

Reclaimed Water a Godsend

Story and Photo
By Mary-Justine Lanyon

Should a homeowner who lives near the Lake Arrowhead Country Club hear the sprinklers working in the middle of the night or a passing motorist see the plumes of water irrigating the golf course, they need not worry that water they could be using to brush their teeth or drink with their meals is being used.

The Lake Arrowhead Country Club uses only reclaimed water to irrigate its fairways and greens. A sign to that effect hangs on the maintenance shop.

The reclaimed water was made possible by an agreement between the country club and the Lake Arrowhead Community Services District struck in November 2007. It wasn't until July 2010 that the treated water began to flow in the purple pipe that connects the Grass Valley wastewater treatment plant to the irrigation pond built on the golf course.

Initially, said Matt Brooks, the LACSD operations manager, the water district agreed to credit the country club with 1.3 gallons of reclaimed water for every one gallon taken from the wells drilled on golf course property.

The country club had sold its water rights for those wells to LACSD for \$1 million.

In 2011, Brooks said, the agreement was amended to entitle the country club to 300 acre-feet of reclaimed water a year at no charge. At that point, he said, the club had a credit of 354 a-f.

When the country club first started using the reclaimed water, General Manager Mike Stevens was pleased and excited.

"The penetration is so much better," he said in 2010. "We're already using less water."

That statement holds true today. The club took its first reclaimed water of the year on April 7. The fairways, Stevens said, had been brown after the winter but greened up almost immediately.

"There are more nutrients in reclaimed water than in regular water," he said, "so we don't have to use as much." Salts in the reclaimed water has not proved to be an issue. "The quality of the water is so good, we don't have to flush the greens at the end of the season," Stevens said.

The amount of water the maintenance staff puts out on the turf depends on the weather—how hot it is, whether it's cloudy



When members and visitors see the sprinklers running, they can rest assured potable water is not being used on the turf. Sprinklers generally only come on from 10 p.m. to 6 p.m.; they were turned on during the day for the purpose of this photo.

or clear. But on average the club draws 240 to 250 a-f of reclaimed water each year.

That is water that previously would have been drawn out of Lake Arrowhead to irrigate the turf.

The entire reclaimed water system is computerized so the wastewater treatment plant sends the exact amount of water used in a night to the irrigation pond to keep it full.

Even with conservation, Brooks said, the LACSD ratepayers produce more than enough wastewater to be treated and meet the country club's needs.

"Last year," he said, "we sent 900 a-f of wastewater to Hesperia for disposal, in addition to delivering 240 a-f to the country club."

The reclaimed water, which goes through an extra process involving a membrane filter and UV disinfection at the wastewater treatment plant, meets Title 11 disinfected

tertiary recycled water standards.

NATURALIZING THE COURSE

But using reclaimed water isn't the only step Lake Arrowhead Country Club has taken to reduce both water usage and costs.

Stevens said they have allowed certain areas—that don't come into play—to go natural. Rather than mowing the grass, they let it grow, trimming it when necessary. And they no longer water or fertilize those areas. As a result, they are saving on the cost of both materials and labor.

When asked how the members have reacted, Stevens said "they like it. They realize we're trying to go more green."

He has heard that some golf courses will have to close as it has become too expensive to water them.

"It's a godsend that we have reclaimed water," Stevens said.