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FALL 2008

A NEWSLETTER FOR CUSTOMERS OF THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT



## The State of Our Water



*Reservoirs across California, including Lake Oroville north of Sacramento, are rapidly being depleted.*

Recently, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger proclaimed a statewide drought following two years of below-average rainfall and very low snowmelt runoff. In addition to record low precipitation levels, he cited court-ordered pumping restrictions on water deliveries from the State Water Project (SWP) that have reduced water supplies and led to rapidly depleted water storage levels across much of the state.

The federal court-ordered restrictions have been in place since December of 2007 and may continue long-term. Additional restrictions have been ordered as well.

The drought and pumping restrictions have severely reduced the reliability of the water supply across much of California. State officials estimate pumping restrictions alone have reduced Southern California's water deliveries from the SWP by as much as 30 percent. Thus far, the restrictions have cut 500,000 acre-feet of water deliveries to SWP customers. This is enough water to meet the annual needs for a million families.

The impact of these supply reductions is being felt by thousands of growers and agricultural water users in San Diego who have had those supplies cut by 30 percent this year. Growers responded by stumping

trees and taking crops out of production.

The reduction in supply is impacting the cost of water as wholesalers must pay more to acquire water to meet daily demands. The cost increase will eventually be reflected on individual rate payers' water bills.

Supply reductions may also cause shortages in 2009. This could result in no new construction or developments projects, no annexations, and strict limits on all water used for irrigation and non-public health purposes. This will affect our quality-of-life, jobs, business expansion, and the economic health of the region.

We control our own future in regards to our water supply and conservation is the answer. The Otay Water District offers a host of incentive programs on water saving devices for residential, business, and institutional customers, in addition to programs to help you save water. We are also working with the San Diego County Water Authority in promoting the 20-Gallon Challenge. The 20-Gallon Challenge is a call for residents and businesses to reduce water use by an average of 20 gallons per person, per day.

Saving water is simple! All residential customers and businesses can immediately begin saving water by cutting back

### Otay Water District **DROUGHT WATCH**

#### **LEVEL IV - DROUGHT EMERGENCY**

Stop all landscape irrigation.  
No new construction, annexations or development.  
Conservation goal: more than 40%.

#### **LEVEL III - DROUGHT CRITICAL**

No new construction, annexations or development. Strict limits on water used for irrigation and non-public health purposes.  
Conservation goal: up to 40%.

#### **LEVEL II - DROUGHT ALERT**

Mandatory water use restrictions. Irrigate no more than 3 days per week, 15 minutes per station.  
Conservation goal: up to 20%.

#### **LEVEL I - DROUGHT WATCH**

Voluntary measures to stop waste. Repair leaks promptly. Wash cars with a bucket and shut-off nozzle.  
Conservation goal: up to 10%.

### Otay Water District Continues Level I Drought Watch

In response to Governor Schwarzenegger's California state drought proclamation, the Otay Water District (OWD) has issued a Level I Drought Watch for its service area.

Ratepayers are strongly urged to reduce their water use by 10%.

irrigation to three days per week or less. Irrigations systems should be turned off during rainy weather and should remain off for three to seven days depending on the amount of rainfall.

If you would like to add to your existing conservation efforts (remember every drop counts!), please take the 20-Gallon Challenge or visit [www.otaywater.gov](http://www.otaywater.gov) for more ways to conserve and incentives to save water.



## Fall Back on Your Watering

As the cooler days of fall arrive, landscapes require less water. As a general rule, we can decrease our landscape watering by 10% each month until the winter rains arrive. By mid-November, landscapes need about 30% less water compared with the summer months. However, you should still monitor the soil moisture to ensure that the plants are not stressed. Occasionally check to make sure your plants are not drying out. In the event of a Santa Ana, you may need to increase the frequency of your watering.

Also remember to adjust the watering times on your irrigation controller. If you do not have the instruction manual, visit the Web and search under the manufacturer's name. Most manufacturers have their instructions manuals on their web page. Many controllers also have a water budget or percent adjustment feature that you can use to regulate your watering times.

The fall is also a great time to change the batteries in your irrigation controller. Most controllers have batteries that should be replaced about once a year. Should a power outage occur, your irrigation schedule would be lost and your controller would default to watering each station ten minutes per day, every day.

The Otay Water District offers a \$350 rebate off the cost of a weather "smart" irrigation controller that automatically adjusts your water schedule. Also, check our website for our new \$4.00 per head rebate on rotating sprinkler nozzles. These rotating nozzles are 20% more efficient than conventional sprinkler heads. They save water by providing a more directed, uniform distribution of water across your landscape and eliminating wasteful runoff. Check our website for qualifying models.

