

## **GENERIC DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN**

### **Executive Summary**

Drought is a natural climatic condition which has occurred many times in the past and which will occur again. The purpose of this plan is to provide a management framework for dealing with drought. In addition, it may be used to manage water emergencies that result in temporary loss or reduction in service due to non-climate related factors.

The Drought Contingency Plan is triggered by reductions in surface water allotment or by the inability to satisfy system water demand for any reason. The plan is triggered in stages based on allotment or when demand is projected to exceed supply. Each drought or water emergency stage is associated with a menu of response measures. Each successive stage from Stage I to Stage III represents an increasingly severe condition and includes an increasingly stringent list of response measures.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Drought Contingency Plan is as follows:

- to provide contingency plans to manage drought and emergency conditions.
- to continue to deliver a cost effective, adequate, safe and reliable supply of high quality water.
- to assist in implementing the Lower Rio Grande Valley 40 Year Water Plan (2003) which identifies the need to plan for periods of critical water shortages as a result of drought.
- to identify successful public information strategies which will motivate the community to reduce normal consumption to drought allowances.
- to recommend a programmed response for each stage which would most effectively reduce water consumption to the available supply with the least adverse impact on the residents of the Lower Rio Grande Regional Water planning area.

## DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN (continued)

### **Drought and Water Emergency Response Management**

Specific drought contingency responses are listed according to stage. Stages are dependant on the ability of LRGWUO members to foresee points which would affect water availability. Such restrictions apply only to the use of potable water. After implementation of the Drought Contingency Plan, the LRGWUO members may request implementation of any or all of the following:

#### **STAGE I: MILD DROUGHT CONDITIONS**

Conditions: The seven (7) day average of water production is within 10 percent of the maximum pumping capacity or, if the water storage capacity falls to within 10 percent of the minimum tank storage requirements for the area.

Goal: Reduce water consumption (voluntary restrictions) by 10 percent.

1. A voluntary reduction goal of 50% in landscape plant irrigation water use.
2. Fundraiser car washes are prohibited.
3. Swimming pool filling is prohibited. Swimming pools must be covered when not in use.
4. Restaurants shall not serve water unless requested.
5. Water used for aesthetic purposes is prohibited.
6. Impervious surface cleaning with water shall be prohibited except where conducted by order of the City-County Health and Environmental District or the Police and/or Fire Department.
7. Increase public education by news releases and TV spots.
8. Request voluntary compliance with all drought management response measures from all other area water purveyors.

#### **STAGE II: SEVERE DROUGHT CONDITIONS**

Conditions: The seven (7) day average of water production falls within the 10 percent maximum pumping capacity.

Goal: Reduce water consumption (mandatory restrictions) by twenty (20) percent.

## DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN (continued)

1. No new landscape plants shall be installed or planted and no new landscaping permits will be issued except for Xeriscapes, which are, drip irrigated using a permanent system.
2. No outdoor residential (single family, duplex, triplex or apartment complex) landscape watering except on Saturdays (even address) and Sundays (odd address) during watering hours - before 9:00 a.m. and after 7:00 p.m.
3. Fleet car and truck washing shall be discontinued unless conducted by order of the City-County Health and Environmental District or the Police and/or Fire Department.
4. All street sweeping shall be discontinued except that performed with reclaimed water or brackish water.
5. Routine fire hydrant flushing and testing shall be curtailed.
6. All Water Conservation Ordinance variances are automatically suspended.
7. City and County parks and all schools shall discontinue irrigation of non-play areas.
8. Industries are requested to voluntarily decrease water consumption by 25%.

### **STAGE III: CRITICAL DROUGHT CONDITIONS**

Goal: All Stage I and II drought management response options shall remain in effect. In addition, the following options shall be in effect as warranted:

1. All landscape irrigation is prohibited except when performed with a bucket or permanent drip irrigation system or where reclaimed water is used. No turf irrigation shall be permitted except where irrigated with reclaimed water.
2. All car, trailer, truck or boat washing is prohibited except in facilities certified by the District and displaying approved signage.
3. No new customers shall be approved for connection to the water system.

