



# WATER Spouts

SUMMER 2006

## SCORCHING WATER SAVING TIPS

In the summer months, water use in your house can increase by as much as 400 percent, mostly due to outdoor irrigation. By following these tips, it's easy to be water efficient and keep your yard green.

### WHEN IT'S HOT OUT, COOL DOWN YOUR WATER USE!

- Complete outdoor watering by noon.
- Water between midnight and noon but remember—peak water use is between 5 and 8 a.m., so set irrigation controllers for times when water use is minimal.
- Split irrigation into two or three shorter cycles to allow water to penetrate the soil and reduce runoff.
- Remember: far more plants are damaged by over-watering rather than underwatering.

### CONSIDER WATER EFFICIENT PLANTS IN YOUR GARDEN!

There are many water efficient plants that require less water—and are beautiful, too! For a free water efficient plant brochure call 875-1955.

### TROUBLESHOOT SPRINKLERS!

- After using your irrigation system, look for excessively wet or dry spots in the yard. Such spots could mean broken, clogged or misdirected sprinkler heads that need to be adjusted or repaired.
- Adjust sprinklers that spray sidewalks and driveways.
- Reset sprinkler system timers each season to prevent watering longer than necessary.

### LOOK FOR LEAKS!

- If you have a meter, shut off all water fixtures (inside and out) and check your water meter. If the leak detection dial (the triangular-shaped device) is still turning, you probably have a leak. Check toilets, faucets and showerheads first for indoor leaks. Then, check your sprinkler valves and pipes, and landscaping for signs of leakage.

## WATER AGENCY TAKES MAJOR STEP TOWARD ALTERNATIVE WATER SUPPLY

PROPOSED VINEYARD SURFACE WATER TREATMENT PLANT WILL INCREASE FLEXIBILITY OF SUPPLY

**S**acramento County Water Agency is one step closer to bringing an alternative supply of Sacramento River water to its customers. The milestone is marked by the approval of a preliminary design report (the initial action to examine facility design and site features) for the Water Agency's first surface water treatment facility.

The new facility is part of the Freeport Regional Water Project—a joint effort between the Water Agency and the East Bay Municipal Utility District to develop a supply of Sacramento River water for municipal uses. The facility includes a new water treatment plant and a water storage facility linked to a new water intake structure on the Sacramento River.

Formed in the 1950s, the Water Agency has historically relied on groundwater (water found in aquifers below the earth surface and pumped to the surface for use) for 85 percent of its water supply. The remaining 15 percent is a combination of treated surface water from the city of Sacramento and recycled water.

The Vineyard Surface Water Treatment Plant is a key component of a larger conjunctive use program—a concerted effort to better manage groundwater supplies. The new facility will significantly reduce the Water Agency's use of groundwater sources by providing the flexibility to use the new surface water supply during times when surface water is abundant.

"This project is critical to the success of providing a reliable water supply for our customers," says Keith DeVore, Water Agency director. "It will boost current water supplies, help to replenish groundwater aquifers and meet future projected water demand as our service area continues to grow."

With the first phase scheduled for completion in 2011, the surface water treatment facility will have an initial capacity to treat up to 50 million gallons per day (mgd) and will expand to treat up to 100 mgd once the facility is fully constructed. The facility will be located on 78 acres on Florin Road between Excelsior and Bradshaw roads.



## DO YOUR PART TO BE WATER SMART!

**R**emember that it is important to be conscious of your water use, especially during the dry summer months. To help our customers do this, the Water Agency has many programs in place.

**GO RETRO:** Homes built before 1992 could benefit from a **retrofit kit**. These kits include items such as faucet aerators, low-flow showerheads and toilet water displacement devices that can significantly reduce water use in your home. Call at 875-1955 to get your free kit.

**BOOST YOUR HOME WATER USE I.Q.:** A **free** Water Wise House Call can identify areas where your home could become more water efficient—both inside and out.

Experts will examine your home and yard and provide recommendations for areas of improvement such as leak repair, the addition of water saving devices and adjustments to your irrigation system. The review takes about two hours to complete. Within 10 days of the

review, customers will receive a written report of the analysis including a customized 12-month watering schedule and an evaluation form.

To schedule an appointment, call Mike or Phyllis Connor with Irrigation Consultation and Evaluation at (916) 772-2226 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday.

**EDUCATE WATER WASTERS:** The Water Agency Water Waste Education Program helps educate customers about water wasting and how to minimize unnecessary water use.

As part of the program, Water Agency water conservation employees investigate complaints and patrol service areas to minimize water waste. If water waste is observed, they will provide a notice describing the problem and some suggested solutions to minimize water waste. Water conservation solutions include:

- Stop irrigation water run off.
- All hoses should be equipped with automatic shut-off nozzles.
- Refrain from using water to clean sidewalks, driveways and patios—use a broom instead.
- Repair leaking pipes, fixtures, or sprinklers.
- Check sprinkler coverage weekly.
- Update watering schedule monthly.

