

Water Features

Goleta Water District News – Summer 2016



After five dry years we are still in a

Stage III Water Shortage Emergency

Thank you for being a water saver!



Lake Cachuma on Life Support

The Goleta Groundwater Basin is now the main source of water for District customers

After five years of severe drought and an historic lack of rainfall, water conservation is critical to ensure adequate supplies for drinking, public health and safety.

Plus: A multi-year effort to protect and extend water supplies



[Cover Photo: The drought has left the boat ramp at Lake Cachuma high and dry]

Drought Status Update



Despite many predictions of a wet El Niño event, mild winter storms brought another year of below average rainfall. In fact, due to little rain and the dry watershed conditions, Lake Cachuma remains at historic lows, below 15% capacity and projected to fall even further over the summer. Even with a multi-year effort to protect and extend water supplies during the drought, all the planning in the world cannot change the fact that the lack of significant rain has left the Goleta Valley in severe drought. While we are fortunate to have the Goleta Groundwater Basin as a resource to help offset the loss of Lake Cachuma as a current water supply, conservation remains critical.

This newsletter features a number of the District's efforts to help the community weather the extended drought, including updates on Lake Cachuma and how water supply sources have shifted, efforts to protect the Goleta Groundwater Basin, and long term plans underway to develop additional water supplies. Even with the added expense of managing the water supply and ensuring delivery during the drought, the District still has among the lowest rates for water service on the South Coast.

In addition to actively managing water supplies through use and conservation programs, the District participates in a number of regional efforts to secure and protect water supplies, manage delivery infrastructure and minimize customer expenses. A successful partnership with Goleta Sanitary District has delivered recycled water since 1995, and an exchange agreement with the City of Santa Barbara allows both entities to serve customers in certain delivery areas in the most efficient and cost effective manner. The District works directly with other water districts and agencies as an active member of a number of boards and groups, including: WaterWise SB, which promotes water conservation; the Cachuma Operation and Maintenance Board which meets monthly with the County of Santa Barbara to manage the facilities at Lake Cachuma; the Central Coast Water Authority, which manages deliveries of State Water to the South Coast; and the Cachuma Conservation Release Board, which protects Cachuma Project water rights. The District also participates in the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan process to secure grant funding for important local water-related projects.

Whether cooperatively with other agencies or in service to customers, the District is doing everything it can to ensure water remains available for public health and safety needs of the community. As the severe drought continues, our community depends on each of us to use water wisely. We're all in this together.

John McInnes



General Manager

Stage III Water Shortage Emergency Restrictions Reminder

Stage III water use restrictions include:

- ◆ Outdoor landscape irrigation *remains* limited to no more than two times per week during early morning or late evening hours, and no irrigation is allowed for 48 hours after it rains:
 - Manual watering (including with a sprinkler attached to a hose) is *now* only allowed before 8 a.m. or after 8 p.m., any two days per week.
 - Use of fixed (i.e. installed) sprinkler systems must comply with the following updated schedule:
 - Residential properties may water Wednesdays and Saturdays, before 6 a.m. or after 8 p.m.
 - Commercial and institutional properties may water Tuesdays and Fridays, before 6 a.m. or after 8 p.m.
 - Public parks, athletic fields, and golf courses may *now* water no more than two days per week, before 6 a.m. or after 8 p.m.
- ◆ Hotels, motels, and other lodging are *now* required to post water shortage notices, and refrain from daily linen washing unless specifically requested by the patron.
- ◆ Agricultural customers using overhead spray irrigation outdoors are *now* restricted to before 10 a.m. or after 4 p.m.

For a complete list of restrictions, information on conservation, tips, and rebates visit www.GoletaWater.com.

Drought and the Water Allocation Moratorium

Q&A

Q: *Is the District issuing new water allocations during the drought?*

A: No. Under the SAFE Water Supplies Ordinance, the District has not issued any new water allocations since October 2014. The District is not obligated to provide new water service once a water shortage emergency has been declared if a proposed project does not have a pre-existing right to receive water services.

Q: *Why is development still happening during the drought?*

A: Much of the current construction is for developments that secured water rights years ago, before the current drought. By law, the District cannot take these rights away, nor can it prevent property owners from exercising water entitlements that were approved and paid for prior to the drought. While many are frustrated to see development during the drought, under state law the District is obligated to provide water service to projects that have valid pre-existing water entitlements.

