

Diamond A Mutual Water Company



Summer 2015

The Drought

Update on the Drought

The State Water Resources Control Board has ordered that our company, along with 2,600 small water companies such as ours, reduce water use by 25% from a baseline period of June through November 2013 to the period June through November 2015. The Board voted unanimously to establish a 25% reduction as the Company goal in lieu of an unenforceable option provided by the State to to arbitrarily reduce irrigation to two days a week.

Great news!! Diamond A has reduced its water use by 36% for June and and 33% for July as compared with the baseline of use in 2013. This shows that we are embracing conservation in a big way. Keep in mind that this is in ALL our interests to conserve this limited resource. It is tempting with such an out of sight, out of mind resource to think it is somehow magically replenished. Ultimately, all our water comes from rainfall.

(See Page two for details regarding our water use.)

Ways to Conserve Water

- *The vast majority of most households water use is outside the house. Of course there are many things one can do inside which I am sure most of you are aware of. (limit flushes; when rinsing clean things such as fruit, place a container under it to catch water for your house plants; take shorter showers; and so on).*
- *If you have sprinkler controllers, try reducing the irrigation duration. Some controllers have a % feature. It might require some fine-tuning, but try a 50% setting and see if this over-stresses critical plants. If so, back off some on the reduction or increase water durations on stations that need it.*
- *Try to convert to drip irrigation as it is the most efficient way to provide water to your plants.*
- *Try to limit lawns to locations where you actually use the lawn as a patio. Better yet, install a patio if you can manage it.*
- *Of course, fix leaks.*
- *Do not plant new plants until we are out of the woods in this drought. Even drought resistant plants need a*

lot of water to establish them. If you must plant, wait until the rainy season so that they plants can be irrigated by rainfall and develop a good root system prior the the following summer, but certainly use drip irrigation in any case.

- *Only irrigate at night or early mornings. This results in more of the water getting to the plant as opposed to being evaporated by the sun and heat.*
- *Trees should be your priority for irrigation as they take the most time to establish. In addition, they contribute the most visually to your landscape. HOWEVER, do NOT irrigate your oak trees! Summer irrigation can develop oak root fungus (heat and moisture combined can result in this). Most of our native oaks are well-established and thus have deep roots.*
- *Irrigating trees is best done with long, infrequent irrigation. This encourages deep rooting with in turn makes trees better able to withstand drought.*
- *Ground covers, especially turf, should be your lowest priority as they can generally be quickly reestablished.*

Diamond A Mutual Water Company

Compliance with Reductions

<u>Month/Year</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>'15 vs. '13</u>	<u>Change</u>
JUNE	5,554,748	3,548,646	(2,006,102)	-36%
JULY	6,126,942	4,116,224	(2,010,718)	-33%
AUG	6,044,838			
SEP	5,165,299			
OCT	4,185,911			
NOV	3,479,283			
TOTAL	30,557,021			

Water Conservation Rebate Act FAST!

The State is providing rebates for those who wish to reduce their water usage both by removing turf and changing toilets to low-use ones. These rebates will probably go quickly so if you wish to take advantage of them, you should act soon. The links are as follows:

Turf

<http://www.saveourwaterrebates.com/turf-replacement-rebates.html>

Toilets

<http://www.saveourwaterrebates.com/toilet-rebates.html>

Diamond A Mutual Water Company

Chlorination

Very few of us like chlorination, but it is a necessity to prevent us from becoming ill. There have been some complaints regarding being able to smell and/or taste chlorine in our water.

Our chlorinators have been serviced and in some cases replaced to assure more reliable chlorination. Below is a report prepared by Gary Mickelson of Jerry and Don's Yager Pump and Well Service (JDY). He explains the process and legal/health requirements of chlorination. JDY is making an effort to do the minimum chlorination to meet safety and legal requirements.

If you still find this to be unacceptable, the only alternative is to treat the water you use. If you wish to treat only kitchen tap water, this is fairly simple and low-cost. Just make sure the filter has a charcoal filter. However, if you want to treat all of your household water (not irrigated water) you will need a whole house system which costs about \$2000 to install and then requires some replacement of activated charcoal (carbon) at certain intervals. The activated charcoal neutralizes chlorine along with other substances.

The water system has four active wells with three Chlorine injection systems. Each of these systems injects Chlorine into the water as it is pumped into storage tanks. The tanks act as contact tanks for the Chlorine with the water; it takes a minimum of twenty minutes of contact time with the water for the Chlorine to kill any Bacteria that might be in the water.

Normally it takes a Chlorine residual of 0.1 to a 1.0 parts per million (ppm) in the water to kill bacteria. The water quality factors into what the residual needs to be for each water source. The water coming from the wells is very low in bad minerals, thus making it easier to maintain a lower dosage. The water system has been trying to maintain the lowest Chlorine residual and still keep the water safe to drink.

The State permit for the water system states that the water system must maintain the Chlorine injection systems as part of the use permit. This means that there must be a measurable amount of Chlorine in the water at the last/farthest locations in the piping of the system. This must be at least 0.1 ppm. In order to obtain this goal; we will have a higher reading of Chlorine closer to the tanks than out in the rest of the water system.

Diamond A Mutual Water Company

Financials

Current Financial Status

Revenue is tracking generally as expected. Water usage, and therefore Water Sales Revenue, is slightly lower than forecast due to continuing conservation efforts by members during the drought. Maintenance and Improvement Revenue is consistent with the Budget.

Expenses are running below the budgeted levels, which is more than offsetting the lower Water Sales Revenue. Because water usage is lower than expected, pumping costs (electricity) are also well below budget. There have been no major breaks in the system and therefore Repair and Maintenance costs are thus far below budget.

Capital Projects

The equipment to provide accurate well monitoring has all been installed and the wireless communication system has also been completed.

These two projects came in slightly under the Capital Budget, for a YTD savings of \$6,500.

The replacement of the White Oak tank is still scheduled to be done in 2015. The permit has been approved.

The Water Company has been approved for a \$200,000 loan from Westamerica Bank to purchase and install the White Oak Tank. Loan

terms are more favorable than the previously approved equipment lease (lower interest rate at 3.50% and longer repayment term (4 yrs vs 3 yrs). The Board unanimously agreed to proceed with entering into the Westamerica Bank loan.

The Diamond A Website

Do not forget that there is a wealth of information available on the Diamond A website not only regarding the DANA but also the Water Company as well. For example, there is Address & Contacts, the reporting of water problems, Board Postings, Consumer Confidence Report, Water Use Tips, and past Newsletters. The address is as follows:

<http://diamondasonoma.com>