



Waterlines

A Newsletter from Belmont Terrace Mutual Water Company
Sebastopol, California
May 2019

Keeping You Up to Date

This periodic newsletter is designed to keep everyone who depends on Belmont Terrace water up to date on the status of our system and events that could impact our water supply. The mutual water company also has a Web site at www.belmontterrace.org. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions about what we should cover in the newsletter, please contact the editor, Ed Thompson, at ethompsonjr@gmail.com or 707-861-9988.

Groundwater Situation

You have probably read in the local paper about efforts to regulate groundwater use under the state's relatively new Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. The law was passed in response to widespread over-pumping of underground water basins, which could eventually lead to some areas having no water at all during droughts.

The Santa Rosa Plain groundwater basin has been determined to be one of those areas of concern, necessitating that groundwater use be inventoried and a plan be prepared to assure that the level of pumping is sustainable in the long run. Belmont Terrace is not within the stipulated boundary of the basin, which extends only as far west as the Laguna. But our well extends down into an underground formation that is connected to the groundwater under Santa Rosa, so that we could be affected by whatever happens in the basin. For that reason, we joined with the City of Sebastopol to request that we be included in the process of preparing the Santa Rosa plan. The approval of our request gives us a seat at the table, as well as an obligation – only fair – to contribute to the cost of preparing the groundwater management plan. After much highly-publicized debate, it was recently determined that most of the cost will be borne by Sonoma County. At some future date, however, Belmont Terrace may be asked to pick up some of the cost of administering the plan, though it is likely to be very modest. Stay tuned.

Need for Water Conservation

We are fortunate to have an abundant, reliable water supply. And to keep it that way, we all must be constantly vigilant about how much water we use, practicing conservation whenever possible.

This need was underscored recently when, after a routine inspection, state water officials determined that our peak demand of 52,000 gallons – the highest daily use over the past decade – exceeded the amount of water that our tank can store, about 41,000 gallons. Though this was technically in violation of state rules, we were able to demonstrate to state officials that our peak use has been declining in recent years and convinced them to give us additional time to further reduce demand before having to spend a lot of money to increase our storage capacity.

Current average daily use data (2016-2018):

Winter	13,000 gal
Summer outdoor	28,000 gal
Summer total	41,000 gal

The highest water demand occurs during the spring through fall months when we are irrigating our yards and gardens. During this season, outdoor use accounts for nearly 70 percent of our total daily use. So, friends and neighbors, please do your utmost to assure that your irrigation systems are efficient and that you are not using more water than necessary to keep everything green and healthy. This would include actions such as replacing lawns with drought-tolerant plants – Belmont Terrace will pay you “cash for grass” if you contact Bruce Petersilge – substituting drip irrigation for sprinklers, finding and fixing any leaks in the pipes (and indoor plumbing), and recalibrating your irrigation schedule to avoid over-watering.

Storage Tank Cleaning & Re-roofing

The Board is now in the process of soliciting bids for the cleaning of our storage tank and replacement of the aging roof. Financed by your monthly

fees, this is part of the on-going maintenance required to keep our system reliable. There may be a brief interruption in service during the process and we'll give you plenty of notice before that occurs. Please direct any questions to the system operators Bruce Petersilge or Debby Turner at operator@belmontterrace.org

Customer Responsibility Policies

Because of some recent issues, the Board wants to call your attention to a couple existing policies related to the responsibility of our customer-members to keep our system operational and healthy. Here is a summary.

Water Line Breaks and Repairs

The first policy concerns the responsibility for reporting and repairing any breaks or leaks in water pipes supplying individual homes. Between the water mains in the streets and each home is a shut-off valve located in a box in the ground. These valves allow the water to be turned off if necessary to prevent flooding and allow repairs. The valves are the property of Belmont Terrace and most are quite old and require special expertise to turn off and on without risking breakage. Therefore, only the Belmont Terrace operators are permitted to turn valves off and on, and homeowners must immediately notify the operators of any event that would require that water to their homes be shut off. Operators and their emergency phone numbers are:

Bruce Petersilge 707-820-7787
Debby Turner 707-820-7633

Responsibility for repairs and their cost depends on where the repairs are located. Anything on the street side of the shut-off valves, including the valves themselves, is the responsibility of Belmont Terrace. Anything between the shut-off valve and the house is the responsibility of the individual homeowner.

Finally, before any digging or excavation that could affect a water line to a house, please notify the operators to arrange for a visit to assure that the water system will not be disturbed.

Delinquent Accounts

The second policy relates to customer responsibility for prompt payment of monthly water fees.

This is necessary to assure that everyone pays their fair share of the upkeep of our system.

In lieu of a monthly statement, all customers have received a coupon payment book. Payments are due on the first of each month and are considered delinquent if not received by the 15th. A late fee of 1.5% per month will be applied to all delinquent accounts and an additional \$10 will be assessed for the cost of preparing and mailing a paper bill to customers whose bill has not been paid by the end of the month. When accounts are 90 days overdue, homeowners and renters will be sent a notice and an additional \$50 delinquent fee will be assessed. Any account more than 120 days overdue is subject to having the water to their home shut off, if the bill is not paid in full within 15 days, and a \$250 fee will be assessed to cover the cost.

Bylaws, Board News & Meetings

At the annual meeting of Belmont Terrace Mutual Water Company last January, the customer-members amended the bylaws to eliminate term limits for Board members. This was recommended by the Board to assure that there will always be a full complement of Board members to handle company business and that institutional memory is maintained. We also welcome new Board member Dee Kosten, who volunteered to serve and was unanimously elected.

You are welcome to attend monthly meetings of the Belmont Terrace Board, which are held at 7 PM on the second Tuesday of each month. Call any Board member for the location.

Belmont Terrace Management

Board of Directors

Steve Paulick, Chair	707-823-4810
Sandy Pete, Secretary	707-799-4798
Laurie Mattinson, Treasurer	707-829-2628
Ed Thompson	707-861-9988
Dee Kosten	707-829-1084

System Operators

Bruce Petersilge	707-820-7787
Debby Turner	707-820-7633