

# BPUD PIPELINE



Summer 2007

*BCPUD needs access to your water meter.*

Our field technicians generally read your meter during the last week of a given month to record your water consumption for the previous quarter. Our staff also periodically needs to read your meter in the event of a water emergency.

An important part of reading customer meters is the ability of our staff to access your meter. Please take a look at your meter box—it is the cement covered box, usually set at ground level (or slightly above grade), just outside of your property line (all water meters are located in the BCPUD public rights-of-way, not on private property)—and check to make sure that it is unobstructed and easily accessible.

If we cannot access your meter for a reading, we will estimate your water usage during the next billing, with a consecutively higher estimate if the meter box remains obstructed.

Please call us with any questions  
415-868-1224.

## **SUMMER IN BOLINAS 2007: IT'S ALL ABOUT WATER CONSERVATION**

You have been receiving our announcements in the mail, you have seen notices posted around town, you have been hearing your friends talking about how to reduce their water use outside the Post Office and in the plaza – THE subject of the summer of 2007 is the Bolinas Water Emergency. It is quite real and it will not go away until we all do our part to conserve water until we upgrade our water treatment plant and the rains (we hope!) start again this Fall.

**What is going on?** At the time this newsletter goes to press, the community is consuming water at a rate faster than our aging water treatment plant is able to produce it. As we all know, Bolinas has a limited water supply and California generally is subject to extended droughts. However, right now our problem is not one of water supply (although we're plenty worried about that – see below), but rather a problem of aging technology at our Woodrat Water Treatment Plant. *(See photo to the right for a glimpse inside our treatment plant on Mesa Road.)*

The four water filters at the treatment plant each contain 6 microfiltration membranes (we therefore have a total of 24 membranes in use at the treatment plant every day); these membranes age over time and their production efficiency declines, which compromises the BCPUD's ability to produce treated water and distribute it to the community.

We are scheduled to conduct a retrofit and conversion of the water filters and associated control panels during the latter half of August 2007. In so doing, the district will make a transition from a high-pressure water filtration system to a low-pressure system which will produce finer filtered water, place less stress on our equipment and possibly reduce power costs. In connection with this project, we will be installing 24 new membranes on all of our filters; BCPUD staff determined that it does not make financial sense to replace those aged membranes now (each membrane costs over \$1,000), only to replace them again in August. (Unfortunately, the membranes for the low-pressure filtration system have different specifications than those for our existing filters, so it is not possible to "re-use" high-pressure filtration membranes in a low-pressure filtration environment). As a result, the district must get through the summer using our older, less efficient membranes — hence the water production shortfall.

**What does this mean?** When our customers consume more water than we can produce, the treated water levels in our storage tanks drop. As time goes by and customers consistently consume water at a faster rate than we can produce it, the storage tank levels drop to dangerously low levels. If we do not reverse the current consumption trends, the district will be out



of drinking water entirely by Labor Day.

**What can you do?** We are appealing to YOU, our customers, to think consciously about your water consumption (both for personal use and especially landscaping) and how you can reduce it every day this summer and then act accordingly. We've included some helpful water conservation information below and have posted links to informative websites on [www.bcpud.org](http://www.bcpud.org). Please also feel free to call the office at 868-1224; we can help you analyze your current usage and provide suggestions as to how you might reduce your water consumption. As a point of reference: the average water consumption in the district is 200 gallons per household per day. Take a look at your last bill from the BCPUD; it tells you your current water consumption rate and gives you last year's data, as well. If you are below the district average, congratulations! But we still need you to conserve. If you are above the district average, particularly if you are significantly above the district average, please do everything you can to reduce your consumption this summer. If every household reduces its water consumption by 25-30 gallons per day (we need a bigger savings from heavy consumers and businesses), we can reverse the current production crisis. We all can make a difference.

**When will the emergency be over? Will we have enough water this summer?** The current emergency will subside when we have sufficiently reduced the overall consumption in the district such that the levels in our drinking water storage tanks rise and fill. It is particularly important that we have full tanks by August so that we can proceed with the retrofit and conversion of the treatment plant, as scheduled. If we do not have sufficient drinking water stored, we will be forced to defer the retrofit and conversion because it is necessary to take portions of the plant off-line to install the new technology. During the retrofit and conversion, we will be operating at only 50% production capacity — as such, it is critical to have as much water stored as possible. We are concerned that our ability to take our water from the Arroyo Hondo creek will be reduced as the summer wears on and creek flows decline (current creek flow is at levels we usually do not see until late August or September due to our dry winter); when that happens, we are forced to use our reservoir water which further complicates our production difficulties because reservoir water is not as clean as surface water and therefore takes longer to produce as drinking water.

**Thank you!** We recognize that we are asking a lot from our community in this water emergency and we appreciate the efforts of each and every one of you. We are fortunate to serve a fantastic community that historically has been extremely responsive to our periodic requests for conservation. Water is a precious resource that we all need and share. Let's be sure there is enough for everyone this summer.

### ***Information Adapted from the Water, Use It Wisely website***

*(<http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/>)*

Every day, on average, Americans use a total of 40 billion gallons of fresh water. Around the house, up to 70 percent of that water is used on our landscapes. That's why saving water outside the home is as important as it is inside. There are a number of ways to save water outdoors, such as choosing low-water use plants and keeping your landscape in water-wise shape. Here are some simple tools you can use around the house to help you conserve water:

#### ***Common outdoor water-saving tools***

- Hand water – the water from the garden hose can be directed right to the plants or shrubs that need more water.
- Don't water on windy days. After all, sidewalks and driveways don't need water

#### ***And some not-so-common outdoor water-saving tools***

- Rain Barrels – Put the water from your downspout to good use by catching it in a mosquito-proof rain barrel. Plants love rainwater because it doesn't contain chlorine and is warmer than tap water. Furthermore, using rainwater can help you save water and money on your water bill.
- Rain Chains – Rain chains are designed to replace a downspout, and channel the water into a specific location, such as a basin or a rain barrel. They're pleasing to look at and they slow water down, reducing splashing and erosion.

#### ***Repairing leaks outside (and inside, while you're at it)***

- Hose Bibs – Hose bibs are the faucets on the outside of your home where you connect your garden hoses. We're more likely to notice leaky faucets indoors, but don't forget to check outdoor faucets, pipes, and hoses for leaks.
- Hose Washers – Simply replacing a hose washer can often fix your leaking garden hose connection.
- Toilet Flappers – Flappers deteriorate over time, so they need to be checked every year to make sure they are fitting tightly over the flush tube. Put food coloring in your toilet tank. If it seeps into the toilet bowl, you have a leak. It's easy to fix, and you can save more than 600 gallons a month.