



# The Waterfront



Sign up for e-mail messaging. You can receive information about rates, planned maintenance in your area, and important reminders. EID will **never** share your e-mail with any third parties and you may unsubscribe at any time.

## Water Meters: What is the Customer's Responsibility?

Spring is a good time to start thinking about your irrigation and water lines to your home. During variable weather patterns of warm or freezing temperatures and dry and/or wet conditions, your water lines are getting a lot of wear and tear. With this in mind, we thought it would be a good time to remind customers of their responsibility when it comes to fixing and checking for possible leaks or line breaks.

Gophers, ants, and other bugs and varmints like to get in and around your box, filling it with dirt and debris. Cleaning out the box, and the area around your box, helps so that you can easily find and get to your shut-off valve and pressure regulator. Once located, you can then clean around and inside the box and inspect your valve and pressure regulator. It's good to turn your shut-off valve off and then back on to be sure it is functioning properly. Look for signs of leakage or corrosion. If you see white or grayish build-up around the valve area or pressure regulator bonnet (cone shaped cover), then it may be a good time to replace those parts before a break occurs. The shut-off valve, pressure regulator, and the piping (see figure above) are the customer's responsibility for any needed repair or replacement.

If you have been experiencing pressure fluctuations and have inspected your meter and/or regulator and still have questions, please give us a call.



Shown above are a set of typical water meter boxes. This illustration helps designate one side as the customer's responsibility and the other as EID's.

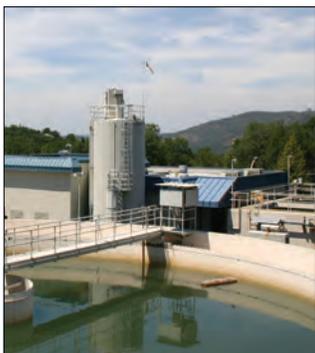
## EID Announces 2012 Facility Tours for Water and Wastewater

For the third year in a row, EID is opening its El Dorado Hills water and wastewater facilities to the public for tours.

The cost of treating drinking water and wastewater is on the rise. Replacing infrastructure and meeting new and ever-changing state and federal regulations is a challenge that must be met or steep fines will be levied by regulators and even more expensive repairs will be required.

EID strives to contain costs while also ensuring that public health and safety and system reliability is paramount.

"This is an excellent opportunity for our customers and the general public to come out and see behind-the-scenes operations of the District's systems. It's an eye-opening experience and one that will help customers understand what it takes to provide these services," said EID General Manager Jim Abercrombie.



To learn more about our water and wastewater operations, please join one of our tours. Water treatment plant tours will be held the third Wednesday of each month starting in June. Wastewater tours will be held the third Thursday of each month beginning in June. Tours will be held through September and are limited to 25 participants. EID customers have priority for reservations. Tours are approximately two hours and will begin at 9:30 A.M. Walking is involved during the tours, so please advise us if you need special accommodations when making your reservation. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your needs. Please RSVP to Jim Murphy at [jmurphy@eid.org](mailto:jmurphy@eid.org) or 530.642.4408.

**Tour Schedule**    **Water:** Wednesdays, June 20, July 18, August 15, and September 19  
**Wastewater:** Thursdays, June 21, July 19, August 16, and September 20



## Message from the General Manager

EID Beats CSPA Lawsuit Requirements, Saving \$6,000 in Fees

**Jim Abercrombie**

In 2009, the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA) sued the District alleging violations of the federal

Clean Water Act (Act) because of sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) from the District's wastewater collection system.

In the past few years we have seen agencies all over the state sued by third-party entities, such as CSPA, using the Citizen Suit provisions in the Act. Standards set under the Act call for zero SSOs, which is nearly impossible for any agency to meet. So if an agency is sued under the Act, the agency is almost certain to lose, pay fines, and also be responsible for the plaintiff's legal fees. Even if the agency's SSO numbers are low, small in size, and promptly cleaned up—as in the District's case—the unfortunate best choice is to invariably enter into a settlement agreement with the party bringing the lawsuit.

