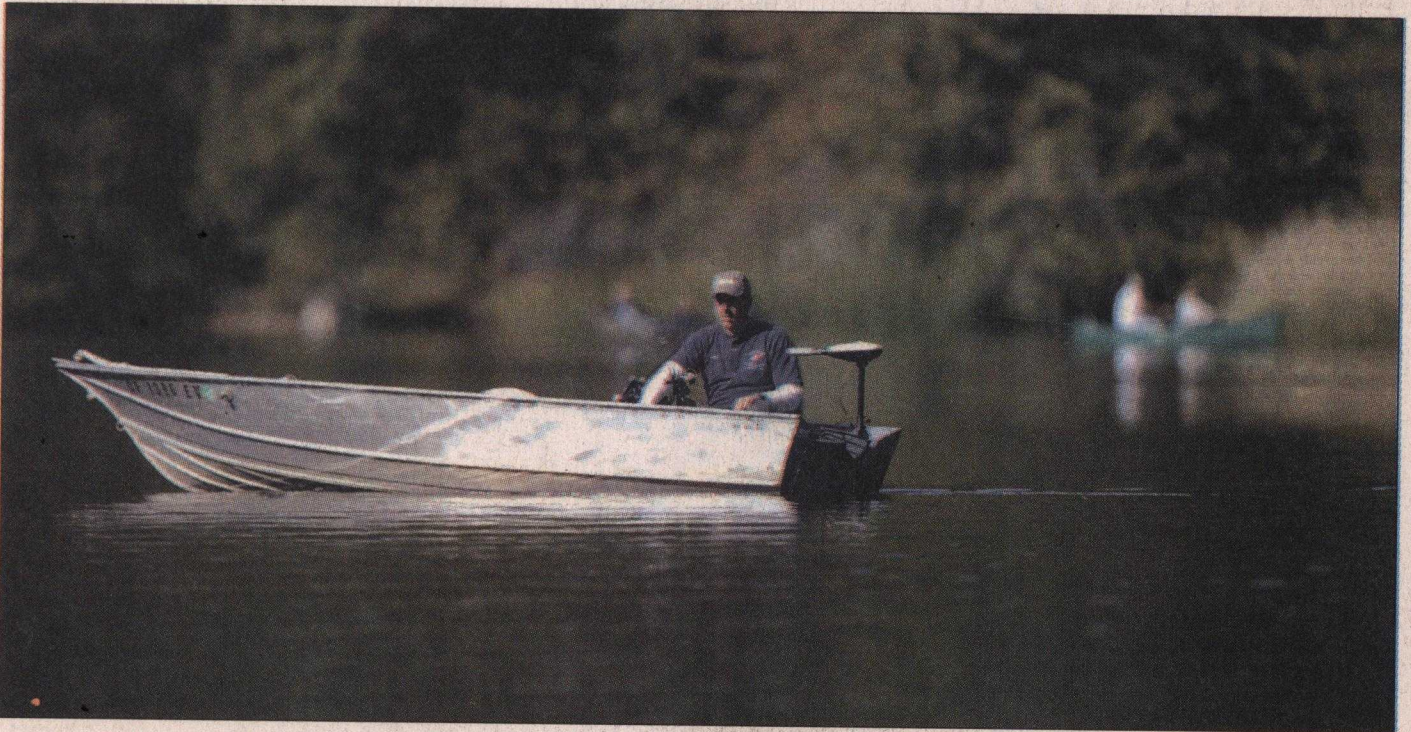


# Water restrictions on way

## Santa Cruz customers face conservation rules May 1



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

Water restrictions for Santa Cruz Water Department customers are aimed at keeping Loch Lomond's levels up during a dry year.

### Water Supply Daytime limits will affect 90,000

By **SHANNA McCORD**  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

SANTA CRUZ — Worried that the city's reservoir could run uncomfortably low this summer, city water workers will hand out tickets to people washing cars or watering lawns during the heart of the day.

Beginning May 1, the Santa Cruz Water Department will place mandatory limits on water use for the 90,000 people it serves

between Capitola and the North Coast. The restrictions, a response to this year's low rainfall, prohibit watering lawns, gardens, ornamental landscaping and the like from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day, said Toby Goddard, the city's water conservation manager. The limitations will be in place until further notice.

Exceptions to the restrictions can be made

See **WATER** on **PAGE A10**

### Water limit rules

#### BEGINNING MAY 1

No outdoor watering 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. everyday.

This includes washing cars, watering plants and lawns and filling swimming pools.

There are exceptions for professional gardeners and people who use drip systems and shut-off nozzles.

Showers and other indoor water uses won't be affected.

## Water

Continued from Page A1

for professional landscapers and gardeners who apply for a waiver from the Water Department, Goddard said. Also, watering with drip systems and hand watering with a shut-off nozzle are excluded from the restrictions. Otherwise, all outdoor water use is limited, including at golf courses, which course owners have said will be detrimental to their business.

Tickets for people who fail to comply with the restrictions are \$25, and repeat offenders could have their water turned off, Water Department Director Bill Kocher said.

Westside resident Mike Tilson waters the plants in his yard with a drip system that's set to go on automatically at certain times.

He's agreeable to following the city's rules.

"We can't run out of water," Tilson said. "If it doesn't rain, we have to cut back."

Faced with the driest year since the 1970s, Goddard said outdoor water use must be restricted during summer — when demand pushes 16 million gallons a day — as a precautionary measure to save the emergency water supply at Loch Lomond Reservoir in case the area is hit again next year with little rainfall.

"Our primary water sources — the San Lorenzo River and North Coast streams — are low and expected to go very low," he said. "The situation leaves us vulnerable if this lack of rainfall goes into next year."

Rainfall in Santa Cruz since October has been half of the normal 28 inches, which prompted water officials to declare this year "critically dry."

The city's water supply is a fraction of what it should be with less than 20,000 acre feet of water flowing into the San Lorenzo River since October, Kocher said.

A normal year sees about 90,000 acre feet, and nearly 200,000 acre feet flowed last year, which was an abundant year for rain. Kocher said the water restrictions should save about 5

percent of the supply at a time of year when the department relies on water from the Loch Lomond Reservoir to meet demand.

The less water people use this summer, the more the Water Department can save in the reservoir for future shortages, Kocher said.

Other areas of Santa Cruz County aren't struggling with the same water dilemma because the majority of water districts are supplied by underground wells, which are slower to react to rainfall shortages.

Kocher is authorized to implement water restrictions during times when supplies run short. However, he will seek the Water Commission's approval April 9 and City Council approval April 10.

Customers will be notified via the Water Department's April newsletter.

"Something needs to be done," Kocher said.

The last time the Santa Cruz Water Department imposed water limits was 1992.

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