

Water Use Management Code Revisions

WWIP Seminar
February 23, 2012

“We know you’re in there....the grass is still wet!”

The Building of a Code

- In 1997, the Texas Legislature directed TCEQ to adopt common drought plan requirements for water suppliers.
- TCEQ required all wholesale public water suppliers and retail public water suppliers serving 3,300 connections submit drought contingency plans.
- LCRA manages the water rights of the Lower Colorado River.
- Includes Austin's water source Lakes Buchanan and Travis (Highland Lakes)

The Building of a Code

- LCRA developed a Water Management Plan containing drought response measures that apply to all customers, including Austin Water.
- Drought response measures are tied to the storage levels in the lakes and include:
 - water use reduction goals
 - A requirement for all partakers to adopt a DCP
 - Adopted DCP must contain measures that align with LCRA's reduction goals and storage level drought triggers
- Austin Water develops specific actions to support LCRA's reductions goals...and the Water Conservation Code is born

Currently Chapter 6-4...



- Authorizes City Manager to determine when to enact each drought stage
- Defines 5 stages of water use regulations: (Drought Response Measures)
 - Year-round Water Use Regulations/Waste Prohibition
 - Stage 1 – (1.4 MAF) reduction goal - 5%
 - Stage 2 – (900,000 AF) reduction goal - 15%
 - Stage 3 – (681,000 or 600,000 AF) reduction goal - 20%
 - Emergency Shortage
- Contains a set of allowable variances from the watering regulations
- Provides authority to enforce drought response measures through Municipal Court

Texas is in Severe Drought

- Dry conditions projected to persist through at least spring with continuation of La Nina
- Expecting normal (little) rainfall in summer
- Record low inflows to Highland Lakes
- Austin's Stage 2 restrictions in effect since September 6
- LCRA has begun steps to implement pro-rata curtailment if storage reaches 600,000 AF

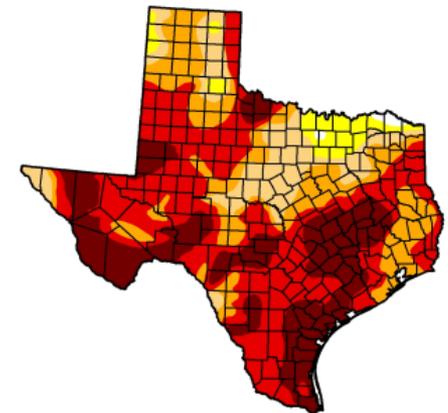
U.S. Drought Monitor Texas

January 24, 2012

Valid 7 a.m. EST

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	0.52	99.48	95.08	82.60	62.47	25.27
Last Week (01/17/2012 map)	0.52	99.48	95.08	82.60	62.47	25.27
3 Months Ago (10/25/2011 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	98.34	90.87	69.61
Start of Calendar Year (12/27/2011 map)	0.01	99.99	97.83	84.81	67.32	32.36
Start of Water Year (09/27/2011 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	99.16	96.65	85.75
One Year Ago (01/18/2011 map)	23.28	76.72	51.41	25.62	7.30	0.00

Intensity:



