

Las Virgenes Municipal Water District Prepares For Water Shortage

Entering Third Year of Short Supplies

Following two critically dry years, 2009 has the potential to be one of the most severe drought years in California's recorded history. Water supplies in the state's major reservoirs and many groundwater basins are already well below average; court-ordered restrictions on water deliveries through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta have significantly reduced supplies from the State Water Project, our source of water for Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (LVMWD) customers; and snowpack in the northern Sierra Nevada, a primary water source for the Delta, continues to be below normal for the year.



Lake Oroville
July 2006

Lake Oroville
February 2009



Governor Declares Water Emergency

In response to these issues, on February 27 Governor Schwarzenegger proclaimed a state of emergency to address California's water shortage. The Governor's proclamation urges water agencies and their customers to reduce water usage by 20%. "This drought is having a devastating impact on our people, our communities, our economy and our environment - making today's action absolutely necessary," the Governor said. His proclamation directed the state's Department of Water Resources to provide an updated report on drought conditions and water availability. If the emergency conditions have not eased, the governor could also declare mandatory reductions in water use.

"Normal" Rainfall Won't Fix the Problem

Many have asked if more precipitation will bring an end to the drought and solve our state's water crisis. Precipitation will temporarily alleviate local outdoor water demand, and perhaps recharge some of the state's reservoirs and groundwater basins. Unfortunately, "normal" rains are not enough. It will take several "wet" years of average or above average rain and snow statewide to refill reservoirs. Moreover, pumping restrictions, Delta water conveyance issues and threatened species concerns are not likely to be resolved quickly. Combined with an increasing population and changing climactic conditions, it is projected that water supply concerns will be with us for years to come.

We Have Been Using Reserves

For the past two years, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), LVMWD's sole supplier of water, has been tapping its storage reserves to maintain deliveries to its 26 member agencies. But the reserves are not unlimited. For 2009 those reserves are projected to be stretched beyond capacity as the Department of Water Resources has projected it would deliver only 15% of the water requested by MWD through the State Water Project.

"We need the public's help and cooperation in meeting this challenge."

John R. Mundy, LVMWD General Manager

The Current Flow
Published for customers of
Las Virgenes
Municipal Water District

*Board meetings are scheduled
at 5 p.m. on the second and
fourth Tuesday of each month.
See web site for meeting and
agenda information.*

Customer Service
818.251.2200

After hours emergency
818.251.2100

**Rancho Las Virgenes
Composting Facility
Compost Giveaway**
Hours: Saturdays 8:00 am - 1:00
pm (except holidays)

Rebate Information
www.LVMWD.com ~
Conservation

**Potable Water
Recycled Water
Wastewater Treatment
Biosolids Composting**

4232 Las Virgenes Road
Calabasas, CA 91302
www.LVMWD.com

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The Current Flow
Special Water Shortage
Information
Issue #1 ~ March 2009

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Water Shortage Public Meetings Scheduled

LVMWD is in the process of scheduling public meetings throughout the service area to provide customers with the latest information on the water supply situation and to explain how the water budget program will work. Meeting information will be mailed and posted on the LVMWD website.



Stretching Remaining Supplies

Based on recent updates of the state's water supply conditions, announcements by MWD, and the Governor's state of emergency proclamation, it is very likely MWD will allocate limited water supplies to its member agencies beginning this summer. MWD is expected to make a final determination on April 14, 2009.

The amount of the allocation will depend upon the severity of the "regional water shortage level". A more severe water shortage level will result in LVMWD receiving a lower allocation to distribute to customers. For example, under a moderate shortage level, LVMWD's allocation may be set at 15% to 20% below its historical demand. Under a more severe water shortage, the required conservation may be 20% to 25%. If LVMWD is not able to stay within its allocation, MWD will assess strict and costly penalties for water purchases in excess of the assigned allocation.

Implementing a Fair Conservation Program

In anticipation of allocations, LVMWD proposes to assign individual customer "water budgets", a fixed volume of water allotted to an account for each two-month billing period. For residential customers water budgets will be

based on a minimum indoor requirement of approximately 12,000 gallons every two months for single family residences and approximately 9,000 gallons for multi-family dwelling units. Additional water will be budgeted for outdoor use based on property size and variations in seasonal irrigation demand; more in summer months and less during cooler months. Similar to MWD's allocation framework, customers who exceed their budget will be assessed a surcharge to cover the cost of additional water. Using water wisely could save the District and its customers millions of dollars in penalties from MWD.

Unlike a flat "across the board" percentage cut, this method does not penalize those who have already been conserving. It also provides customers flexibility in how they will use their individual allocations.

Public Participation in the Process

LVMWD's Board of Directors will consider adoption of an ordinance that establishes the framework for customer water budgets at its March 24 and April 14 regularly scheduled meetings. Members of the public are welcome to attend to address the board with comments on the proposal. ■

Mandatory Conservation Measures Already In Effect

In response to the state and local water supply shortage, the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (LVMWD) Board of Directors has adopted mandatory water conservation measures that will carry penalties for non-compliance effective immediately.

