THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT • PROUDLY SERVING EAST COUNTY AND THE SOUTH BAY SINCE 1956

pipeline

WINTER 2011

A NEWSLETTER FOR CUSTOMERS OF THE OTAY WATER DISTRICT

Water Supply Outlook 2011

Despite receiving an above average level of early season precipitation, there are still multiple factors that could potentially affect our water supply in 2011.

Semi-arid San Diego County imports approximately 80 percent of its water supply. This water comes from Northern California and the Colorado River through a long, complex system of aqueducts, reservoirs and pump stations. With years of drought in Northern California and the Colorado River basin as well as pumping restrictions to the State Water Project, water deliveries to Southern California have been strained. Numerous factors, including the limited availability of supplies, have driven the price of water higher for customers.

The rain and snowfall that much of California received is a great start to 2011. Based on early precipitation reports, the state's Department of Water Resources (DWR) has announced that initial allocations to the State Water Project, a water storage and delivery system that distributes water throughout California, are 25 percent of the requested deliveries. If precipitation levels continue to rise, these projected allocations could grow to 50 percent. While this may seem like only a minimal amount, it is a big improvement on last year's initial allocation of just 5 percent.

The initial allocation is a conservative estimate of deliveries to the State Water Project and the DWR will adjust deliveries as conditions develop throughout the year. These allocations illustrate an important factor affecting our water supply - even with above average precipitation in Northern California, court ordered pumping restrictions limit the DWR's deliveries to the State Water Project and limit the ability to move water from areas of the state where it is abundant to areas where it is in much shorter supply. The pumping restrictions have been in place since 2008 and are the result of lawsuits and environmental rulings to protect the health of the fragile Sacramento - San Joaquin Bay Delta. Unfortunately, conflicts and regional animosity continue to delay viable solutions to the many challenges facing the delta, and will likely continue to delay a resolution to the crisis for years to come.

As we start the new year, we must remember that we still face challenges when it comes to our water supply. Weather forecasters from the DWR warn that the heavy precipitation we received this fall may be evidence of a La Niña weather pattern. La Niñas typically bring above average precipitation in the fall and winter months, but produce drier conditions in the spring and summer months when water is needed most. Additionally, the Colorado River, the source of two-thirds of Southern California's water supply, is still struggling to recover from years of drought. Even with the recent rains, it will take many years of above average rainfall to restore the Lake Mead and Lake Powell reservoirs to normal levels, which are currently only about half full.

In order to reduce our dependence on imported water and minimize the impact of higher wholesale water costs, the District is working to develop reliable local water supplies. Current projects include expanding the use of recycled water, developing groundwater supplies and supporting the exploration of ocean water desalination projects.

In 2011, water conservation will continue to be an important way that customers can minimize the impact of higher imported water costs. The District has useful information and programs on its website, www.otaywater.gov, to help you save water both indoors and outdoors. In the last few years, Otay customers have successfully avoided mandatory water restrictions because of your strong efforts to save water voluntarily. We thank you for your support and continued commitment to water conservation in 2011.

Automatic Bill Pay Service is Available

Enjoy the convenience and peace of mind that comes with knowing your payment will be automatically transferred from your bank, Visa or MasterCard account. Transfers are even made when you are on vacation or out of town on business so you can avoid missed payments and late fees. Customers can also choose to go paperless and avoid getting a bill in the mail each month. Save time, postage and check writing costs while gaining better control of your finances.

To enroll, please visit www.otaywater.gov and select "Pay Your Bill Online"

If you do not have Internet access or have questions about registering for this new service, please call Customer Service at 619-670-2777 to speak to one of our representatives.

Master Composter

TRAINING COURSE

Master composter training is a five-week course with instruction, lectures and discussions.

After course graduation and 30 additional hours of community service, participants will be certified to teach others about composting at workshops or events!

