity such as the City’s withdrawal of surface water could result in the take, or harm, to endangered species. The City’s activities are not unique in this regard; all withdrawals from surface waters can face similar challenges. The City’s surface water sources (San Lorenzo River, Newell Creek and the North Coast streams) make up approximately 95 percent of the City’s water supply and the City needs a federal ITP to continue operations on these sources.

The HCP must accompany the ITP application and City officials must negotiate with federal regulators for approval of that plan.

### CONSERVATION STRATEGY

The conservation strategy being proposed by the City improves instream flow for anadromous salmonids (coho salmon and steelhead trout) while recognizing the limits of the existing water supply system. A supplemental water supply project, such as the desalination project being proposed, would allow instream flows to more closely approximate optimal instream flow levels, and thereby protect endangered fish and provide a safety net for the City’s water system during drought. While it is unknown how much of the City’s water supply would be lost to endangered species, it could be a minimum of 800 million gallons per year, or as much as 1,600 million gallons per year in some dry years. (The City’s average annual water use is approximately 3,500 million gallons per year.)

### CITY COUNCIL OPTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

During its April 5, 2011 meeting, the City Council was asked to direct staff to enter into negotiations with federal officials from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for approval of the Habitat Conservation Plan for an Incidental

*Esta informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua potable. Tradúzcalo ó hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.*

此份有关你的食水报告, 内有重要资料和信息, 请找他人为你翻译及解释清楚。

# WATER QUALITY 2010

## CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT

**T**HIS ANNUAL CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF LAST YEAR'S WATER QUALITY and has been prepared to inform the City of Santa Cruz water customers about their drinking water. Included are details about where your water comes from, what it contains, and how it compares to State and federal drinking water standards. The City of Santa Cruz Water Department vigilantly safeguards its water supplies and provides thorough treatment to ensure that our customers receive high quality drinking water. We are committed to providing our customers with accurate information about their water. Once again we are proud to assure our customers they can have confidence that their drinking water is of the highest possible quality.

In 2010, your tap water met all United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and California drinking water health standards.

### WHERE DOES OUR WATER COME FROM?

To provide water for our service area, the City of Santa Cruz depends on supplies from four locales: the North Coast sources, the San Lorenzo River, Loch Lomond Reservoir and the Live Oak Wells. Except for groundwater from the Live Oak Wells, these are all surface water sources dependent on rainfall and runoff. No water is purchased from State or Federal sources or imported to the region from outside the Santa Cruz area.

The North Coast sources consist of surface diversions from three coastal streams and a natural spring. Due to the excellent water quality and the lowest production cost, the North Coast sources are used to the greatest extent possible. These source waters are conveyed to the City's Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant for purification. The use of these sources by the City dates back to 1890.

San Lorenzo River flows are diverted to the City's Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant for treatment. Two wells located beside the river, and hydraulically connected to the river, are included in this City water right. Additionally, the City diverts water from higher in the San Lorenzo River to Loch Lomond Reservoir. This water is used

to supplement storage in the reservoir during dry years when natural inflow from Newell Creek is low.

Loch Lomond Reservoir, constructed in 1960, provides surface water storage on Newell Creek. Water from the reservoir is treated at the Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant. Additionally, the reservoir and surrounding watershed are used for public recreation purposes, including fishing, boating, hiking, and picnicking.

The Live Oak well system consists of three groundwater wells and a small treatment plant located in the southeast portion of the City's service area. These wells draw from the Purisima Aquifer. During the summer and fall seasons, when surface flows are inadequate to meet the daily demand, supplemental water is brought in from the Live Oak Wells, treated at the Live Oak Treatment Plant and distributed to customers primarily in the southeast service area.

### IS OUR WATER VULNERABLE TO CONTAMINATION?

In 2002, water suppliers were required to conduct assessments of their water sources. These assessments included delineations of areas around sources from which contamination might reach the source. Further, the assessments included an inventory of activities with the potential to release contaminants within the delineated areas. There are potentially contaminating activities in the areas of the Santa Cruz sources, such as automobile service facilities,

