

THE PIPELINE

News from the Ventura County Public Works Agency

August/September

Vol. 6 • No. 8

From the Director's Desk

Jeff Pratt,
Public Works
Agency Director



Dear Friends,

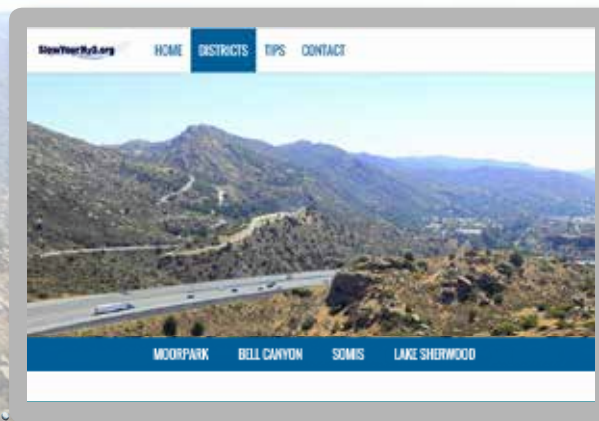
This month's *Pipeline* is all about water. Ventura County's sunny, warm climate is a great reason to live here, but it also means we have to be responsible about how we manage one of our most precious resources – water.

VCPWA's Water and Sanitation Department is working hard to develop strategies for dealing with what is shaping up to be the driest year on record. But we can only do so much; the public must also be involved. Customers of Ventura County Waterworks District Nos. 1 (Moorpark), 17 (Bell Canyon), 19 (Somis), and 38 (Lake Sherwood) can visit the new SlowYourH₂O.org website to get water conservation tips as well as updates on the drought situation.

In this issue, we also provide many tips on how to conserve water. These tips cover gardening and lawn care, recreation (such as swimming pools), and household water use. Please share them with family, friends, and co-workers. You may also invite them to attend one of our free upcoming workshops. Topics will vary between workshops and include an introduction to the essential principles of a watershed-friendly garden, as well as California-friendly landscape training. Workshops will be held throughout September and October. Remember: If everyone does a little, we all benefit a lot.

All the Best,

Jeff Pratt
Director



SlowYourH₂O.org

SlowYourH₂O is the unified message going out to community members in Moorpark, Bell Canyon, Somis, and Lake Sherwood.

In response to the ongoing drought and state-mandated emergency regulations aimed at water conservation, VCPWA's Water and Sanitation Department is excited to announce the launch of its new drought awareness and water conservation website, **SlowYourH₂O.org**. This website was developed for the four waterworks districts it serves — Ventura County Waterworks District Nos. 1 (Moorpark), 17 (Bell Canyon), 19 (Somis), and 38 (Lake Sherwood) — to help keep them informed about the cutbacks in water usage and future rate increases. "With the new water-conservation mandates ramping up, it is vital that we all work together to help to reduce water usage during the drought," says David Sasek, Director of the Water and Sanitation Department.

The new website is filled with educational information for its customers, offering water-conservation tips, timely drought updates, information for tracking District water usage, and news relevant to District customers.

Since March, 2015, the Water and Sanitation Department has been working with each District's Citizens' Advisory Committee, the Districts' wholesale water provider, and the State Water Resources Control Board to prepare

comprehensive drought-response plans. Public meetings, which focused on the drought, were held with each District's Citizens' Advisory Committee throughout May and June to develop specific plans for each District.

"The public is encouraged to stay up to date on how the drought is impacting the Districts by following Ventura County Public Works Agency on Facebook," says Sasek. "We invite people to review the **SlowYourH₂O.org** website to learn more about their area and help us reach the water conservation goals set."

The Department has also utilized various other avenues of communication to keep customers informed of changes, including flyers, bill inserts, e-mails, and social media. The Water and Sanitation Department has also presented information to local community groups, including the Bell Canyon Homeowners Association and the Moorpark City Council.

"The results we are seeing are positive," adds Sasek. "The overall water reductions through July show community members are responding to the messaging. Moorpark is at 27.4% (excluding agriculture use), with a goal of 32%, Bell Canyon is at 27.4%, with a goal of 25%, Somis is at 19.7%, with a goal of 25% and Lake Sherwood is at 24.4%, with a goal of 25%. We are looking forward to seeing the conservation efforts continue to grow."

Be Water Wise...

Water... we all need it to live, for drinking, bathing, growing our crops, not to mention recreation. California is known for its sunny weather, but this comes at a price, particularly during the past several years — 2014 was the driest year in California since recordkeeping began in 1895.

Mother Nature works in mysterious ways. While many states in the central U.S. are receiving record-breaking rainfall and experiencing devastating floods, in California we need to scale back water usage. The mountain snowpack for winter, 2015, was measured at just 5% of the average amount. California's major reservoirs, Lake Shasta and Lake Oroville, are currently at 73% and 67% of average, respectively. As summer turns to fall, it's clear this trend will continue.

