

Nipomo Community Services District DISTRICT NEWS



Issue 1, 2008

CONSERVE! CONSERVE! CONSERVE!

Nipomo is running out of water, and at an alarming rate.

Just because it's raining doesn't mean our water-shortage problem is over.

Last year San Luis Obispo County received approximately 40% of its average rainfall. In 2007 NCSD customers used an average of nearly 11% more water than they did in 2006.

That puts us at a significant deficit for 2007, so even a normal rainfall year would still not be expected to bring us back to where we were at the time of the last groundwater reading (April 2007).

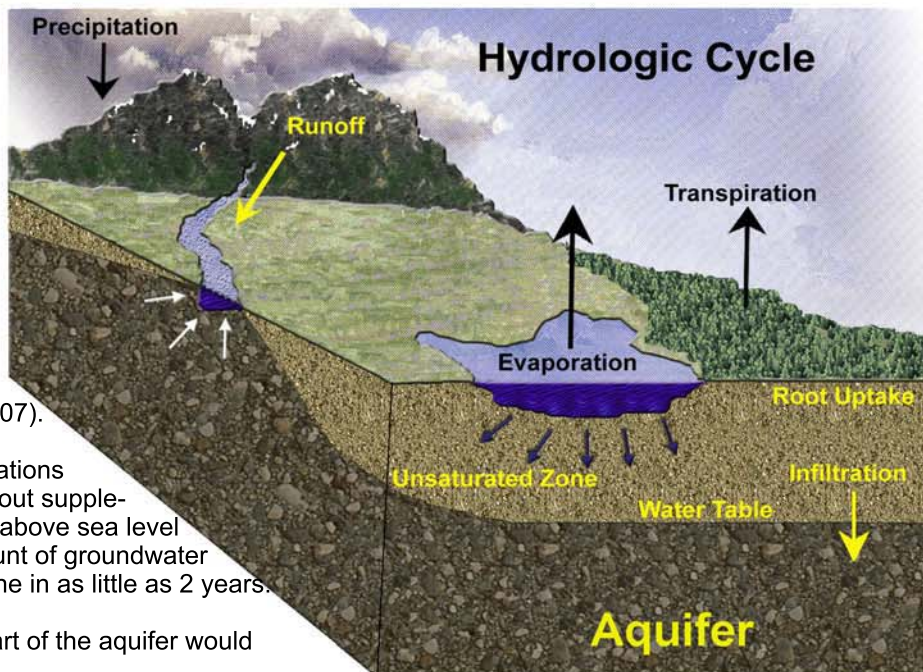
According to the latest studies by Science Applications International (SAIC), projected out 39 years, without supplemental water, 100% of the Nipomo Mesa aquifer above sea level could be used up in 11 to 12 years, and the amount of groundwater needed to prevent seawater intrusion may be gone in as little as 2 years.

If saltwater intrusion occurs in our aquifer, that part of the aquifer would never again be able to store drinking water.

Making the problem worse is the length of time necessary to bring supplemental water to Nipomo (see page 3, *Supplemental Water - Where Are We Now?*). The costs of supplemental water can be expected to raise water bills up to 3 times the current amount.

The cheapest, quickest way to start addressing Nipomo's water problems is to CONSERVE WATER.

Conserved water is immediately available, and a pipeline does not have to be constructed to bring it to Nipomo. That means less cost to you. SAVE WATER -- SAVE MONEY!



TOP 5 WAYS TO SAVE WATER

1. Check home and landscape plumbing for leaks. Fix leaks.
2. Replace indoor plumbing fixtures with water-saving fixtures.
3. Replace lawns and other high-water-use plants with water-saving plants.
4. Never let the water run in a sink unless it is doing a job. Turn off the water while brushing your teeth, cleaning vegetables, etc.
5. Don't use your water hose as a broom. Hoses can deliver up to 10 gallons a minute, which quickly adds up to \$\$\$\$!

Community Forum on Proposed Emergency Water Shortage Regulations and Fees.

