

# Recycled water: A smart solution

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CALIFORNIA is facing the most significant water crisis in its history. After experiencing two years of drought and the driest spring in recorded history, water reserves statewide are extremely low, reports the California Department of Water Resources.

In Marin County, a substantial portion of our water supply is from the Russian River, where water diversions have been reduced the past two summers for fishery protection.

North Marin Water District is actively working to maintain an adequate water supply. The district has emphasized helping customers conserve water, improved the efficiency of our treatment plant at Stafford Lake, developed a recycled water system with Novato Sanitary District to supply StoneTree Golf Course, and continues to seek protection and expansion of our Russian River water supplies.

North Marin Water District is working with a number of other water and wastewater agencies in Marin, Napa and Sonoma counties to expand the use of recycled water through the North Bay Recycled Water Program. This unique, regional recycled water program will provide recycled water for irrigating large landscapes, so fresh drinking water can be saved for household uses. This will also decrease the need for additional Russian River diversions.

The Marin County portion of this plan proposes to provide recycled water to large landscapes, golf courses, school and park turf areas, including the Fireman's Fund Co. and Valley Memorial Park Cemetery, commercial users west of Highway 101, and potentially to schools and other irrigated playing fields.

Recycled water from Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District is also proposed for landscape irrigation at the Hamilton Field.

Recycled water is not used for drinking, and it is delivered using special purple pipes that are separate from potable water pipelines.

Recycled water is a safe, proven resource that has been used for decades and its current use is growing rapidly. Recycled water is already used in Novato and the Terra Linda/Marinwood areas of Central Marin. It is also used in Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Petaluma, the Town of Windsor, Calistoga, St Helena, Yountville, Napa, San Francisco, San Jose, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, Daly City and other Bay Area communities.

Environmental studies are currently being conducted to analyze potential benefits and impacts associated with the North Bay Recycled Water Program.

A combined Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report will be available in early spring 2009.

Public meetings and hearings will be held to discuss the project and receive comments from the public.

To learn more about this exciting new program, or to be placed on a list to receive more information, please visit the project Web site at [www.nbwra.org](http://www.nbwra.org).

Recycled water saves fresh drinking water for potable uses and provides a reliable new supply to keep landscapes green. The North Bay Water Reuse Authority is a model for future water supply planning.

It protects the environment and gives us the ability to meet future urban and agricultural water needs.

This is a vital opportunity - let's take it.

Dennis Rodoni is president of the North Marin Water District board of directors.