



## **STAGE 3 WATER EMERGENCY**

Talking Points: October 1, 2015

### **The Problem & Its Cause:**

Four years of drought and continued dry weather have resulted in a severe decline in the City of Fort Bragg's water supply. The Noyo River is now so strongly influenced by high tides that it cannot reliably supply much water. The Noyo typically provides about 40% of the City's water at this time of year.

### **The Numbers:**

The City must now rely on its two remaining water sources: Newman Gulch and Waterfall Gulch, both of which are also at record low levels. These two sources are producing a total of about 240 gallons per minute (gpm) or 350,000 gallons per day (gpd). Current city-wide water needs are about 600,000 gpd. Thus, there is an immediate shortfall of about 250,000 gpd.

### **Water Emergency:**

The City's water system normally maintains a 10% margin of safety between its raw water supply and daily water demand. The flow supplying the water system has dropped well below this margin. It is essential that drastic water conservation efforts be implemented. On September 30<sup>th</sup>, the Fort Bragg City Council declared a Stage 3 Water Emergency in accordance with the Chapter 14.06 of the Fort Bragg Municipal Code.

A Stage 3 Water Emergency establishes mandatory conservation measures and is intended to reduce water use by at least 30% as compared to the same month of the previous year. City water customers have already voluntarily reduced water use this summer, making this a challenging goal.

The following uses of water are prohibited during a Stage 3 Water Emergency:

1. Defective or leaking equipment using City water must be repaired or turned off. Leaking pipes must be repaired. The City's Water Department will be closely monitoring water services for leaks and will notify customers when a leak has been detected and needs to be fixed.
2. Irrigation or watering of landscaping with City water is prohibited.
3. Washing/cleaning of any paved surfaces and building exteriors is prohibited.
4. Washing of vehicles without a shut-off nozzle is prohibited.
5. Restaurants may only serve water upon request. The use of disposable plates, cups and flatware is required.
6. Lodging establishments must encourage guests to conserve water and encourage reuse of linens and towels.
7. All commercial water customers are encouraged to be innovative in finding water reductions that best fit their operations.

**Water Conservation & Supplemental Sources:**

The City is reaching out to its largest water users to help them identify ways to significantly reduce their water usage. We are also launching a public outreach and education campaign.

A combination of measures is needed, including conservation and identifying short-term supplemental water sources. The City is looking at a variety of options.

**Weather Forecast:**

The weather forecast is not very encouraging. In the short term, no storms are expected. The extended forecast is unclear. The City is planning ahead with consideration that the Stage 3 Water Emergency may continue through the end of October and possibly into November.

**Operational Matters:**

The City's Water Treatment operators have found it necessary to use source water that is ordinarily avoided at this time of year due to dissolved solids and brackish taste. While this water is fully compliant with all health standards and is safe to drink- taste, odor, and appearance may be affected. Unfortunately, until there is a significant rain event, these 'taste and odor' issues are likely to remain. For people with medical conditions that require managing salt intake, they may wish to use bottled water for drinking and cooking during this water emergency.

**Regulatory Issues:**

The City is in contact with the agencies that regulate the City's water system to advise them and keep them updated as to our water supply shortage. We are also asking their assistance on ways to help us through this challenging situation.