Consequently in May 2010, the District entered into a settlement agreement with CSPA. Our strategy was to seek an agreement that set out performance standards to reduce SSOs in an achievable timeframe thus allowing the District to continue to remain in control of our facilities, staff time, ratepayer funds, and maintenance schedules. The District was successful at negotiating an agreement that satisfied CSPA but also included obtainable performance goals. We were also able to negotiate an early termination clause if we achieved less than 5 SSOs per 100 miles of pipe in two consecutive years.

The goal for 2010 – 2011 called for less than 11 SSOs per 100 miles of pipe. The District, through the evaluation of operational performance, reassignment of staff, and Board authorization to purchase an additional hydro-cleaning truck, along with hard-working dedicated employees, was not only able to meet that goal, but exceeded it with only 4.27 SSOs per 100 miles of pipe in 2010. In 2011, the District achieved an even greater reduction—only 1.96 SSOs per 100 miles of pipe. This significant accomplishment allowed the District to terminate the CSPA agreement three years early, saving the District \$6,000 in compliance monitoring fees that would have been paid to CSPA. And, most importantly, meeting and ultimately terminating the agreement allowed the District to maintain control of operations, maintenance, and the funding of any necessary repairs and/or replacement of portions of our collection system.

The District's vast collection system covers 77 square-miles and includes 64 lift stations, over 561 miles of pipelines, and 7,300 manholes.

The District is fortunate to have dedicated employees along with an informed and practical Board that allows for proactive management and reduces costs for ratepayers now and in the future.

## The News—Briefly

### Prop 218 Rate Change Notice Mailed February 3, Public Hearing and Workshop March 26

The District mailed a Proposition 218 notice to all customers on February 3, 2012, announcing proposed changes to its rate structure based upon completion of an extensive cost-of-services study. In summary, the proposed 2012 bill changes for the average consumption for Single Family Residential customers with medium-volume use are as follows:

- water and wastewater** — \$2.38 per month increase
- water/wastewater/recycled water (dual-plumbed)** — \$1.55 per month decrease
- wastewater** — \$3.70 per month decrease
- water** — \$6.08 per month increase

Please refer to the tables in the Proposition 218 notice for more information.



The Proposition 218 notice contains rate change information for the next four years—2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015. To see how your individual bills may change for each of these next four years, use the rate calculator which is located on the District's website at [www.eid.org](http://www.eid.org) or call Customer Services at 530-642-4000.

Because of the change back to the "50/50" allocation method, meaning 50% of the rate is collected from fixed charges and 50% is collected from variable (commodity) charges, and changes in customer classes, there is no across-the-board percentage increase proposal. The impact of the rate changes on each customer's bi-monthly bill will differ based on the amount of water each customer uses and whether the customer also has sewer and recycled water service. This means that for some customers, monthly costs will go up, and for others monthly costs will go down.

The EID Board of Directors will hold a public hearing on **Monday, March 26 at 6:00 P.M.** at the **Cameron Park Community Center** at 2502 Country Club Drive in Cameron Park. The purpose of the hearing is to consider the proposed rates described in the Proposition 218 notification. A workshop will also be held at **9:00 A.M.** on the same date, **Monday, March 26** at the **District's headquarters building** in Placerville. The workshop will allow customers who cannot attend the public hearing to address the Board on this matter. For more information on submitting a written protest, please refer to the Proposition 218 notice. All written protests must be received in the District office at or before the time set for the public hearing.



Above Right: Cost of Services Study Report. Above Left: Prop 218 Rate Change Notice. These documents are available on the District's website.

# Questions and Answers: Winter Residential Sewer Rates Relaxed

Left: EID's Communications and Community Relations Director, Mary Lynn Carlton talks with Lori Grace, customer services manager, about the winter sewer rates. Right: Lori Grace and Jennifer Downey, senior finance assistant, review customer statements.



