Drought is here. Take one action today to save water.

California is experiencing drought following two critically dry years. Given the region’s climate and in anticipation of reoccurring drought, ACWD prepares for times like these. We are putting our experience and lessons learned into practice now and positioning for future dry years. With investments in infrastructure, a diverse water supply, customers’ conservation, and innovative dry year preparations, we plan to meet our customers’ needs in 2021. Yet, with climate change and warmer temperatures, customers must conserve water today for tomorrow.

To learn more about drought, how ACWD plans to meet 2021 water demands, and conservation programs, visit acwd.org/drought.

State Calls on Californians to Cut Water Usage by 15%

Efforts to curb Californians’ water usage amidst deepening drought conditions have the State calling on residents for voluntary water conservation of 15%. A reduction in indoor and outdoor water use will help preserve available supplies, protect water reserves, and maintain critical flows for fish and wildlife. The Executive Order issued by the Governor implores California residents to reduce water use by 15% compared to 2020 levels. To reach this goal, the Tri-Cities will need to save about 6,500 acre-feet of water over the next year for future use, or enough to supply nearly 23,000 households per year. ACWD and its customers in Fremont, Newark and Union City can work together and meet the challenge to save water now to safeguard supplies for our community, businesses, and ecosystems.

ACWD supports the State’s call for 15% conservation by our customers and we have the programs and resources to help you meet that goal.

Simple Savings

How to Reduce Water Use by 15%

Simple can be significant when it comes to saving water. It takes only a few small changes to reduce your water use by 15%. ACWD has launched “One Saves Water,” a water conservation campaign offering water-saving hacks that contribute to unified and substantial water savings. Currently, the average Tri-City area household uses 245 gallons of water per day! Be mindful of water usage and encourage everyone in your household to adapt or increase water conserving habits. EveryONE can make a difference to cut back on individual water use by 15%.

Visit acwd.org/drought to see a list of water-saving hacks.

Message From The General Manager

It is an honor and privilege to introduce myself to you, our customer, as the new ACWD General Manager and the 10th general manager in the agency’s 107-year history. I have spent the last 24 years of my career working on our customers’ behalf to ensure the District maintains reliable water service to the Tri-City area. Like you, I am an ACWD customer. I’ve lived in the service area for nearly three decades, have raised my children here, and am vested in this exceptional community.

The role of General Manager brings great duty and responsibility, and I am excited about the opportunity. From environmental engineer to Manager of Engineering and Technology Services, I’ve been fortunate to move many projects and programs forward to deliver on ACWD’s Mission of providing a reliable supply of high-quality water at a reasonable price to our customers. In my role, I will work closely with the ACWD Board of Directors and staff to preserve the District’s legacy and provide quality service to our customers.

I have a customer-first philosophy, and it is important to maintain ACWD’s respectable reputation within our community, throughout the region and state of California, and within the water industry. Though my appointment comes at a time of multiple challenges - a statewide drought on the heels of a global pandemic - I will lead the agency with integrity and in a way that represents the best interest of our customers.

That is not to say that challenges may not linger; after two consecutive critically dry years, drought throughout the West is real and significant. A statewide Executive Order calls on Californians to voluntarily reduce water use by 15% and ACWD supports these efforts. Thanks to our customers’ past investments in water supply reliability and ongoing conservation efforts, ACWD’s water supplies are adequate for this year but we are currently anticipating a third dry year and that will stress our supplies. We all need to do our part to conserve water now. This newsletter provides more information on ways to save and the programs available to you. We are here to help!

Though drought is at the forefront, responsible water agency management requires that we also remain focused on water resiliency, environmental stewardship, fiscal responsibility, infrastructure investments, water quality and reliability, and preparation for climate change. As we address what is at hand, we plan for the future, and I am truly honored to serve you!

Ed Stevenson, General Manager
Drought: Frequently Asked Questions

Does ACWD have enough water?
After two critically dry years, ACWD has sufficient supply for this year as well as a healthy start on reserves for 2022. This comes thanks to past investments in water supply reliability made by our customers including water-use efficiency and conservation, local groundwater recharge at Quarry Lakes, brackish groundwater desalination, water supply contracts with the State and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Regional Water System, and remote groundwater banking in Kern County.

