

Grizzly Flats CSD Newsletter

March 2012



Water System Improvement Project Reservoir Lining & Embankment work

At February's regular Board meeting, the Board decided to move forward with Phase II of the WSIP. Phase II will include draining the reservoir, doing some earthwork on the existing embankment, and installing a liner. Once temperatures are warmer, some chip/seal work will also be done on the intersections where pipeline was installed last fall. We expect construction at the reservoir to last approximately 45 days; 7-10 days to drain the water, 3 weeks for the embankment work and 2 weeks to install the liner. We hope to complete the project by mid to late June so flows from Eagle Ditch can refill the reservoir. Concerns about lack of precipitation and construction delays have been evaluated. We feel confident that this project should move forward and can get done without significant disruption to our customers.

We understand that this project has caused concern to some in our community. We thank the members of the public who attended our meeting and shared their feelings on the issue. We thought we would address some of the concerns we have heard from the public.

FAQs about the WSIP Phase II

1). How much water will I be able to use while the reservoir is empty?

We are urging all customers to conserve. We ask that you delay planting your gardens, flowers and other landscapes (lawns, shrubbery, trees, ponds, etc.) until after the reservoir project is done.

When the District starts draining the reservoir, we plan to declare a Stage 1, which will ask all customers to reduce their usage by 10% - 20%.

If everyone can conserve and keep water demands lower than normal, we hope to avoid declaring higher conservation stages. Our staff will monitor customers' demand for water compared to our inflows. If we can't

keep up with demands, we will ask you to conserve by declaring a Stage 2. If treatment still can't keep up, the Board of Directors will consider declaring a Stage 3.

If you need information on what is required under each Water Conservation Stage you can:

- a). Go to our website (www.grizzlyflatscsd.com), click on the "Customer Info" tab at the top of the page, then click on "Water Shortages and Emergency Response Stages". The document will pop up in a separate window and will explain the restrictions of each stage.
- b). Check the Grizzly Flats Post Office! The Stages will be posted in the glass case that hangs on the wall inside the post office (opposite wall from the mailboxes).
- c). The newsletters that come with your bill. We sent out the stages in last month's billing and we will send them out again next month.
- d). The GFCSD Office! We have the stages printed and ready to hand out at our office. Come by and pick up a copy Monday thru Friday, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

Use the resources listed for information during the project construction too! We will be posting project updates, changes in conservation stages and more!

Based on previous years' usage history, we believe we can keep up with customer demand and we know our community can reduce their water usage significantly if an emergency situation occurs.

2). We don't have enough water to drain the reservoir!

We currently have a good supply of water. For the first time in years, our flows coming into the reservoir kept the reservoir full. Maybe you noticed that we didn't have to declare any conservation stages last summer. We had so much precipitation last year that it has put us in a good position this year. Even with the small amount of rain/snow we've received, it is not thought that we are in danger of "running out" of water.

3). What will happen if there's a fire?

While the reservoir is empty, we will still have water in our 4 potable water storage tanks. That means water will always be available from the 150 fire hydrants in the District. We will have a flow of treated water into the system to keep those tanks full.

We are aiming to complete the project in the spring or early summer before fire season begins. We have contacted Chief Gill at Pioneer Fire Protection District to determine if an alternative plan is needed. We will do whatever it takes to keep our community safe.

4). How long will construction last?

Many components of this project depend on weather conditions. We can't forecast what the next few months will bring, but our hope is to start draining the reservoir on March 15th. That will allow the soil to dry enough for construction to begin on or about April 30th. The embankment work will take about three weeks and the installation of the liner will take about two weeks. So if there are no construction delays, we estimate the work will be done by mid to late June.

If we get a large amount of rain or snow in the next few weeks, the start date may be changed, which means the construction would last later into July. However, more precipitation means our inflows would last longer and would give us a longer window to refill the reservoir.

5). Why not wait till next year to do the construction?

This was considered and many factors led the Board to proceed this year.

Increased costs to our customers- costs will increase for the District if the project is delayed. Labor costs would be increased. GFCSD would need to purchase the liner and fence posts and find a way to store these items until the project could proceed.

It's a dry year- It's actually an advantage to the District to do this project in a dry year. The reservoir soil has to have certain moisture content before construction can begin. The drier the year, the earlier we can start construction. "Old-timers" in the community can tell you about the droughts during the 1980s and 1990s. Droughts normally don't happen for just one year. If a drought is occurring, this could be the 1st year of several dry years to come.

Demand is lower- We have had a large number of foreclosures in our area the last few years. Many of those homes either sit empty or were purchased by part-timers. Our customer demand is lower than it has been in recent years. We should not have an issue meeting current customer demands while the reservoir is empty.

6). How will the reservoir liner help our water supply?

By installing a reservoir liner, the District will be able to store and use more water. Currently, we lose approximately 35 acre feet per year (more than 11 million gallons!) to leakage (figure from *May 1998 Borcalli Reconnaissance Investigation of Off-Stream Storage*). The liner will stop that leakage. We hope this will alleviate a lot of the issues we have. Our community has one of the lowest water consumptions in the County, yet we often have to ask our customers to reduce their usage in late summer and early fall.

Currently our usable storage is **22.80 acre feet**. By installing the liner we should increase our usable storage to **27.33 acre feet**.

Many studies performed by the District in the past have indicated a need to get this work done. The May 1995 Study by Victor Wright stated "*With time, or with increase in the reservoir head, subsurface erosion could increase. The borings show that the roots are widespread in the dam embankment and near the foundation surface. Since leakage into one root hole in the reservoir bottom near the spill way pipe has already been directly observed under water, this condition warrants careful consideration for future operation of the reservoir.*" He went on to say "*The most positive option for repair is a complete impervious lining for the reservoir bottom. A number of new geosynthetic liner systems are available that are effective and fast to install with the reservoir drained.*" Keep in mind that the study that found the deficiencies was done in 1995, which was almost 17 years ago. **The Board acted now to resolve these long standing issues and they were able to do so without raising your water rates!**

7). Conservation stages ask customers to reduce their water usage by 10% to 50%. I use very little water as it is. Will I be penalized if I'm unable to reduce my usage?

Under the policy, we are given the authority to enforce conservation measures by charging customers fines or terminating water service for those who don't comply.

Keep in mind that the District will not take this authority lightly. Common sense will be used to enforce any kind of fines for noncompliance. If your usage is 75-100 gallons each month, you probably won't hear from us. However, if you're a household that frequently goes over the allotted 300 gallons per day and you continue to do so after conservation stages are declared, we will probably contact you. **You can find your current usage at the bottom of your water statement under "Average Usage in Gallons Per Day"**. You can also call our office for help finding this information.