

Your Watershed
By the Russian River Watershed Association

Conserve Water Today

Much has been written these past months of the need for water users in Sonoma and Mendocino counties to reduce their water use immediately. Due to significantly lower than normal rainfall this past winter and a reduction in the water flows to Lake Mendocino from the Potter Valley Project, the Sonoma County Water Agency is projecting that Lake Mendocino may reach historically low levels by September. In response to the projection, the Agency requested a 10-15% voluntary reduction in water use from water customers and the agricultural community and filed a Petition for Temporary Urgency Change with the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) to request lower minimum flows in the Russian River. In response, the State Board issued an Order approving the Temporary Urgency Change Petition and included a requirement for the Agency to make a 15% reduction in diversions from the Russian River to the Agency's service area from July 1 – October 28, 2007.

How can you reduce your water use at your home or office by 10-15%? To assist with this question, water providers throughout Sonoma and Mendocino counties joined together to develop a Top Ten list of simple water conservation tips that you can implement right now to reduce your water use. The Top Ten Water Conservation tips are:

- 1. Reduce irrigation by 20%.** Check and adjust the schedule on your irrigation controller regularly based on weather and water needs of your plants.
- 2. Find and repair leaks now.** Water leaks are the biggest cause of water waste. Test your toilets faucets and showerheads for leaks, and check your meter to see if the low flow indicator is spinning. If you have a leak, fix it right away!
- 3. Inspect and tune-up irrigation system monthly.** Leaks outside are just as wasteful as leaks inside. On a monthly basis, check for leaks in pipes, hoses, emitters, and couplings. Inspect your irrigation equipment in operation so problems can be detected.
- 4. Irrigate between midnight and 6:00 a.m. to reduce water loss from evaporation and wind.** When you irrigate during the day, much of the water is lost to evaporation and wind.
- 5. Use a broom, not a hose, to clean driveway, deck or patio.** Using water to wash your driveway is wasteful.
- 6. Use a bucket and a hose with an automatic shut-off nozzle when you wash the car, or take your car to a carwash that recycles.** Don't let the water run

when washing your car at home. Consider taking your car to a car wash that recycles their water.

7. **Cover pools and hot-tubs to reduce evaporation.** Pools and hot-tubs can lose a lot of water due to evaporation. When not in use, cover your pool and hot-tub. Not only will this reduce the amount of water lost to evaporation, it will also help keep your water warm.
8. **Use front-loading washing machines.** Front-loading washing machines use up to 40% less water than a standard washing machine. They also use less detergent and help reduce the length of time your clothes are in the dryer.
9. **Run the dishwasher and clothes washer with full loads only.**
10. **Prevent and report water waste.** Don't leave the water running inside or outside your home. Prevent water from your irrigation system from running off your property and on to streets and sidewalks.

By implementing these tips all year long, you will improve your water use efficiency, reduce your water use and save money on your water bill. In addition, you can conserve water by taking advantage of water conservation incentives, rebates, and information that your water utility offers. Many water utilities offer programs and rebates that will assist you in reducing your indoor and outdoor water use. Call your local water utility to find out what programs and incentives they offer and how they can help you reduce your water use today.

The Russian River Watershed Association (www.rrwatershed.org) is an association of eleven cities, counties and special districts in the watershed that are working together on programs for clean water, fisheries restoration and watershed enhancement.