### **Initiation Procedures and Termination Notification**

The LRGWUO board members shall report the nature and severity of the drought or water emergency condition to the LRGWUO Board of Directors. If the LRGWUO Board of Directors find that a drought or water emergency condition exists, the Board shall recommend that the respective Mayor of the respective entity declare a drought or water emergency and

## DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN (continued)

impose the measures provided in this Plan to protect the region's water supply. LRGWUO shall be charged with public notification and education activities related to the drought or water emergency and the restrictions imposed upon water users to conserve water. The LRGWUO shall continually monitor the drought or water emergency condition and promptly recommend that the declaration be rescinded or modified as warranted by changing conditions.

In the event of a sudden emergency, a Board member may contact the respective Mayor and request emergency action by the Mayor. The LRGWUO Board of may also request cooperation from citizens to immediately address a water emergency.

The LRGWUO Board of Directors shall notify the Executive Director of the NMED within five days following implementation of any mandatory water use restriction.

## **GENERIC WATER CONSERVATION PLAN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The role of the LRGWUO is limited to the coordination and encouragement of water conservation activities. Individual entities and not the LRGWUO shall develop the water conservation plans within their own boundaries. These plans will reflect the individual entities unique structure. The following is a suggested generic water conservation plan for individual entities within the LRGWUO region.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The LRGWUO Water Conservation Plan was developed with the following ideas in mind:

- To promote water conservation by educating the public in the ways to conserve water,
- to adopt a water conservation ordinance,
- to adopt a landscape ordinance, and
- to adopt a conservation oriented water rate structure

### **EDUCATION**

The LRGWUO will promote water conservation by educating the public of ways to conserve water. Educational activities will include:

- Fact sheets, newsletters, or other correspondence explaining the new water conservation and drought contingency programs
- Publication of articles or announcements on water conservation in a local newspaper
- Mail-outs, bill stuffers, door hangers, door-to-door distributions or other direct distributions written water conservation material.
- A school education program
- The printing of water conservation tips on water bills at least quarterly
- A public speaking program for civic groups;

## **WATER CONSERVATION ORDINANCE**

The LRGWUO will promote the awareness of water use and practices, and spread the demand within the region through odd/even watering schedules.

- There will be no watering between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- Even numbered addresses may water outside on Tuesdays, Thursday and Saturday. Odd numbered addresses may water outside on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.
  - The exception to this ordinance will be the two weeks after plants are set into the ground.
- No water is allowed to run continuously.
  - Vehicles can only be washed with a bucket or a hose with a shut-off nozzle.
  - Puddles should not appear among plants.
  - No water should be allowed to flow into the street, alley, or adjacent property.
  - Concrete, cement, or other impervious surfaces should not be watered with a hose unless there is a hazard.
- Leaks must be repaired within five (5) days of detection.

## **LANDSCAPE ORDINANCE**

New Business and businesses making structural changes (renovations) worth over \$25,000 are required to put in and maintain landscaping. Landscaping must encompass at least 15% of the parking area (building pad and storage areas are exempt).

- Per each 1,000 square foot of landscaping said business must have:
  - An underground irrigation system
  - One (1) tree
  - Twenty (20) shrubs
  - One Hundred (100) square feet (10 one-gallon plants) of groundcover
- Some substitutions are allowed, see recommended plant lists for Dona Ana County.

Naturalized vegetation undisturbed by clearing of the site may be included as landscaping.

## **RATE STRUCTURE**

- Members of the Lower Rio Grande Water Users Organization will adopted a conservation-oriented water rate structure. The rate structure for residential customers is in the form of an increasing block rate.
- Separate rate structures have been established for commercial customers and bulk-water haulers.