

On Tap

Governor Declares End of Drought in Most Counties

On Friday, April 7, 2017, Governor Brown issued an Executive Order B-40-17 to lift the drought emergency restrictions in all California counties except Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Tuolumne, where emergency drinking water projects will continue to help address diminished groundwater supplies. The order also rescinds two previous emergency proclamations from January and April 2014 and four drought-related executive orders issued in 2014 and 2015. The action ends the statewide emergency drought proclamation put in place by the Governor on January 17, 2014.

How Does this Order Relate to TUD Customers?



Lyons Reservoir – April 2017

To understand the continuing drought designation for Tuolumne County that is identified in the governor's most recent actions, it is important to distinguish between groundwater and surface water.

Groundwater relates to wells drilled for the purpose of extracting a water supply from underground. Surface water refers to water supplies from rivers, streams and reservoirs. Many groundwater wells in Tuolumne County have not recovered from the drought conditions of the past several dry years, and may not for many years to come. The governor's identification of continuing

drought conditions in Tuolumne County refers to groundwater and the continuing need for alternatives to dry and contaminated wells that resulted from the damaging effects of the drought.

Tuolumne Utilities District's (TUD) surface water supply (Pinecrest Lake and Lyons Reservoir) on the other hand is secure this year and as in 2016, TUD will not need to enact drought restrictions relative to water use. Notwithstanding the current favorable watershed conditions, it is important to note that TUD's water supply outlook is dependent on weather conditions and can fluctuate depending upon how those conditions affect the snowpack in the watershed. So, while the District's surface water condition outlook is presently favorable, it is susceptible to revision if the watershed experiences any long, warm and sustained dry periods this spring and summer. The watershed, upon which TUD relies for surface water, resets itself each year and is entirely dependent on snowpack developing in the winter to supply water in the summer.

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"This drought emergency is over, but the next drought could be around the corner," Governor Brown stated in a written release, so "conservation must remain a way of life." Last May, Governor Brown signed Executive Order B-37-16, which directed state agencies to develop a new approach to long-term water conservation that will make the state more resilient to future droughts. The State Water Resources Control Board is currently working on conservation measures that would apply on a statewide basis.

Making Conservation A Way of Life

The State Water Resources Control Board has released a long-term water conservation framework that seeks to continue to Make Conservation a Way of Life in California. The state has yet to set these conservation standards but they are intended to be tailored to meet local hydrological conditions, population, industry and other conditions. The process to establish the long-term water conservation standards will begin in 2018. Once finalized, the conservation standards are expected to go into effect in 2021. These restrictions may include a 55 gallon per day per capita limitation on indoor water use and a 45 gallon per day limitation on outdoor water use. We await development of formal regulatory proposals that we will review and comment on. TUD encourages all customers to closely monitor the Water Board's proposals on this issue.

The District encourages customers to use water wisely. For more information on conservation, go to <http://www.tudwater.com/water-conservation/>

New Toilet Rebate Program in Tuolumne County



Due to recent grant funding, all Tuolumne County residents are now eligible for the Watersense Toilet and Showerhead Rebate! Tuolumne Utilities District, and Twain Harte Community Service District, in partnership with the Tuolumne County Resource Conservation District, are offering a rebate of up to \$100.00 for one Watersense labeled toilet and up to \$25.00 for one Watersense labeled showerhead (one application per household). According to the EPA, replacing just one conventional toilet and one conventional showerhead with Watersense approved models could save the average American household 15,900 gallons of water per year! And some models can be found at a price below the rebate amount.

Applications with receipts dated as of January 1, 2017 are eligible to receive a rebate. This water conservation program is available through grant funding. The program is anticipated to be completed by November 30, 2018. Apply early and start saving today! If you are interested in applying for the rebate or would like more information, go to <http://www.tudwater.com/water-conservation/>

Hazardous Tree Removal Update



Tree removal – Skyline Tank, Ponderosa Hills

Tuolumne Utilities District (TUD) has been implementing a Hazard Tree Management Plan since 2015 to combat the damage caused by the bark beetle. The ongoing drought has made trees in this region susceptible to epidemic infestation of the native bark beetles causing vast tree mortality particularly in proximity to TUD buildings, tanks, structures and ditches.

Governor Brown declared a state of emergency in October 30, 2015 and issued an Emergency Proclamation in High Hazard Zones due to extensive tree mortality. TUD was approved in February, 2016 for funding to address this hazard through the California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) program for damages under CDAA-2015-05. (75% of the expenses for tree removal are reimbursable under this funding source.) Since then, TUD has removed over 400 hazardous trees near TUD water tanks, wells and other

infrastructure. TUD is currently working with a Licensed Timber Operator to remove approximately 190 dead and dying hazard trees found in proximity to the Section 4 ditch and about 45 dead and dying trees in proximity to the Columbia College sewer lift station. This phase of the tree mortality project is estimated to be completed by mid-May.

Other Hazard Tree Removal Projects



Tree marked for removal –
Section 4 ditch, Twain Harte

The District has recently sent letters to property owners along the Soulsbyville ditch. It is estimated that 1,000 hazardous trees will need to be removed in this area to protect the ditch system. The anticipated hazardous tree removal start date for the Soulsbyville ditch project is June 2017.

