

Splash!

A Quarterly Publication of
The Water Specialist

Fall 2008

What does the drought mean to you?

Our region's water supply crisis intensified recently with the first declaration of drought in more than 17 years. As the governor calls for an immediate 20 percent usage cutback statewide, the implications of waste to our economy, environment, and quality of life cannot be understated.

With such a request, it's important to familiarize ourselves with the situation and anticipate what it will mean in the future.

Q. Why are we in a drought? Wasn't there sufficient rain last winter?

A. Generally, it doesn't rain enough in Southern California to support the population, so Vallecitos Water District (VWD) wholesalers – Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) and the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) - import water from the San Joaquin-Sacramento delta

in Northern California and the Colorado River. The Colorado River has been in drought seven of the past eight years. Northern California experienced the driest spring on record as well as environmental rulings that have slashed supplies delivered to our region in an attempt to protect endangered fish from getting caught in the pumps.

Q. Will there be water rationing?

A. So far MWD and SDCWA have been able to meet demands through emergency storage at reservoirs and aquifers. But if the dry conditions persist this winter, expect restrictions on use starting in 2009.

Q. How will I be notified?

A. Expect coverage in the media as well as other communications from VWD such as this newsletter and its web site.

Continued on Page 2

Lake Oroville

Full capacity 2005



Today



Droughts along major water sources will require everyone to do their part to conserve now to hopefully avoid mandatory cuts and penalty-pricing later. Go to www.20gallonchallenge.com for conservation advice today.

Lake Mead

Full capacity 1997



Today



Preparing for the pending drought - continued from page 1

Q. When rationing, where can I find the biggest water savings that will not likely impact my lifestyle?

A. Whether rationing or not, the governor has an overall plan for all Californians to cut use by 20 percent. Therefore, this would be a good opportunity to comply by making permanent changes in water-use patterns, such as transitioning landscapes to California-friendly and reducing overall outdoor irrigation, washing machine and dishwasher use by 20 percent. What plan do you have to reduce your use permanently?

Q. Are there overlooked places to conserve?

Save water; go California friendly

Approximately 50 percent to 80 percent of water usage in Vallecitos Water District is dedicated to outdoor use – but it doesn't have to be when you go "California Friendly."

It is still possible to have a beautiful yard and save water at the same time and San Marcos residents Mark and Lisa Ruiz proved this as "Best in District" winner in the "San Diego County 5th Annual California-Friendly Landscape Contest.



According to Lisa Ruiz, the blueprint for water savings was apparent at their residence prior to purchasing the home. Impressed, they continued the theme by adding their own plants,

which in the end – earned them this unique distinction.

As winners they receive a \$500 gift certificate to an area nursery and an honorary paver at the Water Conservation Garden in Cuyamaca. But more importantly, they save a precious natural resource with a water-wise landscape.

A. In water-supply emergencies customers may find increased savings by checking plumbing fixtures, irrigation systems, and toilets for leaks.

Q. How are you conserving water at VWD?

A. We always are monitoring pipes so we can repair leaks before they surface. Plants around our facility are California Friendly and require very little or no irrigation.

Q. Will there be financial disincentives to reduce water use?

A. Yes. SDCWA has developed a generic, mathematical model that will be sensitive to less water sales, which will directly be reflected in increased unit charges the more that is used.

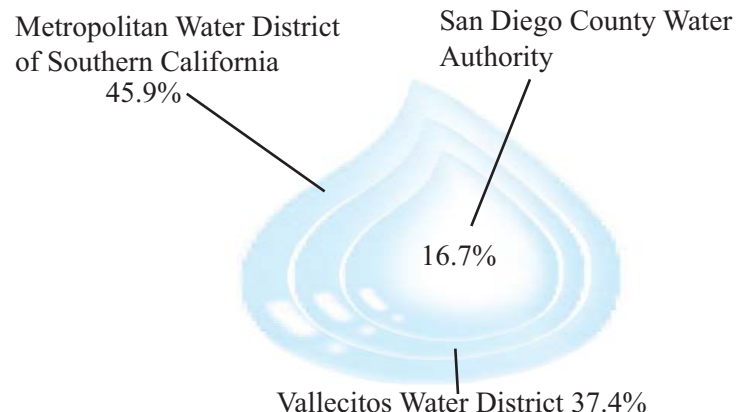
Q. Will prudent water conservers be recognized for their historical efforts?

A. Hopefully the District will be able to recognize the large number of "Frugal Users" that continue to conserve wisely, and this type of permanent reduced demand is being considered in the mathematical model.

