2026 Sunset Well Replacement & Tanglewood Well Installation Projects
Frequently Asked Questions (7/10/2026)

1. Why is South Tahoe Public Utility District drilling new drinking water wells?

The District is investing in two new drinking water wells to improve the reliability of our water system and ensure we can continue providing safe, reliable drinking water during peak demand, emergencies, equipment maintenance, or if another well is temporarily out of service.

California regulations require water systems to be able to meet maximum daily water demand even if the largest well is unavailable. These projects help the District meet those reliability standards while preparing for community needs.

2. What is the difference between the two projects?

Sunset Well Replacement - The Sunset Well replaces an existing well that was drilled in 1990. The current well produces approximately 600 gallons per minute (gpm). The replacement well will be drilled on the same property, will be 500 feet deep, and is expected to produce approximately 2,000 gpm.

Tanglewood Well Installation – Tanglewood well is a completely new production well. A test well drilled in 2025 confirmed favorable groundwater conditions and water quality. The new well will be around 500 feet deep and is expected to produce between 800 and 2,000 gpm, depending on pump testing completed this summer.

3. When will construction occur?

Construction is expected to begin as early as **mid-July 2026** and continue through **early November 2026**. Critical drilling and well installation activities at each site will occur continuously for approximately four weeks. Current schedules are:

Tanglewood Well Installation: Mid-July through early September, with 24-hour work from July 27 - August 24

Sunset Well Replacement: Late August through early November, with 24-hour work from September 8 – October 6.

Schedules may change due to weather, drilling conditions, or other unforeseen circumstances.

4. How much does this project cost?

Tanglewood Well Installation - Phase 1 of the Tanglewood Well Project (Tanglewood Test Well) was completed in 2025 at a cost of $1.15M. Phase 2, occurring in 2026, includes the installation, development, and testing of a permanent production well at a cost of $1.12M. Phase 3 will include design and construction of the wellhouse and integration into the

District's water system at an estimated cost of $3.25M and will occur between 2028-2030. Estimated total project cost: $5.5M.

Sunset Well Replacement - Phase 1, occurring in 2026, of the Sunset Well replacement project includes installation, development, and testing of a replacement production well at a cost of $1.15M. Phase 2 will include design and construction of the wellhouse and integration into the District's water system at an estimated cost of $3.25M and will occur between 2028-2030. Estimated total project cost: $4.4M

5. Why will crews work 24 hours a day?

Well drilling is a continuous operation. Drilling must be conducted around the clock to maintain borehole stability and prevent collapse.

Stopping and restarting drilling equipment can increase project duration, costs, and technical risks. Continuous operations also reduce the total number of days that nearby residents experience construction activity.

6. Will construction be noisy?

Yes. Construction and drilling equipment generate noise that will be lessened by using temporary engineered sound walls surrounding the drilling sites, as well as a Noise Mitigation Plan implemented by the Contractor. Drilling noise is expected to be approximately 55-60 decibels outside of the sound wall, like a washing machine.

Non-critical work will be conducted during normal working hours, between 8 AM and 6:30 PM. Although some construction noise is unavoidable, the District is committed to limiting disruptions for nearby residents.

7. Will my water service be interrupted?

No. Customers should not experience interruptions to water service or changes in water pressure because of these projects.

8. Will roads be affected?

Yes. Temporary traffic impacts may include lane closures and detours around work areas. Discharge piping placed in the right of way will include traffic-rated crossings and signage where required. Access for local residents and emergency vehicles will be maintained. Staging of equipment and materials will occur off the street to the greatest extent possible.

9. Where will groundwater go during testing?

Water generated during the initial stages of development will be clarified using an engineered filtration system and discharged to the sanitary sewer system. Due to the

limited capacity of the sewer system, water generated during pumping tests will be clarified then pumped to nearby marshes under permit by the appropriate regulatory agencies. Rigorous monitoring will be conducted to ensure the discharges exceed water quality standards.

10. Is my drinking water safe during construction?

Yes. Construction activities will not affect drinking water quality. Before either new well is connected to the water system, it must undergo extensive testing for water quality and meet all state and federal drinking water standards.

11. When will these wells begin supplying drinking water?

The drilling work occurring this summer is only one phase of the project. The anticipated schedule is:

- **2026:** Drill and test the wells
- **2027:** Complete engineering design of well houses, pumps, controls, electrical systems, and piping
- **2028-2030:** Construct the well facilities and connect the wells to the drinking water system

12. How does the District know the aquifer can support these wells?

The District actively monitors groundwater conditions by measuring groundwater levels at 40 monitoring wells twice each year, testing each production well annually, and monitoring aquifer response during high-capacity pumping tests. We also use a groundwater model to evaluate long-term aquifer health.

Monitoring shows no measurable decline in aquifer storage, and the additional pumping from these wells is expected to have a negligible impact on groundwater levels.

13. Why is the District replacing the Sunset well instead of repairing it?

A detailed condition assessment determined that replacing the existing well is the most effective long-term solution. The replacement well will also have a larger diameter, increasing production from approximately 600 gpm to about 2,000 gpm.

14. What will these sites look like when the projects are complete?

The District strives to design wellhouses and pump stations to resemble residential homes and blend into the surrounding neighborhood (see examples below). Architectural features, exterior finishes, paint colors, landscaping, and fencing are incorporated where

appropriate to minimize visual impacts and complement the character of the area. It is likely that you have passed by a District well or pump station without even knowing it!

15. How many wells does the District currently operate?

The District currently operates 11 active drinking water wells and maintains 2 standby wells. These wells range in age from approximately 22 to 60 years old.

16. How can I receive construction updates?

The District will provide construction updates through its website and email for nearby residents when significant activities or schedule changes are anticipated.

17. Who can I contact with questions?

For questions about the Sunset Well Replacement or Tanglewood Well Installation Projects, please contact: South Tahoe Public Utility District Customer Service 530-544-6474.

Example Wellhouse and Booster Station

Figure 1 Paloma Well House

Figure 2 Grizzly Mountain Booster Station