

September 2011

To our Customers:

**It's Been Raining These Past Two Winters! Should We Continue to Conserve Water? District Participation in the Russian River Water Conservation Effort.**

**It's raining and the reservoirs are filling. The Regional Russian River Watershed conservation effort was very successful. Do we need to continue with it?** Expect water to continue to be a frequent topic in the local news for the near future. Because of reduced diversions from the Eel River and regulatory restrictions due to the Russian River Salmonid Biological Opinion, the summer Russian River flow will never again reach recent historical levels. Lake Mendocino will not have excess water and summer flows will be reduced. Sustainable water use will need to be a continual objective and that means always using water wisely.

Sweetwater Springs Water District will continue to be an active participant in the regional conservation effort. The Board has directed that the District implement a water conservation program that fits with the regional efforts and that will continue during all kinds of weather and seasons.

**The District's approach/strategy in participating in the ongoing water conservation effort is similar to the summer effort - 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 are good water efficiency ideas year round. 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 as before, 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.** 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 approaches 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 year round:

- Find and repair leaks on your property and in your house. In particular make certain toilets and the irrigation system are not leaking. **Most water wastage in this District is due to leaks – and fixing leaks will save you money!**
- Check out your irrigation system. Tune it up regularly, including checking 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 – available at the District office. Water conservation kits are also available.
- Check into rebates or replacement programs for low flow toilets, and rebates for high efficiency clothes washers in the Guerneville System (funded by Russian River County Sanitation District) and toilet rebates in the Monte Rio System.
- **Find and repair leaks on your property and in your house.** It's a redundant message, but leaks are our biggest waster!

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 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.