



The Waterworks

A Publication of the Petaluma Department of Water Resources & Conservation

Thank You for Saving Water

Petaluma's primary water source is the Russian River water system operated by the Sonoma County Water Agency. In May, the State Water Resources Control Board ordered the Agency to reduce Russian River water use by 25 percent in comparison to 2004 because of concerns about low water levels at Lake Mendocino. This prompted the City Council to declare a water shortage emergency in June.



By replacing turf with a water efficient landscape, Friedman Bros. on Lakeville Highway will save water.

In response, across the city, Petaluma residents and businesses have taken water savings to a new level. Many residential and commercial properties are converting their high water-use lawns into drought tolerant landscapes that are pleasing to the eye, save water and reduce maintenance costs. Residents are

replacing water-guzzling toilets with high-efficient toilets and are taking advantage of the City's rebate programs to purchase water-efficient washing machines. Doing its part, the City mulched over many

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Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility — Technology and Nature Working Together

Petaluma's Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility is now fully operational. The new facility, located at Cypress Drive and adjacent to Lakeville Highway on the east side of the city, replaces a 70 year-old treatment facility.

The new facility treats the community's wastewater to meet increasingly stringent federal water quality regulations using a unique combination of modern wastewater technology and natural wetland treatment processes. The facility produces high-quality recycled water through advanced treatment, filtration and UV disinfection. Recycled water is used on-site for landscape irrigation, fire protection, plant process water and toilet flushing. Methane gas produced in the

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Over four miles of walking trails, which ring the facility's polishing wetlands, are open to the public.

Flushable Wipes? Don't Believe It!

Flush it and forget it. That's the advertising message to parents buying the latest toilet wipes for kids, packaged with appealing colors and smiling frogs and flamingos. Don't believe it. The same goes for moist towelettes, personal wipes, disinfecting wipes and dental floss.

If you flush these items down the toilet you may unintentionally cause a messy sewer overflow in your house, your neighborhood or someone else's neighborhood.



Maintenance crew removing wipes from clogged pumps.

The problem is the wipes don't break down like toilet paper. They persist and gum up the sewer system. The City's maintenance crews are spending many hours each week manually pulling mounds of "flushable" wipes from our pumps and sewer systems. A local plumber reported the wipes are a constant problem. When he visits a home and sees the wipes near the toilet, he explains they aren't to be flushed and are likely the reason the resident's sewer lateral is clogged.

We are particularly concerned about flows during stormy weather this coming winter. If wipes clog the sewer pumps during a storm, a sewer overflow could result. Please help keep Petaluma's sewer system in good working condition by properly disposing wipes in the garbage can.

Replace Your Old Washing Machine or Toilet. You May Get Paid To Save Water.

The City of Petaluma is pleased to offer Petaluma utility customers up to \$125 in rebates for high-efficiency clothes-washing machines. Washing machines account for more than 20 percent of water used inside the home. Running a conventional washing machine can use more than 50 gallons of water per cycle. Today a new technology has emerged to replace water-guzzling clothes washers with high-efficiency models that use 50 percent less water and energy. Most full-sized high-efficiency clothes washers use 18 to 25 gallons of water per load. These new washers are readily available in retail outlets and are one of the most effective ways to reduce your water usage.



Get up to \$150 for each qualifying high-efficiency toilet (HET) you install! The new HET must replace older toilets that are designed to flush more than 1.6 gallons per flush (gpf). Efficiency is key and it does not mean sacrificing! New, high-efficiency toilets

get the job done with less water without reducing performance. They are specially designed and rigorously tested to meet performance standards. These toilets really work well! For more information, please call us at 778-4546.

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treatment process is used as fuel for the facility's boilers, thus reducing energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

Over four miles of walking trails, which ring the facility's polishing wetlands, are now open to the public. Recycled water has already received two stages of treatment before reaching the wetlands. The polishing wetlands are a low-cost way to use natural

treatment processes to remove polluting nutrients and metals from the wastewater. The wetlands are now home to a wide range of wildlife including pelicans, egrets, herons, sandpipers, Red-tailed hawks, western pond turtles and marsh wrens.

A connecting trail leads to the Shollenberger Park trails. Starting from the Sheraton Hotel, hikers can now take advantage of over seven miles of trails between Alman Marsh, Shollenberger Park, and the Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility trails. There is ample parking at the entrance to the Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility at Cypress Drive.



Large tanks at the Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility called digesters breakdown and treat waste material.

Online Bill Pay Now Available

Petaluma utility customers can now view and pay their utility bill online. Petaluma customers can use the new website to make a secure payment by debit card, credit card or bank account as often as they like. Customers can also sign up for paperless billing, schedule a payment for a future date or enroll in auto-pay, which will automatically deduct the full amount of your bill from either a debit card, credit card or bank account prior to the bill due date. To sign up, please visit CityofPetaluma.net.

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non-playing turf areas in City parks and landscape medians.

The results have been dramatic. Petaluma's total water use for the months of June, July, August and September was 26 percent lower than the same period in 2004. That's a savings of 435 million gallons of water.

Thank you for helping Petaluma use water efficiently.

Conservation isn't our only weapon. The expanded use of recycled water has also helped the City save water. For the months of June through September this year, we delivered 135 million gallons of recycled water for irrigation. Thank you for helping Petaluma use water efficiently.

For More Information

If you have questions about your water, wastewater or storm water service, or our water conservation programs, please contact the Department of Water Resources & Conservation at 778-4546.

For questions about your utility bill, please contact the Finance Department at 778-4350.

Conserve Water — It's the Right Thing to Do!