

Grizzly Flats CSD Newsletter February 2014



HOW IS OUR WATER SUPPLY... DO YOU NEED TO CONSERVE WATER?

Water has been a major topic in the news lately because of the dry weather conditions we have been experiencing. The Governor of California officially declared a drought emergency for our state on January 14, 2014. The low levels of Folsom Lake and surrounding rivers and reservoirs are forcing neighboring water districts in Roseville, Folsom, and Sacramento to enact mandatory conservation measures. El Dorado Irrigation District, the largest water purveyor in El Dorado County is urging customers to voluntarily cut back their water usage.

So what does that mean for us in Grizzly Flats? Your water comes from nearby streams that are fed by natural springs and snowmelt. The water is diverted from those streams into Eagle Ditch and then is stored in our raw water reservoir until it is treated and sent out to your homes. **At this time, the reservoir is full and spilling. Our challenge will be getting through the coming summer months.** Dry periods have caused issues with our water system in the past. In 1987-88 Eagle Ditch stopped flowing. Several important improvements have been made since that time to keep the water flowing including lining Eagle Ditch with pipe and installing the reservoir liner. **These improvements don't ensure water will always flow, but we are better prepared if dry conditions persist.**

Each year we depend on the winter rain and snowfall to recharge our ground water and local streams. We have experienced two consecutive dry years, and we are seeing the effects of that at the springs that provide our water. We were very fortunate to get the reservoir liner installed in 2012. **The liner is helping us retain and store more water, but we must be smarter about how we use it.** It's normal for California to have ups and downs in our weather patterns. This week's precipitation reminds us that winter isn't over yet!

Our District has a Drought Plan in place that outlines how we respond to droughts. Mandatory conservation and emergency stages are set by that plan and are tied to the water level in our raw water reservoir. The GFCSD Board of Directors and staff are watching carefully and if conditions worsen, Water Emergency Conservation measures may be declared. **If that were to happen, GFCSD customers would be notified by mail, email, and postings at the Grizzly Flats Post Office.** We have three stages of conservation measures that ask customers to reduce their average daily water usage by a certain percentage in each stage:

| Water Conservation Stage | Voluntary or Mandatory | % of Reduction required | Reduction in gallons per day (gpd) <small>*based on a household using 200 gallons per day</small> |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Stage 1 - Water Emergency Alert | Voluntary | 10% - 20% | 20 – 40 gpd |
| Stage 2 Water Emergency | Mandatory | 20% - 30% | 40 – 60 gpd |
| Stage 3 Critical Water Emergency | Mandatory | 30% - 50% | 60 – 100 gpd |

But why wait till we are in an emergency to protect our water supply? Why waste water if you don't need to? We have included a two sided sheet of simple conservation ideas with this newsletter. Take a minute to review them to see if there are ways you can use your water more wisely. Take a look around your house and fix those leaks. Are you thinking of installing a lawn or garden this spring? Maybe postpone that project for a year. Or find alternatives....install irrigation systems that will save water, consider landscaping with plants that are drought resistant, or with materials like bark or gravel that don't need water!

We should also remember that it's not just about us. Our state has declared a Drought Emergency, facing what many believe may be one of the driest winters on record. We are near the top of the water supply chain, so water we don't use continues to flow down into the watersheds of areas that need it more than we do. **What can we do to be better neighbors? What can we do as responsible citizens of the State of California? The simple answer is to do what you can to conserve water.**

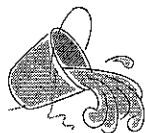
To those customers who are already conservative with their water use, we applaud your efforts to use your water wisely and thank you for your efforts!!!

Looking for more drought or water conservation information?

- California Department of Water Resources – Drought Portal
www.water.ca.gov/waterconditions/droughtinfo.cfm
- Save Our Water is a statewide program aimed at helping Californians to reduce their everyday water use.
www.saveourh2o.org
- Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense - seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply by offering people a simple way to use less water with water-efficient products and services.
www.epa.gov/WaterSense
- Be Water Smart is sponsored by the Regional Water Authority Water Efficiency Program (RWEP) and 19 water providers. These agencies are working together to help their customers use water efficiently.
www.bewatersmart.info
- Water - Use it Wisely – A great site for conservation ideas inside and outside your home!
www.wateruseitwisely.com

WATER TREATMENT PLANT #1 DOWN FOR MAINTENANCE

Need another reason to keep your water use down? January and February are usually the months where we see the lowest water production. For that reason, **we have taken one of our water treatment plants (Plant #1) offline for some much needed maintenance.** The plant has been in use since 1991 and this important maintenance will extend the life of this plant for years to come. This is a project that the California Department of Public Health noted as a priority on our last inspection. We decided to tackle the job in-house to keep costs down for you! Plant #2 will not have an issue keeping up with the water demand as long as production stays normal. By using your water wisely and using some of the tips listed on the enclosed sheets, can mean big water savings to our small water system!



