

Drinking Water in Seal Rock: Partnering to “Protect the Source”

By Adam Denlinger, General Manager, Seal Rock Water District

In the spirit of this year’s National Drinking Water Week theme, “Protect the Source,” I want to recognize how successful technology and partnerships are conserving water resources to benefit the people throughout the Seal Rock Water District (SRWD) and the landscape that supplies our water.

As part of our ongoing commitment to maintain a high quality of life for our citizens through cost-effective, innovative systems, the District recently completed installation of an advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) system for our water utility system. Advanced metering supports the District’s commitment to preserve and protect our environment. The technology not only takes meter readers off the road and reduces carbon emissions; AMI also enhances the District’s ability to quickly detect and stop leaks in the transmission system while providing end-user customers with daily information that helps them improve their own water conservation efforts.



The project entails replacing every residential and commercial water meter in the District with new, state-of-the-art technology that wirelessly communicates usage data to the District office. This innovative system replaces monthly manual reads with multiple remote reads per day, allowing for better leak detection, increased billing accuracy, and improved customer service.

The data offers us a better understanding regarding the flow of water through the system which, in turn, will allow the District and our customers to control unaccounted-for water, reduce our demand on the stream, and “protect the source.” Reducing the amount of water we remove from coastal streams, many of which are already impaired as a result of overallocated withdrawals, translates to better stream health and a more sustainable water supply for the future.

While the system is still in its infancy, the District has already received an overwhelming positive response from customers who have received notification of high water use generated through the AMI program. The District has contacted approximately 30 customers with an alert to the potential of a water leak in their system. With the old system, high usage was detected only through monthly meter readings and generally left the customer with a high volume of water usage to pay for before fixes were made. With 2,525 connections, detecting water leaks early with AMI is already having a positive impact on the District, our customers and, ultimately, the environment.

SRWD is proud of the work we have done on this project, and we recognize that these environmental and rate-payer benefits are also made possible through partnership collaboration with our customers and the [United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Rural Development](#), which financed the system improvements through its [Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program](#).

Protecting the environment is everyone's responsibility, and something the SRWD Board of Commissioners takes seriously. Water is a precious resource, using new technology like AMI allows communities like ours to ensure this precious resource is available for future generations.

Please feel free to contact the District at 541.563.3529 with questions or feedback. For more information regarding this project and other projects please visit us on our website at www.srwd.org.