



# County of San Luis Obispo—Department of Public Works

## County Service Area 23 - Santa Margarita

### 2010 Water Quality Report

April 2011

**TO OUR CUSTOMERS:** The County of San Luis Obispo is pleased to present this annual report describing the quality of your drinking water. We sincerely hope this report gives you the information you seek and have a right to know. *Este informe contiene información muy importante sobre su agua de beber. Tradúzcalo ó hable con alguien que lo entienda bien.*

## SOURCES OF DRINKING WATER

The sources of drinking water (both tap water and bottled water) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and, in some cases, radioactive material, and can pick up substances resulting from the presence of animals or from human activity.

### Contaminants that may be present in source water include:

- *Microbial contaminants*, such as viruses and bacteria, which may come from sewage treatment plants, septic systems, agricultural livestock operations, and wildlife.
- *Inorganic contaminants*, such as salts and metals, which can be naturally occurring or result from urban stormwater runoff, industrial or domestic wastewater discharges, oil and gas production, mining, or farming.
- *Pesticides and herbicides*, which may come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, urban stormwater runoff, and residential uses.
- *Organic chemical contaminants*, including synthetic and volatile organic chemicals, which are by-products of industrial processes and petroleum production, and can also come from gas stations, urban stormwater runoff, and septic systems.
- *Radioactive contaminants* which can be naturally occurring or be the result of oil and gas production and mining activities.

In order to ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) prescribe regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. CDPH regulations also establish limits for contaminants in bottled water that provide the same protection for public health.



## YOUR WATER SUPPLY

Your water comes from two groundwater wells located in Santa Margarita, Well #3 and Well #4. Well #3 is a deep, fractured-rock well. Well #4 is a relatively shallow well that pumps water from the alluvial deposits of Santa Margarita Creek. The water is cleaned through a natural filtration process as it trickles down through the ground. During this process, water may also pick up minerals or contaminants found in the soil, either natural or man-made. Groundwater is normally very clean and is simply disinfected with chlorine to help minimize the risk from viral and bacterial contamination.

The wells are routinely monitored for contaminants and the results are reported to the California Department of Public Health. The findings are evaluated relative to the California Drinking Water Primary and Secondary Maximum Contaminant Standards. **All water quality standards were met in 2010.**

A watershed sanitary survey and a source water assessment have been conducted on the Santa Margarita system. The studies are updated by County staff every five years. The last update was completed in March 2011. The studies identify potential sources of contamination or contaminating activities in the watershed and assess their impact on the water system. The studies included a review of water system information, input from operations staff, findings from field surveys, and recommendations for future surveys. No significant changes in the watershed were noted in the last update. The wells continue to be most vulnerable to the following activities for which no associated contaminant has been detected in the water supply: one gasoline station. (continued on page 4)

### Water Statistics

Year	Total Production, million gallons	Average Daily Demand, gallons
2007	65.9	180,520
2008	64.2	176,000
2009	58.4	160,000
2010	54.4	149,000



These tables list all of the drinking water contaminants that were detected in your water in 2010, unless otherwise noted. The presence of these contaminants in water does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. The State allows us to monitor for some contaminants less than once per year because the concentrations of these contaminants do not change frequently. Thus some of our data, may be more than one year old but remains representative. For questions about this data, contact John Beaton, Water Quality Manager, at (805) 781-5111 or email JBeaton@co.slo.ca.us.

**REGULATED CONTAMINANTS WITH PRIMARY MCLs, MRDLs, TTs or NLs**

Contaminant (Reporting Units)	Where Sampled	Year Sampled	MCL or [MRDL]	PHG, (MCLG) or [MRDLG]	Range Detected	Average Detected	Potential Source of Contamination
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**MICROBIAL CONTAMINANTS**

Total Coliform Bacteria (Present or Absent)	Distribution	2010	> 1 positive sample per month	(0)		Absent	Naturally present in the environment
Heterotrophic Bacteria (CFU/mL)	Distribution	2010	TT = < 500	----	ND—110	5	Naturally present in the environment

**INORGANIC CONTAMINANTS**

Arsenic (ppb)	Source	2009	10	0.004	ND—6.2	3.1	Erosion of natural deposits
Fluoride (ppm)	Delivered	2009	2.0	1	0.147—0.191	0.169	Erosion of natural deposits
Nitrate as NO <sub>3</sub> (ppm)	Source	2010	45	45	ND - 12.0	6.0	Leaching from fertilizer use, septic tanks and sewage; erosion of natural deposits.