Q. How can I help get our community to reduce overall water use?

A. Tell family, neighbors and friends about water-saving devices, conservation tips, and rebates. VWD staff will be happy to offer assistance. Just give us a call at (760) 744-0460. We appreciate your extra efforts to help us through this drought.

Your monthly bill breakdown



Fall back to less irrigation



The fall season brings cooler temperatures and shorter daylight hours. It also means lawns and gardens require less water. Usher in water savings this fall by doing some of the following:

Reduce irrigation cycles by 1-3 minutes. Irrigation systems should be turned off during rainy weather and remain off for three to seven days depending on the amount of rainfall.

Water only in the evening or early morning, between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. when there is less wind and evaporation.

Check for and repair irrigation system leaks, breaks and misaligned sprinkler heads to ensure that irrigation systems operate at peak efficiency.

Use the Landscape Calculator (<http://apps.sandiego.gov/landcalc/>) to determine landscape watering requirements.

Saving water and money suddenly just got easier. Lower water and sewer bills, reduce energy costs and save the environment by using SoCal WaterSmart - a new program VWD now participates in.

- Rebates start at \$165 toward the purchase of an ultra-low-flush toilet
- Rebates start at \$130 toward the purchase of a high efficiency washing machine.
- Rebates start at \$80 per less-than-one-acre toward the purchase of weather-based irrigation controllers.

For more information, visit the incentive section of www.20gallonchallenge.com or call 1-888-376-3314.

Desalination: a local, drought-proof supply

The State Lands Commission recently approved construction of a desalination plant in Carlsbad to provide Vallecitos Water District as well as its partners with drought-proof, desalinated water - an off-set supply to recover partial-drought losses from current sources.

This new, desalinated source will definitely help, but conservation will still be the main catalyst to guide us toward a reliable, water-supply future.

The Colorado River has been in a drought. Northern California, which was compensating for the losses on the Colorado, experienced its driest winter on record. Combine this with a judicial ruling requiring the cutting back of water pumped to our region by 30 percent in an attempt to preserve threatened fish that were getting caught in the machinery, it was necessary to find another more-reliable option.

Offering an endless supply and alternate source for diversifying our water supply, Vallecitos contracted with Poseidon Resources for increased reliability.

In 2011, when VWD first receives water from the \$300 million facility, it will be a guaranteed total of 6.7 million gallons per day – approximately 37.5 percent of the District's overall annual need.

But given the 30 percent cut already in place at current water origins, the projected arrival of desalinated water will not add to supplies as it is an offset. But being drought-proof, it will indeed help.

Along with desalination, what will bridge the gap to water-supply reliability? Conservation.

It offers a quick, easy and inexpensive assurance of water for the future. For advice on what you can do, visit www.20gallonchallenge.com or contact VWD Conservation office at (760) 744-0460.



The amount produced at the Carlsbad facility will account for 37.5 of VWD's annual demand, just enough to recover lost deliveries from current sources.



Board Highlights/News

June - September 2008 Board Meetings

After a Public Hearing, the Board voted to approve the addition of a new pump zone as well as decrease rates in eight of nine current pump zones. The rates for each of the nine zones have been recalculated to recover increasing power costs necessary to pump water to the system for each area.

The Board approved a new budget for fiscal year 08/09 totaling \$79,361,000. The total includes a commitment of \$47,280,000 for capital projects and \$2,776,000 from operations being set aside for future project replacement.

The Board approved an updated Drought Conservation Program Ordinance patterned after wholesaler San Diego County Water Authority. The update establishes regulation to be implemented during times of declared water shortages or emergencies to conserve water, enable effective water supply planning, assure reasonable and beneficial uses, and create incentives to prevent waste within Vallecitos Water District.

All are welcome to attend VWD Board Meetings the first and third Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. in the District's Administration building - 201 Vallecitos de Oro in San Marcos.

Save time, gas, noise - and most importantly - water. Vallecitos Water District now offers rebates for the installation of synthetic turf. Rebates are currently \$1 per square foot. However, before installation, it is recommended that you 1.) verify that synthetic turf is allowed by your home owners association and 2.) consult a certified landscape contractor for more information on installation costs and benefits. Contact the District at (760) 744-0460 for more information.

DID YOU KNOW...

“By installing more efficient water fixtures and regularly checking for leaks, U.S. households can reduce daily per capita water use by about 35% to about 45.2 gallons per day?”

Source: American Water Works Association

Splash! is a publication of information and interest to Vallecitos water and sewer customers. If you receive water or sewer services from another district, please disregard any information that does not apply to you.

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