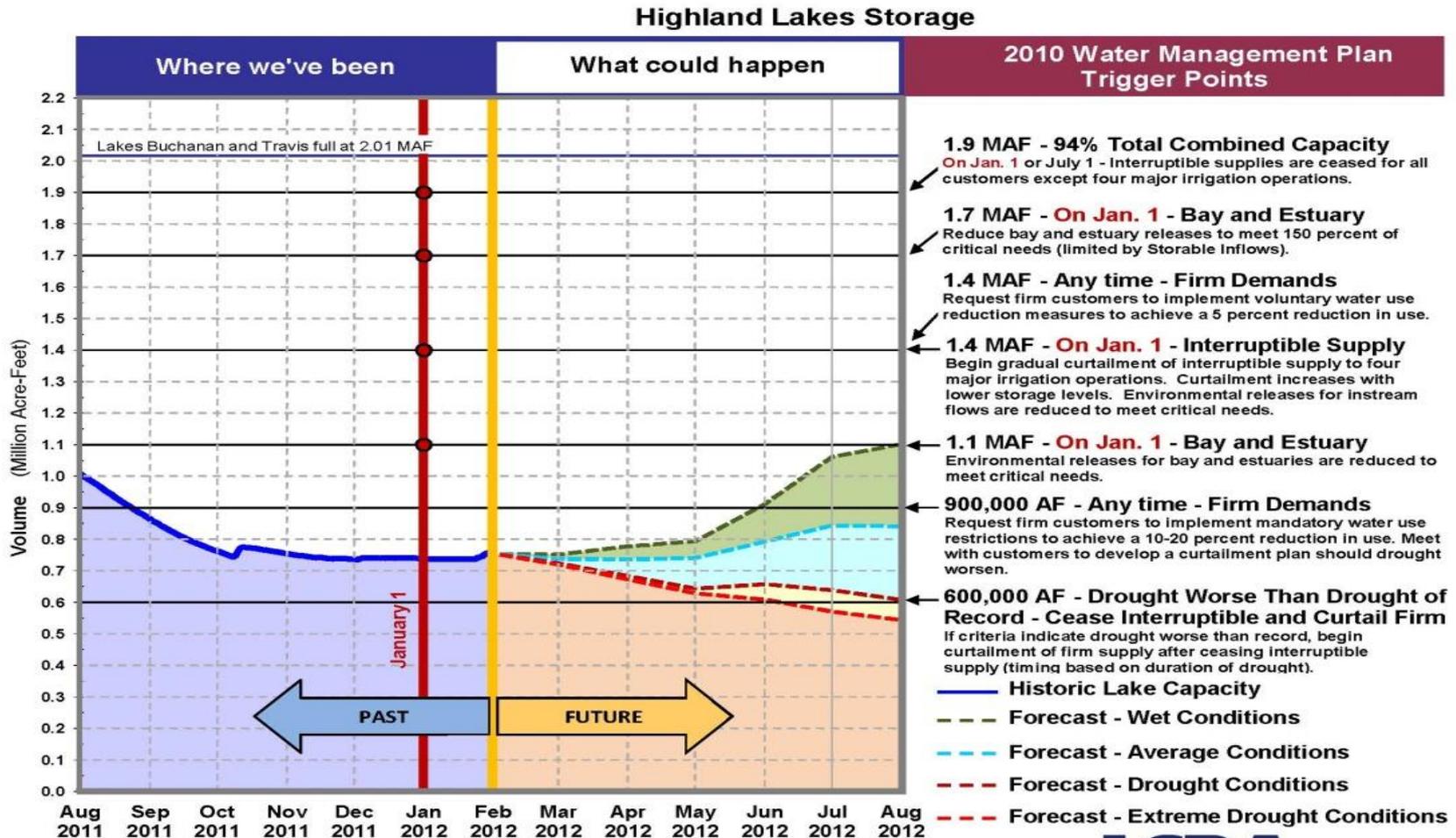
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>



Released Thursday, January 26, 2012
Eric Luebehusen, USDA

Current Combined Lake Storage Projections



Note: MAF equals One Million Acre-Feet
One Acre-Foot (AF) equals 325,851 gallons.

Date: February 1, 2012

Need for Code Revisions

- Concerns about the effects of Stage 3 Water Use Regulations
- Stage 3 Regulations:
 - No outdoor irrigation (except hand-held, one day/week, limited time)
 - No tree watering
 - No car washing
 - No swimming pool filling
 - No sidewalk washing
 - No variances

Need for Code Revisions

- Considering the impacts on both commercial and residential investments, economic and environmental, AWU realized current Stage 3 regulations were not written for long-term, severe drought.
- Needed to implement mandatory irrigation evaluations as recommended by Council
- Needed to switch to administrative enforcement of water use regulations

Engaging in the Process...

