

SECURING OUR FUTURE BY INVESTING IN



OUR WATER RESOURCES



OUR ENVIRONMENT



OUR COMMUNITY

Welcome

Message from Valerie Brown, 2009–2010 Chair, Water Agency Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the Sonoma County Water Agency thanks you for taking time to read the Water Agency's first annual report. I believe it is crucial that the Water Agency and our community work together to protect our water resources and our environment; and as you will read, this past year has proven that such a collaborative relationship does work for the betterment of our community and our resources.



Board of Directors (left to right): Efrén Carrillo, Paul Kelley, Valerie Brown, Mike Kerns, and Shirlee Zane

It takes an incredible balancing act to protect the Russian River's environment and water resources while providing clean, naturally filtered drinking water to our customers. However challenging, this year the Water Agency committed to securing our future by investing in our water resources, our environment, and our community.

I hope you enjoy learning about the Water Agency's work this past year, and I thank you for your interest in our water resources.



Grant Davis, interim general manager

Message from Grant Davis, Interim General Manager

As the interim general manager of the Sonoma County Water Agency, it gives me pleasure to provide you with our first annual report. The purpose of this report is to increase communication between the Water Agency and our community and to report back to the public about the progress of key Water Agency projects and initiatives over the past fiscal year. This report is available electronically on the Water Agency's website, www.sonomacountywater.org.

A wet spring and a cool summer eased fears of mandatory water rationing. The Water Agency continued to work with its water contractors to seek year-round water conservation. Our community heeded the conservation messages, and water use dropped dramatically, resulting in the lowest amount of water delivered by the Water Agency to its water contractors in more than a decade. This historic decline in water use, combined with the past years' drought conditions and the ongoing recession, resulted in the Water Agency's changing how it conducts business.

The Water Agency tightened its belt by reducing water transmission operations and expenses by 9 percent, increasing efficiency of our maintenance operations, and relying more on in-house talent to tackle the major infrastructure and environmental projects needed to secure our water supply. Together the Water Agency and its water contractors developed a strategic water supply action plan that will secure our region's water resources for the environment and our future generations. Please contact me if you wish to share your ideas for how the Water Agency can better serve our community.

Thank you for reading our first annual report. I hope you find it interesting and informative.

On the cover: Our water resources represented by Dry Creek; our environment by an endangered Chinook salmon in the Russian River; and our community by residents recreating on trails at Spring Lake, a Water Agency recreation and flood control facility

About the Sonoma County Water Agency

Organization/Governance

Authority: Act of California Legislature, 1949

Mission: To effectively manage the water resources in our care for the benefit of people and the environment through resource and environmental stewardship, technical innovation, and responsible fiscal management

Board of Directors: The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors acts as the Water Agency's Board of Directors

Wholesale Water Supply

Main Water Sources: Russian River, Lake Sonoma, and Lake Mendocino

Population Served: Approximately 600,000 residents in portions of Sonoma and Marin Counties

Wholesale Water Contractors: The Cities of Santa Rosa, Petaluma, Sonoma, Cotati, and Rohnert Park; the Town of Windsor; and the North Marin, Valley of the Moon, and Marin Municipal Water Districts

Flood Control/Stream Maintenance Services

Flood Control Works: Coyote Valley Dam (Lake Mendocino), Warm Springs Dam (Lake Sonoma), Central Sonoma Watershed Project, and Laguna de Santa Rosa

Central Sonoma Watershed Project Facilities: Santa Rosa Creek Reservoir, Matanzas Creek Reservoir, Piner Creek Reservoir, Brush Creek Middle Fork Reservoir, and Spring Creek Reservoir

Laguna de Santa Rosa: Natural tributary to the Russian River that stores approximately 80,000 acre-feet of water during peak floods

Stream Maintenance: Approximately 150 miles of flood control channels and creeks maintained

Sanitation Services

Organization: In 1995 the Water Agency assumed responsibility from the County of Sonoma for managing the county sanitation zones and districts, which provide wastewater collection and treatment and recycled-water distribution and disposal services; county sanitation districts are separate legal entities, and sanitation zones are owned by the Water Agency

Facilities: Sanitation zones are Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup, Geyserville, Penngrove, and Sea Ranch; sanitation districts are Occidental, Russian River, Sonoma Valley, and South Park County

Population Served: Approximately 22,000 residences and businesses

Endangered Species

Fisheries: The Russian River is home to three fish that are threatened or endangered: coho salmon (endangered), Chinook salmon (threatened), and steelhead trout (threatened)

Regional Map



Water Resources



Lake Sonoma

Ensuring Our Future Water Supply

To ensure our future water supply and address challenges such as drought, economic uncertainty, and an aging infrastructure, the Water Agency in collaboration with the Water Advisory Committee, the Technical Advisory Committee, and stakeholders developed the following Water Supply Action Strategies. Both the Water Agency's Board of Directors and the Water Advisory Committee approved the nine strategies that will guide the management and the protection of our local water resources.

