

Water lines

News you can use from your Sunnyslope Water District

Spring/Summer 2026

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Water status update

How is Hollister's water supply?

Despite a drier than average winter, Hollister's groundwater remains at fairly healthy levels, thanks to our previous two years of consecutive wet winters, as well as careful management of our imported surface water supply. Since the drought ended, we have received a 75 percent allocation of imported surface water for three years running, on top of 100 percent allocation the year before that. This has helped recovery of our local aquifer after the 2021 and 2022 drought years, when we received 25 and zero percent allocations which required us to use more groundwater to meet local demand. Surface water transported from the San Luis Reservoir near Los Banos allows us to preserve our local groundwater and deliver a high-quality 80 percent surface water to 20 percent well water blend to our customers, which reduces hardness and improves taste.



¿Prefieres tu newsletter en español?

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

Safeguarding against future drought

Excess surface water is stored in our local San Justo and Paicines Reservoirs to save for future drought, and to recharge the water basin as needed.

In addition, we will soon have the capacity to store an added 2,000 to 3,000 acre-feet of surplus pre-treated surface water once the San Benito County Water District Accelerated Drought Response Project (ADRoP) is complete at the end of the year. Water treated at the newly expanded West Hills Water Treatment Plant will be stored in deep aquifer storage and recovery wells to provide high-quality water during (Cont. on page 3)

GET PAID TO REPLACE YOUR LAWN
Save on water bills, increase property value, and support birds and bees by taking advantage of our local Turf Removal Program. Receive a rebate of \$2 per square foot (up to \$2,000) to replace lawn with drought-tolerant landscaping. Visit wrasbc.org for details. Photo: Judith Carlson

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

Get two chances to win when you sign up for both! Just click on the contest icon at

sunnyslopewater.org to enroll, and you'll be automatically entered to win a \$100 gift card to 36 Degrees North, the signature restaurant at San Juan Oaks Golf Course. We congratulate our most recent winner, and thank our many conscientious customers who have already signed up to save time, reduce their carbon footprint, and help keep water rates down!



Dee J. Burbank, Sunnyslope Operations and Maintenance Crew Chief, was recognized as a CWEA Maintenance Professional of the Year. Here, Dee tests a backflow preventer which safeguards the drinking water supply for urban Hollister (shown in background).



**Sunnyslope
Water District**

*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 fourth 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

Mike Alcorn, President
Orlando Martinez, Vice-president
Dorothy (Dee) Brown
Jerry Buzzetta
Alexis Perez-Kenny

General Manager

Drew Lander, P.E.



Your award-winning district

Sunnyslope receives multiple awards for excellence

Sunnyslope employees were honored in two prestigious categories at the 71st annual California Water Environment Association (CWEA) banquet in February. The CWEA is the premier wastewater association in California, dedicated to promoting excellence in the industry. We congratulate the Sunnyslope collections crew who received the 2025 Collections System of the Year award, which recognizes wastewater systems with superior maintenance, safety records, and regulatory compliance. Sunnyslope was chosen as the best small-size system in the Monterey Bay section, which includes Santa Cruz, Morgan Hill, Monterey Bay, King City, and Hollister. We also received the same award in 2023, underscoring our consistent commitment to protect human health and the environment.

Our dedicated crew is continually cleaning lines and performing preventative maintenance throughout the system," said Sunnyslope Wastewater Superintendent Jose J. Rodriguez. "Their teamwork and vigilance is why we have super-efficient and safe operations, and an extremely low incidence of spills compared to the industry average."

Sunnyslope manages 13 miles of sewer main lines and four pump stations which safely deliver 61 million gallons of wastewater annually to the Ridgemark Wastewater Treatment Plant. The system serves approximately 1,300 households in the Ridgemark, Quail Hollow, and Oak Creek neighborhoods.

