



The Waterfront

El Dorado Irrigation District • May – June 2009

Message from the interim General Manager



Tom Cumpston

I'll start this message with an introduction. I'm Tom Cumpston, the District's general counsel and, for the next few months, the interim general manager. It's with sadness that we all say goodbye to Tom Gallier, our general manager for the past year, who resigned as of May 15 to re-enter retirement.

Tom was a fine leader in tough times. We will miss him, and we wish him well.

The Board of Directors asked me to take on the general manager duties while the District recruits and hires a new general manager. I accepted and look forward to working with our customers and staff from a different vantage point than my usual general counsel chair. If all goes as anticipated, we will welcome a new general manager before summer's end.

I want to draw your attention to the main article on this page. It discusses the Board's recent decision to declare a Stage 1 drought for the District, what drove that decision, and most importantly, how you can do your share to conserve our precious water resources.

There is no question that our customers are already "water wise." Many of you have installed water-efficient appliances, smart sprinkler systems, and low-maintenance landscapes. Many of you also practice common-sense, day-to-day water conservation. Now we must ask everyone to do more as we put our drought preparedness plan into action.

It boils down to this: Early and effective action will stabilize our water supplies, hopefully to the point that we need not advance to a Stage 2 drought, and can lift the Stage 1 declaration as soon as possible

Thank you for doing your part and supporting your community in these dry times.

**STAGE 1
DROUGHT
IN EFFECT**



Citing the third dry year in a row for California and uncertainties about water deliveries from Folsom Lake, the EID Board declared a Stage 1 drought for the District's service area on March 23.

The Board's decision triggered voluntary actions to achieve a 15-percent reduction in water use from the past three-year, District-wide average. The list of actions that EID is asking customers to take is on the other side of this newsletter.

In a news release, Board president George Wheeldon said it appears that the amount of water in the District's contracts "with the Bureau of Reclamation at Folsom Lake will be cut back more than last year. Even though Jenkinson Lake in Sly Park is filling, we don't want to move too much water from there to the western end of our service area in case 2010 is another dry year. Plus, the amount of water we can send down the hill is limited by the size of the Gold Hill intertie."

The District's drought preparedness plan describes different stages of drought—from Stage 0 normal conditions to the most critical conditions under Stage 3. Each stage sets a target such as Stage 1's 15-percent reduction in use. David Witter, EID's director of natural resources, said that Governor Schwarzenegger asked all urban water users to reduce their use by 20 percent, and that EID can likely achieve that goal "through the cooperation of our customers in meeting our Stage 1 15-percent reduction target and through our water-efficiency programs such as the installation of 'smart' evapotranspiration controllers for watering systems and our conservation-oriented irrigation management service program for agricultural landowners."

To learn more, visit the drought management pages on the District's website. If you have questions or concerns, call 530-622-4513 or 916-965-0930; leave a message at website@eid.org; or write to us: Office of Water Efficiency, El Dorado Irrigation District, 2890 Mosquito Road, Placerville, CA 95667.

NOTE: During a drought, EID sells less water to our customers—both because supplies are tight, and because our customers respond to the call for conservation—yet our fixed costs of providing water service stay nearly the same. The only way to bridge the revenue gap is to increase water use rates a bit during declared droughts. That's the case today.

Because our Stage 1 drought conservation target is 15 percent, Stage 1 drought rates are 15 percent higher per unit of water used. Our bills also contain an 89-cent surcharge to fund enforcement of the District's water waste regulation and additional public outreach.

When conditions allow us to lift the Stage 1 drought declaration, the surcharge will end and rates will return to non-drought levels.

Even with the drought rates and surcharge in place, a majority of our customers will see an overall decrease in their bills over the next twelve months. That's because EID recently restructured its rates to lower the bi-monthly fixed charge for most customers, and an average customer who uses around 3,000 cubic feet every two months—typically much less in the winter and more in the summer—will find their six bills for the year total less under the new rate structure than under the old rates.

The Board will review the new rate structure, including the drought rates, next year to make sure they are working as intended.

