

Summer/Fall 2022

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Water lines

News you can use from your Sunnyslope Water District

Drought update

Goal is now 25 percent reduction in water use

As we enter a third year of drought, municipalities across California have moved to mandatory stage two water conservation (see back page). Our conservation goal has increased from 15 to 25 percent water reduction from pre-drought levels, with a focus on outdoor irrigation, which accounts for about 50 percent of residential water use.

The west is experiencing one of the most widespread and intensive droughts on record. The first four months of this year were the driest in California's recorded history, and reservoirs are at critically low levels. Locally, our available groundwater will not fulfill all of our community's long-term needs, so we depend on surface water imported from the San Luis Reservoir. After the emergency drought proclamation in May 2021, our surface water allocation was cut to 25 percent of normal. The San Benito County Water District, our federal water contractor, allotted us an additional 1,200 acre feet of surface water from our local San Justo Reservoir, which increased our allotment to 43 percent of normal. Nevertheless, we still had to use more than twice the amount of groundwater as the previous year to meet local needs. This year we received zero surface water allocation, so we are using even more groundwater.

Yet the only reason we have groundwater to use is because years of imported surface water helped restore our aquifer from previous low levels. Thanks to careful planning and water management, Hollister is in a better position than many cities, but as the climate crisis continues it is becoming harder to maintain healthy groundwater levels. Droughts are becoming more frequent, and we cannot count on imported surface water like we used to. In fact, we have not received a full surface allocation since 2008. (Cont. on page 3)

BE INFORMED
Check out our
recently mailed
water quality
report for more
information on
the drought and
our local water
supply. View online at
sunnyslopewater.org, or
call us for a copy.



Here is your Sunnyslope Water District
**2021 Annual Water
Quality Report**

Your Sunnyslope Water District produces a Water Quality Report each year to share information on where your drinking water comes from, and how we treat and monitor it for quality and safety. Transparency is part of our regulatory requirements, and we welcome the opportunity to show you how we deliver reliable, high-quality water to your tap. Look inside! >>>

Este informe contiene información importante sobre el agua potable de nuestra comunidad. Tradúcirlo o hablar con alguien que lo entienda. Para ver esta información en español, por favor visite sunnyslopewater.org, o llame al (831) 637-4670 para obtener ayuda.



**¿Prefieres tu
newsletter en español?**

Por favor, visite sunnyslopewater.org
y haga clic en el enlace del
boletín para ver o descargar.
¡Muchas gracias!

**Win a \$100
gift card
when you
sign up for
paperless
billing!**



Just click on the contest icon at sunnyslopewater.org to enroll, and you'll be automatically entered to win a \$100 gift card to La Catrina Mexican Grill restaurant!

We congratulate our most recent winner, James Hart. We also thank our many conscientious customers who have gone paperless to save time and money, and reduce their carbon footprint.

Turn the page to see more benefits of having an online account!

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3570 Airline Hwy.
Hollister, CA 95023



Stellar sewer survey result

State-certified inspectors recently completed a comprehensive inspection of Sunnyslope's wastewater collection system in Ridgemark. No significant deficiencies were found in the entire system, which includes the sewer main lines and manholes. Only a minimal number of short sections were found to need non-urgent, routine maintenance—to be expected in our region which has considerable ground movement.

Regular condition assessment allows us to plan future maintenance and get the longest life possible out of infrastructure. In addition, Sunnyslope operators clean all 13.5 miles of main line each year to prevent backups and spills. As a result, we have a very low incidence of sanitary sewer overflows, which safeguards homes and property, human health, and the environment.



Providing reliable, high-quality, cost-effective water and sanitary services to our community, to protect human health and the environment

3570 Airline Hwy, Hollister, CA 95023
(831) 637-4670 • sunnyslopewater.org
Open Monday-Friday, 8 am to 5 pm

Free 24-hour emergency service:

If you think your water meter is leaking, or you see water gushing in the street, it is an emergency. Do not hesitate to contact us at (831) 637-4670, day or night! Our on-call staff will return your call immediately.

The public is welcome to attend Sunnyslope Water District board meetings, held every third Tuesday of the month at 5:15 pm. To attend remotely via Zoom, please click the board meeting link at sunnyslopewater.org.

Board of Directors

Jerry Buzzetta, President
Dorothy (Dee) Brown, Vice-president
Mike Alcorn
Ed Mauro
James Parker

General Manager

Drew Lander, P.E.

4,341

households on paperless/autopay ...

... and counting! There's good reasons why so many of your neighbors are signing up for one or both of these services—more than half our 7,000 customers—and it's not just to win a free gift certificate (see page one). Don't miss out: save time, money, hassle, and the planet when you go paperless and pay online!

- Get immediate access to current and past statements, see how your bill compares with others, check your conservation score, and track your usage over months and years.
- Use your online account to schedule a secure payment with a few clicks—no check-writing, stamps or envelopes. Sign up for autopay and never pay a late fee.
- Customize alerts for outages, boil notices, maintenance near your home, and more.
- Go paperless for routine bills to slow climate change, and save trees, water, and energy. When phone books went obsolete it was a big win for the environment, and so is this!

