



Conejo Recreation & Park District

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**SUBJECT: PROPOSED WATER CONSERVATION ORDINANCE
City Council Agenda 11/16/21 Item 8A.**

The Conejo Recreation and Park District (CRPD) staff have reviewed and support the City of Thousand Oaks' proposed Water Conservation Ordinance. With a hotter and drier climate, water conservation and efficient water use are both essential.

CRPD agrees that, as stated in the proposed ordinance language, careful water management that includes active water conservation measures in times of drought is essential to ensure a reliable minimum supply of water to meet current and future water supply needs. We also greatly appreciate the proposed ordinance provisions that consider the broad use and public benefit of usable parks and sports fields as we conserve water.

Over the past decade, CRPD has made a strong and continuous commitment to water conservation and efficient water use. Just last month, the CRPD Board of Directors updated the Park District's Water Conservation Plan. Measured by water units/developed park acre, **CRPD's water consumption remains nearly 30% below fiscal year 07/08.**

CRPD remains committed to building upon its past water conservation efforts, to using water efficiently and to being a leader in the community with regards to water conservation and efficient water use.

During recent years, CRPD has made significant strides in its water conservation efforts, including:

- Reached the milestone of having 100% of approximately 10,000 irrigation heads controlled by iCentral Irrigation Control System which monitors local weather and automatically adjusts watering schedule and volume for efficient plant use and automatically performs rain shutdowns.
- Added an Irrigation Technician to field staff to conduct regular water audits and promote efficient water use.
- Added master flow valves at parks,
- Completed numerous waterwise Capital Projects totaling more than \$4,950,000, including, but not limited to:
 - Converted 70 acres (from a total of 250 acres) of irrigated grass turf to native/drought-tolerant species, mulch and non-turf ground cover (CRPD's website has a page dedicated to water conservation which includes maps of the completed grass turf conversion projects at parks throughout the Park District);

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- Converted Irrigated to reclaimed water systems at North Ranch Neighborhood and Triunfo Community Park;
- Upgraded irrigation system Thousand Oaks Community Park;
- Installed waterwise landscape improvements at Banyan Neighborhood Park;
- Replaced irrigation systems at McCrea Ranch;
- Designed and developed 124-acre Sapwi Trails Community Park with no irrigated turf.
- Since Fiscal Year 2017-2018, CRPD has invested approximately \$300,000/year in drought response projects (native and drought-tolerant landscapes, drip irrigation) and plans to do so for the foreseeable future.

CRPD's ongoing efforts to conserve water over the past decade have saved water and money. As a result of careful water stewardship:

- In Fiscal Year 2020/2021, despite a very dry year, CRPD's water use was 12.1% below its water target of 503 units per acre.
- **CRPD has decreased its water use by 29.6% when comparing water consumption in Fiscal Year 2020/2021 to Fiscal Year 2007/2008 units per acre.**
- Since Fiscal Year 2007/2008, because of CRPD's efforts and improvements, **CRPD has saved approximately 1,950 acre feet** (which represents 850,000 units or 635,794,000 gallons) **of water and over \$4,919,000.**

Even with CRPD's achievements, we welcome the input of the community and patrons of the parks for ways and methods we could improve. CRPD's website contains a water conservation page with a list of all the locations Residents can contact CRPD at parks@crpd.org or utilize the *Do Report Irrigation Problems* (D.R.I.P.) Water Watcher program (located at www.crp.org/water) and strongly encourages residents to report water leaks, broken sprinklers, over-watering due to malfunctioning controllers, or anything that results in water waste.

CRPD is committed to resource conservation, water cost savings, and continuously striving to become an environmentally considerate and sustainable operation. CRPD works hard to balance aggressive water conservation efforts (learn more at www.crp.org/water) with community expectations for turf playability and quality and preservation of healthy landscaping.

Finally, a note of thanks to your staff for using information from the recent prior drought when updating the Water Conservation Ordinance. We appreciate the opportunity to work with you and city staff on this and many other important projects and programs. Let's hope Thousand Oaks, Ventura County and California get some sorely needed rain & snow this winter!

Sincerely,


Jim Fried
General Manager

c: Cliff Finley, Public Works Directors / John Brooks, Senior Sustainability Analyst