With shorter and cooler days, the fall is a great time for planting. Many plants, especially California-friendly plants do best if planted and given a chance to establish a more extensive root structure before the winter rains and the heat of summer. Plants grown in the spring will have less time to focus their energies on establishment before the summer months arrive.

Also, consider enrolling in a landscape course at the Water Conservation Garden. Classes cover topics such as landscape and irrigation design, container gardening, and fire-wise landscape techniques. Space is limited, so call the Garden at 619-660-0614 or visit their website at [www.thegarden.org](http://www.thegarden.org).

For more information on saving water around your home or in your garden, please visit [www.otaywater.gov](http://www.otaywater.gov).

### OTAY WATER DISTRICT – Board of Directors

The Board of Directors meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 3:30 pm in the Board meeting room. The public is encouraged to attend at 2554 Sweetwater Spring Blvd., Spring Valley, CA.

#### President

Gary Croucher, Division 3  
[gcroucher@otaywater.gov](mailto:gcroucher@otaywater.gov)

#### Vice-President

Jose Lopez, Division 4  
[jlopez@otaywater.gov](mailto:jlopez@otaywater.gov)

#### Treasurer

Jaime Bonilla, Division 2  
[jbquilla@otaywater.gov](mailto:jbquilla@otaywater.gov)

#### Boardmember

Larry Breitfelder, Division 1  
[lbreitfelder@otaywater.gov](mailto:lbreitfelder@otaywater.gov)

#### Boardmember

Mark Robak, Division 5  
[OtayWater@cox.net](mailto:OtayWater@cox.net)

## REPORT Metal Theft

Across the nation there has been a rash of metal theft from public water agencies and private property. Thieves are stealing backflow prevention devices from along public streets, in front of businesses, apartment complexes, even public parks, often in broad daylight. Backflow parts are sold as scrap to metal recyclers for a few cents per pound. These thefts are not limited to backflow devices but also include brass water meters, fire hydrant caps, manhole covers, even urns from cemeteries.

Under Otay Water District policy, maintaining a backflow prevention device is the responsibility of the business customer or property owner. Replacing stolen backflow devices, which are used to prevent contamination of the public's water supply, can be costly.

There are things you can do to reduce your chance of being a victim of backflow theft. Several companies market metal enclosures to cover the backflow devices, which are bolted to concrete pads. The public is also urged to be on the lookout for anyone tampering with or stealing these items.

The district is working closely with law enforcement and will prosecute anyone stealing or buying the stolen parts. Not only is this a crime, it involves tampering with the public water supply and all cases are forwarded to the District Attorney for prosecution. If you witness anyone stealing fire hydrant caps, manhole covers, backflow prevention devices, water meters, or irrigation valves, immediately call the local police or County Sheriff.





Sat. Dec. 6, 10:00 AM-1:00 PM

**Toss Your Turf; Less Water, Less Grass, More fun!** —Vickie Driver

Join Vickie Driver for a short course in turf removal, tips for evaluating your soil, tuning up your irrigation system, plus creative ideas for a beautiful low water use landscape in lieu of lawn!

First Sun. of the Month—Dec. 7, 1:30 PM

**Ask the Horticulturist Tour**

Enjoy an informative walk through the Garden with one of our professional horticultural staff. Bring your questions and prepare for this interesting tour from the perspective of those who know the Garden so well! Meet at the main entrance to the Garden. Tour will take 45 minutes to 1 hour. **FREE!**

January 17, 9:30-12:30 PM

**Plant Propagation Made Easy**

—Landscape Designer, Connie Beck

Learn the secrets of professionals, and get plants for free! Everything you need to know about how to make new plants from cuttings will be taught by Connie Beck, experienced nursery manager and landscape designer. Learn techniques for preparing, storing and planting seeds. Bring samples of plants you wish to propagate. \$30.00 Members, \$40.00 Non-Members.

Sat. Dec. 6 1:00-4:00-Eliz office

**Ask the Designer**

—Landscape Designer, Connie Beck

Professional Landscape Designer, Connie Beck will give personalized 45-minute landscape design consultations. Bring a photo of your area, your project dimensions, and ideas you like from magazines. Connie will provide practical advice and suggestions for creating your uniquely beautiful low water use landscape. Call for your time slot: 619-660-0614 x10 \$40.00 for Members, \$50.00 Non-Members.

Saturday Afternoon Water-Wise Series

**Water Wise Series**

The following classes can be taken individually or as a pre-paid series of 3 classes. Please pre-register: 10 student minimum per class. Individual Classes: \$15 Members, \$25 Non-Members; Series: \$30 Members, \$60 Non-Members.