septic systems, confined animal facilities, construction, timber harvest, road maintenance, "legacy" land disturbance including historic logging roads, and isolated industrial operations resulting in contaminant plumes, as well as other activities. However, the City currently manages its water sources by prioritizing use of the purest source water during times when the drinking water system is most vulnerable (i.e. during storm runoff periods) so that we can produce the highest quality drinking water possible. In March 2007, the Water Resources Section completed an update of the 2001 Drinking Water Sanitary Survey of the San Lorenzo and North Coast Watersheds. Water source assessments and sanitary surveys can be viewed at <http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/index.aspx?page=1288> or by contacting the City's Water Resources Manager at (831)420-5483 or by email at [WaterResources@cityofsantacruz.com](mailto:WaterResources@cityofsantacruz.com). In July 2010, a Watershed Sanitary Survey for a proposed Desalination Project between the City of Santa Cruz and the Soquel Creek Water District was completed; the executive summary can be viewed at [http://scwd2desal.org/documents/Reports/WSS/Executive%20Summary%20of%20WSS\\_2010.pdf](http://scwd2desal.org/documents/Reports/WSS/Executive%20Summary%20of%20WSS_2010.pdf).

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The City of Santa Cruz Water Department is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to two minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available

## Water Quality Table of Detected Contaminants

### Contaminants Regulated by Primary Drinking Water Standards

CONTAMINANTS (units)	PHG MCLG	PDWS MCL	TREATED WATER <sup>2</sup>	SOURCE WATER RANGE <sup>1</sup>		SAMPLE DATE	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION
				LOW	HIGH			
Aluminum (ppm)	0.6	1	0.04	ND	ND	2010	No	Erosion of natural deposits; residue from some surface water treatment processes
Arsenic (ppb)	0.004	10	ND	1.2	2.8	2010	No	Erosion of natural deposits; runoff from orchards; glass and electronics production wastes
Fluoride (ppm)	1.0	2.0	0.2	ND	0.3	2010	No	Erosion of natural deposits; discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories. Fluoride is not added to Santa Cruz water.
Nitrate (ppm)	45	45	1.2	ND	3.5	2010	No	Runoff and leaching from fertilizer use; leaching from septic tanks and sewage; erosion of natural deposits

### Additional Contaminants Regulated by Primary Drinking Water Standards

CONTAMINANTS (units)	PHG MCLG	PDWS MCL	TREATED WATER <sup>2</sup>	TREATED WATER RANGE <sup>2</sup>		SAMPLE DATE	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION
				LOW	HIGH			
Turbidity (NTU)	TT	Maximum 1 and 95% <0.3	0.07	0.03	0.29	2010	No	Soil runoff

*Turbidity is a measure of the cloudiness of the water. We monitor it because it is a good indicator of the effectiveness of our filtration system.*

### Microbiological Contaminants

CONTAMINANTS	PHG MCLG	PDWS MCL	TREATED WATER <sup>2</sup>	SOURCE WATER <sup>1</sup>	SAMPLE DATE	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION
Total Coliform Bacteria	0	less than 5% positive	0 positive		2010	No	Coliform bacteria are naturally present in the environment. They are used as an indicator that other, potentially harmful, bacteria may be present.
E. Coli	0	0	0 positive		2010	No	Human and animal fecal waste

### Contaminants Regulated by MRDL

CONTAMINANTS (units)	PHG	PDWS MRDL	TREATED WATER <sup>2</sup>	TREATED WATER RANGE <sup>2</sup>		SAMPLE DATE	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION
				LOW	HIGH			
Chlorine (ppm)	4	4	0.86	0.01	2.15	2010	No	Drinking water disinfectant added for treatment

### Disinfection Byproduct Contaminants

CONTAMINANTS (units)	PHG MCLG	MCL	TREATED WATER <sup>2</sup>	TREATED WATER RANGE <sup>2</sup>		SAMPLE DATE	VIOLATION	TYPICAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION
				LOW	HIGH			
TTHMs (ppb) [Total Trihalomethanes]	No PHG	80 (RAA)	43 (RAA)	3.4	61	2010	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection
HAA5 (ppb) [Total Haloacetic Acids]	No PHG	60 (RAA)	30 (RAA)	ND	52	2010	No	By-product of drinking water disinfection

### Inorganic Contaminants with Action Levels

CONTAMINANTS (units)	PHG	RAL	TAP WATER 90 <sup>TH</sup> PERCENTILE <sup>3</sup>	# OF SAMPLES EXCEEDING RAL <sup>3</sup>	SAMPLE DATE	EXCEEDS RAL	TYPICAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION
Copper (ppm)	0.17	1.3	0.33	0	2009	No	Internal corrosion of household plumbing systems; erosion of natural deposits; leaching from wood preservatives
Lead (ppb)	2	15	ND	0	2009	No	Internal corrosion of household water plumbing systems; discharge from industrial manufacturers; erosion of natural deposits

