



Running Springs Water District August 2014 Newsletter



The Running Springs Water District is providing this Newsletter to our customers as part of our public outreach effort to share information regarding the District's ongoing activities, operations and services.



State Water Board Approves Emergency Water Conservation Regulation

Governor Brown has called on all Californians to reduce their water use by 20 percent and prevent water waste – visit SaveOurH2O.org to find out how everyone can do their part, and visit Drought.CA.Gov to learn more about how California is dealing with the effects of the drought.

In response to the ongoing severe drought, on July 15, 2014 the State Water Resources Control Board approved an emergency regulation to ensure water agencies, their customers and state residents increase water conservation in urban settings or face possible fines or other enforcement.

The new conservation regulation is intended to reduce outdoor urban water use. The regulation, adopted by the State Water Board, mandates minimum actions to conserve water supplies both for this year and into 2015. Most Californians use more water outdoors than indoors. In some areas, 50 percent or more of daily water use is for lawns and outdoor landscaping.

With this regulation, all Californians will be expected to stop: washing down driveways and sidewalks; watering of outdoor landscapes that cause excess runoff; using a hose to wash a motor vehicle, unless the hose is fitted with a shut-off nozzle; and using potable water in a fountain or

decorative water feature, unless the water is recirculated. The regulation makes an exception for health and safety circumstances.

The regulation requires that the Running Springs Water District either limit outdoor irrigation to twice a week or implement other comparable conservation actions. The Running Springs Water District Board of Directors will be considering limiting outdoor irrigation to twice a week in order to comply with this new regulation at its August 20, 2014 regular Board meeting beginning at 9:00 a.m.

The State Water Board could initiate enforcement actions against water agencies that don't comply with the new regulation. Failure to comply with a State Water Board enforcement order by water agencies is subject to penalties of up to \$10,000 a day.

District to Propose Increase to Fire Availability Fee to Continue Local Control of Fire and Emergency Medical (Ambulance) Services

At a Special Board Meeting held on April 2, 2014 the District's Board of Directors and staff discussed the need for increased revenue to fund the operation of the Running Springs Fire Department and Emergency Medical (Ambulance) Services.

In October 1962, fire protection became the second service provided for the Running Springs community by the District at a local level. Until that time, fire protection for the area had been provided by an all-volunteer fire department comprised of a group of concerned citizens. As the needs of the community outgrew the ability of the volunteer fire department to provide and maintain this service, there was a recognized need for change. Because of the increased community need, a comprehensive study was conducted to determine the best method of providing fire protection. The study concluded that the District had the authority and the ability to provide fire protection services. Primarily, it was determined this would be the most cost effective alternative, while at the same time, would allow local control by an already established locally elected governmental agency.

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While the fundamental purpose of the District's Fire Department is the protection of life and property from fire, several operational functions are provided by the Fire Department as well. These functions include a variety of public assistance services, field emergency medical care services, ambulance transportation services, hazard abatement, community education and awareness programs. Of the services provided, the greatest public emphasis and need has been in the area of field emergency medical care and ambulance transportation.

Over the years, medical aid responses have grown to the point where they significantly outnumber fire related responses. In an attempt to provide better service and better meet the needs of the community, in September 1978 the District's Fire Department implemented advanced life support (ALS or paramedics) into its medical care services. With the implementation of advanced life support services, the District's Fire Department became the first fire agency in the San Bernardino Mountains to provide a 24-hour continuous paramedic program.

In 1984, to enhance its emergency medical care system, the District's Board of Directors authorized the Fire Department to provide ambulance transportation services. Until this time, ambulance service had been provided by the Lake Arrowhead Fire Protection District. Improved patient care, public need and economics were the primary reasons for the Director's authorization of this additional service. The ambulance service boundary includes Running Springs, Smiley Park, Arrowbear, Green Valley Lake, Snow Valley and along State Highway 18 to Lake View Point. The ambulance coverage also includes State Highway 330 to City Creek Ranger Station. The Running Springs Fire Department operates from two local fire stations.

The existing Running Springs Fire Department Fire Availability Fee is a Special Tax that owners of developed property in the Running Springs Water District service area pay to help fund the operation of the Running Springs Fire Department. The voters approved this \$65/year fee which was put into effect on March 11, 1980 by Ordinance No. 9. If adjusted for inflation the fee would be \$158/year in 2014.

The Board has directed staff to proceed with obtaining the necessary information to place a measure on the ballot for the voters to consider in 2015 to increase the Fire Availability Fee to \$158 per year with an annual inflationary increase. If approved by the voters, this additional revenue will help to fund the continued local operation of the

Department which is still the most cost effective and efficient alternative.

CAL FIRE - Fire Prevention Fee

It is important to note and make the clear distinction to our customers that the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Fire Prevention Fee is not in any way affiliated with the Running Springs Water District or Running Springs Fire Department. A bill passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown in July 2011 established this annual Fire Prevention Fee to be collected from the owners of private property located within the State Responsibility Area. The fee is \$115 per habitable structure for those that already pay a special tax or assessment to a local fire district. This fee is currently being challenged by the Howard Jarvis Tax Payers Association. If you do not agree with the legality / constitutionality of the CAL FIRE fee and would like to protest it, the following link has information on how to do so:

http://firetaxprotest.org/?page_id=13

For more information regarding District functions and activities, please visit the District's websites at:

www.runningspringswaterdistrict.com

www.runningspringsfd.org

or contact the District office by phone at 909-867-2766, or by mail at P.O. Box 2206, Running Springs, CA, 92382. In addition, we hold public Board Meetings at 9:00 a.m. on every third Wednesday of the month at our District Office located at 31242 Hilltop Blvd. (Highway 18) in Running Springs. Members of the public are always invited and encouraged to attend these meetings.

Please provide your email address on your next bill if you would like to receive District information by email.

The District now accepts credit card payments in person at the main office. Credit, debit card or electronic check payments may also be made online at: <https://ipn.paymentus.com/otp/stde/rswd> or by calling Paymentus at 877-506-3112.

“The Mission of the Running Springs Water District is to provide water, fire, emergency medical service, sewer, and other beneficial services to the community: The goal of the District shall be to do so with the highest level of integrity and ethical principles and in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible.”