

# Entranosa Water News

March 31, 2010

**Conservation Ordinances.** Both Santa Fe and Bernalillo counties have ordinances dealing with water conservation. The ordinances differ, but they have the same focus – to provide guidelines for domestic conservation. If you live in Bernalillo County, enforcement of the ordinance starts on April 1<sup>st</sup>, and Santa Fe County starts May 1<sup>st</sup>. Copies of the ordinances may be found on the respective county web sites, and we have some hard copies in our office. To make that a little easier for you, we've created a summary of the two ordinances and you can find it on the reverse side of this newsletter. We hope it is helpful.

**Water Hardness.** We measured about 17 grains of hardness at the office this morning, which is an increase from February. We expect it to slowly rise during April to about 20 grains, and in late May it will top out at an average of 27 grains, with a system wide range of 22 to 33 grains. A 'grain' is equal to 17.1 milligrams per liter.

**Water Use.** The weather in March, with minor exceptions, was generally wet and cold and our demand was lower than last year. The average residential meter consumed about 4,825 gallons this past month. The average residential use in March of 2009 was 5,550 gallons and 4,650 gallons in 2008. We were able to identify a few households with leaks based on meter readings - if you've had a leak, please contact the office for details on our leak policy.

**Drought Monitor.** We continue to watch the drought monitor web sites. While there are several of them, the 'best' one is the US Drought Monitor, which can be viewed at <http://drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html>. This site shows our area as having just entered the 'normal' category and about a quarter of the State in a drought condition of one phase or another. The projection, through June, is also 'normal' for our area.

**Automatic Drafts.** We are capable of processing automatic drafts – it is safe, convenient, and free. As a participant, you can choose one of two dates for the draft to be made, and you'll receive a 'normal' statement showing how much will be drafted. The draft will appear on your monthly bank statement, and you can cancel future payments by contacting the office at least three business days prior to the scheduled withdrawal date. We offer drafts on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Contact our office to receive more information to get started.

**Stuff with the Counties.** For those interested in the effort by Bernalillo County to create a North 14 Sector Plan, the next meeting will be Thursday, April 8<sup>th</sup> at Vista Grande Community Center. In Santa Fe County, the Revised Sustainable Land Development process has been through a number of workshops to gather input. You can call Robert Griego to obtain current information on the status – 986-6215.

**Firewise.** ... is a multi-agency program involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, and others in the effort to protect people, property, and natural resources from the risk of wildland fire - before a fire starts. You may find some useful information and suggestions at [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org).

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

## County Ordinances on Water Conservation

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 demand. Municipalities and Counties have enacted ordinances that ‘condition’ the uses of water throughout the State, including the counties of Bernalillo (in 2007) and Santa Fe (in 2002). Both counties declare that ‘water waste’ is a bad thing – the issue is defining what that means.

Water is often described as our most precious resource – Aqua es Vida (Water is Life). Although it would be difficult, we can live without the modern conveniences (phone, electricity) – but we can’t live without water, and fresh water is less plentiful in our area than we’d like. A quick overview of the two county ordinances:

- 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 and are focused on 10% of the use..
- 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 runs from 1 April to 31 October – the prohibition in Santa Fe goes from May 1<sup>st</sup> thru September 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Both counties require new construction to employ low-water-use fixtures. (federal law required this a long time ago). Santa Fe required 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 – but if water, other than precipitated water, is running off of your property – it is considered ‘fugitive’.
- Both counties have developed a series of penalties for non-compliance, with escalating fines. Bernalillo County has 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. Folks in the east mountain area use less water per capita than their neighbors in Albuquerque because the life styles are different, and the community has a greater respect for water, as well as 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 cannot do it justice – but we hope this is somewhat helpful. Aqua es Vida. Should you have questions – we’ll be pleased to help where we can and attempt to answer them.