

Water Wise



Published for large landscape and irrigation customers of the Coachella Valley

Summer 2017

Conversion slashes water bills at PD condo complex

Water rates that were increasing triggered one Palm Desert condominium complex to tear out 16,000 square feet of street-side grass and replace it with desert-friendly plants, a new irrigation system and lighting.

Completed mostly in November 2016, the change at the 30-unit El Paseo Village was "no easy task as it covered three perimeter streets: Lupine Lane, Shadow Mountain Drive and San Pablo Avenue," said Tamara Sorensen, president of the complex's HOA and spearhead of the project.

"I knew we needed to become a more responsible community. Our water usage had been designated as 'wasteful' for years," she said.

For inspiration she drove around the Valley looking for beautiful and sustainable desert gardens. Sorensen's vision for



El Paseo Village HOA's new landscaping features a palette of lush, low-water use plants and a new water-efficient irrigation system.

the project was a lush Mediterranean garden with a contemporary desert palette of low-water use plants.

The HOA worked with a triad of experts: CVWD Water Management Specialist Rene Ramirez, landscape architect Gary Hermanowski of Moeller's Garden Center, Palm Desert and VIP Landscape, Palm Desert.

"Rene was instrumental in helping us reach our turf removal, landscape and irrigation goals," Sorensen said.

A stroll along the Village's sidewalks shows what she calls "symbiotic events of color and texture" created with rocks interspersed with drip-irrigated plants from CVWD's list of desert-friendly plants. Hermanowski designed the placement of plants that includes Little Ollie Olive,

Pencil Bush, American Agave, Blue Elf Aloe, Golden Barrel cactus, Natal Plum, Mexican Bird of Paradise. Many are shaded by the complex's decades-old olive trees.

How much water has the Village saved? Comparing the first three months of 2017 to the same period in 2016 shows a whopping 2/3 reduction in water use. Along with CVWD rebates, those savings "are hard dollars we can put into the coffers towards other improvements for our community" said Sorensen.

"This project is an excellent example of the significant water savings that you can make by changing your landscaping," says Katie Evans, CVWD conservation manager.

Visit www.cvwd.org/conservation for more information about rebates and conservation.



CVWD approves changes to sewer rate structure

On June 27, CVWD's Board of Directors adopted a new sewer rate structure, which simplifies how the rates are calculated and reflects the demand that individual customers place on the sewer system.

The new structure, effective January 1, 2018, is based on industry standards and does not increase revenue received from sewer charges. CVWD has not changed sewer rates since 2010.

For residential customers, changes include elimination of different rates for people living in different cities within CVWD's service area.

As a result, homeowners in La Quinta, Thousand Palms and the Salton Sea communities will see a decrease on their sewer bills.

In addition, homeowners in Cathedral City, Palm Desert, Rancho Mirage and Indian Wells will see an increase of \$1.44 per year on their on their sewer bills, which are typically charged

on annual property tax bills.

For businesses, changes include elimination of the Supplemental Sewer Cleaning Charge and tying rates to actual water use, which translates into demand on the sewer system. Sewer rates are now based on the estimated amount of wastewater a customer discharges into the sewer system. This is calculated using a customer's average water use over the prior three years and assumptions regarding the amount of water returned to the sewer system as wastewater. The three-year average water use calculation will be updated each year, thereby allowing for those who reduce their water use to lower their monthly sewer bills.

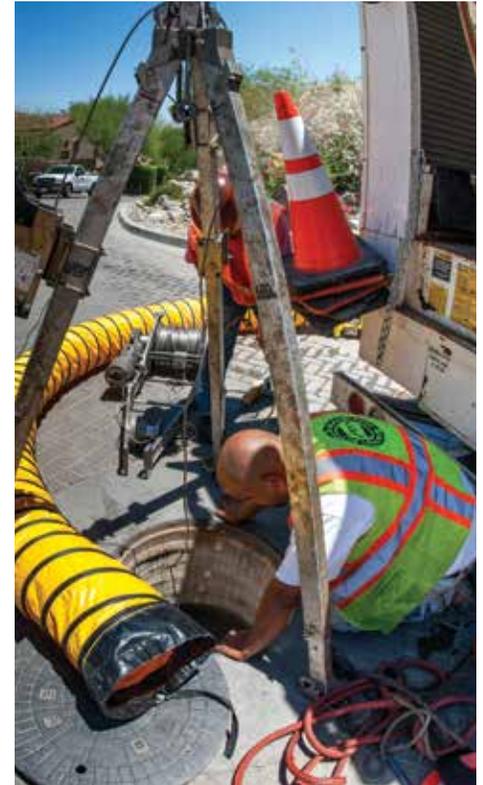
Under this new structure, about 40 percent of businesses will see decreases in their sewer bills (paid monthly with water bills) and about 60 percent of businesses will see increases in their sewer bills. Some of the increases will be significant.

CVWD staff members are available to answer questions about the new rate restructure and how it could affect your business. Please call Assistant Director of Engineering Carrie Oliphant at (760) 398-2661 ext. 2268 for more information or to schedule a meeting.

Revenues from sewer service charges

are used to operate, maintain, repair, replace, and upgrade a sewer system that includes 1,129 miles of pipe that lead to five wastewater reclamation plants that treat an average 17 million gallons of wastewater every day.

