



May 2010

Water Conservation



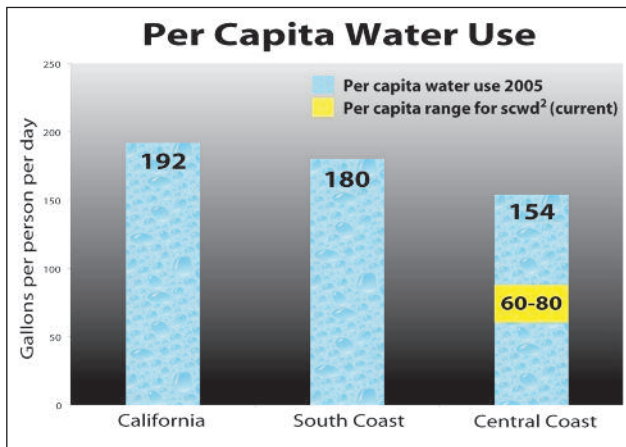
Water Conservation — It's a Way of Life for Our Residents

Water conservation is not a new concept in Santa Cruz County. It's a way of life for our residents — like recycling, keeping our beaches clean, and taking care of our parks and open space. For years, customers for the City of Santa Cruz and Soquel Creek Water District have been actively and measurably conserving water. Both agencies rely solely on local water supplies (surface water from streams and rivers and groundwater) and do not receive any state or imported water. With these local supplies limited by drought conditions and threatened by seawater intrusion from overdrafted groundwater basins, we are committed to managing our precious water resources wisely and efficiently.

Water conservation is the cornerstone of our diversified water portfolios. We are proud that our customers use less than 75 gallons per person per day (gppd). This is already 60 percent lower than California's average water use of 192 gppd and 50 percent lower than

California's targeted water use goal of 154 gppd by 2020.

Since we are already doing a good job, does this mean we don't have to do anything else? The answer is no. Continued conservation efforts are essential to reducing demand on our limited water supplies and they save energy. The agencies will continue to evaluate and implement new water saving programs and encourage the use of more water-efficient technologies and devices that will stretch our existing water supplies.



Our customers currently use less than 75 gallons per person per day (gppd), which is 60 percent less than California's average and is already below the 2020 water use goal of 154 gppd.

Water Conservation Programs for the City & District

- Free in-home (or business) water use evaluations
- Toilet and washing machine rebates
- Free low-flow faucet aerators/showerheads
- Landscape retrofit incentives
- Water efficiency requirements for new development
- Retrofit on Resale
- Water neutral development
- Tiered-rate billing structures

For more information on these and other water saving programs, please visit our web sites at: www.cityofsantacruz.com and www.soquelcreekwater.com

Frequently Asked Question:

Why Not Impose Year-Round Restrictions On Landscape Irrigation?

Historically, during drought years, we have asked our customers to curtail their water use by 15 percent during the irrigation season (May to October). A year-round 15 percent irrigation curtailment would not translate into a significant water savings because very little irrigation occurs during the wetter months (November to April), when most water use is for indoor purposes.

Additionally, water use restrictions imposed by local governmental agencies have been successful because they target specific activities and are generally invoked only during emergency situations. Curtailment during the irrigation season is the most effective way to reduce discretionary water usage and can be enforced fairly.

Top Ten Water Saving Tips!

- 1) Stop irrigation during rainy season
- 2) Install high-efficiency toilets
- 3) Put low-flow aerators on sink faucets
- 4) Use a shut-off nozzle on your hose
- 5) Fill the sink or basin to wash dishes
- 6) Replace turf; garden with low-water-use plants and install drip irrigation
- 7) Take shorter showers and use a lower flow showerhead
- 8) Purchase dishwashers and clothes washing machines that use less water
- 9) Only wash full loads of dishes/clothes
- 10) Install a simple laundry-to-landscape graywater system

For more tips, visit www.watersavingtips.org

Can We Solve Our Water Shortages Simply By Conserving More Water?

Conservation is the cheapest and most efficient way of maximizing our water supplies.

