

IN THIS ISSUE

2007
Irrigation Water
Report



PCWA
UPDATE

Placer County Water Agency

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PCWA is Planning for a Dry Year

With a mountain snowpack that has produced only about half of normal water supplies, PCWA is making dry year contingency plans.

The PCWA Board of Directors in early April reviewed snowpack and water storage data. The board was expected to make key decisions in April and May on how limited supplies will be delivered this year.

Options presented by staff include possible reductions to commercial agriculture growers in Zone 5 west of Highway 65, possible reductions to canal water users in Zone 1 and a call for voluntary water conservation from treated water users. A combination of these options could be implemented.

Snowpack at 53% of Average

The board's considerations are in response to April 1 snow surveys showing just 53 percent of average water content in the Northern Sierra and a Pacific Gas & Electric Co. forecast for 47 percent of average snowpack runoff.

(Please See Dry Year, page 3)

The Other Alpine Meadows

PCWA Water Meters Help a Small Community



METERS MATTER: PCWA Deputy Director of Customer Services Harley Lukenbill and John Abney of Alpine Meadows.

Placer County has two places named Alpine Meadows. One is a world-class ski resort near Lake Tahoe. The other is a small rural community in the woods just up the hill from Colfax.

Located east of Interstate 80 near Secret Town Road, the tiny Alpine Meadows community has 126 homes and its own old-fashioned water system. It is one of 17 small, independent water purveyors that purchase wholesale water from PCWA.

The community was incorporated in 1965 and is governed by the Alpine Meadows Property Owners Association. Its administrator, Jerry Abney, oversees day to day operation of road and water services.

Without much money, Abney and his board have been struggling to
(Please see Water Meters, Page 3)

Enter by May 31

RWA Sponsors 'Water Smart' Garden Makeover Contest

PCWA water users are invited to enter the "Water Smart" Garden Makeover Contest now being sponsored by the Regional Water Authority (RWA).

The contest aims to help local homeowners save water and money by incorporating water-wise gardening concepts such as low-water use plants and trees into their landscaping.

Grand prize in the contest is a free front yard makeover, featuring a custom landscape designed by Christy Tveit, winner of HGTV's "Landscape's Challenge," along with equipment and services donated by RWA partners. The prize is valued at up to \$40,000.

Two runner-up prizes include a professional water-wise landscape design plan by Joseph Pattin of Garden Retreats, and two trees in 24-inch boxes chosen for the winner's location.

Outdoor Water Use is High

"We know that outdoor water use accounts for more than half of all residential water use in our region," said RWA Executive Director Ed Winkler. "If we can find fun and easy ways for homeowners to become more water-efficient



in their yards and gardens, it will help save water and energy, and help us better protect the American River."

To be eligible, entrants must sign up for and complete a free Water Wise House Call with their water provider. PCWA customers may arrange a house call with a water efficiency specialist by calling the PCWA Customer Service Center at (530) 823-4850.

During the house call, the water efficiency professional will visit the customer's home free of charge to check the irrigation system and provide a custom watering schedule. On request, the specialist will also check indoor plumbing fixtures for leaks and provide free water-saving materials and devices.

How to Enter

Homeowners can enter the contest by downloading an entry form and mailing the completed form by May 31 to "Be Water Smart" – the Ultimate Water Smart Garden Makeover Contest, 10461 Old Placerville Rd., Suite 110, Sacramento, CA 95827. The form is available at www.rwah2o.org/rwa/educated/#UltimateWaterSmart.

The winning entries will be randomly drawn in early June.

Canal Tampering Causes Problems

If someone takes more water from a canal than he is entitled to, there's a good chance his downstream neighbor will suffer.

Water flows in PCWA canals are carefully planned and monitored so that customers will receive the water they order and little water will be lost at the end of the canal.

Downstream customers can be affected when someone removes an orifice on a canal turnout, illegally siphons water from a canal or fills a water truck without a permit.

Adjustments to canal turnouts and orifices are made only by PCWA Field Services employees, not by individual customers.

PCWA does not tolerate water theft and encourages anyone who suspects canal tampering to call the PCWA Customer Service Center at (530) 823-4850.

How to Contact Your Elected PCWA Board of Directors

PCWA is an independent public agency governed by an elected Board of Directors.

Your directors are:

DISTRICT 1, Gray Allen
DISTRICT 2, Alex Ferreira
DISTRICT 3, Lowell Jarvis
(2007 Board Chairman)
DISTRICT 4, Mike Lee
DISTRICT 5, Otis Wollan

If you would like to contact a member of the board, please call the PCWA Customer Service Center at (530) 823-4850 or (800) 464-0030. We will be pleased to put you in touch with the elected representative from your area.

Q&A

Why does my PCWA account number have so many numbers?

Your account includes a nine-digit Customer ID Number and a nine-digit Property ID Number. When using the payment remittance stub, customers do not have to enter an account number on checks. When establishing a home banking plan, customers will have to enter these numbers just once. In addition, as required for banking purposes, your payment remittance stub includes Optical Character Recognition (OCR), which accounts for a fixed 30 digit number.

IN BRIEF

Second Phase of Pump Project. The American River Pump Station has moved into its second phase of construction and is scheduled for completion in 2008. The overall \$72 million project will supply up to 35,500 acre-feet of water from the American River canyon to Ophir, via the existing three-mile Auburn Tunnel.