Next Course Begins: February 17, 2011

For more information or to resesrve a space call 619-409-5900 or visit www.chulavistaca.gov/clean

Automated Meter Reading is Coming to Your Neighborhood

Nearly two-thirds of all water meters in the Otay Water District's service area are now automated. Automated Meter Reader (AMR) meters transmit water use data via a one-way radio signal from the meter to a meter reader up to a half mile away. Rather than lifting the cover and visually inspecting the meter each month, data is transmitted electronically to a specially equipped vehicle driving through your neighborhood.

When using AMR, a single meter reader can record up to 5,000 meters during a typical eight hour shift as opposed to that same person walking up to fifteen miles and reading only approximately 700 meters – nearly a 300 percent increase. This technology helps your water district increase productivity, promote conservation, improve customer service and reduce costs.

As AMR comes to your community, here is what to expect:

As a reminder that work is taking place, you will receive a mailed notice that meter replacements will be occurring in your neighborhood. You will also receive an automated phone message as a reminder that work is beginning in your area.

You do not need to be present and we do not require access inside your home. However, please provide safe access to your water meter by clearing any obstructions from the meter cover. An installer from Pacific Meter Services will knock on your door to alert you prior to changing the meter. Each AMR meter installer will carry a contractor picture identification card. Be sure to tell people in your household about your upcoming water meter installation. If you are a landlord, please notify your tenants.

After installation, we will inform you or leave a door tag to let you know your new meter has been installed. However, a meter reader will continue to read your meter manually until all the homes in your community or on your route can be read automatically. There is no charge for the new meter.

Water service will be interrupted during the 15 to 30 minute installation process. If you have sensitive equipment in your home that cannot have its water supply turned off, pets in the yard, questions or other concerns, please call 619-670-2263 to make an installation appointment. Thank you for your cooperation during the installation of your new AMR meter.

Fluoridation in the Otay Water District

Drinking water in the Otay Water District's service area is fluoridated. The District does not add fluoride to the water supply. Rather, the District purchases treated drinking water from area water wholesalers.

Water wholesalers supplement the existing fluoride in the water supply raising it to approximately 0.7 parts per million (ppm), the level recommended by public health experts for optimal dental health.

Due to the blending of waters within the regional water distribution network, levels have varied by region and time of year. By late January 2011, all water wholesalers in San Diego County will add fluoride. This action will result in less variation in fluoride levels throughout the regional water distribution network.

Most water in San Diego County comes from the Colorado River or the Sierra snow pack. As water passes over the surface of the earth, from rain, snowmelt, streams and rivers, it picks up fluoride through the natural erosion process. Fluoride is naturally present in the water at approximately 0.2 ppm, with a range of 0.1 to 0.4 ppm. After January, all water in the region's distribution network will be consistently 0.7 ppm.

We encourage customers taking or who are considering taking fluoride supplements to consult their medical or dental health care professional.

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 Bvd., Spring Valley, CA.

President	Vice-President	Treasurer	Boardmember	Boardmember
Jaime Bonilla, Division 2	Gary Croucher, Division 3	David Gonzalez, Division 1	Jose Lopez, Division 4	Mark Robak, Division 5
jbonilla@otaywater.gov	gcroucher@otaywater.gov	dgonzalez@otaywater.gov	jlopez@otaywater.gov	OtayWater@cox.net

Composting 101

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, and yard clippings to compost.

I've been turning yard clippings and kitchen scraps to compost for more than 30 years. I've done it while living in apartments, rental homes, and homes I've owned. I've composted in big piles, small bins, and even in bales of old straw.

Composting takes some thought, some time, and sometimes energy, but the compost you make is the best thing for your garden.

What is Composting

Composting makes compost. It is the speeded up decomposition of organic matter –plant material in this case -- whose diameter is smaller than a pencil. Leaves, stems, roots, chipped or shredded wood, and flowers all can be composted. Fruits and vegetables make good compost too.

Benefits of Compost

Compost improves soils. The organic matter in compost helps clay soil drain better and sandy soil hold water better.

Compost adds "good guy" beneficial microbes to soil too. As compost breaks down and releases nutrients, those good guys quite literally deliver nutrients to plant roots. Different beneficial microbes suppress "bad guy" pathogens that cause plant diseases.

