

IWVWD General Manager's Column
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IWVWD Issues the “20 Gallon Challenge”

By Don Zdeba

On January 17th, Governor Jerry Brown issued a drought proclamation urging all Californians to reduce their water use by 20%. The fact that we in the Indian Wells Valley do not feel the immediate impact of the drought does not diminish the fact that we need to do our part and be good stewards of our groundwater resource.

IWVWD is issuing the “20 Gallon Challenge” urging residents to reduce their water use 20 gallons per day. It may be much easier than it sounds. First and foremost, cut back on outdoor irrigation. If you see runoff on your sidewalks, gutters and streets, reset your sprinkler timers to fewer days per week and/or fewer minutes per cycle. Alternatively, while the weather is mild, consider hand watering. If you want to make a long-term difference, consider changing your thirsty lawn to a drought tolerant landscape. You can sign up for a free landscape consultation with our XERIC© Ambassadors or you can pick up free literature and water saving devices at the District office. For more hands-on information, you may be interested in attending the 12-week course “Horticulture for Landscapes, Gardens, and Orchards,” which will be taught by UC Davis Professor John Karlik in the IWVWD Boardroom beginning February 25, 2014. The cost is \$70 per person. Other easy ways to save include turning off the water while brushing your teeth, which can save 8 gallons of water if you brush twice daily. Fixing a leaking faucet will save up to 15 gallons per day. A leaking hose bib can lose 20 gallons per day. For more information on the “20 Gallon Challenge” and tips on how to reduce water waste, please visit our website at www.iwvwd.com.

In February 2008, Governor Schwarzenegger directed state agencies to develop a plan to reduce statewide per capita urban water use by 20 percent by the year 2020. A 20 percent reduction means a decrease from the State's baseline per capita use of 192 gallons per capita daily (GPCD) to 154 GPCD by 2020 for an annual savings of about 1.59 million acre-feet or 518 billion gallons of water. The average GPCD can vary greatly in areas of the State due to factors such as climate and whether an area is rural or urban. IWVWD baseline is 269 GPCD and its target is 214 GPCD by the year 2020. The past two years, we have averaged 215 GPCD. Local conservation efforts have achieved these positive results, but there is more that can be done. Obviously, exceeding the goal would be even more desirable.

The recently released “Indian Wells Valley Resource Opportunity Plan –Water Availability and Conservation Report” prepared by Todd Engineers for the Kern County Planning and Community Development Department confirms a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach is necessary to provide the Indian Wells Valley with a sustainable water supply for the future. Developing and implementing the plan will require time and there will be a significant cost associated with some of the actions taken. In the meantime, you've probably heard it mentioned before that the cheapest water is the water that we

don't pump. Using our groundwater resource wisely must become a way of life in our arid desert regions.