Saturday, Jan. 17, 1:00-4:00 PM

1. Designing with California Friendly® Plants  
Landscape Designer Jan Tubiolo

Saturday, Jan. 24, 1:00-4:00 PM

2. Irrigation Design for Water-Wise Gardens  
Kathy Eagle, Dir. of Horticulture at Barona

Saturday, Jan. 31, 1:00-4:00 PM

3. Mulch, Compost, Fertilizer!  
Landscape Designer Jan Tubiolo

# Bye Bye Grass II

In the last issue, I described several ways to remove you lawn. Now that it is gone (it is gone, isn't it?), what will you replace it with?

So often, a homeowner's initial impulse is to replace a lawn with a something that looks and acts like lawn, most often a low growing groundcover. But as a friend of mine likes to say, every plant covers the ground. So why look for something low and flat, when you could convert your former lawn into a beautiful, colorful border of low water-use flowering perennials, trees and shrubs? Or a bountiful vegetable garden? Maybe you'd like a secluded seating area or a lovely, flowing meadow.

All of these options are completely doable with a little planning and some elbow grease (yours or someone else's). Let's assume that you've decided that a lovely, low water-use, flowering border is ideal for your space.

**AS YOU CREATE YOUR NEW GARDEN, CONSIDER:**

**What shape will your border be?** Divide your former lawn into large beds divided by paths. Curve edged beds look informal and naturalistic. Beds defined by straight lines are more formal.

**Where will paths go?** Curved paths complement curving beds. They lend themselves to strolling and relaxing, whereas straight paths are more utilitarian, more about moving from point A to point B.

**What will you make paths of?** Decomposed granite (DG) is inexpensive, easy to install and allows water to penetrate rather than running off into storm drains. New permeable concrete materials are tougher and longer lasting yet allow water to absorb into the soil. Brick or pavers set in sand rather than mortared also allow water to pass through to the soil below.

As beds and paths are defined, update and reconfigure your irrigation system to match. The most water efficient irrigation is drip irrigation. It delivers water directly to the roots where plants need it. Since drip is slow, water penetrates deep into the soil rather than running off onto sidewalks and streets. Drip irrigation is easy to install and easy to maintain. One more thing – never mix drip and overhead sprinklers on the same valve. They operate at different pressures so neither works well when mixed.

Choose plants from Mediterranean climates. California, like the Mediterranean basin, western Chile, southern and western Australia and southern Africa all have the same kind of climate; long, hot dry summers and mild winters with precipitation in winter. As a result, plants from any of these regions are adapted to all of these regions. Fortunately for us, Mediterranean climate plants are beautiful, use little water, and are low maintenance. And they can be mixed and matched to create the perfect San Diego area garden.

For more in depth information about how to get rid of your lawn and what to replace it with, attend for Bye Bye Grass, a two-session class taught at The Water Conservation Garden ([www.TheGarden.com](http://www.TheGarden.com)) and at Quail Botanical Gardens ([www.qbgardens.org](http://www.qbgardens.org)).

Nan Sterman is a gardening expert, garden designer, and author of California Gardener's Guide Volume II. She is the creator of Bye Bye Grass.

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## Take the 20-Gallon Challenge and get DISCOUNTS TO LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

**\$2 DISCOUNT**  
at the San Diego Natural History Museum  
or the Museum of Man for up to 4 people

Features included the:

**H2O = Equals Life Exhibit**

Visit [www.20gallonchallenge.com](http://www.20gallonchallenge.com) and complete the pledge form. Once you submit the form, print a copy of your certificate and present it to the Natural History Museum or the Museum of Man to receive your discount.

**20% DISCOUNT**  
to LEGOLAND® California

Complete and submit the 20-Gallon Challenge pledge form then click on the LEGOLAND® logo at the bottom of your certificate. Print both the certificate AND the LEGOLAND® coupon and present it to LEGOLAND® in Carlsbad to receive the discount.

# El Estado de Nuestra Agua



*Depositos a través de California, incluyendo Lake Oroville al Norte de Sacramento, se están agotando rápidamente.*

A principios de junio del 2008, el gobernador Arnold Schwarzenegger declaró la sequía en todo el Estado de California, tras dos años con un registro de lluvias por debajo del promedio y un deshielo inferior a lo normal. Además de registrar bajos niveles de precipitación, menciono las restricciones de las bombas abastecedoras de agua provenientes del Proyecto de Agua Estatal (SWP), que han reducido el suministro de agua y han llevado a los niveles de almacenamiento de agua a agotarse rápidamente en gran parte del estado.