- Set timeline for new code adoption prior to projected implementation of Stage 3 in the 2012 summer
- Solicited stakeholder input from public meetings December 13, January 19, February 22 and March (TBD).
- Brief the City Manager's Office
- Brief City Legal Department
- Obtain citizen advisory commission input
- Council action as early as May

What We've Heard...

Support for...

- Stronger restrictions in normal /early drought
- Enabling efficient irrigation of trees and vegetable gardens
- Protecting business interests in drought conditions
 - Requiring year round certification of efficient car washing equipment
 - Requiring irrigation audits for certain commercial properties
 - Allowing cosmetic power washing to operate longer
- Enforcement of water use regulations through water bill fines

Where We're Headed...

- General Regulations always in effect
 - Water waste prohibited, commercial irrigation audits & car wash certification required
- 5 Conservation Stages (one always in effect based on storage/demand)
 - Conservation Stage (Above 1.4 MAF)
 - Two days per week outdoor irrigation for residential customers (30 hours/week max)
 - Drought Stage 1 (Trigger of 1.4 MAF)
 - Two days per week outdoor irrigation (20 hours/week max)
 - Home car washing on designated outdoor water use day
 - Drought Stage 2 (Trigger of 900K ac ft)
 - One day per week outdoor irrigation (10 hours/week max)
 - Home and Charity car washing prohibited
 - Drought Stage 3 (Trigger of 600K ac ft)
 - One day per week outdoor irrigation (6 hours/ week max)
 - Drought Stage 4 – Catastrophic
 - Outdoor water use for health and safety reasons only
- Enforcement
 - Decriminalized and removed from the Municipal Court and moved to fines on water bills
 - Customer/AWU retains option to pursue in court

Exemptions for drip irrigation, gardening and tree watering through Stage 3

Proposing a New 1 Day/ Week Schedule

(Modified to minimize system impacts and control peak day)

Applied during Sages 2 and 3:

- Sunday Residential Hose-End Sprinkler Systems – Even numbered addresses
- Monday Public schools and UT
- Tuesday MultiFamily/Comm - Odd numbered addresses
- Wednesday Residential Automatic Sprinkler System - Odd numbered addresses
- Thursday Residential Automatic Sprinkler System – Even numbered addresses
- Friday MultiFamily/Comm - Even numbered addresses
- Saturday Residential Hose-End Sprinkler Systems - Odd numbered addresses

Still proposing....

- Irrigation variances to the watering schedule
- New landscape irrigation variances
- Variances for foundation watering
- Variances related to health and safety

	Conservation	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Storage:	Above 1.4 MAF	<= 1.4 MAF	900,000 AF	600,000 AF	Emergency
Irrigation	2x/wk (30 hrs total) No midday watering (except by hand)	2x/wk (20 hrs total) No midday watering (except by hand)	1x/wk (10 hrs total) No midday watering (except by hand)	1x/wk (6 hrs) No midday watering May require wholesale curtailment	May further restrict outdoor irrigation
Exemptions	Drip irrig , tree watering & veg garden irrig with drip, bubble, soaker exempt				
Restaurants	Water on request				
	Commercial patio misters 4p-midnight			Comm patio misters 4-8pm	Comm patio misters prohibited
Car Washing	Comm washes must meet efficiency standards	Home car wash on designated day	Home & charity car washes prohibited		All car washing prohibited
Recreational Water Use	Fountains must recirculate			Orn. fountains, splash pads & spas prohibited	No filling of pools or ponds; no outdoor recreational use
Pressure Washing	Commercial pressure washing must recycle			Comm. & private power washers must recycle	All cosmetic power washing prohibited
Commercial Plant Nursery	Must use drip irrig or hand watering				

Next Steps

- Continue to seek public input:
 - SpeakUpAustin.org and Waterwiseaustin.org
 - Public Workshops continued into March
- Draft Code Language/ Legal Review - March and April
- Boards & Commissions – April/May*
- City Council – May 24
- Continue to monitor drought, work with LCRA

*RMC 4/17, Housing 4/19, WWW 5/9

Questions/ Comments?

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SpeakUpAustin.org
Waterwiseaustin.org