Q: *Why is the District approving these projects?*

A: The District does not approve developments, it simply serves water to homes, businesses, and agricultural operations in its service territory. The District has no land use authority, meaning the District does not approve or deny development projects or determine whether or not the project will have adverse impacts on the community. That is the responsibility of the City of Goleta and the County of Santa Barbara.

Q: *How much water is being used by this new development?*

A: In 2014, the last year before the moratorium was triggered, all new approved projects accounted for less than one half of one percent of the 14,380 acre feet used by District customers.

Frequently Asked Questions About Water Quality

Q: *Will I notice any difference receiving groundwater?*

A: In the shift to groundwater, you may notice some differences in your water's appearance. These changes are purely aesthetic and do not present any health risk.

Q: *Why does my water look white?*

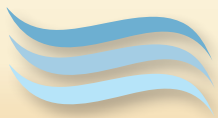
A: White or cloudy water means the water has air in it. This is a result of the pressure used to move water through the distribution system, and if you let the water sit, it will settle and clear, but this is not necessary.

Q: *What if the water looks brown?*

A: Reddish-brown water results from an increase of iron and manganese, both of which are naturally occurring in the "hard" groundwater in certain areas of our Basin. These minerals settle in the pipes and pose no health risks. In the event reddish-brown water comes out of your tap, run the faucet for five minutes to flush the line, or call District customer service at (805) 964-6761 for instructions. Various commercial rust remover products such as RoVer®, Rit Rust Remover®, Iron-Out®, Miracle-Rid-Iron®, or Whink® can be used to remove any stains from clothing or fabric that result from temporary increased concentrations of iron and manganese in the water.

Q: *How can I help protect water quality?*

A: Protect water quality by being careful about the products you use at home and on your landscape. Buy shampoos, shower gels, or toothpastes that do not contain microbeads (polyethylene and polypropylene). Don't flush unused or expired medications. Drop off old medications at the Sheriff's Department Goleta Substation at 7042 Marketplace Drive. Avoid overusing landscaping products to prevent runoff. To report water waste call (805) 964-6761 or visit www.GoletaWater.com.



Lake Cachuma on Life Support

After five years of below average rainfall we are still experiencing the worst drought in the recorded history of the Goleta Valley.

With winter rains below average for the fifth year in a row, Lake Cachuma is below 15% of capacity and is anticipated to decline further over the summer. Even as vegetation has sprung up on the hillsides and plants are flowering, there hasn't been enough rain for the Santa Ynez River to bring inflow into the lake.

While areas of northern California dealt with flood conditions and throwing open reservoir gates to release water, the Central Coast remains deep in drought. The lack of rainfall means the District will not be able to count on the lake, normally the main source of supply for the Goleta Valley, until the drought is over.

Instead, customers will rely primarily on groundwater and State Water, supplemented with purchased water and water stored in the lake from prior years. Even as Cachuma's importance as a supply source diminishes, its role as a conveyance facility remains critically important. The lake serves as the conduit to deliver State Water, purchased water and carryover water to the South Coast. Declining lake levels recently necessitated the relocation of the pumping barge to deeper waters. The lake remains a lifeline for the community, but with so many dry years, Lake Cachuma is on life support, and conservation remains critical to sustaining the Goleta Valley. Every drop saved is a drop preserved for drinking, health and safety.