## **I understand that the Board of Directors recently voted to allow winter residential sewer rates to be relaxed due to the dry winter we are experiencing. Can you tell me more about this?**

This one-time exception to the District's regulations was initiated by Director George Wheeldon and unanimously approved at the Board's January 23, 2012 meeting. In summary, the Board directed staff to use the lower of the last two years—either 2011 or 2012—of winter water usage billing cycles to establish a customer's 2012 sewer commodity rate. This was done, as you mentioned, due to the unusually dry winter we had experienced as of that date, as evidenced by the snow survey conducted by the California Department of Water Resources. Because of this dry weather, some customers found it necessary to increase their irrigation frequency. As Director Wheeldon stated in his presentation, when you look at historical rainfall dating back ten years in the month of December, it shows this has been drier than any other year in recent history. For instance, in 2003 we had 12.93 inches of rain compared to December 2011, when we only had 0.03 inches.

## **How is the sewer commodity rate typically set?**

Residential sewer (wastewater) rate calculations are performed annually, based on water consumption that occurs during a two-month winter billing cycle between November and February. These calculations are based on winter water usage under the assumption that during the winter months, minimal outside irrigation is occurring. During last year's wet winter, this assumption was definitely true, as it usually is. But in this year's dry winter, many District customers, especially those in the lower elevations, have felt it necessary to irrigate and some weather-based irrigation controllers are calling for water for some plant types. That's why it seemed unfair to use the traditional method of setting the commodity rate.

## **How will this calculation be done? Do customers have to do anything to get the lower rate?**

No, at the request of Director Alan Day, staff needs to make this easier for our customers so they don't have to do a thing. Staff will be manually reviewing all residential sewer accounts and will automatically enter the lower usage of the last two water years, unless there are unusual circumstances requiring staff to contact customers to obtain more information before a determination is made.

## **What if you are a new residential sewer customer? How will it be calculated in that case?**

For new customers, the lesser of the flat rate or first full billing cycle will be used until a winter billing cycle is established.

## **Does this also apply to residential recycled customers?**

No, this option applies only to customers who do not receive recycled water. Recycled water customers use recycled water rather than potable water for their outside irrigation needs.

## **If customers have questions, who can they call to get answers, and how will this be communicated to the customers aside from this newsletter?**

In addition to this article, we will notify customers of this one-time exception to the sewer rate-setting method in a variety of ways, including e-mails sent to those customers who have provided their e-mail address and notices on upcoming customer billing statements. We will also make automated calls to customer homes and post notices on the District's website. Customers may also contact Customer Services at 530-642-4000 for more information.

**“The Board directed staff to use the lower of the last two years—either 2011 or 2012—of winter water usage billing cycles to establish a customer's 2012 sewer commodity rate.”**

## **SAVE TIME and GO ONLINE**

EID offers online billing services with no additional charges.

You may view up to three billing cycles with the service.

This service offers you a convenient and secure way to access your account at any time of the day or night.

You can:

- Pay with a Visa or Mastercard
- Receive an e-mail notification when your statement is available
- Choose to automate your payments by choosing recurring payments
- Choose to go paperless



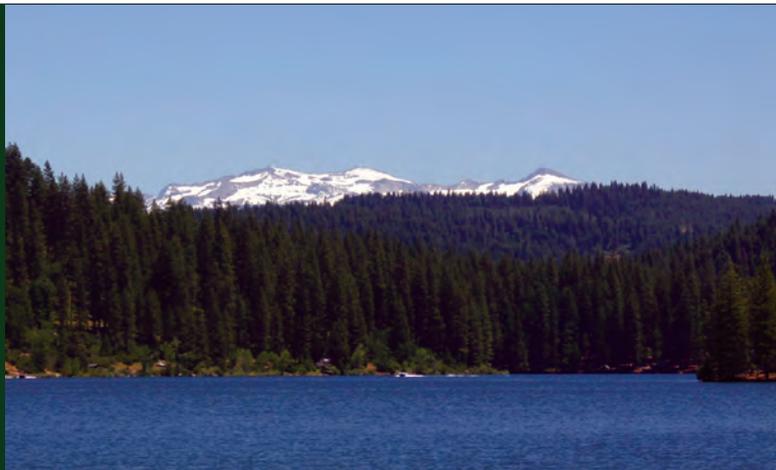
Sign up by visiting our website at [www.eid.org](http://www.eid.org).

