

BCPUD PIPELINE



Summer 2020

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Update on BCPUD's Heightened Water Conservation Alert

At its regular monthly meeting on June 17, 2020, the BCPUD Board of Directors updated the district's Water Conservation and Dry Year Water Use Reduction Program, reviewed current water consumption data and water supply indicators, and voted to trigger a community-wide heightened water conservation alert. The BCPUD requested that customers take immediate steps to reduce their water consumption by 20-30%. BCPUD staff publicized the alert on social and print media, the district's website and via flyers downtown

We are pleased to report that as of mid-July, consumption in the district has declined by nearly 20%. Thank you to everyone and ***please keep up the good work!*** We appreciate that lifestyle changes are necessary to achieve this reductions in water use and we are grateful for your efforts.

If you would like more information about your own water consumption, please contact our office by phone on weekdays between 10 am and 3 pm at (415) 868-1224.

Water or Sewer emergency? Please contact our office at 415-868-1224

STATUS OF BCPUD WATER SUPPLY – 2020

The limited nature of Bolinas' water supply is long-standing and generally well-known by our customers. That said, the community has experienced many changes in recent years and we are discovering that some of our newer residents are not fully aware of our water supply constraints, so it seems appropriate to highlight this topic for our Summer 2020 newsletter. First, a bit of history and background:

In November of 1971, the BCPUD Board of Directors evaluated the district's water supply, declared a water shortage emergency and approved a moratorium on new connections to the water system in order to ensure the district could continue to reliably serve its existing customers and maintain a sufficient water supply for firefighting purposes. The moratorium subsequently was upheld against several legal challenges, including a suit filed by the Pacific Legal Foundation ("PLF") wherein the reviewing court denied the merits of the PLF's claims and found that the BCPUD had a "solid factual basis for declaring the water shortage emergency." Since that time, the district has continued to serve its 587 customers while carefully managing the water supply via the issuance of limited water use permits, extensive education and outreach to customers about the need to conserve, and evaluation of potential supplemental water sources to augment supply. In 2009, following three years of low rainfall (drought) the district rationed water for the first time in its history -- customers were limited to no more than 150 gallons of water per day *per property* until the rains resumed.



(The photo above depicts the BCPUD's "lower dam" on the Arroyo Hondo Creek; water is diverted from this location (or another point further up the creek) and conveyed via gravity piping directly to the Woodrat Water Treatment Plant.)

The BCPUD's principal water source is the Arroyo Hondo Creek, which is located in the Point Reyes National Seashore, directly to the north of Bolinas.

The BCPUD holds licenses to divert 113 acre feet of water per year, or just under 37 million gallons, from the Arroyo Hondo Creek to its water treatment plant on Mesa Road. This translates to an average of approximately 100,000 gallons diverted per day, or about 172 gallons a day per customer. In addition, the BCPUD has two emergency back-up water reservoirs that were constructed in the 1980's: Woodrat Reservoir #1, which is located off of Mesa Road behind the Woodrat Water Treatment Plant (*see the photo of the Woodrat Reservoir #1 on the top of the next page*), and Woodrat Reservoir #2, which is located about ¼ mile further down Mesa Road (*see the photo of Woodrat Reservoir #2 in the middle of the next page*). The BCPUD is licensed to collect 56 acre feet of water (approximately 18.25 million gallons) into these reservoirs. In general, the BCPUD accesses water from its reservoirs for emergency

purposes only, or when it is not possible for operational or other reasons for the BCPUD to divert water directly from the Arroyo Hondo Creek.



Woodrat Reservoir #1

All of the BCPUD’s water sources are “surface water” sources and are highly vulnerable to current weather conditions. Accordingly, when we experience an usually dry winter – such as we did this winter with only 22.7 inches of rain, just 2/3 of “normal” and less than half of the rain received during the 2018-19 rain year – we see an immediate impact on the creek flows (the flows decline much faster) and water storage (the amount of stored water also declines due to evaporation and because we use this water source to supplement for declining creek flows). Following the 2009 rationing event, the BCPUD developed a Water Conservation and Dry Year Water Use Reduction Program (the “Program”), which is on our website: www.bcpud.org, the purpose of which was to establish a plan to minimize the effect of an extreme shortage of water caused by drought conditions on our customers and adopt provisions to significantly reduce the consumption of water during an extended dry period.



Woodrat Reservoir #2

As noted in the sidebar on the first page of this newsletter, at its regular monthly meeting in June 2020, the BCPUD Board updated the Program and triggered a “Heightened Water Conservation Alert” in an effort to avoid mandatory rationing of water. By triggering this alert, the district asked every customer to (i) eliminate all water waste and (ii) reduce overall water use by 20 – 30% to ensure an adequate supply of water for those customers and to meet potential fire-fighting demand(s). Customers were encouraged to significantly reduce landscape irrigation, to run appliances such as laundry machines and dishwashers only when full, and to limit showers to five minutes or less, among other things. The alert was posted on NextDoor and on the BCPUD’s website; it also was published in the Hearsay News. In addition, BCPUD staff sent letters to all customers in town using more than 250 gallons per day of water (the top 20% of all water users) and asked them to do more as their higher water consumption was having a disproportionate impact on the town’s supply. Beginning in early July, BCPUD staff focused its education and outreach efforts on the top 30 water users in town (5% of the district’s customers) as data indicated these customers were responsible for using more than 20% of the district’s water.



Woodrat Water Treatment Plant on Mesa Road

The BCPUD staff’s outreach and education work resulted in several customers discovering significant leaks at their properties and others dramatically cutting back on landscape irrigation and/or reducing other water waste. Thus far, overall water consumption throughout the district has declined nearly 20%. It is critical that we all continue to conserve as much water as possible during the tradition-

ally dry months of Summer and Fall. Thank you for everything you are doing to reduce your consumption in order to ensure a reliable water supply for everyone until the rains resume!