However, forecasts indicate an elevated chance of a third dry year. Continued dry conditions would stress critical minimum flows in lakes and streams, limiting the ability for water managers to move available water supplies throughout the state. An important part of planning for a third dry year is for all of us to take simple actions to save water now.

Does ACWD have water use restrictions in place due to the drought?
Mandatory water use restrictions are not in place, yet we encourage all customers to voluntarily conserve water by 15% per the Governor’s Executive Order. We also monitor for water waste which is restricted. Water waste includes runoff when irrigating with potable water, using potable water to wash sidewalks and driveways, and using hoses with no shutoff nozzles to wash cars. Report water waste by calling 510.668.4200 or visit acwd.org/reportwaste.

Why is new development and construction allowed during drought?
ACWD plans for sufficient water supplies for existing as well as future customers, especially during drought. ACWD is required by law to conduct a Water Supply Assessment for new developments to ensure sufficient supply. To date, ACWD has not determined a need to temporarily suspend new water service connections.

Is drought a result of climate change?
California is no stranger to drought, but 2013-2014 and 2020-2021 are two of California’s driest years in 150 years. More significantly, these recent dry years exhibit characteristics of changed precipitation patterns that are anticipated to occur with climate change – notably a shorter rainy season and a longer dry season. ACWD is working with water resources managers throughout the state to study and prepare for climate change and develop adaptation plans for the new weather patterns; the challenges of today’s drought form a learning opportunity for better management tomorrow – a silver lining!

Do I need to let my lawn die?
Customers are encouraged to reduce outdoor water use, but ACWD does not expect its customers to completely stop irrigating their lawns, just reduce to no more than two watering days per week. A well-maintained lawn can withstand a drought year with reduced watering so we ask customers to follow these simple actions: water no more than two times per week, only early in the morning, and use intermittent soak times (known as “cycle and soak”) to reduce runoff. If you follow these practices, your lawn may not look quite as green in the fall; however, it will remain alive and should return in the fall with winter rains. Better still, consider reducing the size of your lawn and take advantage of our enhanced rebate program to replace a decorative lawn with water-efficient landscape.

Cover Photo: Home of customer in Fremont who participated in ACWD’s Water-Efficient Landscape Rebate Program.

Water Conservation: Survival Hacks for Your Landscape

Drought Proof Your Landscape
Is your lawn turning a little brown as you try to cut back on your water use this year? Would you prefer landscaping that can survive dry conditions because it is adapted to the climate and does not use a lot of water? Install a water-efficient landscape in place of that lawn and save water and money. Customers can now receive a rebate of $2 per square foot of lawn replaced. Learn more at acwd.org/rebates.

Get Inspired to Save Water
ACWD has numerous resources to help you transition to a beautiful climate and drought-friendly landscape. Check out the “Water Wise Gardening in the Bay Area” online plant database and design tool or the “CalScapes Garden Planner” to find plants unique to your zip code and view design ideas for a range of landscaping styles. These resources and more are available on ACWD’s website at acwd.org/gardening.

Take the Guesswork Out of Irrigation
Do you forget to turn off your sprinkler system when it rains? Would you like a timer that does this automatically based on actual weather? Install a smart irrigation controller and ACWD will cover a portion of the cost! Learn more at acwd.org/rebates.

More Tips for Your Landscape
- Mulch is your soil’s best friend; it keeps the soil moist and prevents evaporation.
- Compost is a great water saver as it increases the soil’s ability to hold water.
- Sheet mulching is a great way to prevent weeds and nourish the soil.
- Aeration provides a route for the precious water to get through to the root zone.
- Drip irrigation delivers water directly to the roots where the water is needed.

acwd.org/outdootips
Learn more about these tips and techniques; including how to protect your trees from drought and other important aspects of managing your landscape during dry conditions.

Customers Invited to Participate in Financial Workshops
ACWD’s fiscal responsibility starts with careful evaluation and planning. Customers are invited to attend workshops as the District discusses a variety of topics, including water rates and drought-specific surcharges that could be implemented if the District needs to declare a water shortage emergency.

Workshop Dates:
August 26, September 23, October 28

Workshop information, times, how to participate, and video links to post-workshop recordings will be available at acwd.org/rates.

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Board meetings are open to the public and generally held in the ACWD Board Room, 43885 South Grimmer Blvd., Fremont. Please visit www.acwd.org for 2021 board meeting dates.

Ed Stevenson, General Manager

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