

Water Shortage Task Force Tackles Tough Issues

How to Spread the Word on Drought and Make Equitable Reduction Requests Discussed at October Task Force Meetings



The difficult work of how to reduce water use in Ventura is at the heart of a series of public meetings by the city's **Water Shortage Task Force**. During two meetings in October at the City Sanjon Maintenance Yard, the 13-member task force pored over a Water Shortage Contingency Plan for Ventura Water customers as our community copes with the

three-years-and-counting drought. The goal of the Task Force is to help Ventura Water find ways to make necessary water reductions universal, equitable and sensible.

A primary sticking point at both the Oct. 8 and Oct. 22 meetings was how to recognize households and businesses who are already efficient water users. For them, paring 20 percent off their already lean water budgets could be difficult.

Task Force members had previously broken into small groups to brainstorm ideas for Ventura Water officials to consider. Options include modifying the tiered system or establishing an allocation based on customers' water history. The meetings, which ran more than three hours each, were spent on edits to the Contingency Plan, incorporating previous policy recommendations, and discussing how to establish water conservation triggers if the drought persists.

The Oct. 22 meeting also included a presentation by General Manager Shana Epstein of the existing water reduction rebate and incentive programs in the tri-county area. Ventura's only incentive program at this time is a **50 percent discount on Rain barrels**. As part of their scope, the Task Force will be considering whether funding should be allocated for incentives and/or rebates to assist customers in reducing water use.

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Register Now For Free Water Wise Class On Saturday, Nov. 15

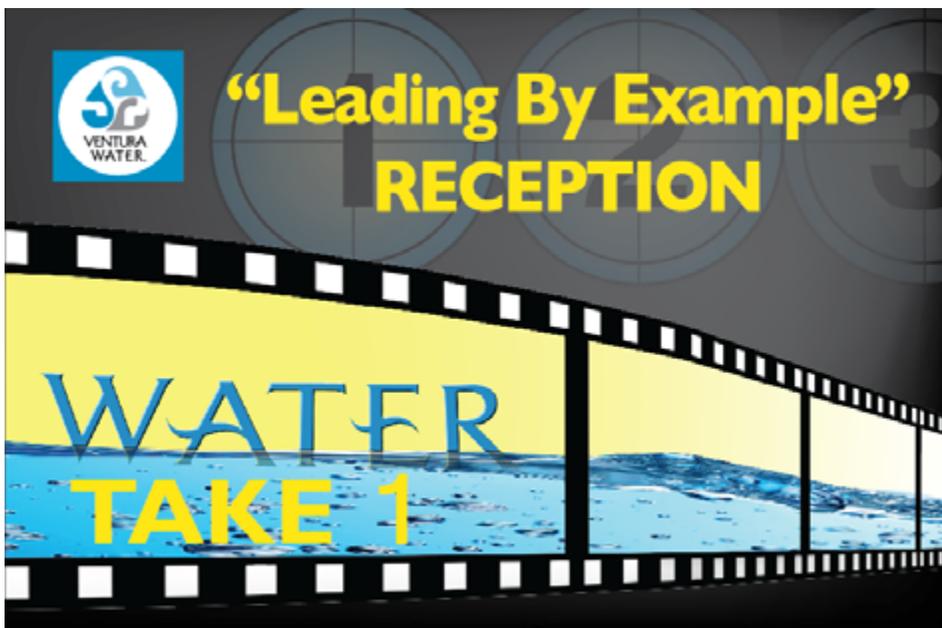
Sign-up now for the last FREE Saturday morning Water Wise class offered this fall. Help Ventura become the most water-efficient community in California.

- November 15, 2014 ~ Turf Replacement with Water Wise Plants ~ City Sanjon Maintenance Yard**
Remove turf naturally, replace it with native or climate-appropriate plants, convert pop-up spray irrigation to drip irrigation, and re-wild your garden habitats to bring back birds, bees and butterflies.

For more information, call (805) 652-4501 or visit cityofventura.net/water/landscape.

Task force members agreed that Ventura Water has made great strides in community outreach. In addition to creating the task force, city water officials have reached out with presentations, educational brochures, leak kits for residents, and [water-education videos](#) and last summer's "Dirty Car" Challenge which received national attention.

