



## PRESS RELEASE

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# **Bay Area Water Agencies to Launch Regional “Water Saving Hero” Water Conservation Campaign Amidst Statewide Drought**

(Santa Rosa, CA) — The Sonoma County Water Agency today joined other Bay Area and statewide water agencies to launch an unprecedented regional public education campaign aimed at reminding residents and businesses to curb water use this summer and fall. The “Water Saving Hero” campaign features ordinary people adopting simple water conservation practices in their everyday lives, and will soon blanket radio and television airwaves, billboards, transit stations, buses, trains and websites throughout the region. The effort also features a new website [www.WaterSavingHero.com](http://www.WaterSavingHero.com), where Bay Area residents can link directly to their local water agency’s conservation tips and cash rebate information. The effort comes as California faces its first statewide drought in 16 years and amidst growing concerns about the future of water supplies from the Delta and other sources.

Projections of low water levels in Lake Mendocino spurred the Sonoma County Water Agency on May 27 to call for voluntary water-saving measures similar to last summer from its contractors, including the cities of Santa Rosa, Petaluma, Rohnert Park, Sonoma, and Cotati; the Town of Windsor; North Marin Water District, Valley of the Moon Water District and the Marin Municipal Water District. The Agency is also seeking reduced water use from municipalities, businesses and agricultural communities in Mendocino and Sonoma counties that rely on the Russian River for water. The call comes after receiving historically low rainfall this spring and continued reductions in diversion from the Potter Valley Project.

“The dry weather, coupled with reductions in diversions from the Potter Valley Project, means we are experiencing a water supply situation very similar to last year,” said Deputy Chief Engineer of Operations Pam Jeane. “Using less water means more water in the Russian River, Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma. We rely on these sources for drinking water, wildlife habitat and recreational activities.”

The Agency’s goal is to save 12,000-15,000 acre-feet in Lake Mendocino by the end of October, 2008. Water supply projections show water levels in Lake Mendocino falling to about 20,000 acre-feet by early fall, a time when the Agency would like to see at least 30,000 acre-feet in Lake Mendocino to release into the upper Russian River for three species listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act: steelhead, Chinook salmon, and coho salmon.

The more than \$1 million “Water Saving Hero” campaign is a partnership among eleven Bay Area water agencies and organizations from the nine Bay Area counties, including the Alameda County Water District (ACWD), Bay Area Water Supply & Conservation Agency (BAWSCA), Contra Costa Water District (CCWD), East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD), City of Napa, Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD), San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), Solano County Water Agency, Sonoma County Water Agency and Zone 7 of the Alameda County Flood Control & Water Conservation District. The campaign is funded by Bay Area water agencies, but will be reimbursed by a grant from the California Department of Water Resources.

The campaign ads and billboards will run at least through the summer and early fall 2008. The campaign aims to make Bay Area residents think about short and long-term steps they can take to reduce water use in their home or business. To learn more about the “Water Saving Hero” campaign, view the ads or link directly to your local water agency’s conservation tips and cash rebates, visit [www.WaterSavingHero.com](http://www.WaterSavingHero.com).

The Agency will work closely with its contractors through established regional conservation programs to provide information and support. Agency contractors have numerous conservation programs in place and will be fully implementing additional resources to meet requested voluntary conservation.

### **The Facts:**

**Dry Spring:** Our region has faced the driest three months of spring on record. This March, April and May, Santa Rosa’s rainfall was .65 of an inch. Next driest was 2004, when 1.91 inches of rain fell during the three-month period.

**Potter Valley Project Flow Reductions:** Water flows into Lake Mendocino from the Potter Valley Project have been reduced by 33 percent. The Potter Valley Project diverts Eel River water through a Mendocino County powerhouse owned and operated by PG&E into the upper Russian River Basin, and is the source of most of the summer flow in the East Branch Russian River. In 2004, federal regulatory agencies ordered a new water flow regime for the Potter Valley Project. This new regime changed the minimum and maximum stream flow requirements for the East Branch Russian River. The East Branch Russian River feeds into Lake Mendocino.

### **About Lake Mendocino:**

Lake Mendocino is located three miles northeast of the City of Ukiah and is the major feature of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Coyote Valley Dam Project. Lake Mendocino is impounded by Coyote Valley Dam, located on the East Fork of the Russian River, 0.8 mile upstream of the East Fork Russian River’s confluence with the Russian River. Coyote Valley Dam is a rolled earth embankment. Lake Mendocino began storing water in 1959.

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*Sonoma County Water Agency provides water supply, flood protection and sanitation services for portions of Sonoma and Marin counties. Visit us on the Web at [www.sonomacountywater.org](http://www.sonomacountywater.org).*