



Conejo Recreation & Park District

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DATE: March 3, 2022

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Jim Friedl, General Manager

SUBJECT: Additional Drought Response Guidelines to Conejo Recreation and Park District's Water Conservation Plan

RECOMMENDATION

Review and approve additional drought response guidelines to the District's Water Conservation Plan.

DISCUSSION

Over the past decade, the District has remained committed to building upon its past water conservation efforts, using water efficiently, and being a leader in the community with regard to water conservation and efficient water use. As detailed in staff's presentation of the District's Water Conservation Plan (www.crpdpd.org/water) to the CRPD Board of Directors in October 2021, measured by water units/developed park acre, the District's water consumption remains nearly 30% below fiscal year 07/08.

As part of the October 2021 discussion, the Board directed staff to present additional guidelines for a worsening drought scenario in the next update (scheduled for Fall 2022). However, due to the current drought situation, staff has accelerated this item.

CRPD is continuously making efforts to balance aggressive water conservation efforts with the community's desire for turf playability and quality, and preservation of healthy landscaping. Staff believes further turf (and resulting water) reductions would seriously jeopardize this balance. If regulatory agencies/water suppliers imposed additional water consumption cutbacks, staff would strongly urge the consideration of alternative community-wide methods to achieve the cutbacks - staff views the District's parks as the community's "lawn" and available for the general public's recreational opportunities. The District has been a leader among park agencies in water conservation and as part of its water conservation measures during the past ten years, 70 acres or approximately 30% of all the District's irrigated turf has already been converted to mulch and drought tolerant landscaping. Because of this, staff believes the District has already reached its

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limit of turf reductions and any additional reductions in irrigated landscaped areas should not be born by the general public's dwindling greenspaces, but by other means. However, if the regulatory agencies/water suppliers mandated the additional water consumption cutbacks from the District's public parks, staff is prepared to take action.

Taking into consideration a variety of factors, including turf reduction efforts to date and community expectations, Parks and Recreation staff have collaborated for the past few months on strategies to develop guidelines for potential water reduction and the predicted outcomes and consequences of each. As a result, staff is presenting a three-tiered system (see attached table) that, when directed by the Board, could be implemented quickly.

The additional drought response guidelines will be included in future Water Conservation Plan presentations and discussions.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPLIANCE

Meets 2022 Strategic Plan Goal 8.4 - Conserve water and favor California natives as well as drought-tolerant landscaping through the board-approved landscape palette.

Meets 2022 Strategic Plan Goal 8.5 - Continue to incorporate water-saving practices into standard operations. Continue the drought response-related irrigation and landscape improvements and continue to seek opportunities to save water in the parks, expand and diversify the District's water supply portfolio, and consider and implement a variety of cost-effective water-saving solutions.

Meets 2022 Strategic Plan Goal 8.6 - Evaluate enhanced recycling and energy conservation practices. Evaluate and enhance our recycling and energy conservation practices within the District and at District properties and events to assure that we continuously improve the District's recycling, energy conservation, resource utilization, and related practices.

Respectfully submitted by,



T. P. Hare, Administrator
Parks and Planning

Attachment

Action	Notification	Recovery Costs	Estimated Annual Water Savings	Overall Cumulative Savings
Tier 1 Guideline				
Remove up to approximately 11 acres of turf at various parks.	Post turf reduction maps on CRPD website at least 7 days prior to implementation. Post public signage, including turf reduction maps website, at affected parks at least 7 days prior to implementation.	None. This would be a permanent water reduction measure.	15,300 units	Reduction of overall annual water usage by 6% (\$102,500)
Tier 2 Guideline				
Remove up to an additional approximately 35 acres of turf at various parks.	Present analysis/information to Board for action. Notify neighbors prior to Board meeting/implementation	\$350,000	48,900 units	Reduction of overall annual water usage by 25% (\$428,700)
Tier 3 Guideline				
Remove additional remaining acreage (approximately 53 acres of turf) from neighborhood parks.	Present analysis/information to Board for action. Notify neighbors prior to Board meeting/implementation	\$530,000	74,100 units	Reduction of overall annual water usage by 53% (\$923,300)

Notes:

1 unit of water = 748 gallons

Recovery Costs - Once irrigation ceases for any significant length of time, there will still be some growth as many native and non-native weed species are able to survive without supplemental irrigation. Mowing, and other maintenance activities would still need to occur, leaving a mottled condition in the park. In the future, if water were to become available for recovery of turf acreage, the refurbishment would be time consuming and expensive. Estimated recovery cost of an 'extreme' refurbishment is approximately \$10,000 per acre in materials, supplies, staff time and increased water for establishment.

Figures for Estimated Water Savings, Overall Cumulative Water Savings are based upon District water consumption data for Fiscal Year 2021/2022.