Vallecitos asks for increased voluntary conservation actions

Looking to slow depletion of reservoir levels and increase water availability through the possibility of extended dry seasons in the future, the Vallecitos Board of Directors recently adopted Level 1 of the District’s drought ordinance - declaring a “Drought Watch” and asking all customers for increased voluntary conservation actions.

After three straight dry winters impacting imported water availability from Northern California and the Colorado River Basin, Vallecitos supported the actions of Gov. Brown and its wholesalers San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) and Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and enacted the first level of its drought ordinance.

As a result, customers are asked to voluntarily:

- Avoid washing down pavements (unless for health/safety reasons)
- Eliminate inefficient landscape irrigation, such as runoff and overspray
- Use a shut-off nozzle when watering the yard or washing cars
- Irrigate only before 10 a.m. and after 6 p.m.
- Recirculate water in ornamental fountains
- Hotel guests should have the option to not launder towels/linens daily
- Restaurants should only serve water upon request
- Repair all water leaks within five days of notification by the District
- Use recycled or non-potable water for construction when available.

Despite the dry-weather trend plaguing the state, the San Diego region is expected to have adequate supplies for 2014. This can be attributed to the fact that the regional demand for water has decreased due to exceptional conservation efforts. Vallecitos commends all of its customers for helping to lower regional water demand as District-wide water use (for single family meters) was down 26 percent between 2007 and 2013. Another contributing factor is the $2 billion spent the last decade by SDCWA and local water agencies on infrastructure projects to bolster a more reliable water supply.

One of the infrastructure projects to benefit Vallecitos directly is the desalination plant currently being constructed in Carlsbad. By early 2016 a portion of the District’s supply will be met by the facility, delivering purified seawater to your faucet from an endless source never impacted by lack of rain.

However, before what we hope becomes the “ultimate drought buster” comes on line, it is important all do their part to conserve should the drought continue. For more water-smart tips, tools and rebates to apply toward the purchase of water-saving devices or waterwise landscape conversions, visit the District’s web site at [www.vwd.org](http://www.vwd.org) or contact the Conservation Department at (760) 744-0460.
Water provider investments present a better outlook in the face of drought

Realizing the complications limited water brings to the economy and our standard of life, Vallecitos’ wholesaler, the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), and local water agencies like Vallecitos have gone to work implementing new programs and strategies to soften the blow of the next drought-related knock-out punch attempt.

A new significant hedge against drought is SDCWA exercising independence from wholesaler Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and receiving its own Colorado River transfers. Starting in 2014, this has netted county residents an extra 180,000 acre-feet (1 acre foot equals 325,851 gallons) of water from the river. That number will ramp up to 280,000 acre feet in 2020 – enough to support more than a half-million typical single-family homes.

SDCWA has also invested $1.5 billion in an Emergency Storage Program that includes the expansion of the San Vicente Reservoir (near Lakeside, CA) to store more water locally for use during dry years and emergencies.

And once on line in 2016, the new Carlsbad desalination plant will produce an extra 56,000 acre feet a year with 3,500 acre feet going to Vallecitos customers. Vallecitos’ supply will also be aided by an additional 2,750 acre feet a year from nearby Olivenhain Dam. Water from desalination and Olivenhain will account for approximately 39 percent of Vallecitos’ annual water supply.

Combining these investments with lower overall water demand from regional conservation is not enough to prevent drought. However, this combination puts Vallecitos in a better position to continue offering exceptional and sustainable services regardless of what the snow levels look like in Northern California or the Colorado River Basin in the future.
District to host a free behind-the-scenes tour on Saturday, May 3, 2014

On May 3 from approximately 9 am to 4 pm, Vallecitos Water District will host its first-ever “Saturday Water Academy” – a full day behind-the-scenes, bus-chartered tour of many of the facilities responsible for providing and treating the water that regularly circulates throughout the agency’s 45 square-mile boundary.

With District staff serving as hosts, customers looking to expand their water knowledge will be treated to presentations, tours of the District’s Water Operations and Wastewater Operations departments, and Sustainable Demonstration Garden and escorted to key service locations generally off limits to the public. This includes the District’s 33 million gallon Twin Oaks Reservoir No.1 and its 40 million-gallon neighbor, Twin Oaks No. 2 - believed to be two of the largest, pre-stressed concrete storage tanks of their kind in the world.

Participants will also be treated to a first-hand look of the District’s award-winning Meadowlark Water Reclamation Facility in Carlsbad. This centerpiece to conservation features state-of-the-art technology to recycle up to 5 million gallons a day, or almost 74 percent of the daily wastewater generated within the District’s boundaries.

The personal, guided tour will cover many of the new technologies and processes Meadowlark now employs after a $25 million upgrade to increase capacity, improve operation efficiency, and protect the environment by driving down the regional demand for imported water. The changes were enough to earn Vallecitos “Recycled Agency of the Year” honors from the WaterReuse Association.

To register or find out more about this award-winning program, go to: www.vwd.org/WaterAcademy or contact Alicia Yerman at ayerman@vwd.org or (760) 744-0460, ext. 223. Hurry, space is limited!
Vallecitos earns 2013 ‘Collection System of the Year’ honors

Vallecitos Water District was recently named 2013 “Collection System of the Year (small system category)” by the California Water Environment Association – San Diego Section for employing industry-leading procedures and techniques to increase system reliability and make the District an environmental protection leader. This award recognizes the District for an optimum performing system that not only benefits customers with service reliability but the entire community with fewer wastewater spills released into the environment.