Visit sunnyslopewater.org and click the WaterSmart sign-in, or call us at 637-4670!



Getting the most out of every ratepayer dollar

At Sunnyslope Water District, we are serious about saving money and providing the best value possible to our customers. *Here are just a few of our ongoing cost-saving policies and measures:*

- Our robust preventative maintenance program ensures that we get the longest life possible out of equipment and infrastructure. We will rehabilitate equipment for as long as it is cost-efficient. For example, we recently rebuilt one of our five well heads, as well as a chlorine pipeline at the Lessalt Water Treatment Plant. Lessalt was also recently painted, inside and out, to maximize our community's investment.
- Our 25 staff members are a lean, hard-working team. Many perform multiple job roles that would require several employees at larger districts. For example, our general manager also serves as principal engineer, and all our field staff must be multi-certified in water treatment, distribution, and wastewater treatment. Many also have additional certifications for laboratory operations, motor repair, vehicle mechanics, electrical instrumentation, etc.
- When PG&E recently changed the time of their more costly peak demand hours, we immediately adjusted our pump operating schedule so that our five wellheads only operate outside peak demand hours.
- When fiscally prudent, we will replace equipment with new technology that saves energy, money, and/or staff time. Our recent upgrade of aeration diffusers at our Ridgemark Wastewater Treatment Plant will save \$100,000 per year in energy costs.



Sunnyslope Water Operator Michael Vargas-Garcia checks pressure gauges at Sunnyslope Well #2. Like all our operators, Michael has multiple certifications to perform many duties such as water treatment, water distribution, wastewater treatment, and more.

How do Sunnyslope fees compare to other water providers?

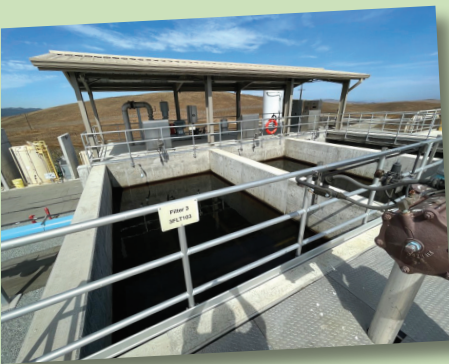
Approximate monthly water bill comparison for average household

(500 gallons per day; 15,000-gallon monthly total)



City of Santa Cruz	San Jose Water	San Juan Bautista	City of Hollister	Sunnyslope Water District
\$315	\$169	\$151	\$124	\$111

Sunnyslope Water District is a nonprofit agency voted into existence by its ratepayers. Financially, our budget goal is to match revenue to expenses, without making a profit. Your elected board of directors are uncompensated except for a small stipend for expenses, approximately \$350 per month.



Water passes through sand filters at the West Hills treatment plant, a final step before distribution. Robert Ekason, courtesy of BentoLink

How water gets to your tap

As your local, nonprofit water agency, we are entrusted with monitoring and maintaining the complex infrastructure that cleans, pumps, stores, and transports the 2.5 million gallons of drinking water that Sunnyslope delivers to Hollister homes and businesses every day.

Highly skilled operators at the West Hills and Lessalt Water Treatment Plants purify our imported surface water, which is mixed with groundwater from Sunnyslope's five wells (Lessalt is currently closed until our surface

water allocations resume). Potable water is then pumped to three hilltop storage tanks for distribution to Sunnyslope customers along 80 miles of buried water mains. Four pressure reducing valves and one booster pump station move water between different elevation-based pressure zones. In addition, five underground interties feed Sunnyslope water into the City of Hollister system. We are also charged with maintaining and servicing 900 fire hydrants for our community's fire protection.

Our sophisticated Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) monitors the overall system, and provides deep insight into the condition of each piece of equipment. CMMS tracks malfunctions over time, predicts problems, and prioritizes maintenance; this allows us to maximize the lifespan of our community's assets and provide safe, clean, reliable water service in the most cost-effective manner possible.

Drought update (Cont. from page 1)

If the drought continues, our groundwater will eventually go into overdraft, threatening our economy and quality of life—we must do all we can to preserve our water supply and secure the future of our community! In 2021 during stage one water conservation, Sunnyslope customers reduced water use by 7.5% (about the same as the statewide average), which was only half of the 15 percent goal at that time. Now we have a 25 percent goal, and if the state does not see adequate conservation there will be tighter restrictions. The good news is we know we can do better. During the last drought in 2015-2016, Sunnyslope customers saved twice as much as in 2021.

For water-saving ideas, please visit saveourwater.com or wateruseitwisely.com (scroll down for 100 tips). Also check out the many free water conservation devices and money-saving rebates offered by Water Resources San Benito County at wrasbc.org.

You ask; we answer!



“What affects the water pressure in my house?”