**DISINFECTANT RESIDUALS and DISINFECTION BYPRODUCTS**

Chlorine (ppm)	Distribution	2010	[4.0 as Cl <sub>2</sub> ]	[4 as Cl <sub>2</sub> ]	0.89 - 1.98	1.32	Drinking water disinfectant added for treatment.
Haloacetic Acids (ppb)	Distribution	2010	RAA = 60	----		1.1	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection
Total Trihalomethanes (ppb)	Distribution	2010	RAA = 80	----		7.9	Byproduct of drinking water disinfection

**CORROSION CONTROL MONITORING**

Ortho-phosphate (ppm)	Distribution	2010	TT (average 1.5 to 2.2)	----	1.53—2.29	1.97	Byproduct of drinking water treatment
pH	Distribution	2010	TT (average 7.4 to 8.0)	----	7.43 - 8.12	7.74	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits; seawater influence.

**CONTAMINANTS WITH A SECONDARY DRINKING WATER STANDARD (AESTHETICS)**

Chloride (ppm)	Source	2008	500	----		20	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits
Manganese (ppb)	Delivered	2010	MCL= 50 NL = 500	----	ND—20	ND	Leaching from natural deposits
Odor – Threshold (TON)	Distribution	2010	3	----	1.1 - 2.2	1.4	Naturally occurring organic materials
Specific Conductance (µS/cm)	Source	2008	1600	----	600—650	630	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits
Sulfate (ppm)	Source	2008	500	----	15—71	43	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits
Total Dissolved Solids (ppm)	Source	2008	1000	----	360—390	380	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits
Turbidity (NTU)	Distribution	2010	5	----	0.04—0.25	0.08	Soil runoff

**UNREGULATED CONTAMINANTS**

Total Alkalinity as CaCO <sub>3</sub> (ppm)	Source	2008	----	----	250—290	270	Runoff/leaching from natural deposit.
Calcium (ppm)	Source	2008	----	----	31—50	40	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits
Total Hardness (ppm)	Source	2008	----	----	160—290	220	Generally found in ground and surface water
Magnesium (ppm)	Source	2008	----	----	19—40	30	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits
Sodium (ppm)	Source	2008	----	----	26—78	52	Runoff/leaching from natural deposits

**LEAD AND COPPER IN HOMES (2008)**

Contaminant	Where Sampled	MCL	PHG	Number of Samples Collected	90th Percentile Level Detected	Number of Sites Found Above the AL	Potential Source of Contamination
Copper (ppb)	Homes	AL=1300	300	10	570	0	Internal corrosion of household water plumbing systems
Lead (ppb)	Homes	AL = 15	0.2	10	ND	0	

**KEY TERMS and ABBREVIATIONS**

**CU** - color units

**CFU/mL**—number of colony forming units per milliliter of sample

**MCL (Maximum Contaminant Level)** – The highest level of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water.

**MCLG (Maximum Contaminant Level Goal) and**

**PHG (Public Health Goal)** – The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs are set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and PHGs are set by the California Environmental Protection Agency.

**MRDL (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level)** - The level of a disinfectant added for water treatment that may not be exceeded at the consumer's tap.

**MRDLG (Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal)** - The level of a disinfectant added for water treatment below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs are set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

**ND (Not Detected)** - Contaminant is not detectable at testing limit.

**NL (Notification)** – The concentration of a contaminant that, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirement which a water system must follow.

**NS (No Standard)** - Contaminant for which there is no established MCL.

**NTU** - Nephelometric Turbidity Unit

**pCi/L** - picoCuries per liter (a measure of radioactivity)

**ppb** - parts per billion, or micrograms per liter (µg/L)

**ppm** - parts per million, or milligrams per liter (mg/L)

**Primary Drinking Water Standards** – MCLs and MRDLs for contaminants that affect health along with their monitoring and reporting requirements, and water treatment requirements.

**RAA (Running Annual Average)** – An arithmetic average is computed quarterly for all sites and compliance is based on the running average of quarters.

**Secondary Drinking Water Standards** – MCLs for contaminants to protect the taste, odor, or appearance of the drinking water.

**TON** - Threshold Odor Number

**TT (Treatment Technique)** – A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

**µS/cm**— microSiemens per centimeter (1 S = 1 ohm<sup>-1</sup>) A measure of electrical conductance.

**USEPA:** United States Environmental Protection Agency

**DRINKING WATER AND HEALTH RISKS**

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. **The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that water poses a health risk.** More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the USEPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDs or other immune system disorders, some elderly, and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. The USEPA/Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-426-4791).

The water delivered to Santa Margarita customers meets the Federal and State drinking water requirements and overall can be considered very good water. The following are a few parameters that may be of interest to you.

