



Stockton, California

October 26, 2009

A Call for Water Conservation

The purpose of this advisory is to provide SEWD's customers with some facts, suggestions, and information on how we, as a community, can get through this dry period.

It's Official: We're in a Drought

You can read it in the paper, see it on TV, or just look out your window at the smoky sky above the tinder-dry landscape; there's no doubt that our region is in for a hot, dry summer, and most of us are well aware that our water situation is becoming more critical with every passing day. The facts are indisputable: rain has been scarce in 2007 and 2008, and after the driest spring on record, it is now official: California is experiencing a drought.

For some of us, dealing with drought has been an on-again-off-again way of life for many years. Those who lived through the severe drought conditions of the late 70's and other low rainfall periods in the 80's and 90's can recall the household and recreational water use restrictions imposed on our communities during those dry spells. But, because our last significant dry period occurred in the early 90's, most twenty-something Californians have never experienced water shortages and drought. This situation poses a significant challenge to water providers: we must find a way to educate our newer users and prompt our established users to get serious about water conservation. We know that making significant changes in our water use habits now will help ease water shortages if this dry spell continues, but community awareness and cooperation is essential in making conservation efforts successful and effective.



1. What are the facts?

2. How you can help?

...making significant changes in our water use habits now will help ease water shortages in the future

Are We Drought Tolerant?

In many ways, society is not geared for water conservation, perhaps because water is considered a "personal" resource. Luxury hotels advertise endless showers with the "world's best showerhead," homeowners' associations encourage residents to plant and maintain lush, green lawns, and overwatering and gutter flooding incidents often continue unchecked, even after dry-year advisories have been issued. Homeowners shun the basin, nozzle and broom, opting to use copious flows of water to clean dishes, cars, patios and driveways. These old habits are hard to break; society's love affair with water is fraught with over use and abuse. But with a painfully dry season looming, it's time to cut back or face serious consequences.



Local and Statewide Links

[City of Stockton Customers](#)
[California Water Service Customers](#)
[San Joaquin County Customers](#)
[Groundwater Banking Authority](#)
[CA Dept of Water Resources](#)
[SEWD Water Conservation Program](#)

The Good News and the Bad News

Water industry research indicates that concentrated conservation campaigns can reduce water use in the community between 10 and 20 percent. Considering the recent population growth in our region, this level of conservation would probably allow us to maintain the status quo in a normal rainfall year. But in a drought situation, the status quo will not suffice. The good news: Stockton's main surface water supply source, New Hogan Reservoir, currently contains enough water to carry us through this year. The bad news: Status quo "normal" water use through the summer, combined with another dry winter could reduce storage in the reservoir to dangerously low levels, triggering mandatory conservation measures, water rationing, and potential hardship from water outages next year. **So the conclusion is, by conserving now, we can improve our water supply situation.**



Here's Where Our Community Conservation Efforts Can Really Make Difference!

If the New Hogan Reservoir storage level drops below 152,100 AF by December 1st, water conservation storage practices go into effect, allowing unused quantities of Stockton's water to be stored for next year's use. New Hogan Reservoir storage fell below 152,100 on April 23, 2008. This means that every drop of water not used by our customers this year will be stored to help alleviate water shortages next year.



It's a Fact!

*The water we save today could boost our supply
enough to ease restrictions or
avoid rationing next year
should this dry spell continue.*

**One Acre Foot of water is defined as enough water to cover one acre of land one foot deep. This works out to a volume of 43,560 cubic feet (one cubic foot of water equals 7.48 gallons) or 325,851 gallons. On average, 1 acre-foot of water is enough to meet the demands of 4 people for a year (Western-Water, <http://www.western-water.com/>).*