<sup>1</sup> Untreated water from the source(s)    <sup>2</sup> Treated water from the treatment plant or water mains    <sup>3</sup> Water from 30 customers' household taps

### Contaminants With Secondary Drinking Water Standards (SDWS)

CONTAMINANTS (units)	SDWS MCL	TREATED WATER AVERAGE <sup>2</sup>	TREATED WATER RANGE <sup>2</sup>		SAMPLE DATE	TYPICAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION
			LOW	HIGH		
Color (CU)	15	1	1	2	2010	Naturally-occurring organic minerals
Iron (ppb)	300	ND	ND	230	2010	Leaching from natural deposits; industrial wastes
Chloride (ppm)	500	31	26	91	2010	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits; seawater influence
Manganese (ppb)	50	ND	ND	20	2010	Leaching from natural deposits
Odor (TON)	3	1	1	2	2010	Naturally-occurring organic materials
Specific Conductance (µmhos/cm)	1600	400	260	770	2010	Substances that form ions when in water; seawater influence
Sulfate (ppm)	500	74	58	302	2010	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits; industrial wastes
Dissolved Solids (ppm)	1000	290	270	480	2010	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits

### Other Monitoring Results

Other monitoring results are provided for consumer information.

CONSTITUENTS (units)	TREATED WATER AVERAGE <sup>2</sup>	TREATED WATER RANGE <sup>2</sup>		SAMPLE DATE	TYPICAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION
		LOW	HIGH		
Hardness (ppm)	164	108	268	2010	A measure of the major cations, primarily calcium and magnesium
Sodium (ppm)	27	25	49	2010	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits, saltwater influence

To interpret the tables, you will need the following definitions:

**MCL Maximum Contaminant Level:**

The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. Primary MCLs are set as close to the PHGs (or MCLGs) as is economically and technologically feasible. Secondary MCLs are set to protect the odor, taste, and appearance of drinking water.

**MCLG Maximum Contaminant Level Goal:**

The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs are set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

**MRDL Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level:**

The highest level of a disinfectant allowed in drinking water. There is convincing evidence that addition of a disinfectant is necessary for control of microbial contaminants.

**MRDLG Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal:**

The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

**ND Not Detected:** Not detected at or below the detection limit for reporting.

**PDWS Primary Drinking Water Standard:**

MCLs for contaminants that affect health along with their monitoring and reporting requirements, and water treatment requirements.

**PHG Public Health Goal:**

The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. PHGs are set by the California Environmental Protection Agency.

**RAA Running Annual Average:**

The average of the most recent 12 months of data.

**RAL Regulatory Action Level:**

The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

**SDWS Secondary Drinking Water Standard:**

MCLs for contaminants that may adversely affect the taste, odor or appearance of drinking water. These are aesthetic considerations that are not considered as health concerns.

**TT Treatment Technique:**

A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

**DATA TABLE UNITS**

**CU** Color Units

**NTU** Nephelometric Turbidity Units

**ppm** parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/L)

**ppb** parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (µg/L)

**TON** Threshold Odor Number

**µmhos/cm** a measure of electrical conductivity

**WATER QUALITY REPORT FROM PAGE 3**

from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800)426-4791 or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>. Last year, our required Lead and Copper monitoring frequency was reduced from annually to every three years. Our 2009 Lead and Copper study results are listed in the table under the heading **Inorganic Contaminants with Action Levels**. In 2009, tap water samples were collected from 30 Santa Cruz homes after their household water sat unused overnight for six hours or more, and then analyzed for lead and copper. These specific Santa Cruz homes were selected because they were all built or their plumbing was constructed between January 1983 and December 1987 with soldered copper pipe as required by the Lead and Copper Rule <http://www.epa.gov/leadcopperrule>.

**WHY ARE THERE CONTAMINANTS IN DRINKING WATER?**

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate the water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800)426-4791.

The sources of drinking water (both tap and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally-occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity. Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

- Microbial contaminants, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.
- Inorganic contaminants, such as salts and metals, that can be naturally-occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.
- Pesticides and herbicides, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses.
- Organic chemical contaminants, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are byproducts of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, agricultural applications, and septic systems.

- Radioactive contaminants, which can be naturally-occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) prescribe regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. CDPH regulations also establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that must provide the same protection for public health.

**DO I NEED TO TAKE SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS?**

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. USEPA/Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800)426-4791.

**WATER QUALITY DATA TABLE**

The Table of Detected Contaminants (pages 4-5) lists drinking water contaminants that were detected during the 2010 calendar year. The presence of contaminants in the water does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk.