## WATER PRESSURE MAY FLUCTUATE THIS SUMMER

Because of the extended wet weather this past winter, construction on a couple water projects has been delayed. These delays, along with expected high summer demands, may cause your water pressure to fluctuate. You may experience low pressures during peak times—for example, in the morning when people are watering their yards. Be assured that the Water Agency is focusing on meeting these demands with as little pressure fluctuation as possible.



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## Managing Tomorrow's Water Today

### QUESTIONS?

Call us at the phone numbers listed below.  
We will be happy to assist you.

- Conservation/Metering:  
Gail at 875-4217 or Chuck at 875-4915
- Water Wasters: Lisa at 875-1955
- Dispatch: 875-RAIN (7246)
- Billing: 875-5555

Visit us online at our new Web address:  
[www.scwa.net](http://www.scwa.net).

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## METERING MOVES FORWARD

The Water Agency is continuing to install water meters in its service area and convert customers with existing meters to metered billing. Here's a look at how the Water Agency's metering program is progressing.

- Currently, 26,000 single family residential customers are on metered billing, i.e. their bill is based on the amount of water they actually use.
- More than 15,000 residential customers remain on flat rate billing, though 3,000 of those customers will be converted to metered billing by the fall.
- Another 2,500 customers will be converted to metered billing after one year of statistical billing that allows the customer to compare to their flat rate.
- About 7,000 customers will require retrofit work on their service connection before meters can be installed. These will be the last customers to be converted to metered billing.



*As part of the summer data collection project, the Water Agency received funding from the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation to fund student assistance with the project.*

## UPGRADE AND SAVE!

The Water Agency has some great programs to save you money on water efficient equipment.



### STOP FLUSHING MONEY AWAY

Toilets can account for more than one-quarter of all indoor water use. Customers may qualify for rebates up to \$125 if they replace a two-gallon-per-flush (gpf) or greater toilet with an ultra-low flush model (1.6 gpf or less).

If you are having a hard time deciding on a toilet to buy, visit [cuwcc.org/maptesting.lasso](http://cuwcc.org/maptesting.lasso) for a comparison of popular toilet model performance levels.

This is a first-come, first-served program, so apply for the rebate today! For more information, call Lisa Williams, at 875-1955 or visit us online at [www.scwa.net](http://www.scwa.net).

### WASHING MACHINE SAVINGS

The Water Agency expects to begin a washing machine rebate program by fall 2006. You can receive a \$100 rebate from the Water Agency when you purchase a tier 3B washing machine. The most efficient washing machines can cost around \$1200, but some models have been dropping in price.

Sacramento Municipal Utility District and Pacific Gas & Electric also have rebate programs—check with them for qualifying machines and rebate availability. (Note: you will need to apply for these rebates separately.) Please visit the Web site at [www.scwa.net](http://www.scwa.net) for more information.



**NO DUMPING!  
FLOWS TO CREEK**

## HELP MAINTAIN OUR STORMDRAINS!

Those "Flows to Creek" stencils that can be seen above stormdrains are there for a reason. Many of these stormdrains flow directly to the river which means the water is not treated once it goes down the stormdrain. To help maintain the health of our waterways, follow these tips:

### DON'T LET YOUR PETS POLLUTE

When it rains, pet waste left on lawns, trails and sidewalks can wash into the storm drain system, flowing untreated directly into our local creeks and rivers. Be sure to pick up after your pet! Bag pet waste in a sealed plastic bag and place into a garbage container.

### KEEP CHEMICALS OUT OF STORMDRAINS

Don't place motor oil, other automotive chemicals, paints or solvents in the stormdrain. Dispose of chemicals properly at a used motor oil recycling center or hazardous waste collection facility. Visit [www.saggreenteam.com/recycle/default.htm](http://www.saggreenteam.com/recycle/default.htm) for information. Report all illegal dumping by calling 875-RAIN.

### EMPLOY SMART LANDSCAPING AND GARDENING PRACTICES

Compost or dispose of garden clippings and grass in your green waste container. Reduce pesticide use by attracting beneficial species, such as honeybees, lacewings, ladybugs, spiders and birds to your yard by planting flowering plants and plant varieties. This will help reduce unwanted pests. Instead of using chemicals, try physically removing weeds and pests by hand.

## COMMERCIAL AND LARGE LANDSCAPE WATER EFFICIENCY CHECKUPS

Commercial, industrial, institutional and large landscape water efficiency checkups are still available and can help your business and home save money. Call 772-2226 to sign up for a **free** checkup today.

## WATER QUALITY UPDATE OUT SOON

Keep an eye out for the Water Agency's annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) coming your way in July. As it does every year, the Water Agency develops the CCR to inform and educate customers about the quality of their water. The CCR is a summary of test results conducted to detect contaminants in drinking water, and is required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The Water Agency routinely conducts tests for more than 100 different constituents at a cost of more than \$200,000 per year. It does this in order to ensure that its customers receive the highest quality water that meets or exceeds all state and federal water quality standards.