

Your Watershed

By: The Russian River Watershed Association

Using “Less” Water Means “More” in Our Rivers and Reservoirs

While our region received average rainfall this past winter, the spring has brought us more rays of sunshine than drops of rain. The historic lack of rainfall has once again brought to our attention the need to use less water this summer. Our pristine water supplies, wildlife habitats and world-class recreation activities in Lake Mendocino, Lake Sonoma and on the Russian River rely on our ability to use less water this summer.

Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma provide a majority of the water used for our water supply system. The Sonoma County Water Agency operates the Russian River water supply system by pumping naturally filtered water from the ground near the Russian River in Forestville. The water is treated and then distributed to its contractors, including the cities of Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Sonoma, Cotati, Petaluma, Town of Windsor, and the Marin Municipal Water District, North Marin Water District and Valley of the Moon Water District.

Using less water means more water for our diverse environment. The Russian River Watershed is home to three species listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act: steelhead, Chinook salmon and Coho salmon. The Russian River Watershed Association and its partner organizations are working diligently to improve habitat for these special species. Now you can help by simply using less water in your yard or fixing any leaks in your irrigation system this summer.

Using less water also means more time in our beautiful waterways to swim, canoe, kayak or boat. Our reservoirs are not only used for water supply and flood protection, but also prime recreation activities. Lake Sonoma and Lake Mendocino offer an array of recreation activities along with scenic picnic and camping sites. The Russian River alone can keep outdoor enthusiasts occupied for the entire summer with its meandering waterways and sandy beaches. By using less water you can contribute to the Russian River’s bountiful recreation activities.

The Russian River Watershed Association encourages residents to take part in its efforts to use less water this summer. There are several sources of information on how to use less water, such as the Sonoma County Water Agency’s Web site, www.sonomacountywater.org. Or, contact your local water provider and ask to speak with a member of their conservation team.

This article was authored by Brad Sherwood of the Sonoma County Water Agency on behalf of RRWA. RRWA is an association of local public agencies in the Russian River Watershed that have come together to coordinate regional programs for clean water, fisheries restoration and watershed enhancement.

