



## 2003 Water Quality Report Zone 3 - Lopez Project

### ***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.*

### **YOUR WATER SUPPLY**

Your water comes from a 67 square mile watershed which drains into Lopez Lake, located ten miles east of the City of Arroyo Grande. Lopez Lake has a total capacity of 49,200 acre-feet which allows the Lopez Water Treatment Plant (WTP) to provide six million gallons per day for users. Water from the lake is piped three miles to a terminal reservoir. The water remains in the terminal reservoir for a period of time to minimize the potential for viral contamination from human contact and to aid particle settling prior to filtration and chlorination at the Lopez WTP. The Lopez WTP provides drinking water for Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach, Pismo Beach, Oceano Community Services District, County Service Area 12, and the Avila Beach Community Services District.

Some of these agencies supplement their Lopez and well water supplies with State Water. The County delivers State Water to these agencies through the Lopez distribution system. The County charges State Water users for a portion of Lopez costs thereby reducing the costs of Lopez Water. State Water comes from northern California near Mount Shasta and from the Sacramento Delta area.

The County samples Lopez Lake, Terminal, WTP, and the distribution system on a regular basis and has the water samples analyzed for regulated and unregulated contaminants by a California-certified analytical laboratory. The laboratory results are reviewed and evaluated relative to the California Drinking Water Primary and Secondary Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) standards. The laboratory results are then submitted to the California Department of Health Services (DHS). In June of 2001, an assessment was completed of Lopez Lake and Terminal Reservoir which included a review of water system files and previous watershed survey reports prepared in 1996 and 2001. Field surveys were conducted to locate and assess the vulnerability of the surface water sources to possible contamination. The surface water sources at Lopez Lake and Terminal were found to be most vulnerable to the following activities for which no associated contaminants have been detected: livestock near the reservoir and a roadway. A copy of the assessment is available at:

Department of Health Services  
1180 Eugenia Place, Suite 200  
Carpinteria, CA 93013

or

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, DHS District Engineer, at 805-566-1326 or John Beaton, Water Quality Manager, at 805-781-5111.

### **KEY TERMS**

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

**Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) and Public Health Goal (PHG)** - 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.

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

**Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level Goal (MRDLG)** - 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.

**Primary Drinking Water Standards (PDWS)** - MCLs for contaminants that affect health along with their monitoring and reporting requirements, and water treatment requirements. Primary MCLs are set as close to the PHGs (or MCLGs) as is economically and technologically feasible.

**Secondary Drinking Water Standards (SDWS)** - MCLs for contaminants to protect the taste, odor, or appearance of the drinking water. Contaminants with SDWSs do not affect health at the MCL levels.

**KEY TERMS (Continued)**

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

**Regulatory Action Level (AL)** - The concentration of a contaminant that, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirement which a water system must follow.

**Variations and Exemptions** - State or EPA permission not to meet an MCL or a treatment technique under certain conditions.

**Not Reported (NR)** - Contaminant was not reported.

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

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

**Not Analyzed (NA)** - Contaminant was not analyzed.

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

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

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

**µmhos/cm** - micromhos per centimeter (unit of specific conductance of water)

**CU** - color units

**CFU/ml** - Colony Forming Units per milliliter

**NTU** - Nephelometric Turbidity Unit

**TON** - Threshold Odor Number

**LI** - Langelier Index; Noncorrosive = Any positive value, Corrosive = Any negative value

**CCWA** - Central Coast Water Authority

**PPWTP** - Polonio Pass Water Treatment Plant

**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 USEPA and the California Department of Health Services (DHS) prescribe regulations which limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. DHS regulations also establish limits for contaminants in bottled water which must provide the same protection for public health.



We are pleased to announce a planned upgrade to the Lopez water treatment plant! The existing plant is 35 years old and struggles to meet the increasingly stringent water quality regulations.

We are looking ahead on your behalf to install a treatment process that can reliably meet your needs and the regulations imposed by the State. Design is underway now and the new improved plant will be on-line in 2006.

A low interest "State Revolving Fund" loan was secured to finance the project. We are very excited about the upgrades and will keep you posted on our progress!





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

## GENERAL DRINKING WATER INFORMATION

All 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. USEPA/Centers for Disease Control 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.

Additionally, the EPA Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water maintains a website with useful information on drinking water. The address is [www.epa.gov/safewater/](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/). Information can also be obtained by accessing the American Water Works Association's website at <http://www.awwa.org>, the DHS website at [www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/index.htm](http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/index.htm), or by calling John Beaton, Water Quality Manager, at 781-5111.

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors meets every Tuesday (except the 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesday in a month) in the board chambers located in the Government Center Annex at 1050 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 <http://www.co.slo.ca.us>.

The public can also participate in the Zone 3 Advisory Group meetings. This group is composed of representatives from the Five-Cities area. The group meets at 6:30 pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of January, March, May, July, September, and November. Information on meeting times and places are published in the newspaper or can be obtained from the County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Works.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions regarding this report, please contact John Beaton, Water Quality Manager, at (805) 781-5111 or Email: [jbeaton@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:jbeaton@co.slo.ca.us).

WE'RE ON THE WEB!  
[WWW.SLOCOWATERQUALITYLAB.ORG](http://WWW.SLOCOWATERQUALITYLAB.ORG)