



Message from the General Manager

Winterization—sound planning for what's ahead



Tom Gallier

This time of year, preparations for winter are in full swing. Practical steps such as insulating exposed pipes and laying in supplies of pellets or wood help to protect against the rigors of a (so we hope!) deep-snow winter.

We're also "winterizing" at the District—not so much in anticipation of cold weather but, instead, against the global economic upheaval. As one step, the reorganization I announced in September saved \$1.1- to \$1.4-million annually by eliminating and downgrading management positions. And, we undertook an intense analysis of our budget to reduce our operating costs even more.

We face a potential double whammy. First, rising interest rates are affecting our existing debt and making it difficult to issue bonds at reasonable rates to help finance critical projects throughout the District. Second, the state may once again grab EID's local property tax revenues to pay for a seemingly bottomless state budget deficit. It could happen as early as this December; if not, it will likely occur sometime next year.

We want to get through these challenging times without a rate increase. We're examining every potential savings and all revenue sources in our 2009 budget, and we're at the point where many of the cost-saving measures will cut our employees' pay—or threaten their jobs. Despite this severe belt-tightening, if the state takes all, or even a good portion, of our property tax revenues, we will have little recourse but to ask our Board to approve a surcharge on customer bills to replace that lost revenue.

At the end of the day, we must have sufficient resources to deliver the safe drinking water and wastewater treatment services you expect. Our "winterization" measures are designed to do that, hopefully with minimal discomfort.

THE STAGES OF DROUGHT

As many people across California—including readers of this newsletter—already know, the state has experienced back-to-back dry years, leading to Governor Schwarzenegger's official declaration of drought in June. But what does this mean to EID customers?

Our watershed experienced near-normal conditions this year, but that situation could change in 2009 if this winter brings below-average or even just average precipitation. So we want to take this opportunity to summarize the different stages of drought as defined in the District's drought preparedness plan, focusing on the steps that we and our customers will need to take to conserve water during each drought stage.

First, "normal" conditions occur during **Stage 0**. In this stage, the District encourages water conservation practices, but does not set a target for customers to reduce their water use through either voluntary or mandatory measures. During Stage 0, as with all drought stages, EID's water waste prohibition is in effect.

During **Stage 1**, the District will encourage customers to take volunteer measures to reduce water use by 15 percent from normal conditions. Such measures include

- irrigate landscapes during evening and early morning hours to reduce evaporation losses,
- inspect all irrigation systems and adjust spray heads to optimize coverage and eliminate overspray,
- reduce duration of irrigation if run-off occurs,
- leave unfilled swimming pools empty, and
- fix all leaks.

Stage 2 actions are intended to increase public awareness of worsening water supply conditions and to continue the encouragement of voluntary conservation measures, followed by mandatory conservation if needed. The goal is to reduce water use by 30 percent from normal conditions. Examples of mandatory measures are restrictions on landscape irrigation and no drinking water in restaurants unless requested.

The objective of **Stage 3** is to reduce water use by up to 50 percent from normal conditions through mandatory measures such as an allotted 68 gallons per day per person for single family detached homes. Sixty-eight gallons is the amount recommended to meet basic health considerations.

The District is developing a special area on the website that will contain more about our drought plan, updates on water supply conditions, and sensible conservation measures we can all take. Visit us at www.eid.org in the coming months. And look for more on this topic in future newsletters.

Emergency repairs at Caples Lake come to an end



Above left: Generators and pumps combined to fill the temporary “bladder” dams with water. Once filled, the bladder dams conformed to the bottom of the lake bed and prevented water behind the temporary structures from leaking into the area where the repair work was done.

Above right: Volunteers lugged water- and fish-laden containers up the steep, rocky back side of the main dam. Once on top of the dam, the fish were scooped into hatchery trucks for transport to Silver and Red lakes.

dams upstream of the main dam to store as much water as possible. While the repairs were made, the District pumped water from behind the temporary dams to provide flows for fisheries downstream of the main dam.

The state Department of Fish and Game conducted two fish rescues at the lake and captured 27,000 fish and fingerlings—all of which were released into nearby Silver and Red lakes. More than 90 volunteers organized by the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance and the Sacramento-Sierra Chapter of Trout Unlimited assisted with the rescues. And the District and Fish and Game hatched a fish restocking plan to begin next spring.

“I am extremely proud of what our employees accomplished in concert with the regulatory and land management agencies and our Project 184 advisory committee,” said Tom Gallier, the District’s general manager. “I can’t overstate the importance of completing this emergency project as quickly as possible with as few impacts as possible, and that’s what was achieved.”

By the time you receive this newsletter, emergency repairs to the Caples Lake main dam outlet works should be completed, bringing four months of intensive effort to a successful conclusion. As we reported in the September/October newsletter, the District’s Board of Directors declared an emergency on July 1 after underwater investigators discovered severe deterioration of the 85-year-old slide gates and trash rack at the main dam—so severe that safe operation of the dam was at risk.

The District mounted a non-stop campaign to complete the needed repairs. On-the-ground actions included drawing down the lake level to create a safe working environment for the repair crews and installation of temporary “bladder”

Irrigation controller vouchers available

EID is the recipient of a Proposition 50 water efficiency grant that will allow us to install 1000 “smart” weather-based irrigation controllers to qualified EID and city of Placerville water service customers.

Evapotranspiration (ET) is the loss of water to the atmosphere by the combined processes of evaporation and transpiration. ET is a good indicator of how much water plants are losing on a daily basis, and the rate of ET varies with different plants. Some plants retain moisture longer than others, even in very dry conditions. That is why some plants are more drought tolerant than others.

Tracking ET with a weather-based irrigation controller can help you irrigate your landscape more efficiently. The ET controller must replace an automatic irrigation controller that irrigates at least 2000 square feet of area with high seasonal water usage. A landscape water survey will be required during the screening process.

To sign up for this program and learn more, go to www.eid.org or call 1-888-WTR-TIPS (1-888-987-8477).

Upcoming Board 2008-09 meetings

Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
10	15	12*	9*
24*	-	26*	23*

* tentatively scheduled

Conserve now and save year-round

During the November to February water-use evaluation period, you can positively affect your sewer rates for the rest of the year by conserving water.

Here are some tips to get you started.

- Cover your irrigation control valves to prevent cracks and leakage caused by the winter weather.
- Install insulating wrap around pipes that can potentially freeze. Our coldest temperatures are normally between December and March.
- Inspect water appliances—in your home and garage—for signs of leakage. This includes water heaters, toilets, sinks, showers, tubs, and hoses on washing machines.
- Use your clothes and dish washers only for full loads.