FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:
STANFORD'S RESPONSE TO THE DROUGHT

1. What are the new state water regulations?

Answer: The new regulations require institutional users like Stanford to either reduce potable water use 25% below 2013 levels OR go to two-days-per-week irrigation of ornamental landscapes that use potable water, the latter of which Stanford will employ for 2015.

2. How will the two-days-per-week water restrictions be enforced?

Answer: Santa Clara County will enforce the water use restrictions in their ordinance; however, the two-days-per-week irrigation restriction is self-enforced by each institution. Stanford expects full cooperation by its water users, and will rely on water use monitoring and casual observation by the entire community to ensure compliance.

3. What if we want to water on different days?

Answer: Two-days-per-week irrigation on a schedule that stipulates certain watering days is the conventional approach being implemented by most water agencies to facilitate monitoring and compliance assurance. Water users that have extenuating circumstances that necessitate irrigating on different days should send an email to Julia Nussbaum, Water Resources and Civil Infrastructure, at juliann@stanford.edu notifying of their intent to switch days and briefly describing the reasons for the change.

4. What is non-potable irrigation water and why are we being asked to reduce consumption by 25% if the state doesn't require it?

Answer: Non-potable water is simply water that is not of drinking water quality. Stanford holds long-standing water rights that allow us to divert water from creeks to supply our non-potable irrigation water. However, non-potable irrigation water supply has relied much more on groundwater pumping the last few years because of the lack of rainfall and low flow in creeks resulting from the drought. Groundwater can be considered like a 'bank' for water supply during droughts; thus, pumping groundwater should be done judiciously in order to preserve an adequate groundwater supply for future years if the drought continues, and for future decades when droughts will reoccur.

5. Won't Stanford achieve enough potable water savings through the SESI project?

Answer: The new SESI energy plant is expected to use considerably less water than the prior energy facility, which will reduce total campus potable water use by 15%. Additional potable water savings such as those implemented in 2014 will reduce potable water use by another 5%; however, that still leaves us about 5% short of the 25% required. Therefore, in order to ensure compliance we have to go to two-day per week irrigation. Most if not all ornamental landscaping can survive (though perhaps not thrive) with this reduced watering schedule. Through ongoing outreach and irrigation improvements, Stanford will continue to work to achieve greater reductions.

Potable Water Use Reduction Efforts

Project/Customer	Expected Savings*	Implementation Begins
Central Energy Facility	15%	April 2015
Grounds: Irrigation Retrofit	35%	June 2015
Faculty Staff Housing	17%	June 2015
Residential and Dining Enterprises: Irrigation Retrofit	46%	July 2015

Non-Potable Irrigation Water Use Reduction Efforts

Project/Customer	Expected Savings*	Implementation Begins
Golf Course	25%	June 2015
Athletics	25%	June 2015
Grounds	30%	June 2015
Faculty and Staff Housing	50%	June 2015
Residential and Dining Enterprises: Irrigation Retrofit	46%	July 2015

**Expected savings calculations based on 2013 usage data*

6. Why doesn't Stanford just rip out the lawns?

Answer: In actuality, lawn accounts for very little of Stanford's non-paved ornamental landscape on the main campus, with native or drought resistant plants totaling more than 75% of landscaping. Lawns are multi-functional landscapes, providing places for the community to gather and enjoy, while also cooling the air and stabilizing soil conditions.

7. What else can I do?

Answer: Stanford's Water Efficiency team has a number of resources available to help aid in water conservation. Through partnerships with the Santa Clara Valley Water District and others, the Water Efficiency team offers rebate programs, home visits to audit and recommend savings initiatives, and a plethora of water calculators, fact sheets and savings information. Visit http://lbre.stanford.edu/sem/Water_Efficiency for additional information.

CONTACTS

Environmental Quality and Water Efficiency

Tom Zigterman, Director, Water Resources & Civil Infrastructure, twz@stanford.edu

Sustainability Programs

Fahmida Ahmed, Director, Office of Sustainability, Sustainability and Energy Management, fahmida@stanford.edu

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