Water Supply Action Strategies

1. Lower summer flows in Dry Creek to enhance fish habitat.
2. Modify operation of Russian River system to meet mandates of the Russian River Biological Opinion.
3. Evaluate potential impacts of climate change on regional water supply and flood protection.
4. Explore opportunities to store and retain winter floodwater for use in summertime.
5. Work with stakeholders to promote sound, information-based water supply planning programs.
6. Improve the reliability of the water transmission system through seismic upgrades and other improvements.
7. Take advantage of energy and water synergies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase energy efficiency.
8. Work closely with water contractors on programs and financing to meet reasonable future water needs.
9. Implement systems that make the best use of every drop of water in the region.



A completed sediment removal project that includes a low-flow channel and preserves existing trees

Stream Maintenance Program

This year crews conducted vegetation maintenance on more than 50 creeks. This work included invasive-species removal, and thinning and pruning of native riparian trees to promote a mature canopy.

Crews also repaired six eroding stream banks, removed sediment that had accumulated in four flood control reservoirs, and completed sediment removal projects on 12 creeks. The largest sediment removal project was on the Laguna de Santa Rosa, where a 5-foot-deep sediment barrier was restricting water flows.



Water Agency work crews replacing an 8-foot section of the Santa Rosa Aqueduct

Investing in Our Infrastructure

The Water Agency and its water contractors' Local Hazard Mitigation Plan to assess and upgrade water supply facilities was awarded \$1.3 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to install a 2,000-foot-long secondary water supply pipeline parallel to the existing Santa Rosa Aqueduct. The new pipeline can withstand a strong earthquake.

For the first time in 50 years, the Water Agency shut down a 6-mile portion of the Santa Rosa Aqueduct to perform a checkup and upgrade equipment, including the installation of two 42-inch mainline valves and the replacement of nine air valves to comply with new regulatory standards.

Saving Our Water Year-Round

Over the past year, the Water Agency and its water contractors have:

- Installed 2,264 high-efficiency clothes washers
- Installed 5,507 high-efficiency toilets
- Removed more than 770,000 square feet of lawn through rebate programs

The Water Agency and its water contractors continued their partnership in the statewide Save Our Water public education campaign.



A regional Save Our Water campaign banner on a Sonoma County bus

Rainfall Fills Local Reservoirs

A wet winter and spring kept reservoirs full with enough water to meet demand from water contractors and instream flow requirements for the environment and instream uses. Demand from water contractors remained at historically low levels due to the community's conservation efforts and a cool, moist spring and summer.



Warm Springs Dam at Lake Sonoma

Achieving Recycled-Water Goals

Recycled water from the Town of Windsor was stored in Water Agency facilities at its Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup Sanitation Zone. The first-of-its-kind facility use agreement helped both public agencies meet environmental regulations that will benefit the environment and the community.

The North Bay Water Reuse Authority, of which the Water Agency is a partner, was awarded \$7.3 million by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to fund construction projects that will expand recycled-water use in the North Bay region.



Recycled-water pumps

Better Management of Our Groundwater

In Sonoma Valley a groundwater management program is now in place and is administered by the Water Agency with guidance from the Basin Advisory Panel, which comprises local stakeholders, including landowners, businesses, and non-governmental organizations. To date, the program has obtained \$250,000 in grants for implementing groundwater monitoring and a recharge study.

In the Santa Rosa Plain, the Water Agency is working to develop a groundwater management plan similar to the one in Sonoma Valley.



Aerial view of the Santa Rosa Plain



Russian River estuary near Jenner

Russian River Biological Opinion

The Water Agency successfully implemented the year-two milestones required by the Russian River Biological Opinion issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service:

- Completing a 60 percent detailed design for a 1-mile Dry Creek habitat enhancement demonstration project and completing 60 percent of the detailed design work
- Completing an engineering feasibility study of a pipeline that would bypass Dry Creek
- Completing environmental enhancement work in Wine/Grape Creek and beginning work in other historic coho salmon streams
- Completing a study of the estuary's topography and water flow
- Designing and implementing for the first time an outlet channel in the estuary that allows the creation of a freshwater lagoon while preventing flooding
- Initiating the environmental review process for estuary management and flow changes in the Russian River



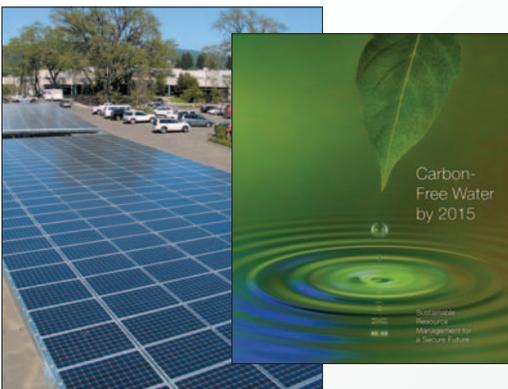
Russian River Chinook salmon

Russian River Endangered Species

The Russian River is home to three fish on the endangered species list: coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and steelhead trout. The Water Agency provides environmental services that improve the native fish resources and habitats of the Russian River watershed through a variety of projects. The Water Agency uses an underwater video-recording system to count Chinook salmon passing through two fish ladders.