The next [Water Shortage Task Force](#) meeting is Nov. 5 at 6 p.m. at the City Sanjon Water Maintenance Yard, 336 Sanjon Road. All Ventura Water customers are encouraged to attend the Task Force meetings to offer perspective, opinions and insight. Alternatively, feel free to email concerns to the Task Force at: watershortagetaskforce@venturawater.net. Emails sent to this address will be forwarded to all members of the Task Force.



Please Be Our Guest
**Water: Take 1 Film Contest
Community Reception
"Leading By Example"**

Thursday, November 20, 2014 from 6-8 p.m.

In partnership with our sponsors, Ventura Water is pleased to invite all community members to attend this year's Water: Take 1 special presentation on November 20, 2014 from 6-8 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza Ventura Beach Hotel.

Event is free with RSVP

The reception's theme of "Leading by Example" highlights local companies and organizations that have:

- Implemented sustainable water practices and policies for themselves and their clients
- Upgraded their private and public spaces with a focus on water conservation, and
- Otherwise demonstrated not only an acute awareness of the challenges facing our water supply, but have taken bold steps towards solutions.



Dear Valued Customer,

Today 95 percent of California is in the grip of a "severe drought," with no end in sight. Water restrictions across the state have become the norm. As you know, on Sept. 22, our City Council declared a [Stage 3 Water Shortage Emergency](#) for Ventura and adopted [outdoor watering restrictions](#) to achieve a 20 percent water use reduction goal.

With [Lake Casitas at less than 53 percent](#) capacity and our groundwater and Ventura River water levels dropping, Ventura's local water supplies are dwindling. Statewide, many groundwater basins are overdrawn, polluted or drying up. Some 420,000 agricultural acres are idled, according to a UC Davis study. Overall, it is estimated that the drought has caused a \$2.2 billion hit this year to California's economy and cost our state 17,000 jobs.

The State Legislature's answer is [Proposition 1](#) on the Nov. 4 ballot. Prop 1 would provide \$7.54 billion in general obligation bond funding for a wide range of water projects as part of a comprehensive water and drought-management plan for California.

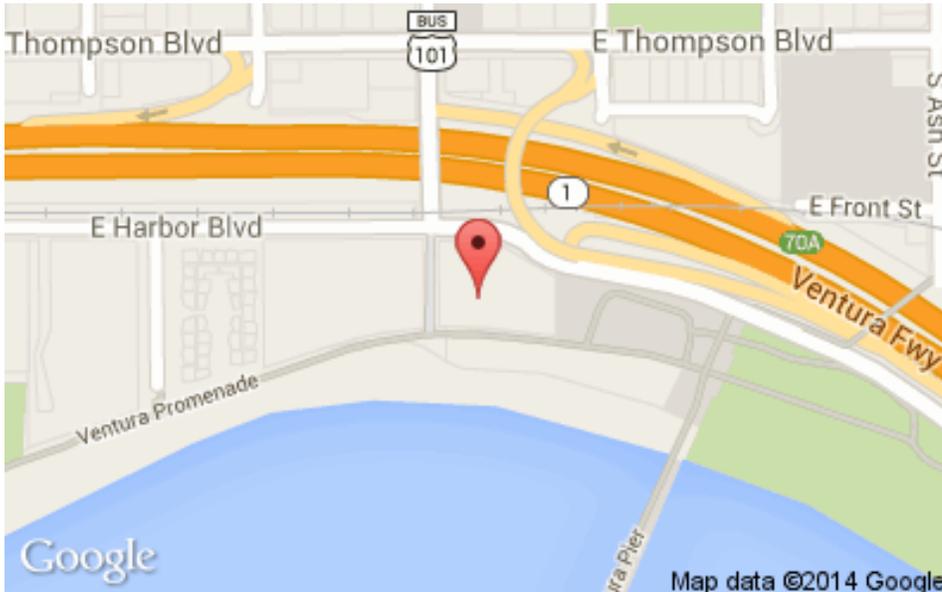
The bond addresses the drought and California's water needs on many fronts. It would fund water conservation and storm-

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These companies and organizations are paving the way for increased recognition and participation on the corporate as well as personal level to achieve water sustainability.

Ventura Water presents [Water: Take 1, an Online Short Film Contest](#), to bring awareness to the issues surrounding our water future to a global audience.



