



For immediate release:

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Outdoor Water Conservation Encouraged as Drought Continues to Strain Water Supply

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) – With the Governor’s declaration of drought and the spring and summer forecasts predicting these continued conditions, the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer is calling for heightened awareness and increased conservation efforts, especially outdoors.

“Outdoor water can account for 50-percent of residential water use in normal years and is even greater in times of drought,” said State Engineer John D’Antonio. “This severely stresses our surface water supplies, groundwater supplies and often the ability of supply systems to meet peak demand.”

“As we move through spring and into summer, we need to prepare for more daylight and warmer weather,” said Water Use and Conservation Bureau Chief John Longworth. “This means checking our irrigation systems and adjusting watering schedulers. By doing so, we can irrigate more efficiently.”

To help New Mexicans conserve outdoor water, the Office of the State Engineer’s Water Use and Conservation Bureau released this list of low-to-no cost suggestions to reduce the outdoor water demand by increasing irrigation efficiency.

- § Replace the back-up battery on your irrigation timer. Depleted batteries or a loss of electricity can result in systems reverting to non-specific default values.

(MORE)

- § Test irrigation systems regularly for leaks, breaks, and misaligned sprinklers. If you have rabbits or gophers in the neighborhood, be especially aware. They are also looking for water and will chew through drip lines to find it.
- § Test the surface moisture of clay and loamy soils by grabbing a handful of soil and squeezing it into a ball. If it sticks together it contains enough moisture to supply your plants with water. This will not work for sandy soils.
- § Test the soil moisture of your root zone and sandy soils by using a soil auger or sampling tube to obtain deeper soil samples.
- § If and when it rains, collect the rainwater or direct it towards trees and shrubs. You don't need the official version of a rain barrel. Stick a cooler, bucket or trash can under a downspout and carry the collected water to the tree.

These simple irrigation tips help to keep systems maintained and help to irrigate appropriately. For more information or to order conservation information materials, please contact the Office of the State Engineer's Water Use and Conservation Bureau at 1-800-WATERNM or waternm@state.nm.us. For a complete listing or to download conservation materials visit the agency's website at, www.ose.state.nm.us/water-info/conservation.

The Office of the State Engineer is charged with administering the state's water resources. The State Engineer has power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation, and distribution of all surface and groundwater in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also Secretary of the Interstate Stream Commission and oversees its staff.

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