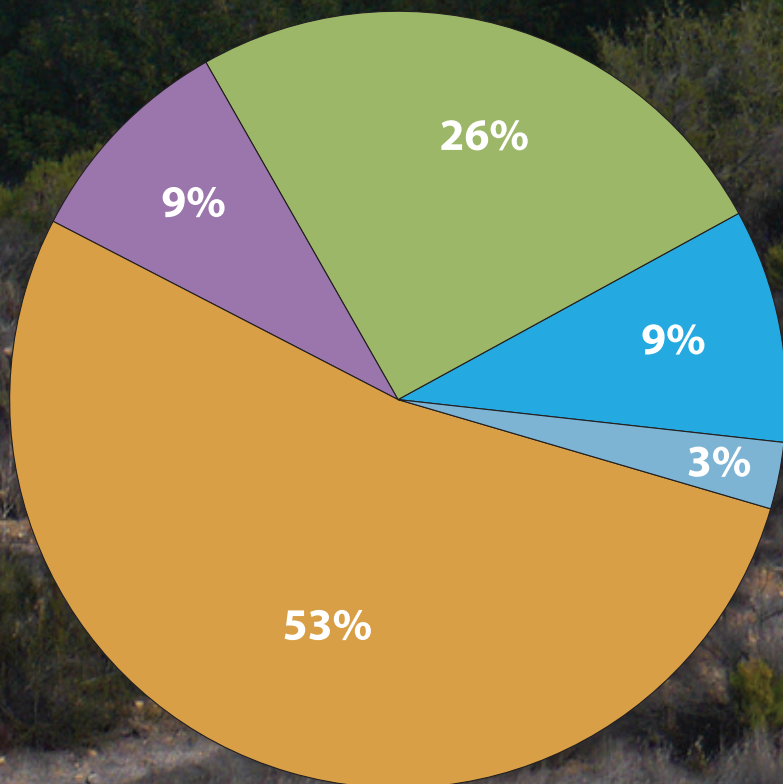
The District remains under a Stage III drought emergency, however, should the drought persist, it will be necessary to move to more severe restrictions in 2017. For a full list of current drought restrictions visit www.GoletaWater.com

This summer please help conserve water by reducing outdoor irrigation, prioritizing water for drought tolerant landscaping and trees, and delaying planting until fall.

Another Summer of Drought

With a dry summer and fire danger looming, the District is focused on significant conservation to preserve water for public health and safety.

Projected Water Year (WY) 2016-17 Supply Portfolio



Lake Cachuma now provides only 3% of the supply portfolio.

Groundwater Recycled Water State Water Supplemental Water* Lake Cachuma

Given the supplies noted above, along with customer conservation efforts, the District can meet the projected demand for the next 12 months.

*Supplemental water includes additional water acquired in December of 2015.

The Goleta Groundwater Basin is Key to Sustaining the Goleta Valley

As we enter our fifth year of severe drought, the Goleta Groundwater Basin serves as our lifeline source of supply by providing the majority of water being served to customers. The basin is critical to meeting the needs of the Goleta Valley, and provides assurance that water will continue to be available for drinking, public health, and safety.

Challenges of Extracting Groundwater

The District's main water delivery system was designed to treat water coming from Lake Cachuma and feed it into 270 miles of pipeline via gravity to customers throughout the Goleta Valley. In contrast, accessing the water in the District's groundwater basin involves maintaining seven active wells and a complex distribution network, containing a vast array of mechanical equipment. The extraction and movement of groundwater is energy intensive, and requires that water be pumped across 23 unique pressure zones to serve customers at all elevations. To meet demand under drought conditions, a number of modifications to the District's network of valves, pressure regulators, pumps, motors and booster stations have been necessary. The longer the drought persists, the more investment is needed to keep the system running and able to meet demand.



Investment in Well Infrastructure

District wells can currently produce 6,000 acre feet per year. To increase capacity, the District has identified those wells that can be quickly modified to increase production to meet seasonal increases in demand. Work is underway to bring two of the District's inactive wells, Berkeley and Shirrell, online for the first time since the early 1990s. New, larger pumps are also being installed at the San Marcos, Anita and Airport wells to increase capacity.

Conditions in the groundwater basin are dynamic and change over time. Meeting short-term production targets and long-term sustainability goals requires strategically balanced investment in both routine maintenance and capital activities. The well program has been designed to be flexible and adaptable so that the District is ready to react to unforeseen mechanical issues, declining groundwater levels, and unanticipated changes to water quality. Investments being made now will go far to help ensure the wells will be there to serve customers long into the future.

Protecting the Health of the Basin

The District remains vigilant in protecting and caring for the basin and will take all necessary steps to ensure its continued health and viability. The 1989 Wright Judgment and 1991 voter-approved SAFE Ordinance set forth a complex set of management rules for the Goleta Basin, including defined limits on extraction, storage requirements, allowed uses, and the establishment and maintenance of a drought buffer for use in times of drought emergency. The drought buffer is the key source of supply sustaining the community through the drought. The District is committed to protecting the community's groundwater by monitoring sources of contaminants, taking legal action to prevent the illegal exportation of water, and supporting State and Federal legislation to protect groundwater.



