

Recycled Water: Frequently Asked Questions

Occidental County Sanitation District

Current Wastewater Treatment Facility

What is the current capacity of the Occidental County Sanitation District Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF)?

The current WWTF can accommodate an average daily dry weather flow of up to 50,000 gallons per day. Wastewater inflow to the WWTF is highly variable and can range from an average of 20,000 gallons per day to 120,000 or more gallons per day during heavy storms.

How is wastewater currently treated at the WWTF?

Wastewater is currently treated to the secondary level in ponds. Wastewater enters an aerated pond where cultured bacteria consume the organic matter and oxygen, producing carbon dioxide and water. The water is then transferred to a settling pond, where most of the remaining solids settle to the bottom. While over 95% of the organics are removed, wastewater treated to this level no longer meets the permit requirements for discharge into Dutch Bill Creek.

What is the role of the WWTF storage pond (Graham's Pond)?

The District uses Graham's Pond to store treated wastewater when discharge into Dutch Bill Creek is not permitted. Treated wastewater held in the storage pond may be used for irrigation (recycled) or held for discharge during the discharge season. Current capacity of Graham's Pond is approximately 9 million gallons (or 27 acre-feet).

When is the winter discharge season?

October 1 through May 14.

What is the allowable amount of discharge during the discharge season?

Discharge is allowed to be 1% of the total water flow for Dutch Bill Creek as measured at Camp Meeker, downstream of Lancel Creek.



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Proposed Upgrades to the Wastewater Treatment Facility

What is tertiary level wastewater treatment?

Tertiary treatment uses a biological process as described on page one and further removes solids by adding a physical barrier that water must pass through, such as a membrane or filtration system.

What is the role of equalization ponds?

Flow into the WWTF varies throughout the year. In times of heavy rainfall, inflow to the WWTF exceeds the treatment capacity of the system. During these times, sewage would be kept in equalization ponds until it can be treated and released, either into Dutch Bill Creek or a storage pond.

What are the allowable uses for recycled wastewater treated to the tertiary level?

Tertiary treated water is available for many uses including: irrigation of crops, landscapes and pasture lands; groundwater recharge; decorative fountains; non-structural firefighting; flushing toilets and urinals.

Can recycled water be used to irrigate organic crops?

Yes, recycled water can be used for irrigation on organic crops. Farmers must go through their normal organic certification process and describe the constituents in the water (for example, nitrogen and sodium levels).

What are the projected storage needs for recycled water?

If the District were to stop discharge into Dutch Bill Creek approximately 25-30 acre-feet of storage would be needed to accommodate wet season inflow. The minimum amount of storage needed during the dry season is approximately 2-3 acre-feet.

Questions?

Please visit www.sonomacountywater.org/OCSD for more information, or contact Ann DuBay at Ann.DuBay@scwa.ca.gov or 707.524.8378.