Composting is good for the environment as well. When you put leaves and grass cuttings out for pick-up, they are collected by big, gas-fueled, exhaust spewing trucks. The trucks take the materials to a composting facility, where enormous, gas-guzzling, exhaust spewing machines process it. When you buy the compost, it is delivered, by truck or car, back to your garden.

There's no question that municipal composting is far better than filling landfills with greenwaste. Still, from a sustainability standpoint, composting those materials and using them in your own backyard makes even more sense.

How to Compost

The three methods of backyard composting each have advantages and disadvantages. If you take a Master Composter Training Course, you'll learn about each in detail. Here's an overview:

Hot composting uses microbes to turn plant materials into compost. Start with a cubic yard of "brown" materials such as leaves, paper, and shredded wood, layered with equal portions of nitrogen-containing "green" materials such as fresh grass clippings and kitchen waste. Wet thoroughly to activate microbes already present on the browns and greens.

As the microbes digest the plant materials, they'll heat the pile to at least 140° F. When the temperature starts to decline, the pile is turned with a pitchfork to aerate it and restart the process. When the pile no longer heats up, the compost is done. It will look and smell like chunky brown organic matter, free of weed seeds and pathogens.

Cold composting uses microbes, worms, and other decomposers to turn plant materials into compost. Simply pile yard clippings in a corner of the garden, keep damp, and allow it to decompose without turning. In a year or two you'll have sweet-smelling, chunky brown, organic matter.

Cold composting is easy, but it doesn't kill weed seeds or pathogens. Don't add kitchen waste. Its odor will attract critters.

Vermicomposting uses red wiggler worms to turn kitchen wastes (fruits and veggies only) into compost. The worms live in a small bin or container. Vermicomposting is passive (for us, not for the worms), odorless, and quick. In warm weather, worms eat their body weight worth in a day, less in cool weather.

Tomato and other seeds survive vermicompost but are easy to pull out of the garden when they sprout. Worm castings –that's worm poop – are dark brown and have the consistency of soufflé. Use them throughout the garden.

Choose Your Compost Method

Compost Type	Time	Human Energy	Space	Yard Waste	Kitchen Waste	Kills Weed Seeds/ Pathogens, etc.
Hot Compost	6 weeks	High	Medium	X	X	X
Cold Compost	1 year	Low	Large	X		
Vermicompost	2 weeks in warm weather, 3-4 weeks cool weather	Low	Small		X	

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AT THE Garden

The Water Conservation Garden is a nearly five-acre display showcasing water conservation through a series of beautiful themed exhibits. Displays include a native plant garden and vegetable garden as well as how-to gardening and irrigation exhibits. Admission is free, and the Garden can be viewed on a self-guided tour, or through one of our programs:

- Four to six classes per month for the general public, including landscaping, gardening and art offerings
- Training in water conservation for professional landscapers
- School tours
- Regularly-scheduled adult group tours
- Tours by appointment
- Large educational special events
- Outreach programs, including a speaker's bureau

The Garden is supported by water district dues, memberships, donations, grants, facility rentals and gift shop sales. In 2005, Friends of the Water Conservation was created to increase private support for the Garden.

For more information on classes and events, visit www.thegarden.org

Pronóstico del Suministro de Agua 2011

A pesar de recibir un alto nivel de precipitación a principios de la temporada, todavía existen múltiples factores que tienen el potencial de afectar nuestro suministro de agua en el 2011.

El condado de San Diego con clima semi-árido importa aproximadamente el 80 por ciento de su suministro de agua. Esta agua proviene del norte de California y del Río Colorado a través de un sistema largo y complejo de acueductos, embalses y estaciones de bombeo. Con años de sequía en el norte de California y en los estados q rodean la cuenca delRío Colorado, así como las restricciones de bombeo al Proyecto de Agua del Estado, las entregas de agua al sur de California han sido difíciles. Una multitud de factores, incluyendo la disponibilidad limitada de suministros, ha elevado el precio del agua para los clientes.

