

June 27, 2014

Dear Capitola Knolls Homeowners,

Important Information about Water:

When approaching Capitola Knolls these days you see browning lawns, both on our property and in the neighborhood. Water is a major issue in Santa Cruz County, but even more serious for our Soquel Creek Water District (SCWD) where the only source of water is groundwater from an aquifer so depleted that it is threatened by saltwater intrusion. SCWD has developed a plan called the Conservation Plus Program intended to replenish the aquifer over the next 20 years. What this means for us is strict conservation of water far into the future, or face heavy penalties! SCWD continues to investigate other sources of water but anything new will take years to develop.

Starting this fall, SCWD will allocate to us 65 gallons per person per day for domestic use. SCWD requires that we conduct a census to determine how many people live in each unit; the details of the census will be available soon. We are curious to learn how they will factor in second homes in determining the domestic water budget for Capitola Knolls.

Irrigation water is budgeted separately and is the area where the District plans to conserve the most water. Overhead watering is targeted. The allocated amount is only $\frac{3}{4}$ gallon per square foot per month for irrigation and the water budget is calculated each month, not averaged out over the year. We expect our allocation to be around 15 to 20% of what we currently use during the summer months. Thus, the Homeowners' Board decided to immediately turn off overhead irrigation to the lawns. We need to determine how much water we need for the drip systems utilized to maintain our newer plants and prepare for a 19% increase in our water rates effective July 1. Note that SCWD has not yet calculated the total square footage it will use in calculating our irrigation budget.

The penalties for exceeding the budgeted allocations begin January 1, 2015.

Actions the Board and Shoreline Property Management are taking:

- Meetings with the SCWD, hoping for input into its decisions and to stay on top of any new developments.
- Taking advantage of the SCWD rebate programs for sod replacement and conversion to drip irrigation.
- Working with our landscape contractor to develop water-efficient alternatives to maintain the attractive curb appeal of Capitola Knolls.
- Checking with our laundry room contractor on the possibility of replacing our washers with more water-efficient models.
- Monitoring the water bills for any signs of leaks.

- Increasing the use of mulch to hold moisture in the soil of the drip irrigated beds.
- Continue communication with the homeowners as we receive information from SCWD.

What you can do to help:

- If you rent out your unit, please remind your tenants to be thrifty with water.
- Time your shower and keep it under five minutes.
- Install low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators, free from SCWD.
- Check your toilets for leaks - a few drops of food coloring in the tank will do the job. Install low flow toilets (rebates are available).
- Reduce loads of laundry. Wait until you have a full load before washing clothes. Our washers use 46 gallons per load.
- Defrost food in the refrigerator instead of under running water.
- Minimize use of your garbage disposal.
- Collect the running water while the shower warms up and use it flush toilets or water plants.
- Wash you car at facilities that use recycled water - there are several in Capitola.
- Promptly report any sign of a water leak to Shoreline Property Management (831-426-8013)

We will be discussing water issues at our future Board meetings. If you are interested, join us on the third Saturday of the month at 10 a.m. at Shore Life Community Church, on the corner across from Capitola Knolls. For information about rebates, and more, visit the SCWD website: <http://www.soquelcreekwater.org/>

With your help, Capitola Knolls can be an example of a successful adaptation to water restrictions.



Laurie Salatich, President
Capitola Knolls Homeowner's Association