Las restricciones que ordenó el tribunal federal han estado en vigor desde diciembre del 2007 y puede que continúen a largo plazo. Otras restricciones adicionales también han sido ordenadas.

La sequía y las restricciones de bombeo han reducido drásticamente la seguridad del suministro de agua alrededor del estado de California. Los funcionarios del estado han estimado que tan solo las restricciones de bombeo, han reducido las entregas de agua de la SWP por 30% en el sur de California. Hasta ahora, las restricciones han reducido 500,000 acres-pies de entregas de agua por el SWP a sus clientes. Esta cantidad de agua es suficiente para satisfacer las necesidades anuales de un millón de familias.

Estas reducciones de agua han causado un gran impacto a miles de productores agropecuarios en San Diego ya que solamente este año se les ha reducido

el suministro de agua por 30% llevando a los agricultores a abandonar cultivos y a gastar en soluciones de corto plazo.

La reducción de suministros está afectando el costo del agua, ya que aquellos que compran de mayoreo deben pagar más para adquirir la suficiente cantidad de agua para satisfacer las demandas cotidianas. El aumento de los costos se verá reflejado en las facturas de agua de individuos contribuyentes.

La reducción de suministros también puede causar una escasez de agua para el 2009. Como resultado, nuevas construcciones y proyectos de desarrollo no podrán continuar y además, habrá límites estrictos en las cantidades de agua no solamente utilizadas para el riego sino para otros usos que no incluyen proyectos de salud pública. Esto afectará nuestra calidad de vida, empleos, la expansión de negocios, y la salud económica de la región.

Nosotros controlamos nuestro propio futuro en lo que respecta a nuestro suministro de agua y la conservación de agua es la respuesta. El distrito de agua de Otay ofrece programas de conservación que proveen incentivos para cubrir el costo de equipos y aparatos que ayudan a hacer más eficiente el uso del agua, tanto dentro como fuera de los hogares o negocios. También estamos trabajando con la Autoridad del Agua del Condado de San Diego para promover el Desafío de 20 Galones. El Desafío de 20 Galones es una llamada a los residentes y a las empresas para re-

## Distrito de agua de Otay Estado de Vigilancia por Sequía

### SEQUIA - NIVEL IV ESTADO DE EMERGENCIA

Alto al riego de jardines  
Ninguna construcción de anexos o desarrollos nuevos.  
Meta de Conservación: Mas de 40%.

### SEQUIA - NIVEL III ESTADO CRITICO

Ninguna construcción de anexos o desarrollos nuevos. Límites estrictos de la cantidad de agua utilizada para el riego y otros usos que no incluyen proyectos de salud pública. Meta de Conservación: Hasta el 40%.

### SEQUIA - NIVEL II ESTADO DE ALERTA

Restricciones obligatorias del uso del agua. No riegue mas de 3 días por semanas, y 15 minutos por estación.  
Meta de Conservación: Hasta el 20%.

### SEQUIA - NIVEL I ESTADO DE VIGILANCIA

Medidas voluntarias para detener los residuos. Reparar las fugas rápidamente. Lavar su auto con una cubeta y una manguera con boquilla de cierre automático. Meta de Conservación: Hasta el 10%.

For specific restrictions visit [www.otaywater.gov](http://www.otaywater.gov)

## Otay Water District Declara Estado de Vigilancia por Sequía Nivel I

En respuesta a la proclamación de sequía del estado de California por el Gobernador Schwarzenegger, Otay Water District (OWD) ha declarado Estado de vigilancia por Sequía Nivel I para su área de servicio. Dentro de este nivel se exhorta a los usuarios reducir su uso del agua por un 10%.

ducir el uso de agua por un promedio de 20 galones por día y por persona.

¡Conservar el agua es sencillo! Todos los clientes residenciales y las empresas pueden comenzar de inmediato a conservar agua mediante la reducción de riego a tres días por semana o menos. Sistemas de riego deberían estar apagados durante días de lluvia y seguir apagados de tres a siete días dependiendo de la pluviosidad.

Si desea añadir más a sus esfuerzos actuales de conservación (¡recuerde que cada gota cuenta!), por favor, únase a El Desafío de 20 Galones o visite [www.otaywater.gov](http://www.otaywater.gov) para más obtener más información sobre diferentes formas de conservar agua e incentivos disponibles para ayudar a hacer más eficiente el uso del agua en su hogar o negocio.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT CALL 619.670.2222 OR GO TO [WWW.OTAYWATER.GOV](http://WWW.OTAYWATER.GOV)