**We hope this report is valuable to you. If you have questions or comments on your water, please contact one of the City of Santa Cruz staff listed below.**

**WATER ADMINISTRATION**

Bill Kocher, Water Director  
212 Locust Street, Suite A  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
*phone:* (831)420-5200  
*fax:* (831)420-5201

**WATER QUALITY LABORATORY**

Hugh Dalton, Water Quality Manager  
715 Graham Hill Road  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
*phone:* (831)420-5484  
*fax:* (831)420-5481  
[WaterQuality@cityofsantacruz.com](mailto:WaterQuality@cityofsantacruz.com)

**WATER RESOURCES**

Chris Berry, Water Resources Manager  
715 Graham Hill Road  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
*phone:* (831)420-5483  
*fax:* (831)420-6220  
[WaterResources@cityofsantacruz.com](mailto:WaterResources@cityofsantacruz.com)

You can also find other information on the Water Department and its activities at the City's website, [www.cityofsantacruz.com](http://www.cityofsantacruz.com). There you can find information on water conservation, the Loch Lomond Recreation Area, activities and projects of our Engineering Section, the Water Commission and more.

Meetings of the City Council and Water Commission provide excellent opportunities for you to get involved in issues related to drinking water. Their agendas are posted on the website listed above, at City Hall, or you can call the Water Department at (831)420-5200 to find out more. We welcome your attendance and input.

**SANTA CRUZ CITY COUNCIL**

809 Center Street, Room 10  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
*phone:* (831) 420-5020  
[CityCouncil@cityofsantacruz.com](mailto:CityCouncil@cityofsantacruz.com)

**WATER COMMISSION**

Contact the Water Commission through the Water Department at (831)420-5200. Meetings are scheduled for the first Monday of each month at 7:00 PM.

**Other sources of information**

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH, DIVISION OF DRINKING WATER**  
Monterey District Office  
(831)655-6939  
[www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Pages/DWP.aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Pages/DWP.aspx)

**ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES**

910 K Street, Suite 100  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916)441-4545  
[www.acwa.com](http://www.acwa.com)

**AMERICAN WATER WORKS ASSOCIATION**

666 West Quincy Avenue  
Denver, CO 80235  
(800)926-7337  
[www.awwa.org](http://www.awwa.org)

**US ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA), OFFICE OF GROUND WATER AND DRINKING WATER**

1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460  
(202)564-3750  
[www.epa.gov/safewater](http://www.epa.gov/safewater)



# Balloon Dangers

## What Goes Up, Must Come Down

**R**EMEMBER THE LAST TIME YOU SAW A BALLOON FLOATING ACROSS THE SKY? Straining your eyes, you watch it become smaller and smaller until suddenly, it is whipped up by the wind and is gone... or is it? What goes up, must come down. Balloons released into the air, whether accidentally or on purpose, eventually come back down, falling into parks, streets, waterways and our ocean. Once they come back down, they are litter.

Most balloons are made of latex (rubber) or metallic plastic film, such as Mylar and neither can be recycled. Animals can mistake pieces or whole balloons for food, and the material can clog their digestive systems, causing health problems or even death. Balloons with ribbons or strings also pose a threat to wildlife because animals can get entangled.

In 1994, a pygmy sperm whale washed up on a beach in New Jersey. The little whale, named Inky, needed six operations to remove pieces of plastic lodged in her stomach. The largest piece of trash in the whale's stomach was a metallic balloon.

Did you know that the silvery metallic balloons can also cause power outages?

In some cities, there are about fifty power outages a year due to metallic balloons touching power lines. This has become such a big problem that some cities and states have tried to pass laws to stop the use of these balloons.

With graduations coming up in June, it might be time to think about how your school can honor the occasion. Instead of balloons, why not get creative with cloth, crepe paper streamers, bubbles and reusable windsocks?

**YOU TELL US!** If you've made the switch from balloons to something else for a special event such as a wedding, graduation, or memorial, we want to know. Contact [cmoran@cityofsantacruz.com](mailto:cmoran@cityofsantacruz.com) or call (831)420-5424 and tell us your story.

FOR CUSTOMERS WHO RECEIVE REFUSE SERVICE FROM  
THE CITY OF SANTA CRUZ

## Appliance Pickup Set for May 14

**L**ARGE HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES (washers, water-heaters, microwaves, stoves, air-conditioners, dryers, refrigerators) as well as televisions and computers will be collected from your curb after you schedule a pickup appointment by May 12. (City offices are closed on Fridays.) There is no charge for collection, but you will be required to pay a recycling fee for that appliance. When you schedule an appointment, you will need to authorize the recycling fee on your next utility bill.