# Visit beautiful **SLY PARK RECREATION AREA**

Since 1956, Jenkinson Lake at Sly Park has been a wonderful place to take the family. Call or go online to make your reservation for a great camping and outdoor experience.

*Recreation for the whole family!*

4771 Sly Park Road, Pollock Pines, CA  
(530) 295-6810 [www.eid.org](http://www.eid.org)



## Before you dig, dial 811!

Building a new fence, adding an irrigation or drainage system, or another outdoor project that requires digging?

Avoid costly mishaps by calling 811 before you dig.

Providers with underground services will be scheduled to come mark their lines.

To locate  
underground  
services  
dial **811**  
before you dig



Sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Visit [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense) to learn more.

## Fix a Leak Week

March 12–18, 2012

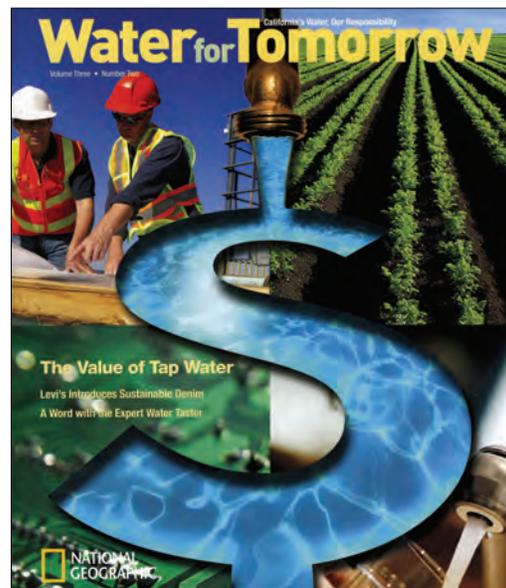
## The Value of Tap Water—A Vital Resource Taken for Granted

*A thirst-quenching glass of water. A refreshing shower. The single most important ingredient for cooking our meals. Then, of course, there is irrigation for crops, hydroelectric power generation, industrial manufacturing, fire protection, waste disposal, recreation, and wildlife enhancement.*

What is more basic to life than water? The need for safe and reliable services is a must. What seems to be taken for granted are the safe and reliable services we receive every day. The cost of delivering drinking water continues to rise as regulations are increased and aging infrastructure needs to be replaced. Yet, it still only costs an average of less than a penny per gallon.

The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), in partnership with National Geographic, has produced a series of magazines that focus on California water. The current issue speaks to these real topics that face us today.

If you would like a copy of the magazine you may come into the District headquarters and pick one up. Or, you can visit [www.waterfortomorrowmag.com](http://www.waterfortomorrowmag.com) to view it electronically along with previous issues.



Water for Tomorrow Volume Three, Number Two  
(Published exclusively for ACWA by: Onward Publishing in partnership with National Geographic)

## 2012 REGULAR BOARD MEETINGS

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
9	13	12	9	14	11	—	13	10	9 (T)	13 (T)	10
23	27	26	23	29 (T)	25	23	27	—	22	—	—

Board meetings generally occur on the second and fourth Monday of each month. The dates marked (T) take place on a Tuesday.

The Waterfront is written and designed by EID's Communications and Community Relations Department.

[www.eid.org](http://www.eid.org) • El Dorado Irrigation District • 2890 Mosquito Road • Placerville, CA 95667 • 530-622-4513 | 916-965-0930