

# THE CURRENT FLOW

Spring 2022



NEWS FOR THE VALUED CUSTOMERS OF LAS VIRGENES MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT



## What's Inside

This issue is meant to inform customers on the ongoing District response to the drought and water supply shortages for our region.

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## LVMWD Further Reduces Outdoor Budgets

**after historic dry start to the year and missed water conservation numbers create a critical water supply shortage.**

On April 5, 2022, the LVMWD Board of Directors voted unanimously to reduce outdoor water budgets from the current 75% to 50%, in response to the worsening state-wide drought and reduced State Water Project (SWP) allocation. The decision was made on the heels of a historic three-month stretch of the driest winter months on record, the recent final snow survey measured by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) at 38% of average, and the District's conservation targets not being achieved.

Drought factors are used to determine a reduction in outdoor irrigation to conserve water. A 0.50 drought factor means a 50% reduction in outdoor water budgets. With the adoption of the new drought factor and decreasing it from its current level of 0.75 to 0.50, the District is striving to eliminate, or at least delay, the need to activate Stage 4 of its Water Shortage Contingency Plan (WSCP), which would essentially prohibit all outdoor watering.

The District is currently in Stage 3 of its WSCP, which dictates and governs water conservation measures throughout the service area to address shortages. The measures include adopting drought factors in response to current and forecasted water supply conditions, assessing penalties for customers who use more than 150% of their water budgets, and the possibility of installing flow restriction devices after three or more months of significant budget exceedances. The Board also authorized hiring a company to help with enforcement to prevent water wasting throughout the service area.

"The word 'drought' has become very normalized in the state of California over the last couple of decades and has lost its sense of urgency," said President of the LVMWD Board of Directors Jay Lewitt. "We are in the most historic of circumstances regarding water supply. I am asking each and every one of our customers to tighten their outdoor water usage belts, so we can stretch every drop of water to make sure we all have enough for health and safety needs. We all need to do this together for our community. And we need to start now."

Climate change is fueling the erratic weather patterns that continue to deprive the state of consistent and reliable precipitation events – our main source of water.

"Planning for climate change impacts continues to be a significant focus of the District, the region, and all water agencies throughout the state," commented LVMWD General Manager David Pedersen. "What was not expected is how quickly climate change would impact water supplies. Instead of planning, we are adapting in real-time."

Adapting to climate change isn't just a "nuts and bolts" institutional duty. It now requires customers to take more responsibility for their personal water use. The relationship between LVMWD and its customers has traditionally been transactional; the District supplies the water and the customer pays their bill. However, it's no longer that simple.

The shift in thinking and need for behavior change by customers is driving a new relationship with water. The

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# Restrictions Target Wasters - Not Savers!

Customers are asking the question “Are Water Savers Being Penalized?” The answer is absolutely NOT.

We are NOT asking every customer to cut back water usage by 50 percent compared to their historical water use. Rather, we are reducing every customer’s OUTDOOR water budget by 50 percent.

Each customer has a unique water budget specific to their household and property size. The budget is based on indoor and outdoor water needs. Indoor water budgets are calculated by how many people reside in your home multiplied by 55 gallons per person per day, multiplied by the number of days in the month.

Outdoor water budgets are calculated using the irrigable area on your property (lawns, ornamental gardens, flower beds, etc.) and the evapotranspiration rate (how much water the plants need to survive), which is based on your specific location. Pools are also included in your irrigated area. Nearly 70 percent of residential water usage is for outdoor irrigation, where the most reductions can be achieved. The formula for outdoor budgets is shown below.

Customers who have already taken steps to be exceptionally efficient with their OUTDOOR usage will not have to cut back as much, or perhaps at all. Customers who have been using up their OUTDOOR water budget, but not exceeding it, must reduce outdoor watering by 50 percent. Customers who have been exceeding their OUTDOOR water budget must reduce outdoor watering even more. Customers who exceed their budget by 150% or more will pay penalties for wasteful use and may have a flow restriction device installed.

A great place to start conserving is by adjusting your irrigation system to cut watering times in half. Compare this new water usage to your budget and adjust up or down depending on how you’re doing. A 50 percent reduction will mean that your lawn will likely brown and be stressed. This is what to expect and shows you are on the right track.

With a changing climate, customers are correct that “there is no end to California’s drought.” Each customer will have to rethink their relationship with water. We are in uncharted territory, and we all must do this together.

$$\text{Outdoor} = \text{Irrigable Area (Square Footage)} \times \text{ET (Monthly Average Evapotranspiration Rate)} \times \text{PF (Plant Factor)} \div 12 \div 100 \times \text{DF (Drought Factor)}$$

## LVMWD Tools to Help Customers Save

More information on LVMWD water budgets can be found at [www.LVMWD.com/WaterBudgets](http://www.LVMWD.com/WaterBudgets)

Rebates for water saving devices can be found at [www.LVMWD.com/Rebates](http://www.LVMWD.com/Rebates)

Rachio users can watch a “tips and tricks” video including how to reduce your irrigation by 50% at [www.LVMWD.com/Rachio](http://www.LVMWD.com/Rachio)

Information on picking up free compost can be viewed at [www.LVMWD.com/Community-Compost](http://www.LVMWD.com/Community-Compost)

Register for your WaterSmart portal and take advantage of near real time water use and leak detection - [www.lvmwd.watersmart.com](http://www.lvmwd.watersmart.com)

