

Connections

Water Shortage Declared — Voluntary Water Conservation Reduction in Place

Over the last two years our region has received significantly lower than average rainfall during the winter and spring months. The lack of rainfall has resulted in significantly below average water storage levels in the region's water supply reservoirs, Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino. In addition, reductions in the amount of water that is diverted from the Eel River to Lake Mendocino have also had a significant effect on the water supply level. Due to lack of rainfall and the reduction in water diversions, the Sonoma County Water Agency (Water Agency), the region's wholesale water provider, is projecting that their water storage will hit unprecedented historically low levels this year.

To ensure that there is enough water supply available for Sonoma and Marin counties, as well as endangered fish species that live in the Russian River, the Water Agency, from which the City of Santa Rosa purchases approximately 90% of our water supply, has announced that it anticipates declaring a water shortage and requiring a minimum of 30% mandatory water rationing from its water customers this summer.

Stage 1 Water Shortage Adopted

In response, on February 24, 2009, the Santa Rosa City Council declared a water shortage emergency and adopted Stage 1 of the City's adopted Urban Water Shortage Contingency Plan (Shortage Plan), asking customers to voluntarily reduce water use to achieve

a community-wide reduction of 15%. The City's Shortage Plan details how the City will respond to water shortages of up to 50% of our water supply. The Shortage Plan outlines four rationing stages (Stage 1–4) with corresponding community-wide water demand reduction goals. The Shortage Plan also includes customer consumption limits, a water shortage rate structure, and prohibitions on water use for each water supply shortage stage.



As part of Stage 1, all customers are asked to reduce their water use by eliminating all water waste and by improving their water use efficiency. Stage 1 does not change current water rates nor does it implement consumption limits for customers. However, Stage 1 does prohibit using a hose without a hose-end nozzle, washing sidewalks, patios and other hard surfaces, and requires restaurants to initiate a "water on request" program.

The Utilities Department continues to work with the Water Agency regarding the amount of water supply that will be available to the City this summer. As water supply conditions change, the City's Shortage Plan will outline how the City will respond to ensure sufficient water supply will be available to the community.

Shortage Plan Consumption Limits

To achieve the community-wide demand reduction goals, priorities for water use have been established, from highest to lowest, as follows: health and safety; commercial, industrial and government; existing landscaping; and new demand. Based on these priorities, different consumption limits have been established for each customer account type in Stages 2, 3 and 4 of a water shortage.

If Stages 2, 3 or 4 of the City's Shortage Plan need to be adopted, customer consumption limits will be implemented. Residential consumption limits are based on per person water use plus a small amount for irrigation. Basing residential consumption limits on a per person basis is the fairest way to allocate water; it ensures that

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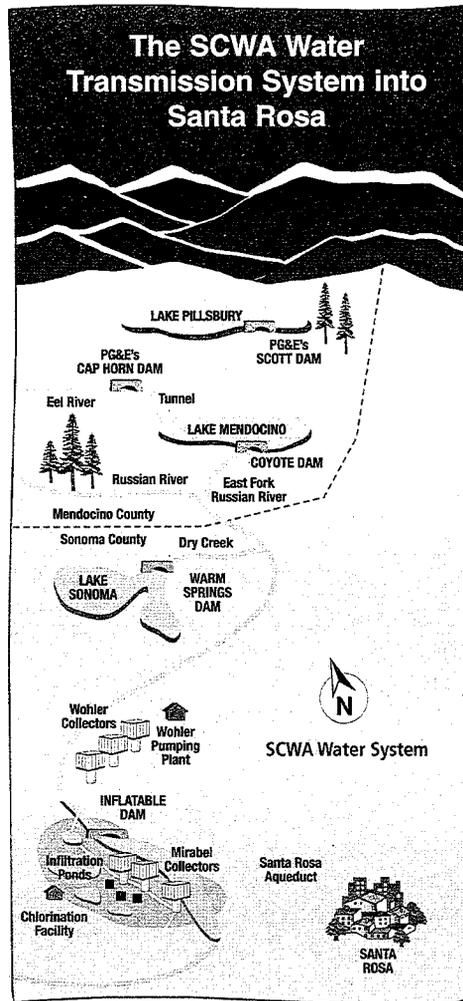
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Where Does Your Water Come From?