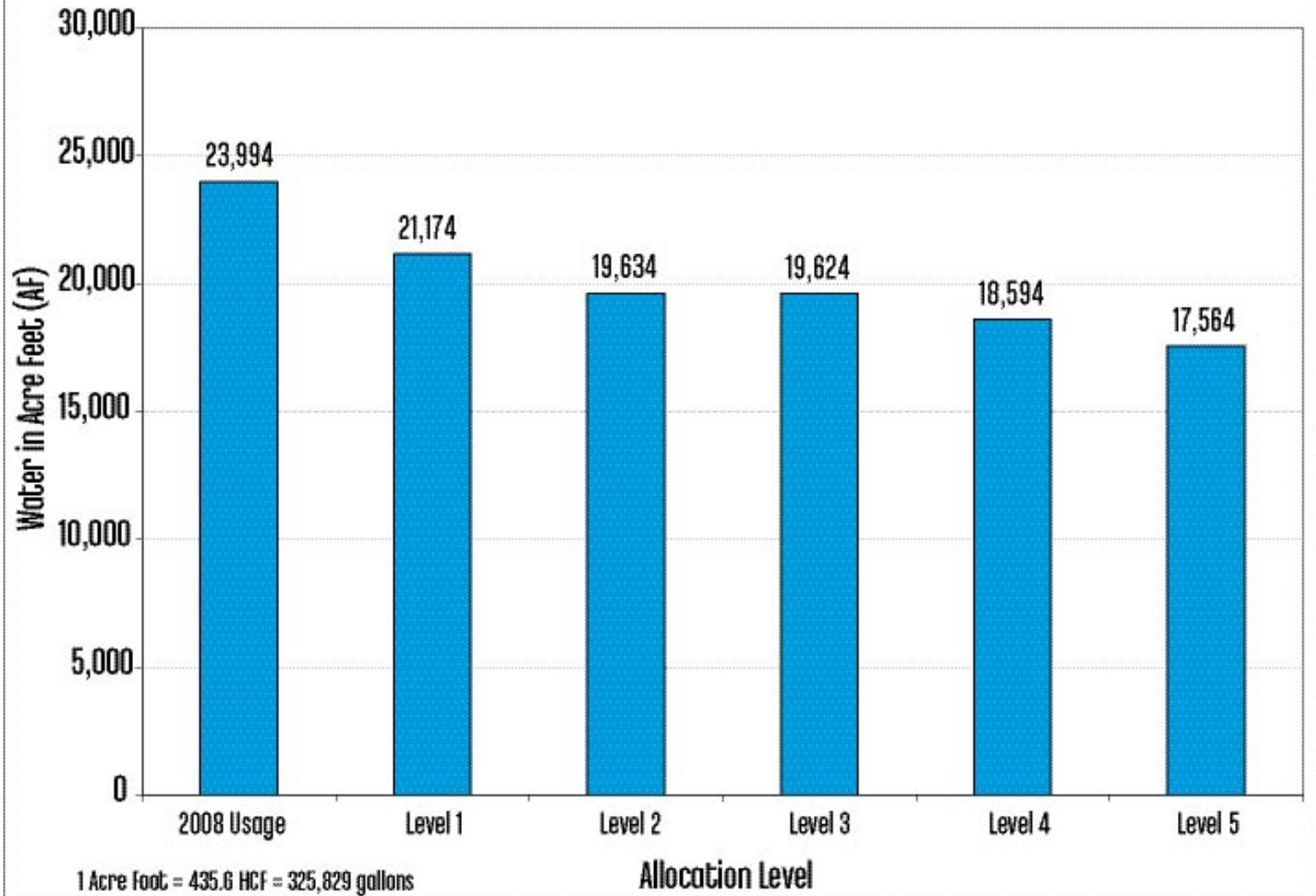
The mandatory measures include:

- ✓ Irrigation is prohibited between the hours of 10:00am and 5:00pm
- ✓ Irrigation is not permitted during periods of rain nor in the 24 hours following rainfall in excess of one inch.
- ✓ Irrigation may not run off to streets, gutters or adjacent properties.
- ✓ Potable water shall not be used to clean or sweep hard surfaces such as sidewalks, walkways, parking areas and driveways, unless an approved water conservation broom is used and only as necessary to protect public health and safety.
- ✓ Car washing is permitted only with the use of a nozzle having an automatic shut-off.
- ✓ Restaurants shall only serve water upon request.
- ✓ Hotels and motels shall offer multi-night guests the option to retain towels and linens during their stay.

The public may report violations by calling 818-251-2180.

Violations of the adopted measures will escalate from a warning letter for the first violation and fines of up to \$250, with the potential for restriction or termination of service after repeated violations. ■

MWD Water Shortage Allocation to LVMWD



The Conservation Challenge – The first bar shows LVMWD’s total customer water use last year. The remaining bars, numbered 1 through 5 show the allocations LVMWD will receive from Metropolitan in response to water supply availability. For example, a “Level 4” allocation would translate to a customer reduction between 20 and 25 percent. ■

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Conservation Checklist

- ✓ Check for leaks around faucets, washer hoses and irrigation valves
- ✓ Be sure your irrigation timer is set to water only twice per week
- ✓ Inform your landscape contractor about water-wise practices
- ✓ There should be no irrigation runoff from your property
- ✓ Turn off your irrigation system when rain is expected
- ✓ Repair broken sprinkler heads and irrigation pipes immediately
- ✓ Wash only full loads of clothes and dishes
- ✓ Replace older “high flow” toilets and showerheads with water-efficient models
- ✓ Don’t use the hose to wash down hardscape – use a broom or blower instead

For more information on conservation and rebate programs, visit www.LVMWD.com or call Customer Service at 818-251-2200. ■