Sunnyslope crew chief honored

We also congratulate Dee J. Burbank, Sunnyslope Operations and Maintenance Crew Chief, who was honored as CWEA Maintenance Professional of the Year in the Monterey Bay Section. The award is given to wastewater professionals who demonstrates exceptional performance and expertise in maintaining treatment plant equipment. Dee J. joined the Sunnyslope team in 2017, and has earned numerous advanced certifications for mechanical technology, electrical instrumentation, water treatment and distribution, and wastewater treatment and collections.

"I always wanted to work at Sunnyslope because it has so many opportunities for growth," Dee J. said. "We're a small district that provides many services so there's always new projects to keep your mind sharp."

"We have a great team assembled here, and we all wear many hats to get the job done. Everyone shines in their own area of expertise and works together to serve our customers and move the district forward."



WINNING TEAM Sunnyslope's collections crew was honored for excellence with the 2025 Collections System of the Year award. Sunnyslope received the same award in 2023, highlighting our diligence in protecting human health and the environment.



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Consolidations proceeding on target

Consolidation projects to bring four local water providers into the Sunnyslope system are progressing on-schedule and on-budget. The Best Roads Mutual Water Company annexation was completed in July 2025, and construction for the Tres Pinos Water District, Stonegate water system, and Venture Estates will be done by the end of the year.

We recently completed pipeline installation along Ridgemark Drive and Harbern Way, on Southside and Bolado Roads in Tres Pinos, and near Tres Pinos Elementary School. Construction will continue this summer along Best Road, Foxhill Circle, and Quien Sabe Road. The consolidations will serve a total of approximately 750 residents (225 households) who have had to depend on bottled water in the past due to water quality and reliability issues.

Construction was made possible by cooperative partnerships between Sunnyslope, the local water providers, San Benito County, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), and San Benito County Water District. Sunnyslope is overseeing construction, and administering \$15.8 million in grants provided by DWR's Urban Community Drought Relief Program. Once

complete, the projects will protect human health, preserve property values, improve fire protection, and ensure that residents in these outlying neighborhoods have access to reliable, safe well water which meets all federal and state water quality regulations.

For more information, please visit sunnyslopewater.org/current-projects.



Water status *(Cont. from page 1)*

drought for Sunnyslope customers and the Cities of Hollister and San Juan Bautista.

Along with long-term planning, daily water conservation remains vital to ensure our local water supply—every gallon we save is a gallon we will have during times of shortage. Intermittent droughts will continue with climate change, and this year the Sierra Nevada snowpack, which supplies our imported surface water, was the second lowest on record. For water conservation tips and rebates, please see the back page or visit wrasbc.org.

Water softeners *(Cont. from page 4)*

community's investment in wastewater recycling. Discharge brine from water softeners that empty into the sewage system contaminates groundwater. Our local aquifer is especially at risk because it is a geologically closed basin with a higher concentration of salts and minerals to begin with—that's why new installations of these softeners have been banned in our area since 2014.

In addition, higher salinity in wastewater negatively impacts the Hollister Water Reclamation Facility, and can make recycled water unusable for crops and landscaping. High salinity makes it difficult to comply with state and federal discharge regulations, which can result in fines that must be paid by taxpayers.

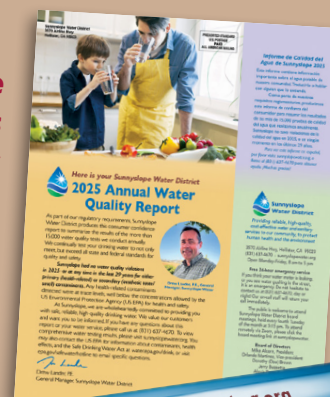
The Water Resources Agency for San Benito County (WRASBC) will pay you a \$300 rebate to remove your salt water softener, or \$250 to upgrade to a non-harmful system. Please visit wrasbc.org and click on "Local Rebates" for details.



