

Water Shortage Task Force Recommends Outdoor Watering Limits



(Photo: Ventura Water Management Analyst Karen Waln addresses members of the Water Shortage Task Force during its Aug. 26 meeting.)

Ventura's Water Shortage Task Force, formed in July by the Ventura City Council to advise it on ways to respond to California's three-year

drought, made its first recommendations at its Aug. 26 meeting.

The **13-member committee** approved Ventura Water staff's recommendation to prepare an ordinance restricting the use of automated landscape sprinkler systems by residents and businesses between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. and to limit their use to two days a week. Residents and businesses would be able to choose which two days a week to water under the recommendation. The recommendation also would allow Ventura residents to water plants and grass outside anytime with a bucket or hand-held hose with a shut-off nozzle.

Task force members delayed considering penalties and fines for noncompliance to their **next meeting** on Tuesday, Sept. 9 at 6 p.m. at the City Sanjon Maintenance Yard, 336 Sanjon Road. The task force's final recommendations for outdoor restrictions will be considered for approval by the **Ventura City Council** at its Sept. 22 meeting.

The two-day outdoor watering restrictions are required by the **state of California**, which has mandated that all water providers statewide reduce their water consumption by 20 percent in response to worsening drought conditions. The proposed restrictions meet the **state's regulations** and are consistent with limitations adopted by other cities in Ventura County. Water providers that fail to comply with the state's mandate may be levied a fine of up to \$10,000 a day by the State Water Resources Control Board.

The watering recommendations followed a presentation from Ron Merckling, **Casitas Municipal Water District's** Water Conservation and Public Affairs Direc-

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Dear Valued Customer,

Many of us have fond memories of McGrath State Beach. Unfortunately, this valued campground is closed again due to flooding. So, how can the flooding be controlled and who should be responsible?

This debate is now before the Regional Water Quality Control Board, because local State Parks staff lobbied to have all parties investigate an interim solution as part of the **City's permit with the Regional Board to discharge tertiary treated water to the Santa Clara River Estuary**, which is adjacent to McGrath State Beach. (This permit allows the City to provide quality wastewater cleaning services to its total population of 109,000). On **September 11, 2014, the Regional Board will hear a report** about the progress of the stakeholder effort.

Customers should understand some background on the flooding issue. In 1961, when State Parks accepted the land from the McGrath family, the deed explicitly

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tor, about the supply status of Lake Casitas. The Lake is one of Ventura's main water sources, providing about 4,600 acre-feet per year or approximately one-third of the water needed for the city. Merckling reported that Lake Casitas was last full in 2005 but that the drought has caused Lake Casitas' **water level to drop to 54 percent** – a near historical low.

Merckling said his district expects the lake's water level to drop to 50 percent by Oct. 1, triggering a mandatory 20 percent reduction in water use for customers. Should the drought continue and the lake level drop to 40 percent, Merckling added, there will be a mandatory 30 percent reduction for customers.

The **Water Shortage Task Force's** next meeting is Tuesday, Sept. 9 and will focus on public educational outreach measures. The meeting is at 6 p.m. at the Ventura Water Maintenance Yard, 336 Sanjon Road. Customers are encouraged to attend and provide input.

Register Now For Water Wise Classes



Sign-up now for the next series of the FREE Saturday morning Water Wise classes. Help Ventura become the most water-efficient community in California by learning more about these drought-busting topics:

- **September 20, 2014 ~ Rainwater Harvesting & Laundry-to-Landscape Graywater ~ City Sanjon Maintenance Yard**

Install a rain barrel, redirect your downspout into your new rain garden, install a laundry-to-landscape system and maintain them all properly.

- **October 18, 2014 ~ Composting and Urban Soils ~ Cornucopia Gardens (Telephone Road & Ramelli Avenue)**

Create healthy backyard mulch, compost and worm castings from your food and yard waste to conserve water, reduce pesticides and revive urban soil.

- **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, visit cityofventura.net/water/landscape.

explained that flooding regularly occurs in that area. In order to keep the farmlands east of the park from flooding, the McGraths retained the right to break the berm. Also in 1961, a levee was constructed on the South Bank of the Santa Clara River Estuary to help protect this area from flooding. In 1964, the park was built knowing the flooding risks and in full knowledge that the City's predecessor to the Water Reclamation Facility discharged water to the adjacent estuary. By routinely breaking the berm mechanically between the ocean and the estuary and the constructed levee, park services were interrupted relatively infrequently by flooding. In 1997, the California steelhead was declared an endangered species, and mechanically breaking the berm became not possible because it could harm the species. A year later, the levee was severely damaged during a storm, and State Parks applied to reconstruct the levee. In 2003, the second application to the California Coastal Commission granted provisional approval to rebuild the levee. To this day, however, the levee has not been rebuilt and flooding has become more frequent. During this same period of time, the Water Reclamation Facility has increased its recycling capacity and has reduced the amount of water released into the estuary, both per capita and in terms of total volume. In addition, the scientific studies show that even if the City began using all its tertiary treated water and discontinued releasing water into the estuary, the park may still flood based upon its history.