The City of Santa Rosa purchases approximately 90% of our water from the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) and has two groundwater wells that provide our remaining water supply. SCWA is our region's water supply provider and was created as a special district in 1949 by the California Legislature to provide flood protection and water supply services to portions of Sonoma and Marin counties. It is authorized to produce and deliver potable water for municipal and industrial purposes; prevent the waste of water supplies; control and conserve flood and storm waters to reduce potential damage to life and property; provide sanitary sewage services; and provide recreational services in connection with flood control and water conservation activities. SCWA operates under direction of a Board of Directors that consists of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors.

SCWA delivers water, on a wholesale basis, to customers through its water transmission system. Its primary source of supply is the Russian River, which originates north of Ukiah and flows to the Pacific Ocean at Jenner (see map at right). Lake Mendocino,



located on the East Fork of the Russian River, and Lake Sonoma, located on Dry Creek, provide the majority of the water for city, industrial, and agricultural uses.

In addition, Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma provide water to maintain minimum stream flows in the Russian River, as required by SCWA's water right permits. The minimum stream flows provide for recreational uses as well as flows for fish, including the federally listed steelhead and Chinook and Coho salmon.

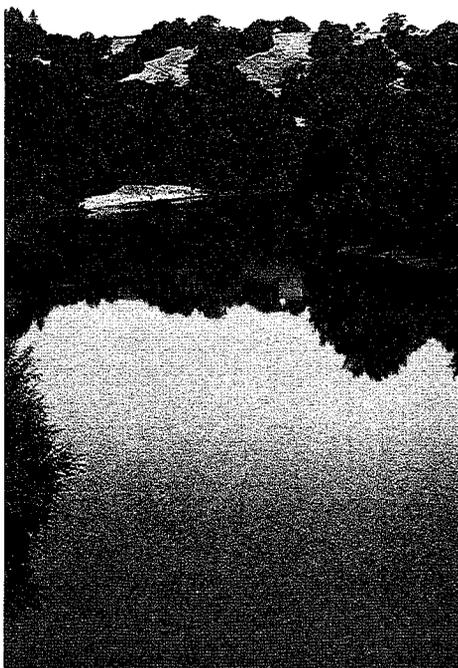
SCWA operates the Russian River water supply system by pumping naturally filtered water from the ground near the Russian River in Forestville. The water is treated and then distributed to its contractors, including the cities of Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Sonoma, Cotati, Petaluma, Town of Windsor, and the Marin Municipal Water District, North Marin Water District and Valley of the Moon Water District.

Water Conservation Assistance Programs

The City of Santa Rosa Water Conservation Program offers many programs and incentives for reducing water use, identifying water waste and improving water use efficiency. In February, the Santa Rosa City Council adopted a Stage 1 Water Shortage, requesting that all water customers voluntarily reduce their water use now to achieve a community-wide reduction in water use of 15%. To assist our water customers, the Water Conservation Program developed a Top Ten list of ways to immediately reduce your water use:

- Reduce irrigation by 20% through the use of our TURF-TIME information. Call TURF-TIME at (707) 543-3466 or visit our TURF-TIME web site at www.srcity.org/turfetime for weekly lawn watering requirements and weekly drip watering recommendations. Turf-Time is updated on a weekly basis, and watering requirements are based on actual plant needs and current weather conditions.
- Find and repair leaks now.
- Inspect and tune-up your irrigation system monthly.
- Irrigate between midnight and 6:00 AM to reduce water loss from evaporation and wind.
- Use a broom to clean driveways, decks or patios. Washing sidewalks, patio and hard surfaces is prohibited during our Stage 1 Water Shortage.
- Take your car to a carwash that recycles water.
- Cover pools and hot-tubs to reduce evaporation.
- Use front-loading washing machines. Contact the Water Conservation Program at (707) 543-3985 for information on rebates offered for the purchase of qualifying front-loading washing machines.
- Run the dishwasher and clothes washer with full loads only.
- Prevent and report water waste.

