

R.R. Water Crisis
Water Cutback
Here Expanded
6/21/76

By BILL NEUBAUER
Sentinel Staff Writer

A 50 per cent cutback in irrigation water for golf courses, parks, school grounds and other public lands was ordered today by the city water commission.

Oh, What A Garden It Was...

A 70-year-old San Lorenzo Valley woman had a flower garden that was the pride of the neighborhood.

More than 200 tall, pink flowers graced the yard around her home.

And each year she carefully saved the flower seeds to replant in her garden the next spring.

But local narcotics agents discovered there was more to her garden than just pretty flowers.

According to officers, the flowers were opium poppies.

The woman told officers that she had been given the seeds approximately eight years ago by a friend.

Each year, she picked the flowers, dried them and saved the seeds for planting in the coming year.

(Continued on Page 2)

And with city water customers using about 1.5 million gallons per day more than they ought to be using if a water crisis is to be averted, there's a strong possibility that residential lawns and gardens may be next on the cutback schedule.

Commission Chairman Jim Hammond told Water Director Morris Allen this morning: "I would like to see the council put into our emergency water ordinance some provision that would allow you to cut back residential water use the way you are allowed to cut back other uses."

Under the ordinance referred to, the Santa Cruz City Council recently empowered Allen to make whatever cutbacks he deems necessary in water provided for industrial, commercial and recreational purposes.

The commissioners were notified during a regular monthly meeting this morning that the public is doing a "fantastic" job in helping to conserve water.

Through conservation measures voluntarily complied with by patrons of the water system, the city has been able to cut normal consumption from around 14 million to around 12.5 million gallons per day.

However, after a record dry year, there is still a big gap between available supplies and consumption, and the bulk of the hot weather still lies ahead.

On a hot day several years ago, the system users consumed a record 18.8 million gallons in one day, and Allen estimates that if the same con-

(Continued on Page 2)

SC Water Cutback Expanded

(Continued from Page 1)

ditions applied now the use would be 21 million gallons because of population and other growth.

The city allocates Loch Lomond on a "safe yield" basis of about 2300 acre feet per year, and that has been allocated to the June-October period this year.

But use projected for the same period is about 500 acre feet in excess of this, hence the water commission concern.

Commissioner Mel Calender noted that the city at the present rate of consumption will be some 151 million gallons in arrears if drastic action is not taken, and the cutbacks ordered today were in response to that.

The water department and the commission complimented the public for its truly conscientious cooperation, but as Calender and Hammond indicated at one point, "something dramatic" may have to be done to avert a crisis later this summer.

Commissioner Arthur Hackwood urged that the fairways of the golf courses, the parks, the school grounds and other public lands "be browned out" to set an example for the public to follow.

These cutbacks could save considerable water, for DeLaveaga Golf Course uses about 250,000 gallons per day and Pasatiempo averages about 200,000 gallons per day.

Car wash firms have already cut back substantially in an effort that could save about 75 acre feet of water per year.

Allen suggested strongly that it would be unwise for the city to draw more than 2300 acre feet from the reservoir, saying:

"If we drew down the 500 acre feet extra, we would get down to a minimum pool. And we do have to think in terms that next year may be a dry year, also."

The commission stressed it is using a soft approach in solving the water problems but that it will recommend stronger measures if need be to avert a crisis.