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A NEWSLETTER FOR CUSTOMERS OF THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT

◆ Spring 2008

Despite Recent Storms, Water Conservation Still Critical

This winter, San Diego experienced periods of torrential rain. Despite the wet weather, conserving water is still as important now as ever.

Our region is heavily dependent on imported water. We live in a semi-arid region that provides about ten percent of the water needed to meet local demand; the other 90 percent must be imported from faraway Northern California and the Colorado River. While the recent storms and reports of a deep snow pack in the Sierra's are certainly welcome news, the threat of water shortages is far from over.

Eight years of drought on the Colorado River have left the major reservoirs serving Southern California less than half full. Even if wet conditions continued, it will take many years to replenish them, but now we also face long-term challenges posed by environmental problems in the Sacramento-San Joaquin bay delta.

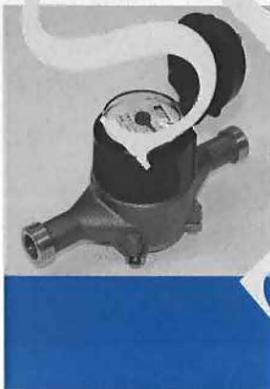
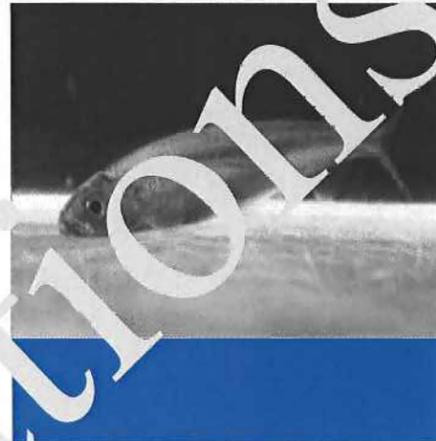
The future of the delta, which provides 40 percent of San Diego's water supply, is currently being decided in the courts over compliance with the Endangered Species Act. This issue will not be resolved quickly and will likely result in less water deliveries to Southern California this year and in future years. The impact to Southern California is our inability to fill reservoirs and instead, the region will have to further draw down our diminishing regional storage. Because of the uncertainty, water conservation cannot be an isolated effort put forth only during times of drought. Today, conservation must become part of our Southern California lifestyle.

Since the last major drought in the early 1990s, Southern Californians have become leaders in water conservation. Because of our efforts, water demand today is essentially the same as it was eighteen years ago. Low flow toilets and showerheads, high efficiency clothes washers and other indoor conservation measures have saved enough water to allow our local economy to create jobs, homes, and new opportunities. For this to continue, however, extending water conservation practices outdoors is becoming essential.

Depending on the season, 60 percent or more of all water is used to irrigate landscaping. Regrettably, much of this is wasted due to the over-watering of turf grass, poorly maintained irrigations systems, and poorly thought-out irrigation schedules, when simple, but effective, measures are available to conserve vast amounts of precious water.

Water conservation is the most cost effective and environmental sound way to reduce demand. For tips on conserving water, check out our website www.otaywater.gov or visit the Water Conservation Garden located on the campus of Cuyamaca College. By working together, we can stretch the region's limited water supply to continue growing the economy.

A recent federal court decision restricts the north-to-south flow of water as a requirement to protect the endangered Delta smelt under the Endangered Species Act.



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Meter Reading Goes Wireless

Approximately one-third of water meters in the Otay Water District's service area are now automated (AMR). AMR meters are able to transmit their water use data via a one-way radio signal to a meter reader up to a half mile away. Now, rather than lifting the cover and visually inspecting each meter, every month, monthly water use data is transmitted electronically to a specially-equipped vehicle driving through the neighborhood.

By using an AMR system, a single meter reader will be able to record up to 5,000 readings during a typical eight-hour shift, as opposed to that same individual walking ten to fifteen miles per day and reading 700 meters or more.

Because of the cost savings and productivity enhancements being realized from this technology a capital improvement program is underway to completely replace all of the district's 48,000 traditional meters.

The AMR meters also store up to 30 days of water use history and can send a signal notifying us of possible water leaks. This technology will lead to the development of new programs, such as real time water use monitoring, to help customers save water.

AMR is just one way the Otay Water District is utilizing technology to increase productivity, accuracy, reduce staff costs, promote water conservation, and enhance customer service.



AMR meters are able to transmit water use data using a secure, one-way radio signal.

Putting Water Use into Perspective

Did you know the average Otay customer uses 18 units of water per month. Since one unit of water equals 748 gallons, this comes out to 13,464 gallons each month. For a family of four, this is nearly 450 gallons of water every day.

By comparison, conserving water customers, those using fewer than 10 units per month, use 7,480 gallons per month or 249 gallons per day or less.

Otay Water District Board of Directors

The Board of Directors meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 3:30 pm in the Board meeting room. The public is encouraged to attend at 2554 Sweetwater Springs Blvd., Spring Valley, CA.

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Bye, Bye Grass

By Nan Sterman, Plant Soup Inc.
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\$350 Rebate for a "Smart" Irrigation Controller

Typically, more than 60 percent of water is used outdoors. Installing a "smart" irrigation controller is one of the best ways to reduce water use, save money and keep yards beautiful throughout the year.

Minimum requirements: at least 2,000 square feet of irrigated landscape and four active irrigation valves. The deadline to apply for the rebate is June 30, 2008.

For more information, please call 619-670-2290 or visit www.otaywater.gov and click on "Conservation."

Classes at the Garden

For more information, please visit www.thegarden.org.

Check Your Water Pressure

Have you experienced a leaking faucet or a constantly running toilet? A faulty water pressure regulator may be the cause. Even in new homes, pressure regulators do wear out and can fail.



Pressure regulators can wear out and should be checked whenever you are doing any plumbing work around your house.

The quality of your pressure regulator dictates the years of service to expect. Regulators may last as little as one year, or twenty years or more. To ensure proper water pressure in your home, it is your responsibility to have and maintain a working pressure regulator.

When doing any plumbing work around your house, ask your licensed plumber to check your water pressure.

Spring
Garden
Festival
ON THE CAMPUS OF
Cuyamaca College

9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, April 26, 2008

900 Rancho San Diego Parkway, El Cajon, California

water-wise gardening lectures
prizes
crafts
books
garden clubs
free admission
free parking
plant sale
tours
food
live music
Conservation In Bloom

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