Today, the City, the County, State Parks and other stakeholders are all considering and exploring **interim solutions** to keep the campground more available during the time that the City develops and implements its Integrated Water Resources Management Plan. The total cost of the interim solutions varies. For example, pumping the estuary would

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Announcing Ventura Water's Extreme Water Saver Challenge

When Ventura Water challenged local residents to drive **dirty cars** this summer

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and show their support for conserving water, residents heeded our call, revealing in their filthy cars and showing support for reduced water use.

As the severe drought continues, we have a new challenge for Ventura! California and Ventura continue to be in an extreme drought, and as we move into autumn, our local water supply situation is likely to worsen. An extreme drought calls for extreme measures. So Ventura ... how far would you go to save our H2O? What extreme measures would you take? We want to know!

Ventura Water is inviting our customers and all of Ventura to participate in the **Extreme Water Saver Challenge**. Ventura Water will award prizes to the most creative and efficient water savers who post videos, messages or helpful tips on the **Ventura Water Facebook page**.

Let's get extreme! Keep driving those dirty cars, but let's take our commitment to conserving water an extreme step further. Here are some ideas:

- **Re-think your landscape.** Do you really need all that water-guzzling grass? Consider ripping out your entire lawn and planting a **beautiful garden** with California native plants. Get creative. Get extreme!
- **Re-think your laundry.** How many times can you wear an article of clothing without washing it? Is your washing machine a water-efficient model?
- **Re-think how you waste water without even realizing it.** Is every drop of water in your shower being used to clean your body or wash your hair? Can you keep a few buckets in your shower to catch extra water, then find ways to use that collected water at home? If so, share those ways with us!
- **Re-think the toilet.** How about replacing all your old toilets with low-flushing models? To really go extreme, don't flush every time. (A good motto: if it's yellow, let it mellow; if it's brown, flush it down).
- **Re-think everything!**

We hope everyone will join our **Extreme Water Saver Challenge**. Let the ideas start rolling in!

Calling All Filmmakers! Water: Take 1 Online Short Film Contest Early Bird Deadline is September 15



Submit your water-focused short film before September 15 and have the most votes to be awarded a special Early Bird prize in November. Films (less than five minutes) with a water theme are being accepted now at watertake1.com for the third year of the global contest. The final date to submit a film is November 1.

Film watchers are also needed to cast their vote for their favorite film. All films can be watched and shared online at watertake1.com until voting closes on December 1. Since there's only one vote per computer, viewers are encouraged to share

their favorite on social media to create a buzz and start a conversation about water stewardship. To stay updated, fans are invited to "Like" **Water: Take 1's**

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potentially cost \$1.6 million a year (for approximately 10 years). A long-term solution of moving the campground and restoring the wetlands is estimated to cost \$28.9 million. The City supports identifying potential solutions and offered to research and apply for grant funding to implement potential solutions, which can be a laborious task, in the spirit of collaboration. To date, State Parks has not accepted the City's invitation to cooperatively find funding to implement solutions. However, the City is not in a position to use local funds to pay for costly solutions to make the state park more available to visitors from all areas of the state and the country.

I encourage all of you who are interested to read the City's comments to the Regional Board on the **interim flood management study**, as well as the comments of other agencies that participated in developing interim solutions. It is important for the Board to hear from the customers who want to encourage State Parks to cooperate with the City to identify and find grant funding for an **interim solution**.

Sincerely,

Shana Epstein,
Ventura Water General Manager

www.saveourh2o.org



www.epa.gov/watersense/



[Facebook page](#), and “Follow” us on [Twitter](#). Sign-up for our email list at city-ofventura.net/watertake1 to be the first to get the inside scoop on the WT1 Sneak Peek Party on November 20.

In early December, the ten finalist films will be named and one will be awarded the Grand Prize of \$1,500 in March 2015. In addition, a film shot in and around the City of Ventura will receive the Ventura Vision Award, sponsored by the [Crowne Plaza Ventura Beach Hotel](#), and will win a spotlight profile broadcasted on local television. Other awards and prizes include the Audience Choice (iPad) and the Best Student Short Film, sponsored by [Carollo Engineers](#) and Hopkins Groundwater Consultants (Go Pro Camera).



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