There is still hope, however. Water conservation by our consumers — residents and businesses in Ventura County — can go a long way toward preserving this critical resource. It's time to develop some good habits and stick with them. Our lifestyles will need to change a bit, and we're not alone — agriculture and industrial production must also adapt to new water-conservation measures. Here are some of the ways we can use water more wisely, and comply with the Emergency Water Use Restrictions that were put in place June 1, 2015.

Household Use

Develop good, water-conserving habits that can become second nature:

- Turn the water off while brushing teeth, take shorter showers, and use a broom instead of hosing off the patio.
- Capture water in buckets while showering, and use this to water indoor and outdoor plants.
- Check household plumbing regularly for leaks.
- Use water-efficient washers, and install high-efficiency toilets.
- Avoid washing the car more than necessary; use a bucket while washing and only turn on the hose to rinse.

Go to www.bewaterwise.com for more great tips!

Take Advantage of Available Water Conservation Rebates

Ventura County residents may be eligible for rebates for indoor and outdoor conservation efforts such as high-efficiency clothes washers and toilets, smart irrigation controllers, and high-efficiency nozzles. These smart appliances translate into big water conservation savings!

The County of Ventura Public Works Agency's Water Quality and Conservation page offers comprehensive water conservation rebate information under its Rebates tab. For details visit <http://pwa.ventura.org/water-sanitation-department/water-quality-conservation>. Or visit www.socalwatersmart.com to learn more about available rebates.

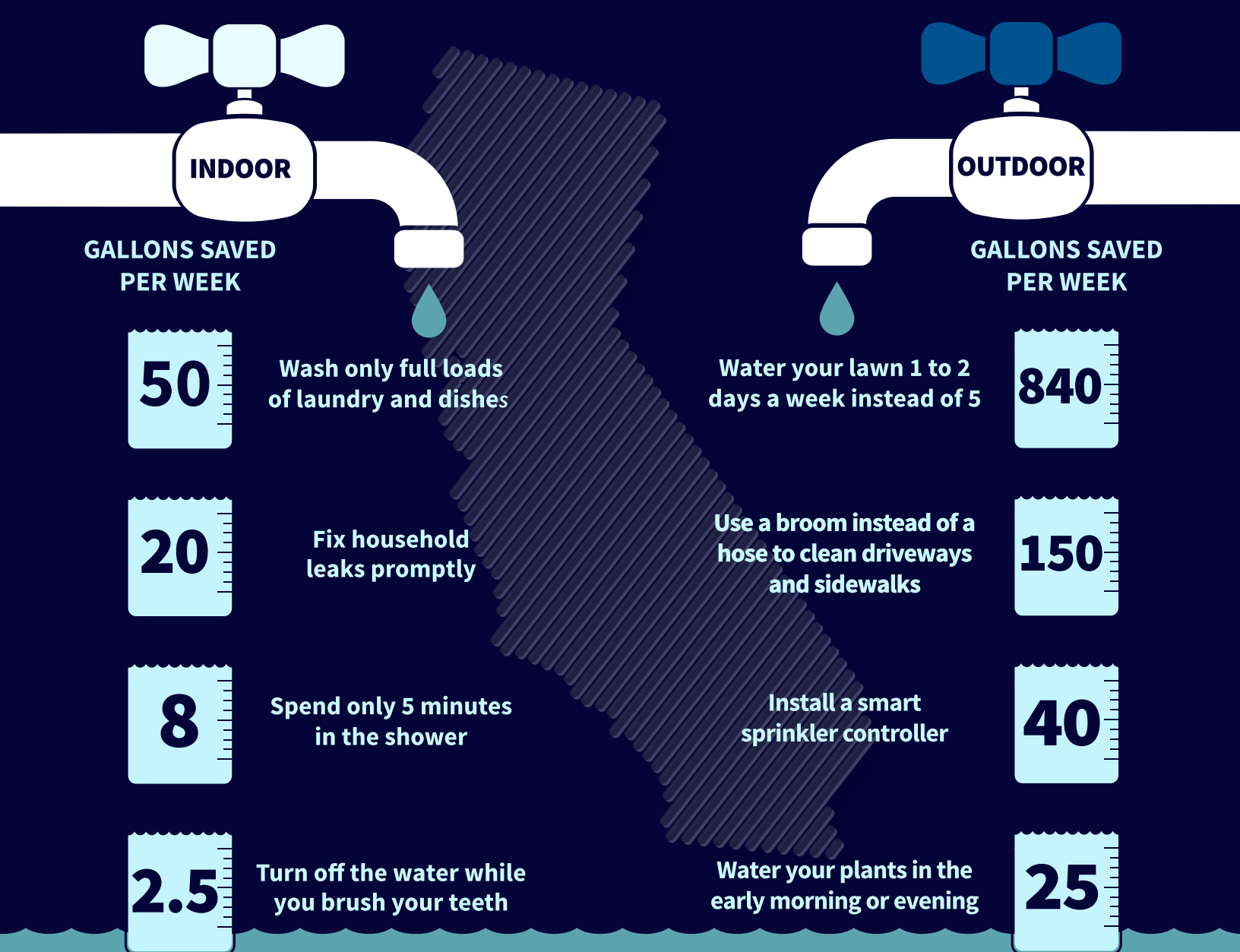
Recreation

It's not a good time to build a swimming pool. At this time, filling residential swimming pools is prohibited within the four Districts managed by the Department of Water and Sanitation (Moorpark, Somis, Bell Canyon, and Lake Sherwood)—a typical residential pool uses from 10,000 to 30,000 gallons of water. So what's a pool owner to do? Avoid refilling existing pools by using a cover when the pool isn't in use. For current pool owners, consider doing the right thing by focusing on drought-tolerant landscaping to offset pool usage.