**Iron**

Well #3 is a deep well that when **untreated**, can sometimes exceed the Secondary Drinking Water Standard for iron (300 ppb). In 2010, the **untreated** water iron levels ranged from ND to 760 ppb with an average of 110 ppb. Elevated iron levels can cause discoloration of clothing, water faucets, and toilets. For this reason, Well #3 has iron removal equipment installed at the well site. **After treatment**, the iron levels in the water were **not detected**. Water from Well #3 is always treated before it is delivered to the consumer.

**Arsenic**

Water from Well #3 contains low levels of arsenic, **but does meet the federal and state standard for arsenic**. The arsenic standard balances the current understanding of arsenic's possible health effects against the costs of removing arsenic from drinking water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency continues to research the health effects of low levels of arsenic, which is a mineral known to cause cancer in humans at high concentrations and is linked to other health effects such as skin damage and circulatory problems.

**Lead and Copper**

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water typically comes from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. The County of San Luis Obispo is responsible for providing high quality drinking water, but cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may wish to have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (1-800-425-4791) or at <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

**SANTA MARGARITA NEWS**

SLO County Public Works Department began construction of a multi-phase project in 2009 to improve your water system. The first phase (now complete) involved upgrading waterlines and installation of new fire hydrants and valves within the system.

In 2010, the final phase of improvements began with the construction of a new 500,000 gallon water storage tank, pipeline, and access road at the southwest end of town that will improve fire flows to the community. This work is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2011. These improvements have been funded by a low-interest loan and grant from the United States Department of Agriculture. CSA 23 water customers approved a water rate increase in 2008 to repay the USDA loan portion of the loan and grant.

A community decision on a drought reliability program that could include a connection to the State Water pipeline is anticipated in 2011. A draft EIR for the project is currently available for review on the web site shown on page 4 under CSA 23 or at the County Public Works Department or the Santa Margarita Library.

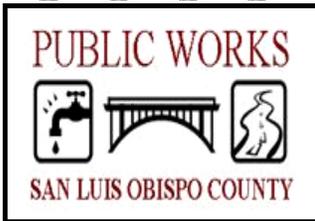
## Water Conservation Tips for Consumers

Did you know that the average U.S. household uses approximately 400 gallons of water per day or 100 gallons per person per day? Luckily, there are many low-cost and no-cost ways to conserve water. Small changes can make a big difference – try one today and soon it will become second nature.

- Take short showers – a 5 minutes shower uses 4 to 5 gallons of water compared to up to 50 gallons for a bath.
- Shut off water while brushing your teeth, washing your hair or shaving and save up to 500 gallons a month.
- Use a water-efficient showerhead. They are inexpensive, easy to install, and can save you up to 750 gallons a month.
- Run your clothes washer and dishwasher only when they are full. You can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- Water plants only when necessary.
- Fix leaking toilets and faucets. Faucet washers are inexpensive and take only a few minutes to replace. To check your toilet for a leak, place a few drops of food coloring in the tank and wait. If it seeps into the toilet bowl without flushing, you have a leak. Fixing it or replacing it with a new, more efficient model can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- Adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered. Apply water only as fast as the soil can absorb it and during the cooler parts of the day to reduce evaporation.
- Teach your kids about water conservation to ensure a future generation that uses water wisely. Make it a family effort to reduce next month's water bill!



Visit [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense) for more information.



### Internet

USEPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water  
[www.epa.gov/safewater/](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/)  
California Department of Public Health

County of San Luis Obispo  
Department of Public Works  
County Government Center, Room 207  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

**We're on the Web! [www.slocountywater.org](http://www.slocountywater.org)**

## OPERATIONS

The Santa Margarita water system is operated by qualified operators who are all certified by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). They are knowledgeable professionals dedicated to maintaining your water system and providing you with the best quality water possible. Operators conduct weekly inspections of the wells, tanks, and distribution system in order to ensure safe and reliable water.

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The Santa Margarita CSA 23 Advisory Committee meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 pm in the Community Hall on the corner of I and Murphy Streets. The public is welcome to attend.

The San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors meets every Tuesday (except the 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesday in a month) at 8:30am in the board chambers located in the new County Government Center, 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo. The Board holds budget hearings during the month of June. Interested persons should check the Board's agendas for specific dates. Agendas for all Board of Supervisors meetings are posted in some County libraries, the County Government Center, and on the Board of Supervisors internet web site at [www.slocounty.ca.gov](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov).

## YOUR WATER SUPPLY (Continued from Page 1)

A copy of the assessment is available at the web site address above under CSA 23 or at the County of San Luis Obispo, Department of Public Works, County Government Center, Room 207, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408. You may also request a summary of the assessment be sent to you by contacting Kurt Souza, CDPH Regional Engineer, at 805-566-1326 or John Beaton, Water Quality Manager, at 805-781-5111.