On Wednesday, January 30, 2008, 6:30 PM, a public meeting will be held at the Nipomo High School Forum on the proposed Emergency Water Shortage Regulations and fees. These regulations would be enacted in stages should the groundwater storage in the aquifer under the Nipomo Mesa fall to specific levels. See page 2, "Emergency Groundwater Shortage Regulations at a Glance" for more details.

Supplemental Water - Where Are We Now?.

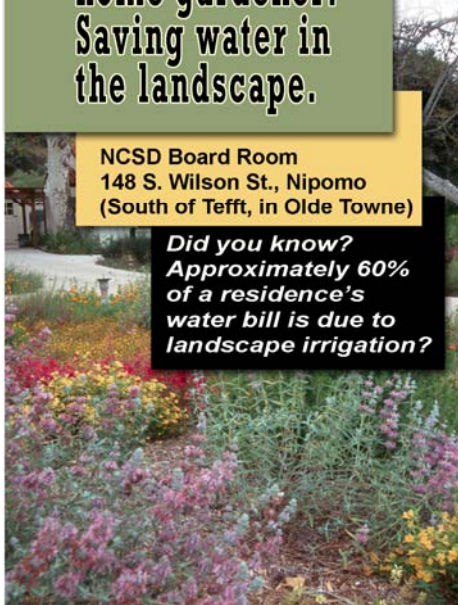
The NCSD Board of Directors continues to assess options for bringing supplemental water to Nipomo. See page 3, "Supplemental Water, Where Are We Now?" for more details.

FREE!

Workshops for the home gardener: Saving water in the landscape.

NCS D Board Room
148 S. Wilson St., Nipomo
(South of Tefft, in Olde Towne)

Did you know?
Approximately 60%
of a residence's
water bill is due to
landscape irrigation?



Learn How to Make Your Landscape Water-Efficient!

The District is presenting a series of free workshops designed to help residents make their landscapes more water-efficient. Space is limited, so make your reservations now! [Call 929-1133](tel:929-1133) or email cwhitlow@ncsd.ca.gov.

Feb. 2, 2008 – 9 AM: Importance of Soil Building and Composting. Learn to help your soil use water and nutrients efficiently. Will include a demonstration of tumbler composting and starting a worm ranch. Presented by CalPoly lecturer Hunter Francis, who received his MS degree (from CalPoly in Agriculture (with a Soil Science specialization). Hunter is Co-founder and Program Associate for the Sustainable Agriculture Resource Consortium.

Feb. 9, 2008 – 9 AM: Native and Drought-Tolerant Plants. Learn how beautiful your yard can look with water-efficient plants. Will include demonstration plants which will be raffled off to workshop participants at the end of the workshop! Presented by Carol Bornstein, co-author (along with our local David Fross, owner of Native Sons Wholesale Nursery) of *California Native Plants for the Garden*. Carol is also Director of Nursery Operations and Horticultural Outreach at the Santa Barbara Botanical Garden. Three signed copies of Carol's book will be raffled off at the end of the workshop!

Feb. 16, 2008 – 9 AM: Landscape Design with Drought-Tolerant Plants. Learn the tricks of incorporating water-efficient plants into your landscape. Given by Celeste Whitlow, NCS D Conservation and Public Outreach Specialist, who received her BS degree in Environmental Horticulture from CalPoly SLO. Three signed copies of *California Native Plants for the Garden* will be raffled off to workshop participants at the end of the workshop!

Feb. 23, 2008 – 9 AM: Water-Efficient Landscape Irrigation. Drip irrigation, timers and more! Leak detection! Presented by Joe Decker, who has over 25 years of experience in irrigation. He currently works for Farm Supply in SLO, where he daily helps people problem-solve and better manage their irrigation systems. A free discount coupon for irrigation materials from Farm Supply will be given to each workshop participant!

Proposed Emergency Water Shortage Regulations at a Glance

The available groundwater under the Nipomo Mesa is shrinking and something needs to be done to prevent salt-water intrusion. The decline in water levels is particularly rapid in dry years such as 2007 when there is minimum percolation. In an effort to reduce demand in dry years, NCS D has prepared a set of proposed Emergency Water Shortage Regulations. **A public workshop at Nipomo High School Forum is set for 6:30pm on Wednesday, January 30, 2008**, to get feedback from the community. Residents can download a copy of the proposed Draft Regulations from the NCS D's website (www.ncsd.ca.gov), or pick up a copy at the NCS D Office, 148 South Wilson Street.