The District has a court-determined right to pump 2,350 acre feet per year under normal conditions, and more during drought. During wet winters when excess water is available, the District uses the wells to replenish the basin by injecting excess water from Lake Cachuma. At the end of 2015, the District had accumulated over 45,500 acre feet of water stored in the basin. The District is now drawing from this stored water at the capacity which existing infrastructure allows.

The District completed an extensive Groundwater Management Plan in 2010. This document is currently being updated to reflect changed conditions since 2010.

A Multi-Year Effort to Protect and Extend Water Supplies

The District has long been at the forefront of conservation, and we have been actively managing the current drought since it began in 2012 with a number of initiatives:

- ◆ **Moratorium on issuing new water connections under the SAFE Water Supplies Ordinance.**
- ◆ **Adoption of a Drought Preparedness and Water Shortage Contingency Plan.**
- ◆ **Declaration of a Water Shortage Emergency (currently escalated to Stage III).**
- ◆ **A variety of rebate programs to help businesses and residents implement water conservation projects.**
- ◆ **Mandatory water use restrictions for all customer classes.**
- ◆ **Early update of the Infrastructure Improvement Plan to reflect changing water supply conditions.**
- ◆ **Active investment in the District well program, which includes 7 active wells, with 4 under rehabilitation and plans to drill 2 more.**
- ◆ **Sophisticated supply and demand model to project 12 and 24 month supply.**
- ◆ **Drought surcharge.**
- ◆ **Free water conservation checkups.**
- ◆ **Active investigation and enforcement of water waste reports.**
- ◆ **Lawsuit to defend the Goleta Groundwater Basin and protect customer water supply.**
- ◆ **Customer Scorecard Program to work with large users to detect leaks and reduce usage.**
- ◆ **Targeted public information campaign to all customers.**

This planning has allowed the District to delay more significant drought impacts, minimize the economic harm to the community associated with more severe restrictions such as banning outdoor irrigation or agricultural irrigation, and ensure adequate supplies of water remain available for drinking, public health and safety.

Even as the District manages the current drought, long term strategies are being pursued to secure and extend water supplies into the future:

The Potential of Stormwater Capture

There is an increasing awareness of the importance of stormwater management and capture in providing local communities with additional water supplies. The District is developing a Stormwater Resources Plan that will explore the potential for stormwater capture, determine hydrologically optimal project locations, and identify project opportunities. Other benefits of stormwater capture, including open space preservation and water quality improvements, will also be examined. By developing a methodology for determining the most sensible projects, the District is well-positioned to take advantage of local, state and federal funding designed to help communities create new local sustainable water sources.

Recycled Water Expansion

Recycled water plays a critical role in drought planning as it remains available even during periods of low rainfall. The District was recently awarded a \$75,000 grant to conduct a feasibility study to explore opportunities to expand recycled water use in the Goleta Valley. The study will evaluate advanced treatment technologies, such as microfiltration, reverse osmosis, and ultra violet light with advanced oxidation. Depending on the treatment recommendations, the study will also determine the best use of expanded recycled water, ranging from potential groundwater replenishment projects, to agricultural use, or even augmenting drinking water supplies. Programs such as these already exist and have been permitted in California, and represent the next generation of drought planning.



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To learn more about our e-billing system, visit www.GoletaWater.com/pay-your-bill-online/billing-information.



Tree Saving Drought Tips

As the drought continues, our urban forest needs extra care. Trees require periodic deep watering, especially if you have already cut back on watering lawns and other surrounding landscaping. Check soil moisture 6-8 inches below the surface near the drip line using a small shovel or screw driver. If the soil feels dry and crumbly, it's time to water your tree with a slow soak. If the soil feels sticky or wet, let it dry for a couple days before checking it again. Use a soaker hose or an irrigation bucket to slow water so it can be fully absorbed. Don't forget to add a 3-6 inch layer of mulch, but keep mulch off the trunk. For instructions on how to make your own irrigation bucket, visit www.GoletaWater.com.

Contact us:

Call us:
(805) 964-6761
Press 1 for drought information

Visit our office:
4699 Hollister Avenue
8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mon. – Fri.

Send us an email:
eNews@GoletaWater.com

Visit our website:
www.GoletaWater.com

The District Board of Directors meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at the District office. The public is always welcome.