

McKinleyville CSD: Providing Water, Sewer Service and Sense of Community Near the Land of the Big Trees

DISTRICT FACTS

Location
Humboldt County

Number of Customers Served

- 6,300 water customers
- 16,900 residents of community using all services

Established
1970

Water Source
Purchases wholesale water supply from the Humboldt Bay MWD

Notable Projects
Recently expanded recreational services including:

- Hiller Park Loop Trail
- Hiller Sports Complex
- McKinleyville Activities Center
- MyWaterTracker

Website
mckinleyvillecsd.com

Nestled in a scenic enclave in California's north coastal region, McKinleyville Community Services District plays an integral role in the lives of the nearly 17,000 residents of the unincorporated community in Humboldt County. In addition to providing the staple services of water and sewer, MCSD maintains parks, street lighting, open space and recreational facilities that greatly enhance residents' quality of life.

In short, MCSD not only provides services to the community – it helps to *build* a sense of community.

"MCSD is a reflection of the community we serve — an environmentally conscious, highly efficient and fiscally sound organization that fosters community support and participation," explains Greg Orsini, general manager of MCSD. "Staff and management agree that it is an honor to serve our community."

A History Reaching Back to Pioneer Days

McKinleyville is the third-largest community in Humboldt County behind Eureka and Arcata. Its combination of coastal, mountain and valley areas provides residents and visitors with a wide range of recreational activities. People can surf, fish for salmon and steelhead, hike underneath the world's tallest trees or bike the Pacific Coast Trail all within minutes of McKinleyville.

The original residents of McKinleyville were the Wiyot Indians who occupied the area for hundreds of years before the first pioneers arrived in the 1850s. The stream of settlers grew over the years and in 1897, Arcata businessman Isaac Minor built a general store with a post office, a hotel and a creamery in the area that is now McKinleyville. The general store quickly became the social center for the community and the people decided to call their town Minor in his honor. When President William McKinley was assassinated in 1901, Isaac Minor and the townspeople agreed to change the name of the community to McKinleyville.

The services district itself was created on April 14, 1970, when McKinleyville's residents voted 592 "yes" against 154 "no" to form the district. Initially, the district had authority only to serve water and treat sewer waste. In 1972, voters added street lighting powers. In 1985, they added recreational powers and in 1995, authorized construction of the McKinleyville Library. The district boundaries encompass 12,140 acres.

Maintaining Stellar Recreational Offerings

Part of the district's mission is to maintain and develop recreational activities within its service area in addition to providing water, sewer, parks, street lighting and open

space maintenance services. In recent years, the district has dramatically expanded its recreational services.

New recreational venues include 44 acres of community parks, including: Hiller Park Playground and Picnic Area, Hiller Park Loop Trails, Hiller Sports Complex, Pierson Park and Larissa Park. Additionally, the district has constructed an indoor sport and recreation facility, a community activities center and a library. In 1999, the Mad River Rotary Club completed the fundraising and construction of a law enforcement facility on district land adjacent to the library and community center. The facility was then donated to the district and is leased to the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department.

Water and Sewer Services Still Front and Center

Providing vital services such as sewer and water remains a core role for MCSD. The district purchases its wholesale water supply from the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District, which diverts water from its million-gallon tank on Essex Hill under the Mad River to MCSD's Grant A. Ramey Pump Station at North Bank and Azalea Roads. Water is then pumped to storage

tanks. MCSD's six storage tanks have a combined capacity of 5.25 million gallons, approximately a 36-hour supply for the 6,300 water customers.

All sewage for MCSD's 5,100 customers is treated at the Wastewater Management Facility at Hiller Park. MCSD maintains approximately 65 miles of sewer mains. The district also recycles treated wastewater for agricultural irrigation at the Fischer Irrigation Site and at Hiller Park.

District of Distinction

Not only does MCSD maintain a panoply of services, it operates efficiently. Earlier this year, the district received the "District of Distinction" accreditation from the Special District Leadership Foundation for its "sound fiscal management policies and practices in district operations," according to a district release.

MCSD's General Manager Orsini is understandably proud of the distinction.

"MCSD Board of Directors included this goal in our strategic plan two years ago and we are pleased that our standard business practices made this accomplishment achievable in such a short time," Orsini said in a statement. ♦

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(Left) Members of the McKinleyville CSD Board of Directors and a Humboldt County supervisor break ground on a new teen center in July of this year. They are: (l-r) Director Helen Edwards, Director George Wheeler, Director David Couch, President John Corbett, Director Dennis Mayo and Humboldt County Supervisor Ryan Sundberg. (Right) The teen center is quickly approaching completion, with a grand opening scheduled for April 2016.



Pierson Park is one gem among several of the pristine parks and open spaces that are part of the 44 acres of newly developed community parks in the McKinleyville Community Services District. The district has vastly expanded its community parks and recreational programs in recent years, building an indoor sports facility, a community center and even a library.