



on tap

A Community Newsletter from the Contra Costa Water District | Volume 23, Number 1, Winter 2008

BE PREPARED FOR CONTINUED DROUGHT

Ten Ways to Save Water

As we head into another winter, California may be facing a third year of drought. Water levels are extremely low in the state's key reservoirs, and even a normal amount of rain and snow in the Sierra Nevada this winter won't be enough to refill those reservoirs completely.

The Contra Costa Water District is asking customers to voluntarily conserve as much water as possible. By conserving now, you can help make the water stored in the reservoir that serves you locally - the Los Vaqueros Reservoir - last longer.

Voluntary conservation might be enough to stretch our Los Vaqueros Reservoir water through the drought. If voluntary conservation is not enough, mandatory rationing may be necessary in 2009. We will be monitoring our water supply closely throughout the winter and posting drought updates at www.ccwater.com, on the backs of our bills, and in upcoming newsletters.

At this point, you might be thinking, "I'd like to do my part to beat this drought, but what should I do?" Here's your answer - the top ten things you can do to help beat the drought!

1. STAY INFORMED THE EASY WAY

Regular drought updates, conservation tips and other useful information will be delivered directly to your e-mailbox if you sign up for our Conservation E-Newsletter at www.ccwater.com. This is the easiest way to stay informed and ensure that all of the drought-survival resources you need are at your fingertips.



2. TURN OFF YOUR AUTOMATIC IRRIGATION SYSTEM

By mid-November, your automatic irrigation system should be turned off and you should water manually only as needed. If there is no rain, you might need to water your lawn once a week and your shrubs and trees even less. If there is rain, you can take a break and let nature do the watering for you.



3. GET OUR NEW GUIDE: LAWN & LANDSCAPE WATERING SCHEDULE

With our new guide, *Lawn & Landscape Watering Schedule*, you can learn to water like a landscape pro and save plenty of water by incorporating professional techniques into your watering routine. You can download the guide at www.ccwater.com or request a durable copy be sent to you by calling (925) 688-8320.

4. WATCH OUT FOR WATER WASTE

If you see water waste, you can report it to our Water Savings Team by calling 688-8044. The team will conduct a timely investigation and take appropriate measures to correct the problem. Typical examples of water waste include broken sprinklers, runoff caused by over-watering and irrigation system leaks. When reporting water waste, be sure to include the type of waste observed, where the problem is located and the time of day it is occurring.

5. DON'T FORGET THE SMALL STUFF

Taking short showers, turning off the faucet while you brush your teeth, installing aerators in your faucets and not running the dishwasher until it is full may seem like small measures, but they add up over time. If everyone saved a little water here and there, the savings would be huge. Saving water in small ways is especially appealing to children, who usually want to help but are limited in what they can do.

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Did You Know?

Water and energy conservation are closely linked. When you save water, you save energy. In California, more electricity is used to pump and treat water and wastewater and heat water for homes and businesses than any other activity.



Much of the state's electricity is generated by thermal power plants that burn fossil fuels and emit greenhouse gases. If everyone conserved water, the amount of energy required for water heaters, pumping facilities, water treatment plants and wastewater treatment plants would be greatly reduced. That, in turn, would reduce our community's carbon footprint.

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The Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) serves treated and untreated water to approximately 550,000 people in central and eastern Contra Costa County. CCWD provides treated water to Clayton, Clyde, Concord, Pacheco, Port Costa and parts of Martinez, Pleasant Hill and Walnut Creek.

In addition, CCWD sells wholesale treated water to the City of Antioch and the Golden State Water Company in Bay Point, and treats water at the Randall-Bold Water Treatment Plant in Oakley for distribution to the Diablo Water District and the City of Brentwood.

CCWD also sells untreated water to the cities of Antioch, Martinez and Pittsburg and the Golden State Water Company in Bay Point, as well as 22 industrial customers.

Projects are Key to High Quality Water, Reliable Service

The Contra Costa Water District is committed to providing you with a reliable supply of high-quality tap water at the lowest cost possible. To do this, we must keep our complex network of pumping equipment, storage reservoirs, treatment plants and pipelines maintained and working efficiently.

We have several projects underway or recently completed to upgrade the network and strengthen its ability to meet customers' needs. The most significant projects are listed below.

ALTERNATIVE INTAKE PROJECT

Construction started last spring on the Alternative Intake Project, which consists of a new intake in the Central Delta and an extension of the pipeline system that delivers water to the Los Vaqueros Reservoir and the Contra Costa Canal. This is one of the most significant water quality improvement projects in District history because the intake is being built in a location where, at key times of year, water quality tends to be better than it is at our other intakes.

The new intake will ensure that we have access to high-quality water year round, especially in the fall and during long droughts. It will also increase operational flexibility by allowing us to select which of our four intakes we should use when we need to protect fish in specific areas of the Delta.

