

Water Operations Report 9/10/17

On Wednesday (9/6/17) evening two residents that live near the pump house called to say that an alarm bell was ringing at the pump house. Thank you for those calls! I immediately went to the pump house and was able to silence the alarm. I called Albert Simonson to get his help, and Ron Placa, our volunteer professional electrician, showed up at the same time, having gotten the same call I did about the alarm.

We noted that the storage tanks were filled only about 50% and that there was a signal light on the electrical panel telling us there was low water (hence the alarm bell ringing). Our first thought was that there was a problem with the copper wires (AT&T) that are responsible for communications between the pump house and the wells. When we took operations over in January only 3 of our 5 wells were operating, with 2 of them non-operational. It took us a while to track down that this was a problem with the copper wires and have AT&T come on-site to investigate the outage and make repairs. It was at this time we also learned that AT&T is planning to terminate service to these copper wires. (Note that we are investigating possible replacement systems and will update this activity soon.)

On Thursday morning, our daily Water Watcher phoned me to tell me the storage tanks were low. A note of thanks to all the volunteers who visit the pump house daily to log readings on production and activity – this hands-on system is the only way we know what is going on each day at the 5 wells and the pump house. Just after noon I sent the email to everyone asking them to conserve water. Thank to everyone for following that request.

Later that same day, Ron Placa was able to bring well 7 back online after doing some work in the well's electrical panel. Well 7 and 11 were operating fully and the water level in the storage tanks was rising. On Friday morning, Ron, along with Brian Lightbody, a new member to the community who is also an electrician (and runs part of San Diego County Water Authority's operational unit), met at the pump house and saw that the storage tank level had increased overnight, but not completely. Then, on Saturday morning, after much investigation into the electrical workings of the wells, Ron was finally able to get wells 9 and 10 back online and pumping. When both storage tanks were full Saturday evening, the message went out to the community that operations were back to normal.

For the most part things are back to normal, but there is still a signal light that is triggered telling us that there is low water in the system, even when the tanks are full. Also, the cable to the measuring device to the small storage tank has become unattached, and that will need to be fixed. Finally, we have no idea why some small relays were triggered at the well sites. It could be due to lightening or a surge from SDG&E. We have all seen the SDG&E helicopter hovering around the area the past couple of days, so it would appear that they are investigating some issues of their own.

I will update this report as more data becomes available.

Tim Taschler