Simple ways to conserve water....

Kitchen

- Use the garbage disposal sparingly. You would save gallons of water every time.
- For cold drinks keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap. This way, every drop goes down you and not the drain.
- Wash your fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of running water from the tap. Then use the water in the pan to water your houseplants!
- Don't use running water to thaw food. Defrost food in the refrigerator for food safety.
- Soak pots and pans instead of letting the water run while you scrape them clean.
- If your dishwasher is new, cut back on rinsing. Newer models clean more thoroughly than older ones.
- If you accidentally drop ice cubes when filling your glass from the freezer or have leftover ice in your cup, don't throw it in the sink....drop them in a house plant or your pet's water bowl instead.
- Shopping for a new washer or dishwasher? Look for products bearing the EPA "WaterSense" label for items that been certified to save 20% or more without sacrificing performance.
- Make sure there are water-saving aerators on all of your faucets.

Bathroom

- Shorten your shower by a minute or two and you'll save up to 150 gallons per month.
- Turn off the water while brushing your teeth and shaving and save 325 gallons a month.

Other areas or outside

- Do you leave a faucet on to drip (or in some cases just run) as a way of preventing your water pipes from freezing? This is wasting thousands of gallons of water. Try using insulation or heat tape instead to protect your pipes. Are there ways you can winterize without wasting water? If you are leaving for more than 24 hours, consider draining your pipes (contact our office for instructions if you need them) and reduce the need for dripping faucets.
- Put off planting gardens, landscapes, lawns or anything else that may require a large amount of water. Use the "Save Our Water" website (www.saveourh2o.org) for ideas on water-wise gardens and landscapes.
- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway or sidewalks and save water every time.
- When cleaning out fish tanks, give the nutrient-rich water to your plants.
- Use drip irrigation for shrubs and trees to apply water directly to the roots where it's needed.
- Run your clothes washer and dishwasher only when they are full and save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- Report broken pipes, open hydrants and errant sprinklers to the property owner or GFCSD. Let us know if you see or hear water running, strange puddles of water or other signs of a leak. Working together to take care of our small community has always been a great source of pride to those that live here. Remember, the water district is YOUR district!

Another big use of water.....LEAKS!

The Facts on leaks:

- Leaks can account for, on average, 10,000 gallons of water wasted in the home every year. 10% of homes have leaks that waste 90 gallons or more per day.
- Common types of leaks found in the home include leaking toilet flappers, dripping faucets, and other leaking valves. All are easily correctable. Keep your home leak-free by repairing dripping faucets, toilet valves, and showerheads. In most cases, fixture replacement parts don't require a major investment and can be installed by do-it-yourselfers.

Leak Detection:

- A good method to check for leaks is check your water usage listed on your bill each month. It's likely that a family of four has a leak if its water use exceeds 150 - 200 gallons per day in the winter.
- Check your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same, you probably have a leak.
- One way to find out if you have a toilet leak is to place a drop of food coloring in the toilet tank. If the color shows up in the bowl within 15 minutes without flushing, you have a leak. Make sure to flush immediately after this experiment to avoid staining the tank.

Faucets and Showerheads:

- A leaky faucet that drips at the rate of one drip per second can waste more than 3,000 gallons per year. A home with WaterSense labeled toilets could use that same amount of water to flush for six months!
- Leaky faucets can be reduced by checking faucet washers and gaskets for wear and replacing them if necessary. If you are replacing a faucet, look for the WaterSense label.
- A showerhead leaking at 10 drips per minute wastes more than 500 gallons per year. That's enough water to wash 60 loads of dishes in your dishwasher. Most leaky showerheads can be fixed by ensuring a tight connection using pipe tape and a wrench.

Toilets:

- If your toilet is running constantly, you could be wasting 200 gallons of water or more every day. The cause is most often an old, faulty toilet flapper. It's usually best to replace the whole rubber flapper—a relatively easy, inexpensive do-it-yourself project. Ask your neighborhood hardware store for advice or look online.
- If you do need to replace the entire toilet, look for a WaterSense labeled model. If a family of four replaces its older, inefficient toilets with new WaterSense labeled ones, it could save more than 16,000 gallons per year.

Outdoors:

- An irrigation system should be checked each spring to make sure it was not damaged by frost or freezing. An irrigation system with pressure set at 60 pounds per square inch that has a leak 1/32nd of an inch in diameter (about the thickness of a dime) can waste about 6,300 gallons of water per month or more!
- Check your garden hose for leaks at its connection to the spigot. If it leaks while you run your hose, replace the nylon or rubber hose washer and ensure a tight connection to the spigot using pipe tape and a wrench.