The Water Conservation Program also offers incentive programs and services that can help you improve



Russian River

your water use efficiency. To help reduce indoor water use, the Water Conservation Program provides FREE high-efficiency showerheads and faucet aerators, and provides rebates for replacing your washing machine with qualifying high-efficiency washing machines. The Water Conservation Program also offers rebates for replacing high-flow toilets, which are toilets that flush at 3.5 gallons per flush or more, with high-efficiency toilets, which are toilets that flush at 1.28 gallons per flush or less.

To improve your water use efficiency outdoors, the Water Conservation Program offers a Green Exchange Rebate Program, which provides rebates for improving the efficiency of your irrigation hardware and for replacing high water use plants with low water use alternatives, provides a rainwater harvesting rebate, and offers FREE shut-off hose nozzles.

In addition to incentives and rebates, the Water Conservation Program provides FREE Water Use Home Survey Kits, which assist customers in identifying and eliminating water waste and improving water use efficiency, and FREE Residential "Check-Ups," where expert staff will come to your home, review your current water uses and make recommendations for improving your water use efficiency indoors and outdoors. In addition, you can log on to the Water Use Efficiency Calculator at SRCity.org/WaterCalculator to review your water use. By entering your Utility Account number, password, number of residents and landscape square footage information, you can view your past water use, get information on your water use efficiency, and find out how much money and water you can save by improving your water use efficiency.

For more information on current incentives or to request assistance in reducing your water use, please contact the Water Conservation Hotline at (707) 543-3985 or visit www.SRCity.org/wc.

previous water conservation has been taken into consideration, and it does not penalize those that are already implementing water conservation activities. The water use consumption limits for residential accounts for each of the four water rationing stages can be seen in the *Residential Water Use Consumption Limits* chart (below).

Commercial, industrial, health care and safety consumption limits are based on prior year demand. Dedicated irrigation account consumption limits are based on plant type and evapo-transpiration data. The water use consumption limits for commercial and dedicated irrigation accounts for each of the four water rationing stages are shown in the *Commercial and Irrigation Water Use Consumption Limits* chart (below).



Drought-tolerant landscape.

Water Shortage Information and Assistance

Staff members from the City's Water Conservation Program and Utility Billing Division are available to answer any questions you may have about the water shortage, your water allocation, or the City's Shortage Plan. In addition, the Water Conservation Program offers many programs and incentives that may assist you in reducing your water use (See article *Water Conservation Assistance Programs*, page 2).

For questions about the number of residents on file for your water account or about your water bill, please contact Utility Billing at (707) 543-3150. For water conservation assistance, please call the Water Conservation Hotline at (707) 543-3985. Offices are open Monday through Thursday from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM and every other Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Additional information is also available on our web site at www.SRCity.org/watershortage.

| Account Type | Residential Water Use Consumption Limits (*gpcd = gallons per capita per day) | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|----------|
| | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 |
| Single Family Residential | Voluntary 15% | 65 gpcd* Plus 2,500 gal/mo May – Oct | 57 gpcd* Plus 2,000 gal/mo May – Oct | 50 gpcd* |
| Multi-Family Residential | Voluntary 15% | 65 gpcd* Plus Moderate Landscape Allotment May – Oct | 57 gpcd* Plus Minimum Landscape Allotment May – Oct | 50 gpcd* |

| Account Type | Commercial and Irrigation Water Use Consumption Limits | | | |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | Stage 4 |
| Commercial / Industrial | Voluntary 15% | 85% of previous 12 months' use | 80% of previous 12 months' use | 70% of previous 12 months' use |
| Health Care / Safety | Voluntary 15% | 95% of previous 12 months' use | 90% of previous 12 months' use | 85% of previous 12 months' use |
| Dedicated Irrigation | Voluntary 15% | 80% of net evapo- transpiration demand | 50% of previous evapo- transpiration demand | Minimal amount for mature trees/shrubs |

Water Shortage Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. What happens if it rains soon?
Will we still have to ration water use?**

A. While recent rainfall has helped replenish storage levels in Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma, rainfall levels and water storage levels are still significantly below average at this time. Significant amounts of rainfall are still needed to ensure enough water is available this year for all water users, including people, businesses, farmers, wildlife, recreation and the environment.

