



San Dieguito Water District

# Currents

A Water Conservation Newsletter Published for Customers of San Dieguito Water District • Spring 2009

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— Larry Watt,  
SDWD General Manager

## Water Cutbacks Loom Despite a Rainy Winter, Drought Continues — Mandatory Restrictions Are Likely This Summer

In February 2009, the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) urged residents and businesses to increase water conservation efforts now and prepare for cutbacks that may begin this summer. Supply shortages imposed by the Metropolitan Water District would require that SDCWA reduce deliveries to its member agencies throughout San Diego County, including San Dieguito Water District (SDWD), resulting in mandatory water restrictions for customers.

Although our area received a moderate amount of rain this winter, California is in its third consecutive dry year, with snowpack levels (including the Sierra snowpack, which represents one-third of California's water supply) considerably below normal. River runoff in northern and central watersheds (notably, the Sacramento and San Joaquin river systems) has remained below average for more than two years in a row. Key reservoirs around the state hover near record-low levels.

Adding to current drought conditions are environmental issues. Regulatory restrictions have been imposed on pumping water from northern California to southern California through the State Water Project (SWP) to protect the Delta smelt fish. Additional restrictions to protect salmon and steelhead fish could be ordered this spring. San Diego County generally receives 30 percent of its water from the SWP.

SDWD General Manager Larry Watt reports, "Based on the above conditions, it's no wonder that on February 27, 2009, Governor Schwarzenegger proclaimed a Statewide Drought Emergency and urged Californians to cut water use by 20 percent. About 80-90 percent of the County's water supply is imported. I encourage our customers to continue following the conscientious water conservation practices that many have already initiated. We expect the water supply situation to become increasingly worse as the year goes on."

# H<sub>2</sub>O!

Although Encinitas features Batiquitos Lagoon to the north, San Elijo Lagoon to the south and the Pacific Ocean along the west, we live in a semi-arid desert.

## Join Our Conservation Team

Some elements of the drought, such as rainfall, snowpack, and environmental/political decisions, are beyond our control. But an important element lies in our hands: the hands that turn off the tap while we're brushing our teeth; that pick up a broom instead of a hose to clean the driveway; that click over to websites to participate in conservation and rebate programs.

SDWD invites all customers to participate in our drought response conservation program, which is designed to help people meet voluntary and mandatory water restrictions. Here are a few ways to begin. For more information, please contact SDWD's Water Conservation Coordinator at (760) 633-2676.

- **Homeowners:** Visit [www.socalwatersmart.com](http://www.socalwatersmart.com) for rebates on items inside your home (e.g., high-efficiency toilets and washing machines) and outdoors (e.g., weather-based irrigation controllers and artificial turf).
- **HOAs:** Visit [www.20gallonchallenge.com](http://www.20gallonchallenge.com) to learn how to meet future water availability limits, protect

landscape investments and save money in the form of maintenance, water and energy consumption.

Several HOAs have begun the process by taking advantage of SDWD's-subsidized water use audit, at no charge to customers.

- **Hospitality industry:** Serve water and change sheets and linens only upon request.
- **Commercial enterprises and multi-family housing:** Visit [www.mwdsaveabuck.com](http://www.mwdsaveabuck.com) to learn about and obtain rebates on a variety of equipment.



SDWD customer Jane Schmauss says she has practiced water conservation at her Cardiff home for 40 years.



San Dieguito Water District  
Drought Response Conservation Program ...  
The water we save today can save tomorrow.

# Take Advantage of Convenient Payment and Service Options



Program Assistant Samantha Morrow invites people to take advantage of customer-friendly SDWD services.

In these conservation-oriented times, SDWD offers several customer service programs to conserve time and energy as well as water usage.

- A **Payment Drop Box** is located near the SDWD entrance at 160 Calle Magdalena. It can be accessed 24 hours a day. Place your payment with stub in an envelope labeled with your name and account number (no cash, please).
- Use our **Automatic Payment Program** to have your payment automatically withdrawn from your bank account. This free service makes it easier to pay your water bill and eliminates the possibility of late payments. You can get an Automatic Payment Form by stopping by the SDWD office or calling (760) 633-2658 to request a form in the mail. You can download a form by typing "SDWD Automatic Payment Form" in your Internet search engine.

- Visit our **Online Customer Service Center** to make a Credit Card Payment or to view the last three years of your water usage and billing history. The information can be invaluable in helping you monitor and conserve. Here's how to access the Center:



1. Go to [www.CityofEncinitas.org](http://www.CityofEncinitas.org) and click on the water faucet.
2. Follow the easy directions to register.
3. Once you're logged in, you can view consumption history, make a payment, edit your mailing address, view your account balance and change your PIN.

## DIY Tips for Homeowners

### Looking for a Great Read? Try Your Meter!

As water conservation becomes more critical, learning how to read your water meter is a great way to track water usage and check for leaks. Here are some general meter-reading tips. If you need assistance, please call (760) 633-2810. Customers are responsible for the water service pipes on their property side of the meter.

#### How to Check for Leaks



Catching a small leak before it gets bigger can result in a huge savings of water and money. Even slow toilet

leaks can waste enough water to fill a swimming pool in just one month.

First, make sure all taps and sprinklers are off. Next, check your meter. If the leak detection dial is turning, chances are you have a leak somewhere in your system.

1. **Locate Your Meter:** Your meter may be located near the curb in front of your home or in the alleyway behind your home.
2. **Carefully Remove the Lid:** Check for insects and other animals.
3. **Determine the Meter Size:** Most SDWD meters are  $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Newer homes have a second, 1" meter to serve fire sprinkler systems.
4. **Read Your Meter:** SDWD meters read in 100 cubic feet, equating to 748 gallons per unit. The number shown under the words **Cubic Feet** indicate the total cubic feet of water recorded since the meter was installed.
5. **Determine Water Usage:** Write down the number of cubic feet the first time you read your meter. The next time you check it, write down the new number. Subtract the first from the second number to ascertain your water usage over the given period.



Each dial rotation equals one cubic foot or 7.48 gallons.

### Get to Know Your Pressure Regulator

Water pressure is created by water forcing its way through the distribution system to your tap. The water pressure at your home depends upon its elevation and your proximity to the reservoir that serves your home.

Too much water pressure can cause household pipes and appliances to malfunction. To address this problem in high-pressure areas, pressure regulators may have been installed. Although the bell-shaped devices are preset by the manufacturer, they can malfunction. To avoid damaging indoor pipes, regulators should be set at 50-60 PSI. Since pressure

regulators are considered part of a homeowner's private water system, we recommend you contact a plumber to make adjustments.

Outdoors, high pressure can cause water waste, reports SDWD Engineering Specialist Felice Tacktil. "Too much pressure causes sprinklers to mist, with most water lost to wind drift. If you notice that your sprinklers mist or conversely have a short reach, you might consider getting a pressure regulator designed specifically for your landscape irrigation system." She advises people seeking further information on irrigation issues to call her at (760) 633-2676.



**San Dieguito  
Water District**

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