



# NEWS SPLASH

Spring 2005

## DISTRICT MOVES INTO WATER SHORTAGE PLAN

The Sammamish Plateau Water and Sewer District has moved into its Water Shortage Response Plan, which was activated due to the drought conditions that exist because of a very dry winter. The District Board of Commissioners voted to activate the Plan in the Advisory Stage on March 21, 2005. The District followed the lead of the Cascade Water Alliance and the City of Seattle, which implemented their Water Shortage Plans on March 16. Water suppliers are also responding to the declaration of a statewide drought emergency by Governor Christine Gregoire on March 10. The District hopes to work in concert with the Cascade Water Alliance and the City of Seattle in responding to the drought conditions.

The District's Water Shortage Response Plan consists of four stages:

**Advisory Stage:** Initiated when existing conditions could lead to a water supply shortage

**Voluntary Stage:** Customers are asked to voluntarily reduce their consumption in any way they choose. The District provides a list of suggested conservation measures for customers.

**Mandatory Stage:** The District chooses which measures are needed to immediately reduce consumption. Enforcement of these measures can include written warnings and citations.

**Rationing Stage:** A water emergency is declared. Water use demand must be sharply and quickly curtailed. The District may set a standard allotment of water per household. Citations may be issued for those exceeding their allotment.

By entering the Advisory Stage, the District responded to lower than normal rainfall levels, which is one of the triggers to enter into the Advisory stage. Rainfall is important for

recharge of the District's groundwater aquifers. The District is informing its customers that the potential exists for lower than normal water supply later this summer. Customers may be asked to reduce consumption unless conditions return to normal. Although the cold, wet weather seen in March and April has been helpful, it has not eliminated the

d r o u g h t conditions. As of this writing, the District was still observing rainfall totals that are well below normal for this time of year. The District is employing some a d d i t i o n a l management strategies to manage its water supplies this summer. Recently the District received a ten-year permit from the Department of Ecology to recharge its aquifers in the winter to provide additional storage for the peak summer consumption period.



*Don't be a waterhog!  
Save water this summer.*

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Water Shortage Plan stages can change at any time, and may change throughout the summer. For the most up-to-date information about the Plan stage the District is currently implementing, please visit the District website at [www.sammplat.wa.org](http://www.sammplat.wa.org).

# WATERWISE LANDSCAPING TIPS

- ❑ Test your automatic irrigation system once a month. You will be able to check for leaks and broken heads and repair any problem areas.
- ❑ Get to know your irrigation controller. Adjust your controller monthly. This way, you will be able to adapt your timer to existing weather conditions. Avoid the “set it and forget it” mentality when adjusting your controller.
- ❑ Install a rain sensor or an automatic rain shutoff valve on your system so you are not running your irrigation when it does rain. Avoid watering when it is windy.
- ❑ Check to make sure that your hose connections do not leak. Install washers, if necessary, and repair or replace hoses.
- ❑ Apply water only as fast as the soil can absorb it. Water running off onto the pavement is an indication of overwatering. Water in short, repeated intervals for best absorption, especially on slopes or compacted soils.
- ❑ Water in the evening or early morning. Avoid watering your lawn during the heat of the day. As much as **30%** of your water is lost due to evaporation. Also, scald or burn can occur on the grass leaves. Water droplets act like tiny magnifying glasses and can scorch the vegetation.
- ❑ Mow your lawn at a height of two inches or longer. Longer grass will help shade the roots and hold moisture.
- ❑ Aerate your lawn each year in the spring and fall to reduce thatch and compaction and increase water penetration. Topdress with compost to enhance your soil.
- ❑ Avoid summer fertilizer applications, especially during drought conditions, as extra water will be required to move the fertilizer into the soil.
- ❑ Mulch your shrub beds to control weeds and help planting beds retain moisture.



*The Cedar River Watershed during drought conditions.  
Photo Courtesy Seattle Public Utilities*



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