Gardening and lawn care

"Outdoor water use makes up about 60% of the total household water usage. If you can reduce outdoor water use by 50% following the suggestions listed in this issue, you can reduce total water usage by 25% or more," says David Sasek, Director of the Water and Sanitation Department. Xeriscaping is the art of landscape design to reduce water usage. Did you know that drought-resistant landscaping can reduce water consumption by 50% or more? Try reducing the amount of turf used in household landscaping and replace it with water-wise turf, mulch, and plants that need less moisture.

Consider adding rain barrels to current conservation efforts and even get a rebate! According to www.socalwatersmart.com, "Collecting and re-using rainwater from gutters and downspouts for lawns and gardens minimizes the amount of water flowing into your storm drains, sewer systems, and local waterways."



The Drought is Real...



DIGGING IN & Making a Difference!



Sharon Hurault, Management Assistant at the Water and Sanitation Department, is a happy participant in the turf removal program funded by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's SoCal Water\$mart program.

With the help of a professional landscaper, Sharon removed the turf grass in her front, back, and side yards, and received a rebate check for over \$8,000. "While you must pre-register for the program, jump through a lot of hoops, and be sure you comply with all applicable local laws, ordinances, and other restrictions, it is totally worth it," says Sharon. "Each plant is now watered through a drip irrigation system. In addition, not having to maintain a grass lawn, or use a weed wacker or a lawn mower, is wonderfully freeing. We also have a lot more wildlife in our yard, including hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees."

EVERY *Bit* Helps

To do its part in reaching the City of Moorpark's water usage reduction goal of 32%, the Moorpark Reclamation Facility is now using recycled wastewater to irrigate its landscape and has reduced its daily operational use of potable water at the plant by 100%. In addition, the city's transportation and road division is making use of recycled water by trucking it out of the reclamation facility for use in their daily operations.



Is Your Garden Watershed Friendly?



After

Learn for **FREE** how to use the watershed-friendly approach in your garden. This five-part workshop series will be held on **Saturdays, September – October, 2015**, at the Ventura County Government Center. Discover how to design, mulch, grade, and plant for the efficient use of rainwater and the elimination of the long-term need for irrigation. You'll be an expert water-conserving gardener in no time!



Before

Workshop One: Watershed Basics Class, Saturday, September 12, 2015, 9am

Workshop Two: Evaluating Your Garden Site, Saturday, September 26, 2015, 9am

Workshop Three: Designing Your Landscape, Saturday, October 10, 2015, 9am

Workshop Four: Turf Removal, Saturday, October 17, 2015, 9am

Workshop Five: Planting and Irrigating, Saturday, October 24, 2015, 9am



For details and registration information, visit www.watershedwisetraining.com/class-calendar/



After a few of our driest years on record we need to be prepared if El Niño hits!

On **September 28-30, 2015**, all VCPWA departments will participate in a real-time flood-response exercise called **Storm Day**. VCPWA departments will mobilize their emergency-response teams, and test the Agency Operations Center and their own department operations centers with realistic scenarios of major flooding from storms. VCPWA will be testing its communication systems, tracking capabilities, and the field resources needed to deal with a major storm or disaster event right here in Ventura County. Outreach to local press and local communities will also be tested. Lead organizer for the exercise is Karl Novak, Deputy Director of WPD's Operations and Maintenance Division.

**VCPWA Picnic
"FAIR FUN"**



Come One, Come All!

We are getting excited about our **"State Fair MidWay"** booths. Help plan or "man" your booth or just come on out and support your PWA division.

There will be lots of variety in the menu this year, including, by popular demand, Gabriel Ramirez serving up his mouth-watering tacos and Eric Weinstein spinning out the sweet stuff: fluffy cotton candy! Yum!

Adults and kids will enjoy the music, food, and activities we have planned, including: Tug-of-War, the Rope Bridge, the Horseshoe Toss Competition, and the Golf Tournament, as well as some really fun surprises! Enjoy the old-fashioned midway and celebrate being a team member of VCPWA!

Tickets will be on sale soon at your department's admin desk!

**Join us!
Ventura County Public
Works MidWay**



YOU'RE INVITED — JOIN US!

Saturday, October 3, 2015 11am to 3pm **Soule Park, Ojai**

Transportation ▪ Water & Sanitation ▪ Watershed Protection ▪ Engineering Services ▪ Central Services