Free Service tags may be used to cover the recycling fee.

Two tags are required for a refrigerator, air-conditioner or freezer; one tag is required for all other appliances.

Televisions and computers are picked up at no charge.

Please call 420-5220 by May 12 to schedule your appointment.



## Don't Doo It!

**H**AVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE NEW DOGGIE DOO BAGS that they say you can flush down the toilet? *Don't Doo it!* The manufacturer claims that you can pick up dog waste, tie off the bag, and flush it all down the toilet. These "flushable" plastic bags are touted as "hydro-biodegradable," dissolving when they come in contact with water. An in-house experiment, however, revealed that the bags do not dissolve so readily. When you flush these bags down the toilet, particularly with a low-flow toilet, you run the risk of clogging your sewer line, which can be very costly to you.

Your sewer line and our wastewater treatment system are not equipped to process any kind of plastic bags. Animal owners should be responsible about picking up dog waste, so pick it up (in any kind of plastic bag), tie it off, and remember to place it in the trash cart where it belongs.



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PRST STD  
 US POSTAGE  
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 SANTA CRUZ, CA  
 PERMIT NO. 11

**CURRENT WATER RESOURCE CHALLENGES FROM PAGE 2**



Take Permit to ensure the City's water operations comply with the Endangered Species Act. The City Council voted unanimously in support of this request and City staff is now authorized to negotiate a conservation strategy that could include: A) using current water supplies; B) a conservation strategy with supplemental water supply should the City approve a supply project (2.5 mgd desalination plant currently being studied in an EIR process) and; C) exploring the potential to provide more water for fish, with an even larger supplemental supply project.

The next steps in the process include coming to agreement with federal regulators on the conservation strategy, assessing the remaining take (harm to fish) with this strategy in place, finalizing negotiation of the ITP, developing the monitoring plan, writing the implementing agreement, securing long-term funding, conducting environmental analyses and — ultimately — implementation of the permit.

**WHAT IF THE CITY FAILS TO REACH AN AGREEMENT ON A PERMIT?**

If the City fails to devise a Habitat Conservation Plan that adequately protects special status species and reach agreements with regulators for its permits under the Endangered Species Act, it could face fines and court-ordered limits on its water operations.

**OTHER SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES BEING PROTECTED**

In addition to coho and steelhead salmon, other protected special status species being studied in the Habitat Conservation Plan within the City of Santa Cruz Water System include the Pacific lamprey, Pacific pond turtle, tidewater goby, California red-legged frog, Mount Hermon june beetle, Zayante band-winged grasshopper and the Ohlone tiger beetle. Various studies of these species include assessing habitat, evaluating the effects of the City's water operations and facilities, and developing conservation strategies and mitigations, and will result in a similar process with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service:** Habitat Conservation Plans under the Endangered Species Act: [www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/hcp.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/hcp.pdf)

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA):** Habitat Conservation Planning and Incidental Take Permit Processing Handbook: [www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/laws/hcp\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/laws/hcp_handbook.pdf)

**City of Santa Cruz:** [www.cityofsantacruz.com/index.aspx?page=425](http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/index.aspx?page=425)

**scwd2 Regional Seawater Desalination Program:** [www.scwd2desal.org](http://www.scwd2desal.org)

*For more information, contact Bill Kocher, Director, Santa Cruz Water Department at (831)420-5205 or [bkocher@cityofsantacruz.com](mailto:bkocher@cityofsantacruz.com).*

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The project is currently conducting a thorough environmental review in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act by evaluating the project in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The purpose of the EIR is to identify and evaluate the effects of the proposed project on the environment, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate how and whether any significant effects can be mitigated or avoided. This will ensure that the governing bodies and permitting agencies consider any potential environmental impacts when deciding whether to approve the project.

*For more information on the project, visit the project website at [www.scwd2desal.org](http://www.scwd2desal.org).*

**Sewer Low Water Use Billing Calculation**

LOW WATER USE VERSUS regular water use will be calculated for all inside City customers on May 1, based on the average of the lowest four out of five months of your winter water use, from December through April. This is the time when outdoor water use is normally at its lowest, and approximates how much water from each home flows to the sewer system. If the total water use for the four months is 9 ccf or less, which is equal to an average monthly use of 2.25 ccf or less, you will qualify for the lower sewer rate for the upcoming year.

New customers will be considered for low water use after they have been in the system for billings from December through April.