

# Pain of California's drought spreading

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

OUTINGDALE – In the small community of Outingdale in rugged El Dorado County, neighbors Mary Callahan and Steve White confess they used to leave the water running while brushing their teeth. No more.

Now, in addition to turning that tap off, they have stopped filling outdoor birdbaths and cut back on landscape watering. They bathe less and take “Navy showers” when they do, collecting the outflow in buckets and jugs as they wait for the water to heat up. They tell their visitors to live by these rules as well.

Outingdale is one of the first communities in Northern California to know what the worst drought since 1977 really feels like. Residents have been told by the El Dorado Irrigation District, their water provider, to consume no more than 68 gallons of water per person per day. That's about one-third of the state average. Their use is being monitored by water meters at each home.

Millions more Californians could find themselves in a similar situation as the drought continues into the sweltering months of summer.

“It's not a pleasant thing that's going on here,” said Callahan, who retired to Outingdale with husband, Dennis, about 15 years ago. They recently asked their daughter and three young grandsons to cancel their annual summer visit because there isn't enough water to go around. “It breaks my heart because I don't get to see them very much.”

Outingdale, founded in the 1920s, consists of about 150 small

homes on the flank of a forested canyon alongside the middle fork of the Cosumnes River. Residents enjoy more than a mile of riverfront access, including shaded beaches and deep, clear swimming holes that create a cool refuge amid the hot Sierra Nevada foothills.

That river is also their only source of tap water. Thanks to a state water right held by the El Dorado Irrigation District, the river is piped into two holding tanks, treated with chlorine, then delivered to homes and fire hydrants.

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