

Drought Update – good news, bad news

New State mandated regulations

On July 15, 2014 the State Water Resources Control Board approved emergency regulations to ensure water agencies and residents across the State redouble efforts to conserve water. Approximately 80 percent of the State continues to experience severe drought conditions and the prospects for a “wet” 2015 are uncertain. These emergency regulations apply to all water users regardless of site specific circumstances.

What is the status of our water supply?

Here in Hidden Valley Lake we are more fortunate than most. Our drinking water source, the Coyote Valley groundwater basin, remains in relatively good shape. Groundwater elevations are low – which is of concern – but not critically so. Furthermore, Hidden Valley Lake is nearly full and can serve as an emergency drinking water supply, should the drought worsen and continue through 2015 and even 2016.

What are we required to do?

Pursuant to the State Water Resources Control Board’s recently adopted regulations, the following activities are prohibited, except where necessary to address an immediate health and safety need or to comply with a term or condition in a permit issued by a state or federal agency:

- (1) The application of potable water to outdoor landscapes in a manner that causes runoff such that water flows onto adjacent property, non-irrigated areas, private and public walkways, roadways, parking lots, or structures;
- (2) The use of a hose that dispenses potable water to wash a motor vehicle, except where the hose is fitted with a shut-off nozzle or device attached to it that causes it to cease dispensing water immediately when not in use;
- (3) The application of potable water to driveways and sidewalks; and
- (4) The use of potable water in a fountain or other decorative water feature, except where the water is part of a recirculating system

Failure to comply with any of the above water use prohibitions is punishable by a fine of up to five hundred dollars (\$500) for each day in which the violation occurs.

In addition to the above water use restrictions, the recently adopted State regulations require the District to adopt an ordinance requiring District constituents to limit outdoor irrigation of ornamental landscapes or turf with potable water, to no more than 2 days per week, or some other mandatory conservation measure that will achieve a comparable reduction in water consumption. The District is pursuing the first of the two options. An ordinance restricting outdoor irrigation of ornamental landscapes or turf with potable water is scheduled for adoption at the August 19, 2014 Board of Directors meeting.

As a whole, the District’s water use efficiency – the amount of water used per person, per day (per capita consumption) - is well below statewide averages. In recent years, per capita consumption has

averaged 100 gallons per person, per day, as opposed to the statewide average of 198 gallons per person, per day. Many of the District's customers use less than 100 gallons per person, per day.

On February 18, 2014 the HVLCSD Board of Directors adopted Resolution 2014-2 urging District customers to reduce water consumption by 20 percent. Since then, water consumption decreased by 10 percent in comparison to the same period last year. It is anticipated that the mandatory outdoor irrigation restrictions, which will become effective with the adoption of the outdoor irrigation restrictions ordinance on August 19, 2014, will reduce total usage by an additional 10 to 15 percent.