Stage 1 drought actions—voluntary and with no penalty for non-compliance

- Irrigate your landscape only during the evening and early morning hours (8:00 pm – 6:00 am) to reduce losses from evaporation and wind drift.
- Inspect your irrigation system, repair any leaks, and adjust spray heads to eliminate avoidable overspray.
- Water with the weather as it changes. Contact us to learn about weather-based irrigation controllers. You may qualify for \$650 in vouchers.
- Reduce minutes of running time for each irrigation valve if water runoff (gutter flooding) is occurring.
- Do not refill a swimming pool that has been drained.
- Wash vehicles using a bucket and a hose equipped with a shutoff nozzle for a quick rinse. Commercial car washes are exempt—and remember, many in our area recycled their water.
- Contact us to learn how to take advantage of EID's water conservation incentive, rebate, and give-away programs to replace high water-using plumbing fixtures and appliances with water-efficient models.
- Take advantage of free information from EID on how to use water efficiently, read your water meter, repair leaks, and irrigate efficiently.
- Agricultural customers in the irrigation management service (IMS) program should follow the recommended irrigation schedule. Customers not in the IMS program are asked to reduce their water use by 15 percent.
- Restaurants are asked to serve water only if customers request it.

Everyday and easy to remember tips for conserving water

- Sweep, don't wash, paved areas.
- Don't dawdle in the shower—an extra five minutes could mean up to 15 gallons down the drain.
- Fix faucet drips and leaky toilets.
- Wash only when your dishwasher and clothes washer are fully loaded.
- Don't run water continuously while shaving, brushing your teeth, peeling vegetables, or washing dishes by hand.

Every drop of water saved is a drop in the water savings bank!

View your bill and make payments online—Summer 2009

EID is excited to announce a new way for customers to access their accounts—online.

This new bill payment and presentment service, planned to go live in June or July, will allow customers to go online to instantly review and pay bills with Visa or MasterCard.

Customers who sign up for the service will receive an email notification when their bills are available and can choose to make a one-time payment or set up recurring payments. There will also be an option to go paperless or continue to receive a bill in the mail.

This service will be available 24/7 so customers can access their accounts and make payments anytime and anywhere Internet access is available.

Online Access!

2009 regular Board meetings

May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
11	8	13	10	14	14(W)	9	14
--	22	--	24	--	26	23*	--

Board meetings occur on Mondays. The first October meeting will take place on a Wednesday.
* tentatively scheduled

"Discover your Watershed" this summer

Area residents have an opportunity to experience the wonderful world of water and learn more about how our water resources connect the environment, economy, and people through watershed connections—from the high Sierra to the western end of El Dorado County.

All tours are scheduled for Saturdays, with the lower watershed tours on June 13 and 27 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Participants will meet at the Shingle Springs Safeway on 3380 Coach Lane. The middle watershed tours, on July 11 and 25, will convene at EID headquarters, 2890 Mosquito Road in Placerville. These tours will also run from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The upper watershed tours begin at Sly Park Recreation Area and last from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Tours will leave all meeting locations promptly at 8:30 a.m.

The tours are sponsored and will be led by a partnership that includes El Dorado Irrigation District, Apple Hill growers, El Dorado County, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District, American River Conservancy, and Pine Hill Reserve. The tours were developed as a component of the South Fork American River Watershed Plan—created by stakeholders and agencies throughout this watershed—as one way to offer meaningful learning experiences to local communities.

There is no charge for the tours. Each will include short walking excursions and easy hikes, so organizers ask participants to bring good-quality walking shoes, a hat, bottled water, snacks, and a sack lunch. Reservations are required because space is limited.

For more information, call Melissa Marquez at 530-642-4130 or send an e-mail to mmarquez@eid.org.

Fish stocking update

As you may remember, in late February, the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) moved EID's Forebay reservoir and our Upper and Lower Echo Lakes to the list of waters to be stocked with fish through January 1, 2010. That is underway.

With regard to Jenkinson Lake, EID anticipates receiving an update from DFG in May on whether the lake will be stocked this year.

For more information, visit the DFG website at www.dfg.ca.gov or visit the District website.

TOILET REBATE INFORMATION

Due to statewide changes, ultra low-flow toilets (1.6 gallons per flush) will no longer qualify for a rebate after 6/30/09. Only high-efficiency toilets (1.28 gpf) will be eligible starting 7/01/09. Visit the EPA's WaterSense site at www.epa.gov/watersense for a list of eligible high-efficiency toilets.