For general information about rate changes, visit www.cvwd.org/ratechanges or call (760) 398-2651.



Irrigation Guide

This irrigation guide offers suggested watering times for lawns. Individual watering times vary based on sprinkler efficiency, soil and weather conditions. Start with this guide and try reducing the number of minutes of watering per day.

	Water-efficient shrubs	Water-efficient trees	Non-desert trees	Grass on spray or rotary system
July	0.9 gal./day 7 days/week	17 gal./day 7 days/week	59 gal./day 7 days/week	Spray system: 13 min./day; 7 days/week Rotor system: 30 min./day; 7 days/week
August	0.9 gal./day 6 days/week	17 gal./day 6 days/week	57 gal./day 6 days/week	Spray system: 15 min./day; 7 days/week Rotor system: 33 min./day; 7 days/week
September	1 gal./day 5 days/week	18 gal./day 5 days/week	63 gal./day 5 days/week	Spray system: 12 min./day; 7 days/week Rotor system: 28 min./day; 7 days/week

CVWD increases rebates for outdoor water saving programs

CVWD has doubled its rebate to convert turf areas to desert-friendly landscaping, which has already encouraged more than 13 million square feet of grass removal.

See details listed below:

Turf Conversion Program for residential and commercial customers.

- ✓ The rebate for replacing spray-irrigated living or dead grass with desert-friendly landscape has increased from \$1 to \$2 per square foot.
- ✓ Projects are now eligible up to a maximum of 10,000 square feet, an increase from 2,000 square feet per year.
- ✓ For commercial customers, the maximum remains at 25,000 square feet per project.
- ✓ The new changes are effective July 1, 2017 and will be in effect for the program year through June 30, 2018 as long as funds are available.



Turf conversion applicants must:

- Be a CVWD domestic water customer in good standing
- Submit a landscape plan and plant list of trees, shrubs, ground covers
- Submit color photos of existing turf areas listed in the application
- Have a fully functioning irrigation system

Among other program requirements and conditions:

- Overhead irrigation systems in the project area must be capped off or converted to drip, rotating stream, rotating spray or bubblers.
- Desert-friendly plants must cover a minimum of 25 percent of the new landscaped area at maturity.
- Turf cannot be replaced with all rock, decomposed granite or non-permeable hardscape.
- Artificial turf projects qualify for a rebate.

New rebate program for HOA and Commercial customers who upgrade to more efficient irrigation hardware.

- ✓ The rebate pays 25 cents per converted square foot or the total cost of approved irrigation hardware, whichever is less.
- ✓ Eligible projects must range between a minimum of 1,000 square feet to a maximum of 20,000 square feet of irrigated area.

Other landscape-related rebates currently available for residential customers are sprinkler nozzle rebates and smart irrigation controller installation.

Research shows that converting from spray-irrigated turf to desert-friendly, drip irrigated landscapes reduces outdoor water use by 70 percent to 80 percent.

All rebate programs require pre-approval.

Applications are available online at www.cvwd.org/rebates or they may be picked up at CVWD's Water Management Office, 75-525 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert.



New online bill payment system, instructions coming soon

On July 25, CVWD will launch an improved online payment system for customers.

This new system will feature more user-friendly options including text notifications and copies of previous months' bills.

Customers will also have the ability to pay multiple accounts at once.

Instructions for logging into the new system will be sent by email from Paymentus Corporation to all online bill pay customers.

For more information call (760) 391-9600 or visit www.cvwd.org/billpay.

Annual review & water quality report mailed to customers

CVWD's annual review and consumer confidence report (CCR), which includes water quality information was recently mailed to all CVWD customers except those who have opted out of receiving printed copies.

To view the water quality report online, visit www.cvwd.org/waterquality.



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Replenishment assessment charge increases for some

In June, CVWD's Board of Directors approved an increase to the Replenishment Assessment Charge (RAC) for private groundwater pumpers in the West and Mission Creek subbasins, effective July 1, 2017. The RAC is used to fund the district's groundwater replenishment program.

The West Whitewater River Subbasin RAC



was increased from \$128.80 per acre-foot to \$143.80; the Mission Creek Subbasin RAC was increased from \$123.20 per acre-foot to \$135.52; the RAC for the East subbasin will remain at \$66 per acre-foot.

Different rates are established within each Area of Benefit to reflect the varying costs involved in implementing that area's replenishment projects and programs, including those designed to reduce groundwater pumping.

Groundwater replenishment is a key component to CVWD's Groundwater Management Plan, along with conservation and using recycled water and imported water in lieu of groundwater.

To alleviate groundwater overdraft, Coachella Valley Water District and Desert Water Agency oversee three groundwater replenishment facilities. Artificial replenishment, or recharge, is one of the most effective methods available for preserving local groundwater supplies, reversing aquifer overdraft and meeting demand by domestic and commercial water consumers.



CVWD and DWA's groundwater replenishment program has percolated 650 billion gallons of water back into the aquifer to date. This has been possible thanks to a supply of imported water from the Sacramento Bay Delta and the Colorado River, as well as entitlements to captured snow melt from the San Gorgonio Mountains.

At the same time, the District secures increased supplies of imported water for replenishment, it asks customers to reduce their demand by being water-efficient in their homes, yards, gardens and businesses.

To learn more about the RAC, visit our website at www.cvwd.org.