The proposed Draft Regulations would establish four levels of drought response – Water Watch, Water Warning, Water Emergency, and Extreme Water Emergency. NCS D would take water level readings from approximately 60 groundwater wells in April of each year and use the data to compute the volume in groundwater storage above sea level. If the readings indicate there is at least 100,000 acre-feet (AF) of groundwater in storage above sea level in a particular year, then the regulations would not call for use restrictions.

If the readings indicate the available storage ranges from 90,000 AF to 100,000 AF, then the Board would implement

the Water Watch program. In addition to providing information on the need to conserve, this level would include some restrictions on the timing of irrigation and decorative use of potable water.

If the readings indicate the available storage ranges from 80,000 AF to 90,000 AF, then the Board would implement the Water Warning program. The goal would be to reduce demand by at least 10%. In addition to the Water Watch Programs, maximum-use targets for all customers would be established, and issuing Intent-To-Serve Letters for new development would be prohibited. If a customer's consumptions exceeds their ration, they would pay a surcharge on their excess use.

If the readings indicate the available storage ranges from 70,000 AF to 80,000 AF, then the Board would implement the Water Emergency program. The goal would be to reduce demand by at least 35%. In addition to the Water Warning Program, the maximum use targets would be smaller and the setting of new water meters would be prohibited.

If the readings indicate the available storage is 60,000 AF or less, then the Board would implement the Extreme Water Emergency program. The goal would be to reduce demand by at least 50%. In addition to Water Emergency Program, the maximum use targets would be set at a minimum level necessary for health and sanitation.

Supplemental Water—Where Are We Now?

On average, the amount of groundwater used by residents from the Nipomo aquifer is two times the amount nature puts into the aquifer. In other words, for every gallon nature puts into the aquifer, two gallons are drawn out.

In 2007 the amount of groundwater stored above sea level shrank by over 15%. With the current rate of water consumption, the District's geohydrologist predicts we could exhaust the remaining water storage in 12 years if the historic rainfall pattern repeats itself. While no one knows how much water is actually needed to prevent saltwater intrusion, it is clear a combination of new supply and reduced demand is needed to ensure the long-term health of our water supply.

The NCSB Board of Directors is committed to developing cost-effective and sustainable supplemental water supplies to augment the District's existing groundwater wells. With this goal in mind, the Board, in 2004, executed an agreement with the City of Santa Maria to bring in up to 3,000 acre-feet of Santa Maria City water with the understanding that NCSB would construct the plumbing to connect the two systems.

A preliminary study regarding the Waterline Intertie was completed in 2005, and the District circulated a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). However, when the estimated cost of the project jumped from \$9 million to \$24 million in November 2006, the Board put the Waterline Intertie Project on hold and ordered a comparison of all



likely alternatives. Of the nine projects presented to the Board in June 2007, the Board directed staff to bring back more information on the two most promising alternatives to the Waterline Intertie: desalination and State water.

In November 2007, the Board reviewed an evaluation of possible desalination projects. Although desalination is likely to be very expensive to build and operate, the Board determined it was the only option likely to meet the long-term needs of the Nipomo Mesa.

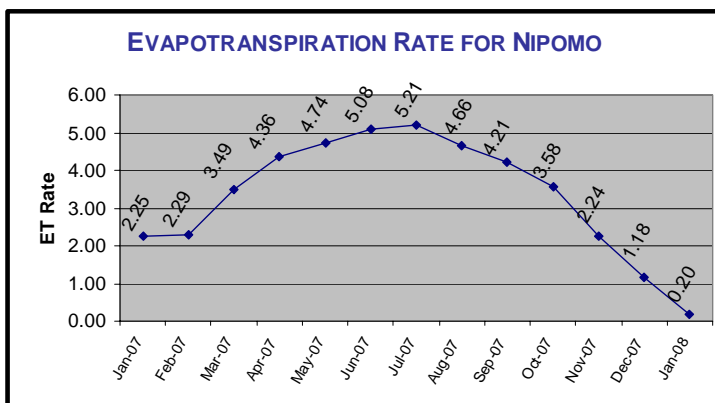
In December 2007, the Board reviewed an evaluation of connecting to the State Water Project pipeline running down Thompson Avenue. Because of the high costs and uncertainty of water delivery, the Board put aside further consideration of the State Water Project. Instead, the Board determined the District should fine tune the Santa Maria Waterline

