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Headline

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Sierra Madre is Experiencing a Drought

The City of Sierra Madre's existing water supply comes from one of two sources; tunnel water from the local dam (5-10%) and groundwater wells (90-95%.) Throughout the summer and fall of 2012 City Public Works staff observed the water levels receding at each of the City's four wells, which make up the area aquifer.

Normally, rainfall throughout the winter months reduces customers' irrigation water use and provides water to recharge the aquifer. Aquifer water levels therefore tend to increase during the winter and spring months. This year's minimal rainfall, combined with Los Angeles County Public Works diverting water from Santa Anita Dam to locations outside of Sierra Madre, has resulted in limited water for groundwater recharge at the City's spreading basins.

Overall, resident water consumption is up from last year. During the period April 24th through 30th the Water Department produced 2.56 million gallons of water a day resulting in a 2 foot drop in water level within local wells. The same period last year showed a production of 1.5 million gallons a day. During the month of April 2013, the department produced a total of 70 million gallons versus production of 46 million gallons in April 2012. Well water levels dropped over 30 feet within that 12 month period.

While water conservation is always important, the drastically low level of available groundwater necessitates implementing additional water conservation procedures in Sierra Madre at this time. The Sierra Madre Municipal Code provides for the implementation of mandatory water conservation regulations in times of water-related emergencies. These conservation measures were enacted through adoption of a City Council resolution on May 28, 2013.

The adopted resolution requires that each water customer conserve a percentage of his/her July 2011 - June 2012 water use. The required percentage of conservation will vary, depending on the customer's current water use. Customers currently consuming 0-12 billing units of water (0-1,200 cubic feet) will be exempt from the conservation requirements, but are required to continue to consume less than 12 billing units. Customers currently using 13-17 billing units (1,300-1,700 cubic feet) are required to reduce their consumption by 10%. Customers using 18 units or more are required to reduce by 20%.

These mandatory conservation measures will remain in place until the key well located in the East Raymond Basin reaches 500 feet above sea level; it is currently at 293 feet. It is anticipated that this will take several consecutive years of significant rainfall to achieve.

Residents must conserve water, now more than ever. Information on conservation recommendations and the City's latest efforts in the conservation cause can be found at www.cityofsierramadre.com/water-conservation.