Below—in numerical order—is a total of Chinook salmon from the current and prior years:

2003: 6,103	2005: 2,572	2000: 1,445
2002: 5,474	2010: 2,508	2001: 1,383
2004: 4,788	2007: 1,963	2008: 1,125
2006: 3,410	2009: 1,801	



Solar panels at Aviation location

Carbon-Free Water by 2015

The Water Agency made strides toward its goal of Carbon-Free Water by 2015:

- Ongoing conservation efforts by local residents and businesses combined with a cool, moist spring and summer decreased demand for water, lowering the Water Agency's energy use by 10 percent from 2009.
- Total greenhouse gas emissions have dropped 38 percent from 2006 levels, when the Carbon-Free Water by 2015 program was instituted.
- More than 2,847,560 kilowatt-hours of solar power were generated at the Water Agency's 404 Aviation Administration Building, Sonoma Valley Sanitation District, and Airport/Larkfield/Wikiup Sanitation Zone.

Water Education

An effort to launch the Headwaters to Ocean (H2O) pilot watershed education program gained momentum with the purchase of the 140-acre Rockpile Road property above Lake Sonoma. More than 3,500 students in the third and fifth grades participated in the Water Agency's Water Education Program.



Students participating in a tour of Water Agency facilities

Putting Youth to Work Restoring Habitat

The Sonoma County Summer Youth Ecology Corps conducted its second successful season of providing summer jobs, ecological education, and workforce readiness training for 176 youth. The youth helped remove invasive species of vegetation and replanted stream banks with shade-bearing native plants.



Youth removing invasive vegetation from a stream as a part of the Youth Ecology Program

Don't Flush That Pill

Approximately 7,000 pounds of unwanted medical pills were collected through the Safe Medicine Disposal Program. The Water Agency is collaborating with the Russian River Watershed Association and the City of Santa Rosa to administer the program, which provides safe medicine disposal locations at pharmacies throughout Sonoma County.



SAFEMEDICINE
DISPOSAL PROGRAM

www.safemedicinedisposal.org

Our Water Is Priceless

The Water Agency launched a public-education campaign themed "Our Water Is..." to inform consumers about the Russian River Biological Opinion, the value of water, and the factors in rate increases.



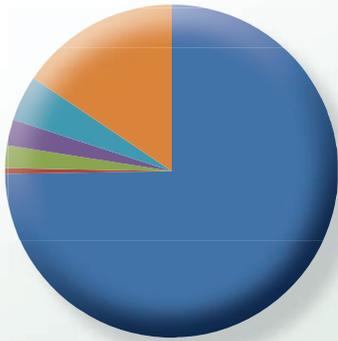
Our Water Is Priceless

A gallon of tap water from the Sonoma County Water Agency costs a fraction of a penny (\$.002). The Water Agency provides affordable, clean drinking water to more than 600,000 residents in portions of Sonoma and Marin counties. The cost of your drinking water includes implementing the Russian River Biological Opinion, a federally mandated 15-year blueprint to save endangered fish and ensure our water supply.



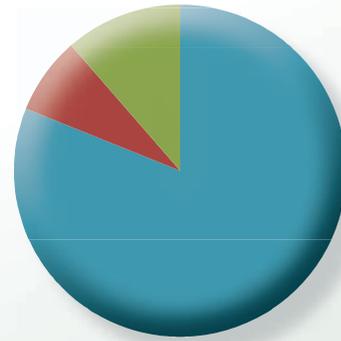
www.sonomacountywater.org/OurWaterIs

Sources of Water Transmission Revenue by Category



■ Water Sales	\$ 27,767,501
■ Interest	266,246
■ Power Sales	761,488
■ Miscellaneous	981,131
■ Federal, State, and Local Government	1,641,656
■ Use of Fund Balance	5,785,439
Total	\$ 37,203,461

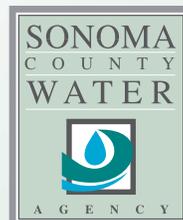
Water Transmission Expenditures



■ Operations and Maintenance	\$ 30,211,049
■ Debt Service	2,746,698
■ Capital Assets	4,245,714
Total	\$ 37,203,461

Quick Facts

- In 2009–2010 the Water Agency delivered approximately 46,000 acre-feet of water to its wholesale contractors—the lowest delivery in more than a decade.
- One acre-foot is the volume of water sufficient to cover 1 acre of land to a depth of 1 foot.
- One acre-foot of water is the same as 326,000 gallons.



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