

Entranosa Water News

May 1, 2007

Billing Address. For those folks that utilize a billing service, or that choose to not use the return envelope that comes with the bill – please note that the address to send a payment is PO Box 925, Albuquerque, NM 87103-0925. Our mailing address for correspondence is 1330 State Highway 333, Tijeras, NM 87059. .

Drought Watch. We monitor, on a regular basis, the web sites that address drought issues and status. This past Tuesday, April 24th, the US Drought Monitor listed our region as “normal”. During the same period last year, the site indicated we were in “severe drought”. The U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook says current conditions will persist through July (the extent of the prediction), and (based on reports we’ve read) we anticipate a routine monsoonal season about the 2nd week of July.

Conservation Ordinances. (repeat from last month). The Bernalillo County Commission has approved a water conservation ordinance and it became effective on April 12th. Santa Fe County has had such an ordinance for several years. The ordinances differ, but they have the same focus – to provide guidelines for domestic conservation. On the reverse side of this newsletter, we’ve provided some of the highlights (again). We hope it is helpful. You may obtain copies of the ordinances from the appropriate offices for each county but we’ll have copies available at our office as well. There are some differences between our Conservation Plan and the ordinances issued by the County’s (we developed ours first) and, while encouraging reasonable use, we’ve always said that you should use what you need – no more and no less ... where that conflicts with the law – we suggest that you obey the law.

Water Hardness. We measured about 25 grains of hardness at the office this morning. We expect it to remain in the range of 25 to 29 grains between now and the middle of August.

Water Use. Our pumping this year is less than last year for the same period. The average residential meter consumed 5,239 gallons. The previous two years, the average residential use for April was 5,613 gallons in 2005, and 7,157 gallons in 2006

Rate Study. The board is continuing to work on a rate analysis for the water and wastewater components of our operation. It has been a very productive process.

Campbell Ranch. We have been approached, once again, by Campbell Corporation to discuss solutions to their water needs in support of the approved Master Plan. We’ve agreed to see if we can assist with that solution. As a reminder - a short summary of our development and growth policy for the past 10 years is that ‘growth supports itself’ – they bring (or pay) for water to support their requirement, and they fund the onsite and offsite infrastructure, which is designed to not affect the service of others.

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG – IT IS THE LAW 260-1990 or 811

County Ordinances on Water Conservation

Water is often described as our most precious resource – Water is Life - Aqua es Vida. We can live without the modern conveniences (phone, electricity), although it would be difficult – but we can't live without water. It is not a mineral, it is not a commodity that can be bought and sold on the futures market – but water rights permits DO become a private property right. I don't need to tell you how important water is, or the thousands of ways we use it. Aqua es Vida.

In the Estancia Basin, over 90% of the water pumped from the Basin goes to agricultural purposes. Domestic uses (household uses) account for less than five percent of the use. Municipalities and Counties have the right to 'condition' the uses of water, by ordinance. Both counties; Santa Fe and Bernalillo, have done that – Santa Fe in 2002, and Bernalillo in March of this year. Both counties declare that 'water waste' is a bad thing – the issue is defining what it is.

- The Bernalillo County ordinance has more depth, definition and flexibility, and the Santa Fe County ordinance covers a broader scope of activities with less depth and definition. Both ordinances have aspects unique to themselves.
- Both counties exempt agricultural uses from the ordinance – so – 90% of the uses in our area are exempt from the requirements of either ordinance. Thus, both ordinances are severely limited with respect to the amount of impact they'll have on the overall conservation of water.
- Both counties prohibit outdoor watering between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. during certain times of the year – with conditions. The prohibition in Bernalillo goes from 1 April to 31 October – the prohibition in Santa Fe goes from May thru September.
- Both counties require new construction to employ low-water-use fixtures. Santa Fe requires all residences to have retrofitted their fixtures by 1 January 2005.
- Both counties address rain water harvesting, or roof collection. Santa Fe mandates it for all new construction, Bernalillo requires it, starting in January 2010, unless other measures are taken (so it is an option).
- Both counties prohibit water waste and fugitive water, the definitions of which (in each county) are mildly different.
- Both counties have developed a series of penalties for non-compliance, with escalating fines. Bernalillo Counties have the option of imposing criminal penalties.
- The Bernalillo ordinance makes reference to stages of drought, which will be covered in a future drought ordinance, yet to be drafted.

We believe conservation is an integral part of water management – for us, for local government, and for the state. Conservation is one of the three considerations mandated by state law when the Office of the State Engineer considers a water rights application. Folks in the east mountain area use less water per capita than do their neighbors in Albuquerque or Santa Fe – the life styles are different, and the community has a greater respect for water and awareness for the need, and the ways, to conserve water. "Conservation" is a complicated policy issue; the ordinances and the space available to us in this newsletter can not do it justice – but we hope this is somewhat helpful.