

Santa Cruz imposes water rationing

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Mandatory restrictions on the use of water within the Santa Cruz water district will go into effect Sunday, the City Council decided last night.

Among the restrictions:

- Residences will be allowed to water lawns and landscaping only two days a week — Wednesday and Saturday for those with odd-number street addresses, and Thursday and Sunday for those with even street address numbers.

- Cars can be washed only one day per week — Sunday for odd-number street addresses and Saturday for the even. And then only with a shut-off nozzle on the hose and a bucket.

- Swimming pools may not be topped off or filled, and no sidewalks, driveways or building exteriors may be washed down.

Outdoor watering for businesses will also be restricted, but city officials haven't yet determined which days businesses may use for watering.

Violators could be subject to

a \$100 fine.

These emergency measures were deemed necessary because of the shrinkage of the district's water supply due to the sparse rainfall in the past year.

The Santa Cruz water district, with 90,000 customers, serves all households and businesses within the city limits, as well as Live Oak, parts of Capitola, Pasatiempo, Santa Cruz Gardens and areas of the North Coast.

Other water districts, such as Soquel Creek and Watsonville,

are not as severely affected by the lack of rainfall the past two years because those districts pump their water out of the ground. Santa Cruz relies almost completely on surface water sources, with its main reservoir at Loch Lomond.

The water department's attempts to have water customers voluntarily cut back during the month of April were not successful, said Water Department Director Bill Kocher.

"For the first 20 days of April, we exceeded our target every day," he said.

The water department had hoped to use only 303 million gallons in April. Instead, it looks as if water users will have consumed 354 million gallons.

If customers could have cut back their usage by 10 percent, these mandatory measures would not have been necessary, officials said. The goal of the new phase the district will enter May 1 will aim at a 20 percent reduction in water usage.

Strict water rationing will be imposed in June if usage for the month of May is not significantly curtailed, the council indicated.

Ann-Marie Mitroff, water conservation coordinator for the city, said outdoor use of water at this stage was targeted because that's where significant cuts can be made.

State statistics, she said, say most people overwater their lawns by 50 percent. At the most, people need to water their lawns only twice a week.

Yesterday's public hearing drew a number of landscape contractors, laundromat owners and carwash owners who are dependent upon water for their livelihood. Although overall rationing is at least a month away, these business owners expressed concern over the possibility.

Dale Johnson, a laundromat owner, said his business and others like it already conserve water. "We don't have any leeway to cut back on," he said.

Kocher responded, "We must realize that we have a finite amount of water."

Not limiting businesses like carwashes and laundromats would allow people to save their ration of water at home and wash their cars and do their laundry somewhere else, he noted.

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WATSONVILLE
REGISTER-Pajaron
April 27, 1988