The City of Santa Rosa Utilities Department continues to work with the Sonoma County Water Agency, our wholesale water provider, regarding information on water supply storage and the amount of water that will be available to the City this year.

Q. Where can I view a copy of the Urban Water Shortage Contingency Plan (Shortage Plan)?

A. Copies of the Shortage Plan are available to view or download on the City's water shortage web site: SRCity.org/watershortage. Copies of the Shortage Plan are also available to view at the Municipal Services Center South Building located at 69 Stony Circle, the Utility Billing Service Desk located at 90 Santa Rosa Avenue, and the City Clerk's office located at 100 Santa Rosa Avenue. Additional information may also be obtained from the Water Conservation Program by calling (707) 543-3985.

Q. How will water rates be affected?

A. The Shortage Plan includes a proposed water shortage rate structure based on modifications to the current water rate structure. The water shortage rate structure is designed to encourage customers to reduce water use per consumption limits and to reward customers for using water per the consumption limits. The water shortage rate structure includes a Water Shortage Charge added to all water sold when mandatory rationing is in effect and an Excess Use Charge applied during Stage 3 and Stage 4 water shortages on all water used above consumption limits. On April 21st, the Santa Rosa City Council will hold a public hearing to consider adoption of the proposed

water shortage rate structure.

If the proposed water shortage rate structure is adopted, it will only go into effect when a Stage 2, Stage 3, or Stage 4 water shortage is adopted by the City Council. A Stage 1 water shortage does not change current water rates. The proposed water shortage rate structure only affects the water use portion of the water bill when Stages 2, 3 or 4 of the City's Shortage Plan are implemented. Except during implementation of Stages 2, 3 or 4 of a water shortage, the proposed water shortage rate structure does not change the current water user charge. **The proposed water shortage rate structure does not impact or change the current fixed monthly charges for water, wastewater user charges, or the wastewater fixed monthly charges.**

For additional information on the proposed water shortage rates, please visit SRCity.org/watershortage.

Q. How will my bill be affected during a water shortage?

A. Customers who reduce their water usage per the consumption limits can expect to see a decrease in the water portion of their monthly utility bill.

Q. Why are the consumption limits based on the number of people in my household?

A. Consumption limits for residential customers are based on the number of people per household because it is the fairest way to allocate water. Allocating water on a per person basis accounts for the level of water conservation that has been implemented previously, does not penalize those that are conserving water, and ensures that there is enough water available to meet the health and safety needs of our community.

Q. How do I update the number of residents on file for my account?

A. To update the number of residents or find out the number of residents listed for your account, you can call the Utility Billing Department at (707) 543-3150. In addition, information on the number of residents in your household is listed on your utility bill every other month.

Q. What happens if I use more water than my allotment?

A. During a Stage 2 water shortage, there is no monetary penalty for exceeding your consumption limits. During Stages 3 and 4 of a water shortage, an Excess Use Charge is applied to all water used above the consumption limits.

During Stages 2, 3 and 4 of a water shortage, there are additional penalties for customers who repeatedly use water in excess of the consumption limits. If customers exceed their allotment for 3 consecutive months or for 6 months out of a 12 month period, the Utilities Department could require customers to have a water audit and install water conserving devices, install a flow reducer at the water meter, or could disconnect water service. Staff from the Utilities Dept. and Water Conservation Program are available to help customers understand the consumption limits, provide recommendations to reduce water use per the consumption limits, and to provide information on water conservation rebates and incentive programs.

Q. How can I get additional information?

A. Additional information is available on our web site: SRCity.org/watershortage or by calling the Water Conservation Program at (707) 543-3985. For more information on your water bill or to update information on the number of residents in your household, please call Utility Billing at (707) 543-3150.

Web Resources

Visit these web sites to learn more about issues mentioned in this Update.

Water Shortage Information:

www.SRCity.org/watershortage

Water Conservation:

www.SRCity.org/WC

Turf Time:

www.SRCity.org/turftime

Water Calculator:

www.SRCity.org/watercalculator

MySpace:

www.myspace.com/SRwater

Twitter:

twitter.com/SantaRosaWater