

May 2009



To our Customers:

District Participation in the Russian River Water Conservation Effort

There is a lot of news in the local media about the water shortage in the Russian River this summer. We have had many phone calls about the District's participation in the regional water conservation effort and how that affects customers of the Sweetwater Springs Water District.

Because of low storage in Lake Mendocino would not allow normal year minimum flows in the Russian River without that reservoir becoming empty in the late summer and have storage for releases in the fall, the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) requested a Temporary Urgency Change to Critical Dry Year minimum flows in the Russian River. The State Water Resources Control Board, which has authority over surface water in California, responded with a Board Order that, among other things, allows the Critical Dry Year minimum flows, reduces SCWA diversions to 75% of the 2004 diversion and requires that SCWA "submit a plan to the State Water Resources Control Board to obtain the cooperation and participation of agricultural and municipal Russian River water users to reach a water conservation goal of 25 percent in Sonoma County" through October 2, 2009.

The Sweetwater Springs Water District clearly is one of the municipal water users in the Russian River watershed and the District Board has directed that the District cooperate with SCWA in the regional conservation effort. In carrying out this participation, the Board has directed that the District implement a water conservation program that fits with the SCWA program.

The District's approach/strategy in participating in this regional water conservation effort is voluntary conservation whereby District customers are encouraged and offered resources to participate in sustainable water use practices, and to search for and fix leaks on their property. Exhibit A below describes the many elements of the water conservation program which we believe will fit with the SCWA regional program required by the State Water Resources Control Board. This program is a voluntary conservation program that encourages wise water use by all District customers and has other elements which, when taken all together and implemented appropriately can significantly reduce District water use and help the SCWA program reach its target reduction. The District will continue with its capital projects aimed at reducing system losses, pay attention to water wasting in the District, fix surfacing leaks as quickly as possible, and look for other opportunities to reduce system losses.

It is important to note that this is not a rationing program. The overall goal of the State Board Order is 25% reduction within the Sonoma

County Russian River watershed and by contractors of SCWA, but there is no mandatory target for any individual entity and the District's Program has no set target, nor do any District customers have a set rationing goal. Some of our customers have been practicing the approach suggested below for wise water use for years and we encourage continued conservation by those customers. Others can do more and we encourage you to look for ways to reduce your water use. Important areas to consider are fixing leaks within your property and managing summer irrigation properly. Below are some tips that may help you save water this summer:

- Consider the need for and/or reduce outside watering.
- Find and repair leaks on your property and in your house. In particular make certain toilets and the irrigation system are not leaking.
- Tune up your irrigation system. Check periodically to make certain the irrigation controller is operating properly.
- Use a broom, not a hose to clean hard surfaces.
- Use a bucket and a hose with an automatic shutoff nozzle when you wash your car, or take your car to a carwash.
- Cover pools and hot tubs to reduce evaporation.
- Run the dishwasher and clothes washer with full loads only.
- Prevent and report water waste (869-4000).
- Consider replacing old water using appliances with new water saving and energy efficient appliances. Use low flow showerheads and faucet aerators.

The District has water conservation kits and low flow showerheads and faucet aerators (these latter two coming soon) at the District office. Rebates for low water using appliances are available for customers of the Russian River Sanitation District (we are trying to get this expanded District wide).

During this dry period the District will be continuing its water main flushing program which is necessary to ensure high quality water throughout our system. The District will make every effort to make certain flushing is done as efficiently as possible and will be very abbreviated compared to prior years' efforts.

**Exhibit A. Sweetwater Springs Water District Water Conservation Program
May 8, 2009**

Reduction Target for the District is up to 25% reduction based on the 2004 water use and production for the months of May through September. For the District, as a whole, this equates to a 15% reduction compared to 2008 water use and production during the same summer months. This is not a rationing target or goal for individuals – some customers have little room for additional water use reduction, others can do much more.

District participation is based on the State Board Order directing the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) to "submit a plan to the State Water Resources Control Board to obtain the cooperation and participation of agricultural and municipal Russian River water users to reach a water conservation goal of 25 percent in Sonoma County" from May 1, 2009 to October 2, 2009, in response to SCWA's Temporary Urgency Change request for Decision 1610. The base year for the 25% reduction calculation is 2004.

The approach/strategy is voluntary conservation whereby District customers are encouraged and offered resources to use water wisely, and to search for and fix leaks on their property. The District will continue with its capital projects aimed at reducing system losses, pay attention to water wasting in the District, fix surfacing leaks as quickly as possible, and look for other opportunities to reduce system losses.

Program Elements:

- Public Education/Information, such as
 - Work with SCWA and other water providers in the region for coordinated message
 - Information on website
 - Mailer in May
 - Home Water Audits – self and assisted:
 - Instructions on meter reading.
 - Check for leaks inside and outside.
 - Evaluate all water uses in facility or home.
 - Office Display with handouts – rebates, low flow showerheads, faucet aerators
 - Provide information on rebates, incentive programs, and water conservation strategies for residents/businesses.
 - Media Spots – press releases, PSA's done on a regional basis
 - Connect with Statewide effort
- Waste of Water Prohibited, staff will be alerted to be on the lookout for wastage of water and contact customers, as appropriate.
- Rate incentives – rates scheduled to go into effect July 1 have increased financial incentive to reduce water use (higher incline to tiered rates).
- Capital Improvement Program – CIP IV-A is replacing water distribution mains as part of program to reduce system losses. CIP IV-A, Project 2 is starting May 11 and should help reduce losses this summer. CIP IV-A, Project 1 should be completed in mid May and also will reduce system losses.
- District staff fix reported and found leaks on a priority basis.