

IWVWD General Manager's Column
October 1, 2015

“Water Year Ends, Conservation Continues”

By Don Zdeba

Happy New Year! October 1st marks the beginning of a new water year. The water year is a term commonly used in hydrology to describe a period of twelve months during which precipitation totals are measured. Its beginning date differs from the calendar year because part of the precipitation that falls in late autumn and winter accumulates as snow which doesn't contribute to storage or supply until the following spring or summer's snowmelt. There are indications California may have a wet winter in store as weather prognosticators cite conditions for an historic El Niño forming. Past experience says we cannot necessarily count on these forecasts becoming reality. Therefore, we must continue the conservation practices we have adopted over the past two years.

Responding to Governor Brown's Executive Order issued April 1st, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) assigned urban water suppliers conservation targets ranging from 4% to 36% based on their residential gallons per capita per day (R-gpcd) during the period of July through September 2013. IWVWD fell into the ninth and highest tier and was assigned a conservation rate of 36%. Beginning this past June and continuing through February 2016, all 405 urban water suppliers under the jurisdiction of the SWRCB are required to report their monthly water consumption compared to the same month in 2013. Conservation efforts by the customers of IWVWD resulted in a 34% decrease in June consumption, 27% decrease in July, 20% decrease in August, and 19% decrease in September. Cumulatively, water consumption is down 25% compared to the same four month period of 2013. This is a significant achievement, but short of the assigned 36% conservation target.

As a result of not meeting our target rate, the SWRCB issued a Notice of Violation to IWVWD. Along with that notice, a Conservation Order was issued on August 31st. The Order contains ten mandated actions IWVWD is required to comply with to help ensure our conservation target is met. Examples of these mandates include: (1) within 45 days develop a plan to fully deploy advanced metering infrastructure; (2) within 30 days meet with the twenty highest water users and identify conservation measures those users may implement; (3) increase outreach efforts towards the customers that use evaporative coolers and provide information on proper evaporative cooler maintenance; (4) if funding becomes available, remove the square-foot limit on the turf removal program to allow for more customers to take advantage; and (5) provide information on the value and application of mulch to reduce the amount of water used to irrigate trees.

Beginning in September and continuing through February 2016, IWVWD is required to submit a report by the 15th of each month detailing progress on implementation of each of the ten mandated actions. The Order notes “Failure to comply with this Order subjects the party to enforcement action including, but not limited to, civil liability of up to \$500 per day for each day the violation continues....” With water use in evaporative coolers

accounting for a significant portion of residential and small commercial water, IWWVD has submitted a request to the SWRCB for an Alternate Compliance Order that recognizes this fact and adjusts our conservation goal accordingly. To date, we have not received any indication our assigned conservation rate of 36% will be adjusted.

The staff of IWWVD has significantly increased conservation outreach and compliance efforts this summer. The conservation budget for the current fiscal year, beginning July 1st, has increased 64% from the previous year. All of our efforts are well and good, but the results we achieve will depend on how our customers embrace the conservation message. There is an abundance of conservation tips and information available on the District's website, www.iwwvd.com. I also encourage liking and visiting the District's Facebook page regularly (IWV Water District) or following us on Twitter (@IWVWaterDist) for timely information related to state and local water issues. Please take note that, unlike recent years, the landscape irrigation restrictions in our Ordinance 97 remain in effect. If your address ends in an even number, landscape irrigation is allowed only on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Addresses ending in odd numbers may water only on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. No landscape watering is allowed on Monday.

On behalf of the IWWVD Board of Directors, thank you for your continued efforts to help meet the 36% conservation target, and please continue to "Use Water Responsibly."