Sunnyslope pumps treated water to three hilltop storage tanks: two near Everest Drive in Ridgemark, and another on Fairview Road above Santana Ranch. Your water pressure is directly related to how high your house elevation is in relation to the tank that supplies your home. Houses at lower elevations compared to the tanks serving them have higher water pressure.

Water pressure can be a bit lower during periods of high demand, such as morning shower time, or during fire hydrant flushing. If you use a lot of water at once, such as showering while running the dishwasher and washing machine, water pressure will be lower inside your home. The size of your home's water lines also affect pressure.

Water pressure is generally not a problem in our service area, but certain residences in Santana Ranch, Sunnyside Estates, Roberts Ranch, and north of Meridian Street may need pressure reducing valves. If you have questions about your water pressure or any issue, please contact us at billing@sunnyslopedwater.org, or (831) 637-4670—your question may appear here!



See a leak? Call us immediately, day or night!

If you see water bubbling up from the road or sidewalk, running down the street, seeping up from the ground—any water where it shouldn't be—it is an emergency! Please call (831) 637-4670 immediately, day or night, and leave your phone number and the leak location. A Sunnyslope staff member will call you back momentarily.

We are on call to respond to emergencies 24 hours a day, every day.



This product is made of material from well-managed FSC®-certified forests and from recycled materials. Printed by a certified Monterey Bay Area Green Business with vegetable-based inks. Please recycle!

Get paid to replace your lawn!

— \$200 to \$2,000 rebates available while funding last —

Now is the time. Water-guzzling lawns are becoming a thing of the past in the west, as climate change drives longer and more frequent droughts. As we head into another hot, dry summer, California has banned watering of landscape grass at businesses and institutions. Average rain in Hollister is only about 13 inches per year, yet even “drought-tolerant” grasses require at least one inch of water a week. This is water we simply don’t have to waste!

Replace your lawn to reduce yard maintenance, save money on your water bill, beautify your yard, raise your property values, improve your soil, support birds, butterflies, and other pollinators—and now get paid to do it!

How much is the rebate? Convert from 100 to 1,000 square feet of eligible lawn and receive a \$2 per square-foot rebate (\$200 to \$2,000). Your project area can be larger, but the \$2,000 cap applies.

Who can participate? Participants must be property owners with maintained, irrigated lawns. Dead grass, new construction, and projects that are already started or completed are not eligible.

What can I put in my design? To get a rebate, use only drought-tolerant plants suitable to our arid climate; native plants that support local wildlife are especially encouraged. Mulch and permeable hardscapes like pavers and stones that allow water to pass through can also be used, but the design must be at least 25 percent plants. Free garden plans are available from the Water Resource Association of San Benito County (WRASBC) at wrasbc.org. If you use an irrigation system, it must be low volume drip, microspray, or bubbler, and be in good working order.

What is not allowed? Rebates cannot be given for vegetable gardens, vineyards, plants with high water use, seed plantings, cement, decking, hot tubs, pools, retaining walls, sheds, trellises, fences, or playground materials. If these are in the project area they will be subtracted from the rebate footage. Materials and plans are approved at the discretion of WRASBC.

How do I get started? Before installation, a WRASBC representative will inspect and measure your project area, and review your materials list. Once you receive your approval letter, installation must take place within 120 days. You can request an extension, but rebates are only available until funds run out. Checks are mailed after post-inspection of your new yard.

For more details please visit wrasbc.org, or contact Shawn at (831) 637-4378. Together, we can conserve and protect our community’s precious water resources!



To get a rebate, use only drought tolerant plants like these native silver lupine and California buttercup. Get free garden plans and the “Low-water/ Drought Resistant Plant List and Resources” handout at wrasbc.org.

Mandatory water conservation rules now in effect

All local water agencies have implemented stage two of the Hollister Urban Area Water Shortage Contingency Plan, and mandatory regulations are now in effect:



- Landscape watering is restricted to two days per week: Tues/Sat for odd-numbered addresses, and Wed/Sun for even-numbered addresses
- No landscape watering from 9 am to 5 pm except for drip irrigation or hand watering with a quick-acting, positive shut-off nozzle
- No hosing down sidewalks, driveways, patios, or other hardscape
 - No watering that causes runoff to hardscape, adjacent property, or unirrigated areas
- No washing vehicles without a quick-acting, positive shut-off nozzle
- No use of fountains/decorative water features unless water is recirculated
 - Irrigation and plumbing leaks/malfunctions must be repaired in a timely fashion
- Restaurants can only serve water on request; hotels must encourage guests to decline daily towel/linen service

A sustainable water supply is only possible with continual conservation from all community members. Our future simply depends upon it! For more information on Stage Two, please visit the Water Resource Association of San Benito County at wrasbc.org, or call (831) 637-4378. You can also schedule a free homelyard water survey—a WRASBC expert will check for leaks and program your irrigation controller for maximum efficiency.

Know your watering days!

Odd numbered addresses



Even numbered addresses