As the City of Santa Cruz (City) and the Soquel Creek Water District (District) evaluate desalination as a new water supply to supplement existing resources, we have asked ourselves (and have been asked by others): “Can we solve our shortage by conserving more?”

To answer this, let’s take a closer look at each agency’s water shortage issues and supplemental water needs:

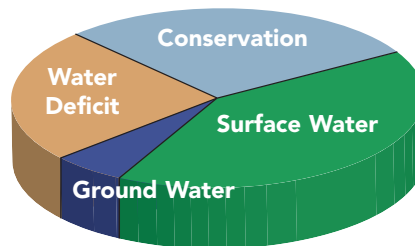
City of Santa Cruz Water Issues:

During drought conditions, the City could be faced with a water shortage of about 45 percent. Existing supplies are provided by the same infrastructure that has been in use since the 1970’s. Since then, the system’s capacity has remained unchanged as population and service connections have continued to increase. Over the last 40 years, the City has evaluated more than 30 different water supply projects that were deemed to be infeasible for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, cost, environmental factors, or public/political opposition.

In 1997, the City initiated a program to develop a practical approach to decrease water demand and increase supply. A committee was formed in 2001 and a report, the Integrated Water Plan, was adopted in 2005; it focused on these points:

- Conservation
- Curtailment (mandatory rationing not to exceed 15 percent in dry and critically dry years)
- Development of additional water supply: Desalination (during drought, which is estimated to occur May to October, one out of every six years)

The City’s immediate need for a supplemental supply is for drought protection. Conservation efforts that provide non-potable water for outdoor use (like rain-water cisterns or graywater systems) do not alleviate potable water needs during a drought since irrigation would already be curtailed.



The City of Santa Cruz primarily uses surface water and some groundwater to meet their water needs. During periods of drought, conservation efforts are not enough and a supplemental supply and curtailment are needed.

Soquel Creek Water District Issues:

The groundwater aquifers beneath the District are overdrafted (meaning more water is being extracted than is replenished through recharge). Despite excellent customer response to the District’s conservation program, resulting in five consecutive years of the lowest water demand since 1986, coastal groundwater levels are not appreciably recovering and remain too low to protect against seawater intrusion. Once seawater contaminates the groundwater aquifers, it is virtually impossible to reverse.

Since 2005, SqCWD’s annual production has been near the pumping goals stated in the 2007 Groundwater Management Plan; however, a 2009 re-evaluation of sustainable yield indicates that the District’s pumping goal should be lowered by at least 10 percent and possibly by as much as 50 percent. A new pumping goal has not yet been established. For a perspective on the consequences of relying on conservation alone to achieve

sustainable groundwater pumping, completely eliminating all irrigation within Soquel Creek Water District, including parks, open space and private property, would only reduce water demand by approximately 25 percent.

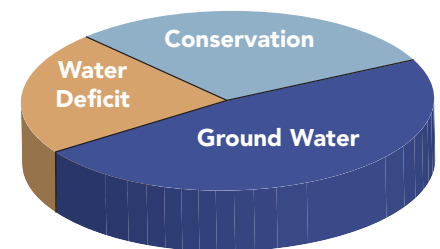
Similar to the City’s efforts, the District evaluated numerous projects to supplement their water supply needs, but each had significant flaws, primarily insufficient and/or unreliable yield to meet the District’s needs.

In 1999, the District also began work on an integrated approach and, in 2006, developed an Integrated Resources Plan that focused on three main points:

- Conservation
- Curtailment during drought periods
- Development of additional water supply: Desalination

The District’s immediate need for a supplemental supply is to reduce groundwater pumping. The goals for the initial use of desalination are to restore the basin by using less groundwater. Once the basin has recovered, the District would continue to supplement groundwater and conservation with desalination, but reduce the amount (400 to 450 MGY).

Conservation is the cornerstone of diversified water supply planning. However, a supplemental supply is still critical and necessary for both the City and the District.



Groundwater is Soquel Creek Water District’s only current water supply. Even with successful conservation efforts, the District needs a supplemental supply to meet customer demand and protect groundwater supply.



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More information is available at:

www.scwd2desal.org

Esta información está disponible en español.
Por favor llame al (831) 475-8500.