Crowne Plaza Ventura Beach Hotel
450 E. Harbor Blvd.
Ventura, CA 93001

RSVP To Water: Take 1 Event

Water Summit Educates Residents about Water Issues, the Drought and Conservation



About 200 community members spent their Saturday participating in the Summit on Water Conservation, held Oct. 25 at Ventura City Hall. Organized by Assemblyman Das Williams (D-Carpinteria), the Ventura Chamber of Commerce and the City of Ventura (Ventura Water), the four-hour event focused on helping attendees learn more about California's three-year

drought and what they can do to save water.

The summit featured a variety of informational sessions, including "Turf Alternatives," "Harvesting Your Own Graywater and Rainwater," "How to Save Water with Compost," "Controlling Your Irrigation Controller" and "Water Saving Devices."

The hallway at City Hall was lined with informational exhibits by local environmental groups, conservation-oriented businesses and government officials. Ventura Water and the [City of Ventura Environmental Sustainability Division](#) also had exhibits and giveaways, as did the [Casitas Municipal Water District](#).

"The drought is the most important topic of our time," Ventura Mayor Cheryl

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water capture programs that increase local and regional water supplies, programs to improve water quality, flood control and habitat restoration, water recycling and salt-removal projects to reuse water and maximize supplies, new recycled water pipelines testing for new treatment technology, and groundwater cleanup efforts and flood management programs.

Supporters say California needs a comprehensive water-management plan to ensure adequate water supplies as the drought continues to stress the state's reservoirs, groundwater basins and ecosystems. Supporters include the [Association of California Water Agencies](#), business groups including the California Chamber of Commerce, several environmental organizations, agricultural and farming interests, labor groups, the California Democratic and Republican parties as well as Gov. Jerry Brown. In fact, you may have seen the recent TV ads featuring Gov. Brown and the reasons California needs to tackle our water problems.

Opponents say the bond does nothing to achieve long-term regional water self-sufficiency, does not relieve the drought, crowds out funding for schools, healthcare and other needs, and adds billions of dollars to taxpayer debt while also giving millions to private interests to build water projects.

A poll taken in June revealed that over 82 percent of Californians identified drought and water shortages as the state's most pressing issue. Compounding the problem is California's aging water infrastructure, the growing population and climate change that is predicted to bring more severe, prolonged droughts in the future.

Before the election, I urge you

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Service office in Oxnard, and State Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson (D-Santa Barbara).

Epstein spoke of Ventura Water’s ongoing efforts to reduce the city’s water consumption by 20 percent, from limiting outdoor water use by residents and businesses to two days a week, to issuing the “dirty car” challenge that drew national attention. She also urged audience members to **check for leaking toilets and faucets** and to consider **replacing their lawns** with drought-resistant landscaping.

“Gold is the new green,” said Hannah-Beth Jackson, adding that she has not watered her lawn in five months. She reinforced Williams’ and Epstein’s call for residents “to go drought-tolerant.”



Gonzales said water efficiency is a top priority for local farmers. The good news, he said, is farmers are monitoring their water use more closely and, “giving plants only water they need” to reduce runoff. The bad news, Gonzales said, is the drought is forcing farmers to grow fewer crops seasonally.

“Whereas before they were growing three or four crops, now they are growing maybe two or three,” Gonzales said, adding, “Less water, less farming, less food.”

Mark Jackson of the National Weather Service confirmed what most people suspect: California completed its driest three-year period in the state’s history since record keeping started in 1895. Rain locally has been 25 percent of normal from 2011 to 2013. He said the 2014-15 outlook is promising but that the state will need at least three years of normal rainfall to end the drought.

Heitmann told audience members during the summit’s opening session in the Ventura City Council Chambers. “At the end of day you will be completely educated about water issues.”

Other speakers were Ventura Water General Manager Shana Epstein, Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner Henry Gonzales, Mark Jackson, meteorologist for the National Weather

to take time to learn about the bond so you can cast an **informed vote**. Be sure to get out and hit the polls on Election Day!

Sincerely,

Shana Epstein,
Ventura Water General Manager

www.saveourh2o.org



www.epa.gov/watersense/



www.home-water-works.org/calculator



www.saveourh2o.org/sprinklers101



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