

Manager's Column

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What is "Groundwater" Anyway?

The mission of the Nipomo Community Services District is to provide its customers with reliable, quality, and cost-effective services now and in the future.

You have probably been hearing a lot of talk lately about, 'groundwater this and groundwater that' – and may be asking; "what is ground water anyway?" Water found below the earth's surface is referred to as ground water. This is water that exists in the very small space between the physical sands and gravels present below earth's surface.

Ground water is an important source of water across the USA and around the world. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the "United States uses about 77,500 million gallons of ground water each day for all sorts of uses like drinking water, washing clothes, watering crops, and making food products." Our District produced (pumped) over 800 million gallons of groundwater in 2012, producing over 3 million gallons per day during the peak water use month of August.

Groundwater supplies are replenished by rainfall and, across the Nipomo Mesa, 100% of water needs are met by ground water. We have no lakes, rivers, or imported supply sources. Multiple low rainfall years like the one we are currently experiencing, threaten our only source of water.

The District has been working for nearly twenty years to obtain a supplemental water source (another source of water to serve our area's customers). A supplemental source of water would greatly increase long-term supply reliability for District customers and allow the District to reduce demand on the area's underlying groundwater basin. Thereby improving the basin's long-term health and lessening the potential for seawater intrusion or other physical damage that would negatively impact our groundwater supply.

A dependable safe supply of potable water, which can be counted on for future generations, is paramount to a community's near-term and long-term property values and economic vitality. Diversification of water supply is ever more important as our State, Region, and Country face growing challenges to meet projected potable water demands.

To read more about ground water, you may visit the EPA's website: www.epa.gov/learn/resources/groundwater. To learn more about area groundwater and the District's effort to diversify supply, please visit the District's website at www.ncsd.ca.gov.

If you have questions or comments about this column or NCS D services, please do contact me.

Until next time...

Michael S. LeBrun, General Manager

info@ncsd.ca.gov