

Diamond A Mutual Water Company



Spring 2014

Report on Our Water Company

We had our annual meeting on April 13th which was well attended.

The drought was on all our minds and what we should be doing about it. One of the problems with the rainfall we have had so far is that we had a very large storm that produced about 15 inches in a matter of a couple of days. This bumps up our annual rainfall amounts but is deceptive as it pertains to adding to our groundwater. Due to the intensity of this storm, the vast majority of this rain ran off and did not percolate into our water tables.

The Board wants to encourage all shareholders to be very careful with their water usage. Contrary to a myth, we do not get our water from the Sierras. Instead, ALL of our water is from rainfall that hits Sonoma

Mountain. Our wells are in the Sonoma Volcanic Formation which has a highly variable aquifer configuration. What this means is the capacity of our groundwater resources is not infinite and each of our wells quite possibly are on separate aquifers of varying capacities.

Several of the Board Members attended The State of Sonoma Valley Water meeting on March 31st. There were representatives from many water-related agencies who made presentations and had a lot of literature. Something that really hit home was that 2013 was the driest in 120 years (since rainfall has been recorded in this area) and possibly within the last 400 years based on tree ring analysis.

Climate change is producing more extreme weather: more droughts, floods, temperature extremes and so on. This is becoming the “new normal”.

The Sonoma County Water Agency informed us that the Sonoma Valley

has a more vulnerable ground water supply than most of the County.

Joe Lieber met with Marcus Trotta and Andy Rich of the Sonoma County Water Agency (both are hydrogeologists) to gather information about our aquifers. Marcus expressed interest in assisting our company with developing a reliable well level monitoring system so we can track trends over time. It is critical that we know if our well water levels are trending downward.

Our ground water data has been and will be provided to the Agency to assist with their on-going studies.

Enhancing Communications

We will be adding the Annual Report to the State of California on our website in addition to the Consumer Confidence Report . These reports will continue to be mailed to those who do not have computer access along with their invoices.

We intend to notify of website postings on the Grove St. “signboard”.

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Pressure Reducing Valves

As much as we try to keep water pressures at reasonable levels, in some areas of the system there will be higher than desirable water pressures. It is highly recommended that you have a pressure reducing valve for your household use. It should be set between 40 and 60 psi. If yours is very old you might want to check it for proper operation.

As these valves affect your drinking and cooking water, it is recommended you use the newer lead-free valves once you replace or install a new one. These cost about \$200 for the parts and probably about the same for labor if you have it done by a plumber.

Well Level Monitoring

We are proceeding to install well water level devices in all 4 of our wells so that we can keep track of any changes in our ground water conditions. This data will also be provided to the Sonoma County Water Agency for their study of the Valley's groundwater.

Being able to monitor our well water levels will provide us with the ability to determine if there are any water table issues of concern well in advance of there actually being a problem.

AB 240

You probably are hearing more about AB 240 than you might wish to, but the Board is making every effort to assure that all our business is in conformance with this law.

Consistent with this, we have created committees to address several aspects of the water company's business and operations. According to direction from an expert on AB 240, up to 3 board members may meet and work on issues and then provide recommendations to the entire board for review, comment and adoption, if appropriate. We are strongly encouraging shareholders to join one of these committees if you believe you have an interest in the area of focus of a committee.

Committees are as follows:

Finance: headed by Dave Martinelli and joined by Mike Buckley and Bill Angeloni.

Technology: Patrick Treacy in charge, and accompanied by Dick Bryan and Bill Angeloni

Communications: Joe Lieber in charge and joined by Celia Schacke. For now, this mainly involves developing our quarterly newsletters.

Governance: Peter Hohorst in charge and Dave Martinelli assisting. The present assignment is getting our bylaws updated to conform to AB240.

Personnel and Professional Services: Dick Bryan in charge, Celia Schacke and Shirley Angeloni assisting.

Time will tell and we would appreciate any input from the membership regarding ways to improve the Water Company's performance.

Water Conservation

Please pay closer attention to your water consumption. It is recommended that you avoid any large plantings until we are through this drought. ANY new plant requires a lot of water just to get it started at least through the first summer. Planting is best done just before the "rainy season" not that we seem to have one that is very predictable these days. The idea being that plants are under much less stress in the winter as they go into dormancy or semi-dormancy and they hopefully will get some rainfall as well. Most plants develop roots during this part of their growing cycle.

We also are planning on having a demonstration by one or more irrigation suppliers perhaps just before our next quarterly meeting starts. It is hoped that these suppliers can provide us with the latest in technology to help us reduce water consumption.

Painting Hydrants

Don't. Hydrants are painted to be both highly visible and also informative to fire fighting personnel. Thus, they should be painted only by the fire department so that the colors are readily recognizable by fire fighters.