

2022 LOCAL DROUGHT EMERGENCY STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



THE NEW PARADIGM OF PARTNERSHIP

Drought is no longer a “here and there” climate event in California. It is now part of our new normal. Approaching the new normal from an industry perspective using an old model where the water provider delivers water to the customer and the customer pays the water bill, is too simplistic.

Climate change is continuing to accelerate irregular weather patterns at a much faster rate than previous predictions. Continued planning is now interwoven with adaptation strategies in real-time. This suggests that a new way of developing a relationship between customers and water providers is needed to ensure water reliability long-term.

The District has established a new partnership with each customer to share responsibilities for water reliability. The District has two main responsibilities in the partnership; provide high quality water at the most reasonable cost, and to equip the customer with the tools and information they need to make

smart choices about their water consumption (education, Advanced Meters, WaterSmart Portal, etc...).

The customer also has two main responsibilities within this partnership; pay their water bill, and stay within their water budget.

The combination of defining ‘climate adaptation’ and the long term nature of drought as a symptom of climate change is critical to push the narrative forward regarding water efficiency and its finite availability. Additionally, providing a call to action for the customer by giving easily understood instructions and the agreement of partnership is a unique message that may resonate much better than just a transaction between a provider and a consumer.

Regionalizing drought messaging and the partnership narrative will also provide an opportunity to further advance the concept of community. What one does impacts all.

OBJECTIVE

Inspire, educate and empower our customers to partner with the District in “Valuing Every Drop” and embrace a water efficient way of life.

INSPIRE

EDUCATE

EMPOWER



KEY MESSAGES/ PROGRAMS



Promote registration and use of the LVMWD WaterSmart portal for customers to take advantage of **NEAR REAL TIME WATER USE DATA AND LEAK DETECTION TOOLS** available through the LVMWD Advanced Meter Project.

Targeted messaging **ACROSS ALL CHANNELS** to generate more participation in LVMWD conservation initiatives from our customers who are regularly exceeding their water budget.

Provide **EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, IN-PERSON AND DIGITALLY, FOR CUSTOMERS** to learn about water use efficiency.

Enlist customers help in curbing wasteful water use with the **STOPTHEWASTE@LVMWD.COM** email reporting mechanism.

Finalize planning and begin implementation of the **LANDSCAPE CONVERSION INITIATIVE AND CONTINUE IN-PERSON SITE EVALUATIONS** to help customers maximize their outdoor water use efficiency.

Resources for Customers
www.LVMWD.com/WaterBudgets
www.LVMWD.com/Rebates
www.LVMWD.com/Rachio
www.LVMWD.com/Community-Compost

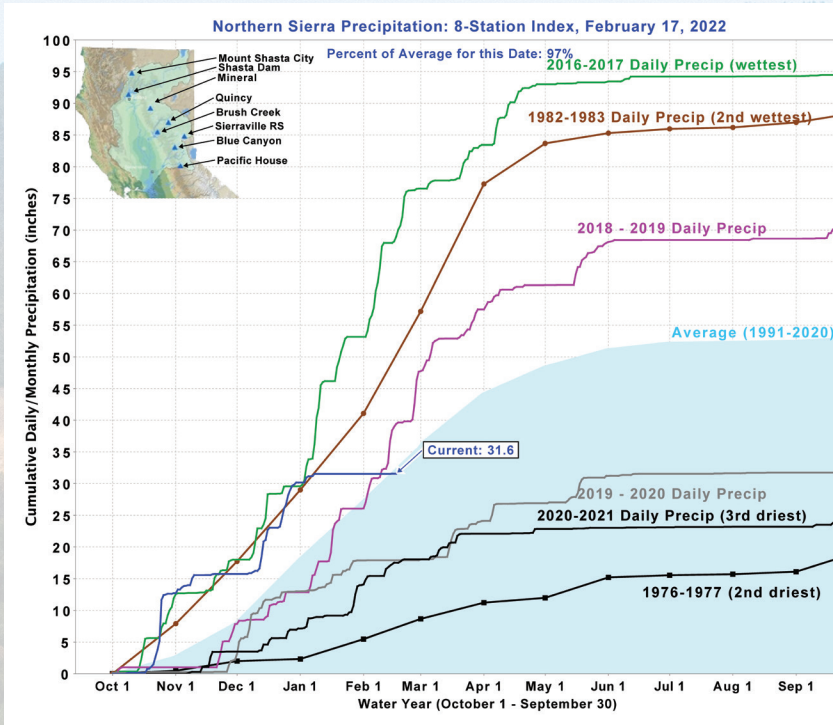
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Water use reduction of at least 35% District wide compared to 2020 consumption

Additional outputs that will be considered when evaluating the performance of the District's communication efforts will be participation rate in the WaterSmart, Rachio and Landscape Transformation programs as well as distribution metrics such as impressions, reach and engagement throughout our digital platforms.

WHERE WE ARE & HOW WE GOT HERE

In **June of 2021** the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District Board of Directors issued a **Water Shortage Alert and the District entered Stage 1 of the Water Shortage Contingency Plan (WSCP)**, recognizing the previous dry years had left the State Water Project, LVMWD's source of drinking water, at perilously low levels. On **July 19, the Board moved the District into Stage 2 of the WSCP** and, on November 16, as late summer and fall saw exceptionally warm and dry conditions, the District made the decision to move into **Stage 3 of the WSCP, and to reduce outdoor water budgets and revise the penalty structure to promote greater water use efficiency.**



On December 1, 2021 the Department of Water Resources declined to give an initial allocation of water from the State Water Project due to the dire conditions of the primary reservoirs including Lake Oroville.

December 2021 saw strong storms that brought significant snow and precipitation across the state, giving water experts cause for guarded optimism and a modest increase in the State Water Project allocation to 15%. Unfortunately, through the month of January and into February, La Niña conditions brought dry weather and no precipitation or snow, flipping our levels of above average rainfall into below average rainfall and creating an immediate need to double down on our communication efforts from 2021.

Through 2021, LVMWD executed the original action items and messages as outlined in the 2021 Strategic Communications Plan. **These successful implementations included:**

- Promoted the **Board actions on drought** and the escalation of stages in the Water Shortage Contingency Plan.
- In October, customers received **Water Use Efficiency Alerts** that informed customers of how their water use compared to their water budgets.
- Expanded outreach to customers educating them on the benefits of their new **Advanced Meters and the LVMWD WaterSmart portal.**
- Executed an expanded and more diverse digital ad strategy, leveraging expertise from Ad-Taxi for display ads and **increased output of content created in-house** directly related to the District's drought response.
- Expanded regional partnerships and collaborations establishing a universal messaging campaign and collateral to amplify LVMWD's drought messaging.

This 2022 Strategic Communications Plan - Drought Messaging outlines the updated communications programs LVMWD will execute to help customers meet their water use efficiency goals and educate them on LVMWD water supplies.