



Water News

Special Edition: Planning for Your District's Water Future ■ Fall 2007

Water Shortages Seen In Future Droughts

Water use per customer has been growing steadily since the last major drought, and is starting to strain the existing water supply.

At the current rate of water use, a water shortage will occur during future droughts.



Conservation is Essential and We Need Your Help



Dear Neighbor:

It is no secret that we have had unusually dry weather statewide during the last year. An important part of our water supply is provided by the State Water Project. But a recent Federal Court ruling is expected to reduce imported water supplies by up to 30%, despite growing demand in the state.

There are troubling signs of growing water problems in our District, too.

Water usage per customer in Montecito, Summerland and Toro Canyon has been steadily rising. Meters installed in recent years have also placed increased demands on our water supply. More are likely to be added in coming years, according to our officially adopted Community Plans.

As we continue to increase customer demand for water, we may outstrip our available water supply.

Montecito Water District is developing plans to bring water supply and customer water demand into alignment. We encourage you to read this newsletter about the water district's supply challenges. Future editions will carry more information on how you can use water more efficiently.

Conservation by all our customers will keep our communities green.

Sincerely,
BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
Montecito Water District

Growing Water Problem: More Customer



Local Water Use Growing

Water use per meter is climbing. Montecito Water District customers have been using more water each year. Looking back, the annual water usage per meter during the depth of the drought in 1992 was 314 hundred cubic feet. Water usage since then has climbed steadily to the point where, in 2007, water usage per meter is 632 hundred cubic feet. Much of the increase is due to landscape use.

More Water Meters, Too

The number of new meters is growing, too. Adding it all up, local water demand is rising beyond the capability of the water district to meet it, especially during a drought.



Lake Cachuma

Search for Water

Staff and consultants have searched the State for additional supplies. After investigating many promising alternatives, most proved to be infeasible or unreliable.

To date we have found only one potential supply that holds promise of meeting local demand: storing surplus supplemental water in Lake Cachuma. The Lake would be our reservoir; the stored water would be withdrawn as it is needed.

Water demand in our community is starting to outstrip supply. Many ask, "can we just buy more water?" Finding a water supply that is feasible, available, reliable, and affordable is the catch.

Unless the growth in the use of water per customer is reduced through conservation by area residents, our community will face water shortfalls during future drought years.

Use Per Meter, More Meters



Proposed Solutions to Water Supply Challenges

The water district is developing plans to bring water supply and customer water needs into alignment.

Our proposed four-step-plan includes:

1. Adopt water efficiency requirements for new customers.

The District is developing requirements, through the County permit process, for new construction and remodels that will significantly decrease the amount of water used by these customers.

2. Increase public awareness and responsiveness.

The public needs to become aware of the water limitations facing our area, and be willing to make the necessary changes. This calls for expanded public outreach and education.

3. Decrease outdoor water use.

With 70% of local water use dedicated to landscapes, it is critical to decrease the amount of water needed to keep our communities green. We will need your help to achieve this goal.

4. Consider a new rate structure that discourages excessive water use.

Small initial units of water would be charged at a low rate, but the more used, the more the cost for each additional unit.

Possible New Water Sources Investigated

- **Bank Supplemental Water in Cachuma:**
Available nearby when needed.
Readily transportable to our District.
A good prospect.
- **Work cooperatively with Carpinteria Valley Water District, Goleta Water District and City of Santa Barbara:**
These agencies share similar challenges to Montecito Water District. Uncertain.
- **Buy some of the County allocation of State Project Water and bank in Lake Cachuma:**
If surplus State Project water is available, may be a good opportunity.
- **Store water in a remote groundwater bank:**
Reliability and transportability are problems. Unreliable.
- **Use desalinated water:**
Possible only if the City of Santa Barbara resurrects the desalination plant. Uncertain.
- **Use recycled water:**
No current option exists.

For full details on the District's water supply situation, see the report available on our website by clicking to montecitowater.com.



State Water Project

Getting Serious About Conservation

Critical Need: Reduce Water Use

It is unlikely that we can find additional water supplies that are available, feasible, reliable and cost-effective. An essential part of the solution is to use the water we have more efficiently. This requires your cooperation if we are to live within our communities' water means.

Your Help is Needed to Keep Our Communities Green with Less Water

Water conservation doesn't have to mean brown lawns and wilting leaves. Our area can maintain its lovely, signature landscapes. With remarkable new methods of irrigation, beautiful species of low-water-use plants, decorative mulches, and many other water conserving actions, we can move as a community to a more appropriate water culture that better suits our semi-arid climate.

Many Drought Tolerant Plantings Are Beautiful and Easy to Care For

Learn to use water more efficiently to maintain beautiful landscaping, while saving money and helping the environment. We can help you conserve water. Contact our water conservation specialist at 805/969-2271. There is no charge for this service.



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