

* * * * WATER ALERT * * * *

WHAT DOES ALERT MEAN?

The **ALERT** status indicates a greater level of concern over the available water supply for the community of Santa Margarita. The residents and water users are being asked to voluntarily reduce their use of water by 15%.

HOW IS ALERT DETERMINED?

The **ALERT** status is triggered when either the groundwater level drops below a monthly set point or the 3-year cumulative rainfall total drops below 84". In this case, the groundwater level has dropped below the monthly set point and the 3-year cumulative rainfall total is below 84". If the dry period continues or if the groundwater level continues to drop then the Board of Supervisors may need to declare a water shortage emergency and the status would be changed to CRITICAL. Residents and water users would then be notified, and mandatory water conservation measures would be implemented. It is anticipated that conserving water now will delay or likely avoid the need for any such action.

WHEN WILL THE ALERT STATUS BE LIFTED?

An above average rainfall this next season would dictate a change back to "OK" status.

WHAT IS BEING DONE?

In the short term, water users are being asked to voluntarily reduce water use by 15%. Reducing water consumption will have the single greatest positive impact to the water supply. The well levels and water demand will be closely monitored by County staff to evaluate the success of the voluntary water conservation. In the longer term, several alternatives to secure a supplemental source of water for CSA-23 are being pursued. A reliable supplemental source may eliminate the need for this warning system.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Current well depths and well production levels will be posted at Well #4 on El Camino Real near Maria Ave. For more information you may contact Laura Holder, Utilities Division Program Manager (805) 781-5135 or look at our website:

www.SLOCountyWater.org

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TIPS FOR CONSERVING WATER

Tips for Reducing Lawn Water Use

- Don't over water your lawn. Only water every three to five days in the summer. Reduce watering time if needed to eliminate water run off.
- To prevent water loss from evaporation, water your lawn during the cooler part of the day. Avoid watering when it is windy.
- Check sprinklers to ensure they're not watering driveways and walkways.
- Adjust your lawnmower to cut grass to a height of 3 inches or more. Taller grass encourages deeper roots and shades the soil to reduce moisture loss.

Tips for Reducing Garden Water Use

- Add compost or peat moss to soil to improve its water-holding capacity.
- Mulch beds to a depth of 2 to 3 inches to reduce evaporation.
- Put off planting major shrubs. Even drought-tolerant varieties need a season or more of intensive watering to properly develop root systems.
- Install drip irrigation for flowers and shrubs.

Other Tips for Reducing Outdoor Water Use

- Wash your car with a bucket of soapy water and use a nozzle to stop the flow of water from the hose between rinsing.
- Clean driveways and sidewalks with a broom instead of the hose.
- Check for leaks in outdoor faucets, pipes, and hoses. Also, check your spa/pool for leaks and have them repaired promptly.
- Cover your spa or pool and reduce evaporation by 90%. An average size pool left uncovered can lose as much as 1,000 gallons of water per month.
- Avoid water toys that need a constant stream of water.
- Use your water meter to check for leaks. Turn off all faucets and water-using appliances, then read your meter. Make sure no one uses water for 30 minutes, then take a second reading. If the dial has moved, you have a leak in a toilet or water pipe.

Tips for Indoor Water Use

- Defrost frozen food in the refrigerator or in the microwave instead of running water over it.
- When washing dishes by hand, use two basins - one for washing and one for rinsing rather than let the water run.
- Repair dripping faucets and leaky toilets. Dripping faucets can waste about 2,000 gallons of water each year. Leaky toilets can waste as much as 200 gallons each day.
- Only run the dishwasher and clothes washer when they are fully loaded. Don't pre-rinse dishes before loading the dishwasher. You will save as much as 20 gallons a load, or 6,500 gallons per year. Tests show pre-rinsing doesn't improve cleaning.

Want more information? Go to: www.SLOCountyWater.org