After the Soulsbyville ditch hazardous tree removal project, the District plans to remove hazardous trees along the Eureka ditch which spans from Twain Harte to Ponderosa Hills. It is estimated that 1,800 hazardous trees will need to be removed in this area. This project is anticipated to start in late summer 2017.

Please use caution while the licensed tree operators are in the project work areas. The District appreciates your patience and cooperation as we work to improve the safety of our infrastructure and ditch systems. For more information on tree mortality projects throughout Tuolumne County, visit the County's website at: <http://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/>

Building a Raised Bed Vegetable Garden from Scratch

By University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Wendy Weidenman of Tuolumne County

Recently I bought a very nice home on several acres that was beautifully landscaped. Being a Master Gardener, I truly appreciated the mostly drought tolerant and native plants, with the occasional thirsty ornamentals mixed into the fray. However, I quickly noticed the few raised beds built for growing vegetables were not well placed for sun exposure. I needed to start a new vegetable garden from scratch.

Once a suitable location in the yard was decided upon, I chose to transition from wall blocks, used by the previous owner for the raised beds, to wood. Wood is much easier to work with. The area chosen allowed for the number of beds needed, a minimum of excavation for leveling each bed, a water source, and at least 6 hours of sun exposure. Deciding to go with 2-inch by 8-inch cedar boards, I made a trip to my local lumber mill for true 2-inch thick boards. The boards were purchased at 8-foot lengths to minimize the need for additional cutting once I got them home. I found hardware cloth with ½ inch mesh for much needed gopher control and 4-inch SDS heavy duty connector screws at my local hardware store. Any wood screw, at least 4 inches long, will do. For extra strength I used 4 x 4 redwood posts, cut to the height of my bed adding more support to the four inside corners. My finished bed is “two boards deep”

to achieve a depth of 16 inches. This is much better for vegetables like asparagus and tomatoes. Once I had the first set of boards built into a box, I attached the wire to the bottom of the box using a staple gun, 9/16 heavy duty staples, and a piece of hardware cloth cut to the size of my box, in this case 4-foot x 8-foot. Hardware cloth is far more durable than chicken wire. The wire was stapled about every 1 to 2 inches to avoid any avenues for gophers.

Leveling my chosen area was the most labor intensive part of the process. To make the job easier I used a 4-foot level and an 8-foot board. Once the boxes were placed, I found some very nice soil sold by a local entrepreneur who does his own processing. Each box holds about 1.5 yards. As a final touch, I mixed about two inches of well-aged (3 – 4 month old) horse manure into the soil of each bed. I'm now ready to plant once the soil is warm enough.



General Manager's Corner

By Thomas J. Haglund, thaglund@tudwater.com

TUD and Fiscal Responsibility



In May 2016, the Tuolumne Utilities District (“TUD” or “District”) Board of Directors (“Board”) adopted a two-year, or biennial, budget for fiscal years 2017 and 2018 (“FY17” and “FY18”). Each fiscal year was predicated on a balanced operating budget. The Board’s budgetary approval set in motion strong efforts to live up to both the Vision and Mission statements as articulated in the 15-year Strategic Plan that the Board developed just a few months earlier. At the outset of that first strategic

planning session the Board identified that the long term viability of the District centered on fiscal sustainability, and the Board indelibly stamped its Strategic Plan with that goal. Then, again, in 2017, a newly constituted Board reaffirmed its commitment to fiscal sustainability and all that assurance entails when making financially responsible decisions. To amplify all of this the Board identified as one of its four overarching goals that the District would be a *financially responsible organization*.

So, just what does fiscal sustainability mean? A technical answer to that question is that fiscal sustainability is the ability of the government entity to sustain expenditure obligations and revenue strategies over time in a way that ensures the agency’s long term ability to provide its services without the threat of default. In this way, fiscal sustainability is achieved by holding fast to a financial philosophy that recognizes that financial strength is about considering the revenue and expenditure implications of each decision the District makes at the time the District is making the specific decision. TUD’s balanced operating budget approach is a good start, but the long term effect of financial decisions is what matters.

The Board has articulated its financial philosophy that the District provide its services at the lowest possible cost given that District customers provide the revenue necessary to fund expenses. As a governmental agency the District has no profit motive. Yet, the cost of infrastructure to provide safe clean drinking water and treat wastewater in conformance with regulatory requirements can be considerable. As the District looks to the future and addresses issues such as regionalizing water treatment facilities, identifying long term water storage and supply options, and budgets for the long term maintenance and operation of its current facilities and services, it will be important for the District to hold true to the principles of financially sustainable decision making to ensure that expenditures, and the rates that support them, are reasonable. The District will do just that.

Two Ways to Stay Informed

Get Involved – TUD Board Meetings

TUD’s Regular Board meetings generally occur on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

Check our website regularly at

<http://www.tudwater.com/board-meetings/>

for the latest Board meeting dates.



Stay up to date with the latest activities at TUD by following us on Facebook. We post weekly updates on traffic alerts, projects, tips from our local Master Gardeners, weather updates and other interesting topics. Follow us today!

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