



Our Water Situation is Serious

Last year was the driest year on record for our area and the Governor has declared a drought emergency throughout California. Southern California water agencies served by MWD reportedly have enough water stored to get us through another year. But what if there is below average rainfall over the next 12 months?

Normally, CRPD is able to turn off irrigation in November or December and leave it off until March or April. This year is different. Irrigation (albeit reduced) continued lest we cross a tipping point and lose large swaths of grass, landscaping, and trees. In addition, in order to conserve water and sustain most of the grass and landscaping, we turned off irrigation in portions of nearly every park. In these areas, the grass will die and the turf will be converted to some other ground cover such as wood chips.

What you may not realize is that, regardless of the drought, CRPD is reducing the number of acres of irrigated turf due primarily to the cost of water and the Water Conservation Act of 2009.

The cost to water Conejo Valley's parks has doubled over the past four years. Last year, CRPD spent \$1.7 million to water. Water managers tell us to expect another doubling of water rates by 2020! Absent significant new revenue by 2020, a \$3.4 million dollar water bill will require dramatic changes in our park system.

The Water Conservation Act gives urban water users a water reduction target of 20% by the year 2020. For CRPD to do its part, we would essentially need to stop watering 20% of our 565 acres of irrigated parkland over the next six years.

There will still be grass on which to play catch, have a picnic, and play your favorite sport - there will just be a bit less at nearly every park. In the coming years, our parks will become more drought-tolerant and look a little different.

I ask for your patience and understanding as these changes are implemented. As stewards of our environment, please know that we are working hard to conserve this precious natural resource, while striving to offer you the finest parks and recreational programming services possible.

At www.crpd.org/water, you can find more information about CRPD's Water Conservation Policy and Practices, turf reduction plans, drought and water conservation resource links, and also help us conserve by participating in the D.R.I.P. Water Watcher Program.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Friedl'. The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Jim Friedl
General Manager