

## **MCCSD WATER RECYCLING PROGRAM**

Mendocino City Community Services District (MCCSD) currently recycles approximately two million gallons of tertiary treated effluent per year to the Mendocino High School (MHS) to irrigate the school's athletic fields. Due to many athletic field improvements and recycled water, the MHS soccer field is now considered one of the best in the conference. The water reclamation system now provides adequate irrigation to the High School athletic fields for the first time in over 100 years.

MCCSD has recycled water since 1977, though the original 1977 water reclamation system was abandoned for a period of time due to lack of operational funding. During the 1994 soccer season, the Mendocino High School soccer field was considered the worst field in the Coastal Mountain Conference (CMC). By the 1994 season, the press referred to the MHS field as the "cat box". Matches were regularly cancelled due to poor field conditions. At the 1994 CMC Annual Meeting, there was a discussion by the Referee's Committee about condemning the MHS soccer field for the 1995 season.

In 1995, MHS received a \$47,000 grant for field improvements from the Reebok Corp. The funds were used for a new irrigation system. By 1996, plans were drawn for a new recycled water system. A 55,000 gallon water storage tank was constructed at the southeast corner of the soccer field, and an automatic pop-up sprinkler system was installed in 1997.

MCCSD and Mendocino Unified School District (MUSD) approved a 1997 Memorandum of Understanding and Joint Resolution 97-1 at the regular MCCSD Board of Directors meeting on February 24, 1997 to commit the necessary capital for upgrading the old water reclamation system. Water Reclamation Requirements Order No. 97-66 was adopted by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board North Coast Region on August 27, 1997 after consulting with and receiving recommendations from the State Department of Health Services. Order No. 97-66 outlined the provisions and limitations of the MCCSD and MUSD joint water reclamation system. The original water reclamation order, that was approved by the Regional Water Board on June 23, 1977, was rescinded.

On June 9, 1998, a ribbon was cut by the Mendocino High School (MHS) Soccer Coach to celebrate the use of the new recycled water system. Local residents engineered and constructed the system for about \$90,000. MUSD has continued to improve the irrigation system, and today the soccer, football, and baseball fields are irrigated with recycled water. MUSD provides most of the funds to operation and maintenance the system. The school district also pays for an array of water quality analyses that are required by the Regional Water Board to ensure the irrigation water meets the stringent requirements for recycled water.

In the future, MCCSD plans to upgrade the 1997 recycled system to provide irrigation water for the middle and grammar schools and Friendship Park once funding is found for the expansion of the system and any additional regulatory requirements are determined.

The Recycled Water System has been a very successful program. The MHS athletic fields are in excellent condition. Injuries caused by students playing on a hard dry field have been lowered, but most importantly, the use of recycled water has reduced groundwater extraction from the local aquifer.