La lluvia y las nevadas que recibió en gran parte el estado de California es un gran comienzo para el 2011. Basándose en los informes de precipitación del Departamento de Recursos Hidráulicos del Estado (DWR), se ha anunciado que la asignación inicial para el Proyecto Hidráulico del Estado, un almacenamiento de agua y sistema de distribución que distribuye el agua a través de California, son un 25 por ciento de las entregas solicitadas. Si los niveles de precipitación siguen aumentando, estas asignaciones proyectadas podrían crecer a un 50 por ciento. Si bien esto puede parecer sólo una cantidad mínima, es una gran mejora a comparación de la asignación inicial del año pasado de sólo 5 por ciento.

La asignación inicial es una estimación conservadora de las entregas al Proyecto de Agua del Estado, y el DRW modificará sus entregas como se vayan desarrollando las condiciones durante el año. Estas asignaciones demuestran un factor importante que afecta a nuestro suministro de agua - incluso con un alto nivel de precipitación en el norte de California, las restricciones de bombeo ordenadas por la corte limitan las entregas de agua de DWR para el Proyecto Hidráulico del Estado y limitan la capacidad de mover el agua de areas abundantes dentro del estado hacia zonas donde es mucho más corto el suministro de agua. Las restricciones de bombeo han estado en vigor desde el 2008 y son el resultado de las demandas y resoluciones ambientales para proteger la bahía del Sacramento - San Joaquín Delta. Por desgracia, los conflictos y animosidad a nivel regional siguen demorando las soluciones viables hacia los múltiples retos que enfrenta el delta, y probablemente seguirán demorando una solución a la crisis en los años venideros.

Al comenzar el nuevo año, debemos recordar que todavía tendremos algunos en cuanto a nuestro suministro de agua. Meteorólogos del DWR advierten que las fuertes precipitaciones que recibimos este otoño puede ser evidencia del patrón climático de La Niña. La Niña suele traer altos niveles de precipitación en los meses de otoño e invierno, pero trae condiciones más secas en los meses de primavera y verano, cuando el agua es más necesaria.

Además, el Río Colorado, la fuente de dos tercios del suministro de agua del sur de California, todavía está luchando por recuperarse de muchos años de sequía. Incluso con las recientes lluvias, todavia serán necesarios muchos años mas de altos niveles de lluvia para restaurar el Lago Mead y los embalses del Lago Powell a niveles normales, ya que actualmente los niveles estan sólo alrededor de la mitad.

Con el fin de reducir nuestra dependencia del agua importada y minimizar el impacto del aumento de los costos del agua por mayoreo, el Distrito de Agua de Otay está trabajando para desarrollar suministros locales y confiables de agua. Los proyectos actuales incluyen la expansión del uso de agua reciclada, el desarrollo de agua subterránea y el apoyo a la exploración de proyectos de desalinización de agua del océano.

En el 2011, la conservación del agua seguirá siendo un medio importante para que los clientes puedan minimizar el impacto de mayores costos de agua importada. El Distrito cuenta con información útil y programas en su pagina de internet, www.otaywater.gov, que le ayudarán a ahorrar agua tanto como en el interior asi como el exterior de su casa. En los últimos años, los clientes de Otay han logrado evitar restricciones obligatorias de agua debido a su gran esfuerzo para ahorrar agua de forma voluntaria. Le damos las gracias por su apoyo y compromiso para la conservación del agua en el 2011.

Servicio de Pago Automático ya Está Disponible

Disfrute de la comodidad y la tranquilidad de saber que su pago se transferirá automáticamente de su cuenta de banco o cuenta de Visa o MasterCard. Las transferencias se hacen incluso cuando usted está de vacaciones o fuera de la ciudad por negocios para que pueda evitar pagos atrasados y recargos por retraso. Ahorre tiempo, gastos de envío, y costos de emisión de cheques, y obtenga un mejor control de sus finanzas.

Para inscribirse, visite www.otaywater.gov y seleccione "Pay Your Bill Online"

Si no tiene acceso a Internet o si tiene preguntas acerca de cómo inscribirse para este nuevo servicio, por favor llame al departamento de Servicio al Cliente al 619-670-2777 para hablar con uno de nuestros representantes.

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