To all Redcrest Water Customers: July 2000

Our water system is under severe constraints due to a lack of storage capacity, and strict limits on the amount of water we may divert from Chadd Creek, our only source. We are requesting all our customers to please conserve water indoors and out. Without voluntary conservation, we face the possibility of severe shortages during the summer months. Our fire-fighting capability could be severely affected by such a shortage.

Over-consumption and waste are squandering approximately 30 percent of our system capacity. This is because there is no financial incentive for our customers to conserve water in our unmetered, flat-rate water system. ***Those who waste water cause higher water rates for all Redcrest customers.*** We're asking all Redcrest residents to remind your friends and neighbors about the importance of conserving water. If you see leaks, irrigation water flowing down streets or gutters, or similar waste, please (gently) bring it to the attention of the resident, or call --(system operator)-- at 555-5555, or --(board president)-- at 555-5555. If summer water usage cannot be reduced by voluntary conservation, installation of meters will be required - which would sharply increase water rates for all our customers.

Thank you for your help. Following are many water saving ideas - you can often reduce your water consumption and septic tank loading by 40% or more by making a few simple changes....

SAVING WATER OUTDOORS

Landscaping accounts for 20-50% of all residential water use and provides the best opportunity for water conservation at home.

1. Don't overwater your lawn. As a general rule, lawns only need watering every *5* to 7 days in the summer. A soaking rain eliminates the need for watering for as long as two weeks.
2.. As much as 30% of water can be lost to evaporation by watering the lawn during midday. Water lawns during the early morning hours when temperatures and wind speed are the lowest. This reduces losses from evaporation. Water in several short sessions rather than one long one. For example, three ten minute sessions spaced 30 minutes to an hour apart will allow your lawn to better absorb moisture than one straight 30 minute session. Only water when your lawn is thirsty - overwatering promotes shallow root growth making your lawn less healthy and less drought-tolerant (To determine if your lawn needs to be watered, simply walk on it. If you leave footprints, it's time to water.)
3. Don't water your street, driveway or sidewalk Position your sprinklers so that water lands on the lawn and shrubs - not the paved areas. Turn off the water immediately when runoff flows out of the intended area.
4. Install sprinklers that are the most water-efficient for each use. Micro and drip irrigation and soaker hoses are examples of water-efficient methods of irrigation. Avoid sprinklers that spray a fine mist, which increases evaporation.
5. Regularly check sprinkler systems and timing devices to be sure they are operating properly. Check sprinkler system valves periodically for leaks, and keep the heads in good repair. Install a rain sensor device which will override the irrigation cycle of the sprinkler system when adequate rainfall has occurred. Contact an irrigation professional for more information.
6. Install a drip irrigation system for watering gardens, trees and shrubs. Drip irrigation provides a slow, steady trickle of water to plants at their roots through a network of small hidden hoses. The systems are regulated by a controller that can be adjusted for different levels of watering according to the needs of the plants. Drip irrigation systems reduce overwatering, weed growth, and the time and labor involved in hand watering
7. Raise the lawn mower blade to at least three inches. A lawn cut higher encourages grass roots to grow deeper, shades the root system and holds soil moisture better than a closely-clipped lawn.
8. Avoid overfertilizing your lawn. The application of fertilizers increases the need for water. Apply fertilizers that contain slow-release, water-insoluble forms of nitrogen.

