

Council Communication

August 4, 2015, Business Meeting

2015 Drought Update

FROM:

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SUMMARY

This is an informational update to the Council on the status of the 2015 drought response.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

Ashland residents continue to do a great job voluntarily keeping daily water use between 4.5 million gallons per day (mgd) to 5 mgd. Thanks to the recent heavy rains and the addition of Talent Irrigation District (TID) water, the reservoir was refilled as shown in the graph below. While this is good news, staff still expects a couple months of severe drought conditions in 2015. To that point, the current weather forecast is predicting higher than average temperatures throughout the summer.

Even with the recent rain refilling our reservoir and the water demand decreasing for a short period of time, staff had a difficult time keeping the reservoir full during the 100 degree weather in late June and early July (see drawdown curve below). During that time period, water demand was right at 5 mgd with a few days that exceeded 5 mgd, TID water use on the front side was higher than normal and staff was only able to pump about .8 mgd from the TID source with the back side still operating. At one point, it took a combination of Ashland Creek flows, TID (.8 mgd with back side still on) and TAP flows (2 mgd) to maintain reservoir levels at 94%.

Consistent with last year's drought response and subsequently adopted policy by the Council on June 21, 2015, staff will continue to keep the reservoir full as possible by the following actions:

- Adding TID water when Ashland Creek water does not meet daily water demand
- Shutting down the back side of the TID ditch when more than 1 mgd of TID water is needed
- Adding TAP water when both Ashland Creek and the TID water source cannot meet our water supply demand.

On June 25, 2015, staff hosted a neighborhood meeting with the back side TID water users to inform them of the pending shut down of the ditch. The backside ditch was shut down on July 8, 2015, and staff began pumping 2 mgd of TID water. In addition to this action, staff is in the process of preparing a letter to the front side TID users requesting a 25% reduction in their TID water use. This letter will also contain a notice that the City may have to completely shut down the front side if other water supply sources fail to meet the City's drinking water needs in the future.

As a reminder, the TAP system will be turned on from August 15 through September 15 to conduct the annual system test. At that time, staff will determine if there is sufficient water supply to turn the back

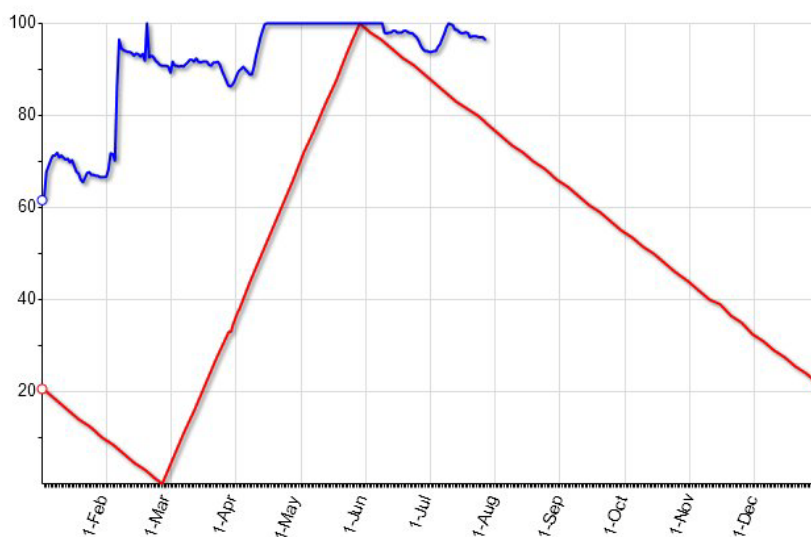


side users back on. Therefore, staff plans on turning the back side back on and off as water supplies warrant.

2015 Reservoir Data

The reservoir graphs (below) provide a daily look at Ashland's water supply over the last couple of years. The **red line** represents the theoretical reservoir use rate necessary to adequately meet Ashland's water supply needs. The **blue line** represents the current reservoir level. If at any point the demand on Reeder Reservoir drops below the theoretical drawdown curve as shown in the chart below, staff is prepared to implement the water curtailment strategies.

2015 drawdown curve



In conjunction with water supply strategies, the water conservation team offers water customers the following programs:

- Processed 140 lawn replacement rebate application forms. This program offers rebates to replace maintained and irrigated lawns with climate appropriate low water use landscapes and efficient irrigation systems.
- Conducted 50 free irrigation system evaluations. The program also offers free soil moisture meters. This is an important program as this detailed evaluation of individual systems will uncover ongoing water waste (bad sprinkler heads, leaking faucets or toilets etc).
- Water Wise Landscaping website, www.ashland saves water.org which helps people design landscapes with plants that use less water.
- Free hardware is available for residences and businesses to reduce water consumption indoors, including low flow faucets aerators, shower heads and spray rinse valves for commercial dishwashing.
- Rebates are available for installing high efficiency WaterSense labeled toilets and Energy Star labeled dishwashers and washing machines.
- Responded to 300 plus customer phone and email requests.
- Completed the Drought Survival brochure
- Completed the Tree Care Guide brochure.



In addition, staff has completed or will complete the following action items.

- Add a 'Drought 2015' section to the City's website - <http://www.ashland.or.us/SectionIndex.asp?SectionID=525>;
- Placed blue lawn signs that say "Use water wisely" in the public right-of-way throughout town;
- Provide the Chamber of Commerce with bathroom door hangers, bed cards and tent cards to distribute to Ashland hotels and restaurants; and
- Julie Smitherman, conservation specialist, and Mike Faught, public works director, have been providing public presentations on what the community can do to conserve at local civic clubs, JPR and are scheduled to participate in the Mayor's town hall show on July 29, 2015.

COUNCIL GOALS SUPPORTED:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND REQUESTED ACTION:

N/A

SUGGESTED MOTION:

N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

N/A