Intertie Project to reduce its cost as the short-term supplemental water supply option, and proceed with the research to develop desalination as the long-term water supply.

Currently, the District is conducting design studies on the Waterline Intertie Project to see if costs can be reduced. These studies should be complete by Spring 2008, which would allow the District to re-circulate a new Draft EIR in Fall 2008, and to seek permits for construction in 2009. Additionally, the District is gearing up to start the research needed for designing a desalination facility.

Save Money—Don't Over-Water!

Landscape irrigation in San Luis Obispo County accounts for almost 80% of SLO County residential water use. It



makes sense to water less during the winter when it is cooler and sometimes even rains, but the question is always "How much do I decrease it?"

Starting this month, the NCSB will start publishing a monthly Watering Index, which is a scientifically based guide to help people adjust landscape watering schedules.

The Watering Index takes the amount of landscape irrigation water you used during the hottest, driest month of the year and then tells you how much water you should be applying to your landscape in the current month.

To find out the amount of water you need to apply in the current month: multiply the Watering Index by the amount of water used in July, then multiply that figure by 100.

January's Watering Index is 3.8%. If you watered your lawn 10 minutes a week in July, you should water it less than 4 minutes a week in January.

$(38\%) \times (10 \text{ minutes a week in July}) \times (100) = (3.8 \text{ minutes a week in January})$

You should apply no water to the landscape when it is raining and for a day or so after the rain stops.

For more information, visit the NCSB website (www.ncsd.ca.gov/Library/water_conservation/WateringIndex.pdf).

For More Information

Water-Efficient Home and Landscape

Be Water Wise: www.bewaterwise.com

Santa Barbara Water Page: www.sbwater.org

Water House: www.h2ouse.org

Water Family Game: www.thewaterfamily.co.uk

Water-Efficient Irrigation Systems

www.sbwater.org/WeatherTechnology.htm

Irrigation tutorials: www.irrigationtutorials.com

Drip Irrigation: www.dripirrigation.ca/

Info on the NCS D Website

<http://www.ncsd.ca.gov/cm/Resources/Conservation.html>

- “Reading Your Water Meter”
- “Detecting Leaks”
- “Drip Irrigation”
- “Septic Tank Maintenance”
- “Even You Can Fix a Leaky Faucet”
- “Why Use California Native Plants”
- “Selected Drought-Tolerant Plants for the Nipomo Area”
- “Frequently Asked Questions about Water Conservation”
- “Tired of Paying a High Price for Your Landscape?”
- “Timing is Everything! You and Your Irrigation Controller”
- “Septic Tank Maintenance”
- “Pharmaceuticals in the Water Supply”
- “Recycling and Re-Use Guide”
- “Household Hazardous Waste: Where Do I Put It?”

NCS D Staff

- Bruce S. Buel, General Manager
- Lisa S. Borgnuda, Administrator
- Peter Sevcik, District Engineer
- Tina Grietens, Utilities Superintendent
- Celeste Whitlow, Water Conservation Specialist



Up-Coming Board Meetings

- 1/30/2008, 6:30 PM, Nipomo HS
- 2/13/2008, 9:00 AM, Board Meeting
- 2/27/2008, 9:00 AM, Board Meeting
- 3/12/2008, 9:00 AM, Board Meeting
- 3/26/2008, 9:00 AM, Board Meeting



Board Meetings, unless otherwise indicated, are held in the Board Room at the NCS D Office.

Board Packets can be downloaded from the NCS D website (www.ncsd.ca.gov)



Printed copies of these documents (and more!) are available in the lobby at the NCS D Office.



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Services District

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