



MEDIA ADVISORY

MONO COUNTY, *California's Eastern Sierra*

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County Addresses Drought: Water Conservation and Communication

Water conservation is on the minds of all Californians this summer, and Mono County is doing its part to save this precious resource. County staff is addressing drought-related issues on many fronts, from implementing water use reductions to providing information to our visitors.

The county public works department's facilities staff is taking measures to reduce water consumption at or beyond the governor's 25% mandate. While this mandate only applies to urban water users, facilities staff was proactive in seeing how such a reduction could be accomplished on county-owned parks, fields and landscaping. For county properties with individual wells, the irrigation schedule was cut from 6 days a week, twice a day, to 4 days a week, once a day, reducing overall usage by close to 50% for those properties.

Irrigation at county parks and facilities in Bridgeport, Lee Vining and June Lake now follows the restrictions laid out by the Public Utility Districts that serve these areas. Generally, these restrictions allow for irrigation on 3 specific days per week, and cut previous use by as much as 50%. "We believe this approach will not have long-term detrimental effects to landscaping or fields, but we will monitor the impact and make adjustments as necessary," said Parks and Facilities Superintendent Joe Blanchard.

Other conservation efforts include shutting off all irrigation systems during recent storm cycles, which gave a nearly two-week reprieve to the county's water supply. Staff is also installing rain sensors on irrigation systems county-wide. Additionally, a recently developed overflow system is being installed at the Crowley Lake ball field will capture runoff from the well's pressure relief valve and will be used to irrigate new trees. "We are continuing to look

at a numerous other avenues to conserve water and will keep you posted on our progress," said Blanchard.

Beyond these on-the-ground conservation measures, the County's economic development and tourism department is working to spread the word that our natural-flow lakes are full of water and trout, encouraging visitors to "c'mon up, the water's fine." An exceptionally wet May has helped boost river and stream levels, as well, and water-based recreation this summer is off to a good start for visitors and residents alike.

At its June 2 meeting, the Board of Supervisors directed county staff to communicate these conservation and awareness efforts. "We hope this will start a conversation about the impacts of drought in Mono County, and that we can engage our residents and visitors in the stewardship of water," said Supervisor Stacy Corless.

Please visit www.mono.ca.gov to get more information about Mono County's water conservation efforts, and to share your comments.

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Mono County offers a rural setting with the most spectacular landscapes in the state. Situated between the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the California/Nevada border, Mono County has a land area of 3,030 square miles, or just over 2 million acres, 94% of which is publicly owned. Much of this land is contained in the Inyo and Toiyabe National Forests. As a result, Mono County is home to vast scenic and recreational resources, and has unsurpassed access to wilderness and adventure.

The county is home to, and named after Mono Lake, which is a large high-desert saline lake. Also located in the county is the historic gold rush town of Bodie, which during its heyday in the late 1800's was home to as many as 7,000 people, and is today maintained as a State Historic Park for the public to come and enjoy. The county seat is proudly located in Bridgeport. Scenic Highway 395 weaves its way north-south through the heart of the county, effectively dividing the steep mountains to the west from the vast desert valley to the east. As it provides access to Yosemite National Park via Lee Vining, it passes beneath towering peaks, and past broad desert expanses.