Water in the Schools. The "Be Water Smart" school educational program is being offered at local schools this semester and is planned again for next year. The program is sponsored by the Regional Water Authority and *The Sacramento Bee*. Information for K-8 teachers may be found [at www.rwah2o.org](http://www.rwah2o.org).

PCWA Online. Information about PCWA, its many water service and water resource activities, background and history, and water efficiency and rebate programs may be found on the agency's website. See www.pcwa.net.

Water Meters

Continued From Page 1

update their aging water system and bring it into compliance with today's tougher water quality standards. Abney says about 80 percent of association dues are being used to operate the water system.

The Alpine Meadows Association buys water from PCWA's Boardman Canal and then treats it in a 1970s vintage water treatment plant. Water is pumped into two 100,000-gallon storage tanks and then piped to homes in the community.

Until 2001 there were no water meters on the Alpine Meadows system. The association didn't how much of the water being treated at the plant was actually reaching customers. Leaks in old pipelines were suspected.

Since that time, the association has managed to equip most homes with water meters and this spring, thanks to PCWA, the final 20 homes are being metered. The 20 reconditioned meters donated by the water agency saved the small community about \$2600, Abney said.

The meters helped the association find problems and reduce usage by nearly 10 million gallons over the first two years. Abney anticipates even greater savings with this year's installations.

Dry Year

Continued From Page 1

PG&E notified the agency in March that the full amount of water it usually supplies to PCWA from the Yuba and Bear river system -- 100,400 acre-feet annually -- may not be available due to dry conditions.

In addition, the Nevada Irrigation District to the north has announced that surplus water will not be available to buyers outside its boundaries this year.

Agency officials remained hopeful that seasonal water from the American River could be available early this year, perhaps by mid-May, through the temporary pumping system at the new American River Pump Station, which is under construction. Four temporary pumps at the site this year could boost water availability to customers by up to 9970 acre-feet.

Keeping Algae Out of Canals

The 2007 irrigation season marks the fourth year of PCWA's new aquatic weed control program.

The program relies on the use of Cutrine-Plus, a copper-based algaecide, to keep canals and customer outlet boxes free of algae and other growth. Canals are treated monthly during the irrigation season.

Deputy Director of Field Services Rick Allan said the program has worked well and customers have been pleased with its effectiveness. The aquatic weed control program is conducted under strict guidelines and supervised by a licensed applicator.

Growers Save Water

High Tech Comes to the Farm

A pilot program that helps growers increase efficiency of their crop irrigation has been extended for a second year.

PCWA directors in April voted to retain JVB Consulting, Inc. to conduct the program this year. The program is supported by PCWA and the federal Bureau of Reclamation.

Thirteen growers, with a variety of orchards and vines, will take part in this year's program. The consultant will monitor 35 probe poles at selected sites on the properties, measuring moisture content, and then preparing computerized schedules of run times and amounts for each site.

"This program has proven what I've always known, that we over-irrigate," said one grower who participated in last year's effort. "This program is very important to our group of mandarin growers, to educate them and keep them informed of practices that they need to look at for the future."

For information on this and other PCWA water efficiency programs, please contact the PCWA Customer Service Center at (530) 823-4850.

Irrigation 2007

Helpful Tips for Canal Water Users

The 2007 irrigation season opened in mid-April (in May at the higher foothill elevations) and runs into October, depending on available water supplies.

PCWA does everything it can to avoid water service interruptions during the irrigation season, but due to the nature of the water system, temporary outages can be necessary.

Irrigation water customers should be prepared to deal with outages resulting from emergencies or planned maintenance. PCWA notifies customers in advance of planned maintenance outages but notification is not always possible in emergencies.

Know the Location of Your Water Connection

Customers should know where water connections are located and how to turn them off and on. Customers should be familiar with the operation of their own private water systems. The agency recommends that raw water users consider onsite storage and the installation of automatic low water cutoff valves on private pump systems.

Your Home Water System: Get to Know it

- Where is your water connection?
- Do you share a line with others?
- Do you have adequate water storage on your property?

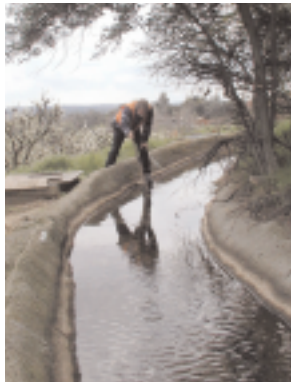
Maintain your private water system

- Is your delivery pipe in good condition?
- Is your delivery box clear and unobstructed?



**PLACER COUNTY
WATER AGENCY**

144 Ferguson Road
(P.O. Box 6570)
Auburn, California 95604



**Annual Newsletter
to
Irrigation Water Customers

2007**

Public Meetings

The Placer County Water Agency Board of Directors meets regularly the first and third Thursdays of each month at 2 p.m. at the Placer County Water Agency Business Center, 144 Ferguson Road, in Auburn. The public is welcome.

www.pcwa.net

This newsletter is published as a public service of the
**PLACER COUNTY
WATER AGENCY**

144 Ferguson Road (P.O. Box 6570)
Auburn, California 95604
(530) 823-4850
(800) 464-0030

General Manager: David A. Breninger
Newsletter Editor: Dave Carter

FOR INFORMATION on irrigation water service, PCWA customers are invited to contact the PCWA Customer Service Center at (530) 823-4850 or (800) 464-0030.