

MRWPCA UPDATE

MONTEREY REGIONAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY

Since 1977

Dedicated to Meeting Northern Monterey County's Wastewater and Recycled Water Needs

Honoring a Business Leader of Monterey County

Culligan Recognized for Their Efforts to Safeguard Water Quality

MRWPCA's Board of Directors recently presented Mike Hebert (pictured), general manager/president of Culligan Water Conditioning Company, with a recognition plaque for his leading role in reducing salt levels in Monterey County's recycled water.



The largest salt water softener exchange service provider in the Monterey County, Culligan discharges tons of salt per month from its softener regeneration processes, which represents 10 percent of the total sodium chloride received at MRWPCA's treatment plant.

Last November, the company began hauling all of its salt waste at its own expense to the treatment plant holding pond. From the holding pond, the salt is safely disposed through a discharge pipe extending two miles into the bay. This has eliminated 40,000 pounds

of salt per month that otherwise would have entered the wastewater recycling system. Additionally, Culligan promotes potassium chloride—the safe alternative to sodium chloride—to its customers and has more than quadrupled its use since 2000.

Culligan, which has been serving Monterey County since 1946, is based in Salinas and serves 14,000 customers in the tri-county area.

10th Successful Year

Water Recycling Season Ends

From mid-April through most of November, the recycling facilities at the Regional Treatment Plant have been converting wastewater to safe water, which is used to irrigate agricultural fields in the Castroville area. Though the tenth recycling season that just concluded didn't break any volume records because of heavier than usual rainfall last winter, the facilities treated and reused nearly all water coming into the plant.

During the winter shut-down, the recycling facilities undergo maintenance. The storage pond is drained and cleaned. Filters are replaced as needed and mechanical parts and engines are serviced.

www.mrwPCA.org

Visit Us on the Web

On the web site, you'll find the latest information on how to help keep salt out of wastewater, including switching from sodium-to potassium-chloride if you're a water softener user. Also available are public meeting agendas and, if you can't attend, minutes from past meetings.

You can also learn more about available educational materials, speakers for your organization and plant tours. Even this newsletter can be read there if you misplace your copy.

Salt Is Affecting Our Water Supply

Since 1998, over 25 billion gallons of recycled water have been produced for irrigation in Monterey County. That's

25 billion gallons of water that has not been pumped out of our aquifers!



However, salt is affecting this resource because it damages plants by restricting their root absorption.

If you use a water softener, please consider lowering your salt level setting, switching to potassium chloride or replacing your unit with a portable exchange service.

Halt the Salt to Protect Our Water

Get all the information at www.mrwPCA.org or call (831) 645-4604 or 422-1001 ext. 604.

Wastewater: The Bigger Picture

Most people know that, once it leaves their homes, wastewater goes somewhere and gets safely processed. When there's no



news about wastewater, that's usually a good thing. After all, who wants to talk or think about wastewater unless absolutely necessary? Well, for those in the industry, it can be an exciting topic—not only the day-to-day details of plant operation, but also the necessary and extensive study and planning for the future. And, throughout the world, MRWPCA is recognized as leader.

In the 1980s, the Monterey Water Reclamation Study for Agriculture, with significant participation from MRWPCA engineers, resulted in the construction of the recycling facility at the Regional Treatment Plant. The facility has been successfully producing increasing quantities of water for agricultural irrigation for over 10 years and is regularly visited by groups from all over the world as an innovative operation.

More recently, in 2003 and 2004, MRWPCA provided water sampling assistance for a study related to the Salinas Valley Water Project proposed by the Monterey County Water Re-

sources Agency. The idea is to construct a diversion facility (rubber dam) on the Salinas River near MRWPCA's treatment plant that can be lowered in wet times and raised in drier times when water would be released from the Nacimiento Reservoir. Seasonally stored water from the temporary diversion would be mixed with recycled water from the plant and then delivered for irrigation through the existing pipelines, reducing the need for pumping groundwater.

Currently, MRWPCA facilities are hosting the filter loading research project. Sponsors and participants include the California Department of Health Services and the National Water Research Institute Research Advisory Board Subcommittee. The four-year, million-dollar project, which is grant funded, will increase the tertiary filter capacities at minimum cost by changing California Title 22 requirements. If successful, the project will save millions of dollars in filter construction costs statewide.

These are but a sampling of the activities that have ensured and will continue to ensure wastewater safety, protection for the environment and the most efficient use of resources.



From High School to ...

Chief Plant Operator

"I had no idea about the complexity of wastewater treatment," says James Dix who began apprenticing at MRWPCA directly from high school 25 years ago.

During the years, James has received state accreditation in the five levels of plant operations and now is qualified to oversee the entire plant. "I really enjoy my job," he says. "Every day presents new challenges—trouble-shooting situations and continually improving our systems in order to reduce costs by being more efficient."

James and his wife have spent many of their vacations volunteering in Mexico and Costa Rica as part of the Mission Trips project through their church to rebuild and refurbish homes for people of need. Their daughter and son also regularly participate.

Save Time and Postage with Automatic Payment Service

If you would like to take advantage of MRWPCA's automatic payment service: 1) Sign and return the coupon below with your payment. 2) Pay with a check from the account to be used (with this, we can instruct your bank to automatically deduct your payment every two months). If you have any questions, give us a call at 372-2385 or 449-6366.

I authorize MRWPCA and my financial institution to initiate entries to my checking savings account for wastewater fees. This authority will remain in effect until I notify you of cancellation in writing. I can stop payment of any entry by notifying my financial institution three days before my account is charged. I can have the amount of an erroneous charge immediately credited to my account up to 15 days following issuance of my financial statement or 60 days after posting, whichever occurs first. This amount deducted will equal the balance owed.

Signature

Date