# Outdoor Water Budget Reductions

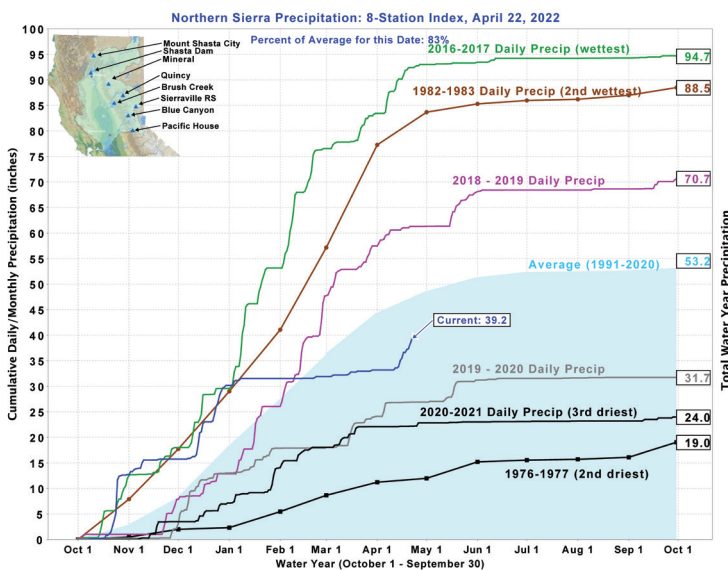
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District's responsibility is to ensure clean and healthy water for all customers, and to provide them with the tools and knowledge to make better informed choices with their water usage. The customer's responsibility is to continue to pay for the water they use, but also take initiative to stay within their water budgets.

Outdoor water uses, such as filling pools and landscape irrigation, account for up to 70% of all residential water usage, so here lies the greatest opportunity for savings. Much of the low-hanging fruit to reduce water use indoors has already been "picked". Most customers have installed water efficient appliances, low-flow toilets and shower heads, and do a pretty good job of turning off the faucet when they brush their teeth and take shorter showers.

What we each do or don't do with respect to water use impacts everyone else. We have hit a tipping point where immediate change in behavior and thought about how we use water is essential. We must save as much water as possible to stretch the supply further. Please do your part. Even with the Board's action to reduce the drought factor, it is very possible that outdoor water uses such as irrigation could be restricted further in the near future, including a maximum one day per week limit or even an altogether prohibition of all outdoor watering. Customers are encouraged to look for regular announcements by the District to stay informed of drought conditions and adjust accordingly.

This graph shows that despite early wet weather and snow, the prolonged dry period to start the year has put our snowpack well below average.



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You may direct communications to LVMWD Board members by sending an e-mail to: [board@LVMWD.com](mailto:board@LVMWD.com)

Board meetings are scheduled at 9 a.m. on the first and third Tuesday of each month

Board Meetings are now live-streamed on the District's website at [LVMWD.com/LiveStream](http://LVMWD.com/LiveStream)

Las Virgenes - Triunfo JPA meets the first Monday of the month at 5 p.m.

Check [LVMWD.com/Board-Meetings](http://LVMWD.com/Board-Meetings) for Board meeting and agenda information

Customer Service -  
(818) 251-2200

After Hours Emergency -  
(818) 251-2100

Construction & Drought Hotline -  
(818) 251-2180

Report Water Waste -  
[StopTheWaste@LVMWD.com](mailto:StopTheWaste@LVMWD.com).

Rebate Information  
[LVMWD.com/Rebates](http://LVMWD.com/Rebates)

Potable Water  
Recycled Water  
Waste Water Treatment  
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Advanced Water Treatment



4232 Las Virgenes Road  
Calabasas, CA 91302  
[LVMWD.com](http://LVMWD.com)



Affordable - Convenient - Sustainable  
[ourLVtap.com](http://ourLVtap.com)

# Free Recycled Water and Compost

As part of the Las Virgenes - Triunfo Joint Powers Authority (JPA), LVMWD customers are able to access free recycled water and compost at the Rancho Las Virgenes Composting Facility in Calabasas. These resources are a great way to cut back on your outdoor water use at home, but still maintain established parts of your landscape, especially mature trees.

## Community Compost

The JPA offers free EPA rated Class A Exceptional Quality compost for customers to use as a great, natural way to feed your planters. This helps condition your soil, adds nutrients crucial to healthy plant growth and is a great way to promote water absorption for those parts of your landscape that need to be prioritized as customers reduce their outdoor watering to meet current water restrictions. The free compost can be picked up on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Rancho Las Virgenes Composting Facility. Visit [LVMWD.com/Community-Compost](http://LVMWD.com/Community-Compost) for more information.



## Recycled Water Fill Station

As another drought response measure, the JPA is making FREE recycled water available to qualifying residential customers Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. This program is not available to commercial customers and is reserved for customers of LVMWD and our partner Triunfo Water & Sanitation District. Recycled water can be used to maintain trees, shrubs, and decorative or vegetable gardens. It may not be used for drinking or for recreation, such as pools or spas. To access the fill station customers need to complete a training course and submit an application. Visit [LVMWD.com/RWFillStation](http://LVMWD.com/RWFillStation) to learn more.



**Create Your  
WaterSmart  
Account Now!**

**Visit our new Customer Connect Portal and set up your  
account in 3 easy steps:**

- STEP 1:** Go to [www.lvmwd.watersmart.com](http://www.lvmwd.watersmart.com) on your computer or smart device
- STEP 2:** Enter your account number and zip code and click "find my account"
- STEP 3:** Provide an email address and a password to access your portal in the future