

Imploring the importance of water conservation



To the community,

The Department of Water Resources reminds the public that May is “Water Awareness Month,” a time to appreciate and carefully use the water resources essential to California’s special quality of life.

“Water is vital to California’s people, animals, ecosystems and economy,” noted DWR Director Mark Cowin. “As warm weather and vacation season arrive, the need is greater than ever to use water wisely and practice water conservation.”

DWR, in partnership with the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA), will continue to run the “Save Our Water” program. The program, which was created by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s 2009 drought declaration, aims to educate Californians about easy ways to conserve water indoors and outdoors. Visit the website at www.saveourh2o.org.

Sierra snowpack and winter rainfall increased in much of California in early 2010. As April ended, Sierra snowpack water content statewide topped 130 percent of average for that time of year. But the state still is recovering from three consecutive dry years. Some major reservoirs are lagging below average.

Lake Oroville in Butte County, the key Northern California storage reservoir for the State Water Project (SWP), stands at just 56 percent of average.

Reflecting these conditions, SWP deliveries for 2010 currently

are estimated at 30 percent of the amount requested by the SWP contractors.

If wet weather patterns continue, a slight adjustment to 35 or 40 percent in the final SWP allocation for 2010 could occur.

Water Awareness Month originated during California's 1987-1992 drought to help educate consumers on using water resources efficiently.

During the recent three dry years, many regions activated drought restrictions and intensified their water conservation efforts. As of April 2010, 67 local water agencies in California mandated water conservation while 56 other agencies urged voluntary conservation practices.

In May, DWR will publish its 2009 Update to the California Water Plan, the most comprehensive report available on water issues, including supply and demand, conservation, global warming impacts and water resource

management. Persons interested in reading the report can access it online at www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/cwpu2009.

During May 4-7, DWR officials will participate in ACWA's annual Spring Conference. The association represents about 450 public water agencies that deliver more than 90 percent of California's water supply.

DWR staff will engage in several special Water Awareness Month events at several locations around the state.

California Department of Water Resources