**IS IT A GIANT SNAKE?
A SEA SERPENT?!**
No! It's new pipeline construction in Ridgemark that will provide safe, reliable well water for our rural neighbors. Four grant-supported annexations will ensure equitable water supply to neighborhoods southeast of Hollister where wells were running dry, or had unsafe arsenic levels.

LEFT: Workers weld together pipeline to create seamless, 200-foot-long sections of water main.

Get the facts on your drinking water quality!



sunnyslopewater.org

Sunnyslope's Annual Water Quality Report was recently mailed to all customers. You can also access it online in Spanish and English by clicking the link on our home page.

Detecting a Leak



Your online WaterSmart account shows continuous water use in orange so you can easily pinpoint when a leak started.

Don't miss out on your benefits!

Great news: the changeover to Sunnyslope's automated metering system is 95 percent complete! The system gives customers 24-hour access to a wealth of detail about their home water usage, as well as unprecedented control of water bills.

To see your data, visit sunnyslopewater.org and sign into your WaterSmart account page. There you can view hour-by-hour water usage to pinpoint when a leak started, or compare your usage to previous months and years. Be sure to sign up for immediate leak notifications and emergency alerts, and check out all the powerful tools that can help you gain insight into your water consumption patterns—you can even request a notification when you exceed a certain water usage threshold.

Sunnyslope is committed to improving customer satisfaction. If you need help with your WaterSmart account page, please call us at (831) 637-4670.



Save money and retire your obsolete water softener—visit wrasbc.org for a \$300 rebate.

Break free from your water softener!

Project solves hard water issues near Ridgemark wells

Are you still paying to soften water in your home? Water softeners became unnecessary for the vast majority of Hollister residents when our area began importing surface water for treatment at our local Lessalt and West Hills Water Treatment Plants.

This allowed Sunnyslope to blend surface water with well water at the well heads to reduce hardness, and prevent mineral scale damage to appliances.

Unfortunately, some neighborhoods within the Ridgemark residential area have experienced intermittent periods of elevated water hardness due to their proximity to groundwater wells. *But now all of that will*

change by the end of this year: new infrastructure will provide these remaining Ridgemark customers with a consistent supply of softer, appliance-safe water.

The improvement is possible because pipeline installed for the grant-funded consolidation project (see article, page 3) will allow Sunnyslope to transport well water to the Lessalt plant for blending before delivery to these neighborhoods. This will provide controlled blending ratios directly from the plant, without quality fluctuations.

Plan now to retire your water softener by the end of the year

Retiring your water softener will not only save money on continual servicing and supplies, it will also protect our local aquifer and our (Cont. on page 3)



Get immediate leak alerts: tap this icon at sunnyslopewater.org to sign up!

Can't find a leak? Not sure you have a leak? Call for free help!

Taking care of undetected leaks can save you hundreds of dollars each year, and our local Water Resources Association

San Benito County (WRASBC) can help you find them. Call to schedule a free home survey

with a friendly, knowledgeable WRASBC technician

who will check your home, inside and out. A technician can suggest water-saving devices and adjust your irrigation controller to maximize water efficiency and plant health. They can also offer valuable landscaping advice which factors in shade coverage, soil type, plant varieties, and elevation changes. *To schedule a free water-wise home survey, please contact Lundi at (831) 637-4378, or lbarroso@sbcwd.ca.gov.*

Save with rebates

Irrigation hardware: 50 percent rebate up to \$100 on water-wise hose timers, rain sensors, and Hunter PM rotators—hardware only.

Lo-flow toilets: \$75 rebate or free ultra-low-flow toilet with pre-1992 trade-in.

Turf removal: \$2 per square foot (up to \$2,000) for turf removal and replacement with low-water-use landscape.

Water softener: \$300 for removal; \$250 for upgrade to salt/potassium-free system (see article at left)

For details and application forms, please visit wrasbc.org and click on "Local Rebates." To schedule required pre-inspection for rebates, please contact Lundi at (831) 637-4378, or lbarroso@sbcwd.ca.gov.