The new intake is expected to come on line in 2010. It will not increase the total amount of water diverted from the Delta.



CCWD/CITY OF BRENTWOOD WATER TREATMENT PLANT

The District is collaborating with the City of Brentwood to oversee the construction and operation of the City's

new water treatment plant. The new plant is funded by the City and located in Oakley. It is designed to treat 12 million gallons of water a day with the ability to be expanded in the future. The plant was completed on schedule and went on-line over the summer.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCE PROJECTS

We're working to reduce our carbon footprint by generating clean energy with solar and hydroelectric power projects, allowing us to rely less on traditional, carbon-based energy sources.

At the Ygnacio Pump Station, we've installed 250 solar photovoltaic panels to generate enough energy to offset 30 percent of the electricity used annually by the pump station. The 40-kilowatt facility was completed over the summer and is now in use.

Our next clean energy project will use the power of water rushing through the Los Vaqueros pipeline in Antioch to generate about 800 kilowatts of electricity.

When completed in 2011, this new hydroelectric facility will offset about 25 percent of the electricity we purchase from traditional sources to power several pumping stations in eastern Contra Costa County.



MIDHILL RESERVOIR II

A second treated-water storage facility was built at the Midhill Reservoir site in northeast Martinez. The 1.5 million gallon facility provides additional water for emergencies, such as fire fighting, and improves our ability to provide uninterrupted water service while other storage facilities are undergoing maintenance. The project was completed over the summer, several months ahead of schedule.

CONTRA COSTA CANAL PROJECT

Located in the Oakley area, this project would replace a 1,900-foot unlined section of the Contra Costa Canal with a 10-foot diameter pipeline. Eliminating the canal's earthen levees will protect public safety by preventing canal levee breaks and flooding. The project also improves water quality by eliminating groundwater seepage into the unlined canal. Work on the first phase of the project began in October. State and federal grants totaling \$7.5 million and developer fees are paying for the project.

BAY AREA REGIONAL DESALINATION PROJECT

The District has been working with three other Bay Area water districts to jointly explore the development of desalination facilities that could produce more than 70 million gallons of water a day to benefit more than five million people in the region. Pilot testing is currently underway at the District's Mallard Slough Pump Station in Bay Point to evaluate various technologies and identify potential environmental impacts.

The goal of this project is to increase supply reliability for the region by developing an additional source of water for emergencies, extended droughts and times when major facilities are taken out of service for upgrades and maintenance.

Saving Water

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6. GET A HIGH-EFFICIENCY CLOTHES WASHER WITH A CCWD REBATE

Replace your older top-loading clothes washer with a new high-efficiency model to save a significant amount of water and energy. High-efficiency washers use 50 percent less water and energy than conventional washers, and they are kinder to your clothes.

For a limited time, we have partnered with PG&E to offer rebates of up to \$200. For a list of qualifying models and program guidelines, visit www.ccwater.com/conserves or call the Conservation Department at (925) 688-8320.



7. GET HIGH-EFFICIENCY TOILETS WITH A CCWD REBATE

Reduce the amount of water you use to flush toilets by as much as 60 percent by replacing toilets manufactured before 1992 with new high-efficiency toilets. These new toilets use advanced technology to reduce water use and improve flushing performance. For a limited time, we are offering rebates of up to \$175 per qualifying toilet. For a list of qualifying models and program guidelines, visit www.ccwater.com/conserves or call the CCWD Conservation Department at (925) 688-8320.

8. STOP TOILET LEAKS

Toilet leaks can result in significant water waste in an otherwise water-conserving household. To detect a toilet leak, add several drops of dark food coloring to the tank. If the color shows up in the bowl after 10 minutes, you have a leak. Often, fixing the leak is as simple as replacing the flapper at the bottom of the tank. Or the leak may be the result of the water level being set too high. Whatever the problem, you will want to get it fixed right away to save water.

9. INSTALL A HIGH-EFFICIENCY SHOWERHEAD

CCWD is currently offering free high-efficiency showerheads to its customers. These high-quality showerheads provide a quality shower with two gallons of water per minute. They also offer a shut-off button that allows you to stop the shower easily while you soap up. When you save water with a high-efficiency showerhead, you also save energy because you use less hot water. To pick up a high-efficiency showerhead, drop by the CCWD main office at 1331 Concord Avenue in Concord. Due to mailing costs, showerheads can not be mailed.

10. LEARN TO READ YOUR WATER METER

Once you learn to read your water meter, detecting leaks and managing your water use becomes much easier. You might even be surprised to learn how much water you use on an average day. Meter reading instructions and a worksheet to help you track your water use are available on our website at www.ccwater.com.