9. Apply mulch to retain moisture in the soil. Mulching also helps to control weeds that use water needed by your plants.
10. Plant native and/or drought-tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs and trees. Once established, they do not need to be watered as frequently and they usually will survive a dry period without any watering. Group plants together based on similar water needs.
11. Don't use a hose to sweep your driveway or sidewalk - use a broom instead. Using a hose to clean a driveway can waste hundreds of gallons of water.
12. Install shut-off nozzles on all your outside hoses so that water flows only as needed. When finished, turn it off at the faucet instead of at the nozzle to avoid leaks.
13. Do not leave sprinklers or hoses unattended. Your garden hose can pour out 600 gallons or more in only a few hours, so don't leave the sprinkler running all day. Use a kitchen timer to remind yourself to turn it off. Better yet, purchase and install an inexpensive hose timer which will turn it on and off at preset times.
14. Check all hoses, connectors and faucets for leaks regularly.
15. If you wash your vehicles at home, park on the grass to do so.
16. Avoid the installation of ornamental water features (such as fountains) unless the water is recycled. Locate them in areas where there are minimal losses due to evaporation and wind drift.
17. If you have a swimming pool, install a water-saving pool filter. A single backflushing with a traditional filter can use 250 or more gallons of water. Cover your spa or pool to reduce evaporation. An average size pool left uncovered can lose as much as 1,000 gallons of water per month. Also, check your spa or pool for leaks and have them repaired promptly.

SAVING WATER INDOORS

1. Never put used water down the drain when there may be another use for it such as watering plants or cleaning.
2. Repair dripping faucets. If your faucet is dripping at the rate of one drop per second, you can expect to waste 2,700 gallons per year which will add to the cost of water and sewer utilities, or strain your septic system.
3. Every time you flush a pre-1980's toilet, it's like pouring 10 large soft drink bottles down the drain. Replace old water-wasting toilets with newer water-saving models, or put a water displacement device such as a toilet dam or an early closure flapper valve inside your tank. You'll find both in the plumbing section of most hardware stores. Check for toilet tank leaks by adding a few drops of food coloring to the tank. If the flush valve is leaking, color will appear in the bowl within 30 minutes. (Flush as soon as test is done, since food coloring may stain the tank.) Check the toilet for worn out, corroded or bent parts. Most replacement parts are inexpensive, readily available and easily installed.
4. Avoid flushing the toilet unnecessarily. Dispose of tissues, insects and other such waste in the trash instead of the toilet.
5. Take shorter showers. Replace your showerhead with a low-flow model (2.5 GPM or lower). Many of these allow you to cut off the water flow to soap up without adjusting the water temperature knobs.
6. Use the minimum amount of water needed for a bath by closing the drain first and filling the tub only 1/3 full. Stopper the tub before turning on the water. Adding hot water later can warm the initial burst of cold water.
7. Don't let water run while shaving or washing your face. Brush your teeth first while waiting for water to get hot, then wash or shave after filling the basin.
8. Install aerators with flow restrictors on all household faucets.
9. Operate automatic dishwashers and clothes washers only when they are fully loaded, or properly set the water level for the size of load you are washing.
10. When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink or basin with soapy water. Quickly rinse under a slow-moving stream from the faucet.
11. Store drinking water in the refrigerator rather than letting the tap run every time you want a cool glass of water.
12. Do not use running water to thaw meat or other frozen foods. Defrost food overnight in the refrigerator or by using the defrost setting on your microwave.

13. Kitchen garbage disposals require lots of water to operate properly. Start a compost pile as an alternate method of disposing food waste instead. Garbage disposals can also add 50% to the volume of solids in a septic tank, which can lead to malfunctions and maintenance problems.
14. Consider installing an instant water heater on your kitchen sink so you don't have to let the water run while it heats up. This will not only save water, but also reduce heating costs for your household.
15. Insulate your water pipes. You'll get hot water faster plus avoid wasting water while it heats up.
16. Avoid the use of evaporative air conditioning systems. Sealed window-type and central air conditioning systems are becoming more power-efficient each year and do not waste water.
17. Use water softening systems only when necessary. Save water and salt by running the minimum number of regenerations necessary to maintain water softness. Turn softeners off while on vacation.
18. If the toilet flush handle frequently sticks in the flush position, letting water run constantly, replace or adjust it.

THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT WATER

✓ All the water that has ever been, or will ever be on the Earth is here now. Only 1% of it is useable for human consumption.

✓ **All the water that was easy and cheap to use is gone.** It was used by previous generations and returned to the environment in one form or another. All future water needed for human consumption will be more difficult to get, more expensive, or both.