

OC Coastal Coalition Meeting July Newsletter

As the Chair of Orange County's Coastal Coalition, my mission is to provide an opportunity to learn about current topics affecting our coastal county and related water issues. In keeping with this purpose, on July 24, 2014, the OC Coastal Coalition hosted a meeting at the Newport Beach Library, which focused on California's current drought. The meeting featured an update on current legislation and three presentations related to the drought.

First, Mr. Steve Aceti, Executive Director of California Coastal Coalition provided a legislation update on various bills including: SB 270 (Padilla), AB 2516 (Gordon), SB 861 (Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee), SB 1168 (Pavley), and AB 2100 (Campos). The following updates were presented:

- **SB 270 (Padilla)** - would prohibit stores from providing single use plastic bags to customers and allow the sale of recycled paper or reusable bags for no less than ten cents. Allows cities and counties or other public agencies that have adopted an ordinance relating to reusable grocery bags, single-use plastic carryout bags, or recycled paper bags, to continue to enforce the ordinance if it was adopted before September 1, 2014. Any amendments to the ordinances after January 1, 2015 are pre-empted by the provisions of the bill except if the amendment only increases the amount the store charges for a reusable bag to no less than 10 cents. Violators would be assessed a civil fine for non-compliance. Stores affected by the bill would retain the money collected from the sale of paper or reusable bags. (Assembly Appropriations – No hearing date set).
- **AB 2516 (Gordon)** - would require the Natural Resources Agency, in collaboration with the Ocean Protection Council, to create, update biannually, and post on an Internet website a Planning for Sea Level Rise Database describing steps being taken throughout the state to prepare for, and adapt to, sea level rise. Many cities, counties, and regions have already begun to address the challenge of sea level rise. Numerous activities have been completed or are underway, including studies, modeling, mapping, cost-benefit analyses, and vulnerability assessments throughout the state to help understand and plan for sea level rise. The information that exists is not centrally located, but found piecemeal among many agencies and entities. According to the author, it would be beneficial for a variety of reasons to create a database and obtain an inventory of the work being done to address this critical issue (Senate Appropriations 8/4/14).
- **SB 861 (Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee)** - authorizes the Coastal Commission, by a majority vote of the commissioners at a duly noticed public hearing, to impose an administrative civil penalty upon a person who knowingly violates public access provisions of the Coastal Act. All funds collected by the Commission would be deposited in an existing account managed by the State Coastal Conservancy. The bill also establishes the Climate Resilience Account to provide additional funding to specifically address the risk and impacts of climate change, sea level rise, and associated extreme events and allows the Environmental License Plate Fund to be used for climate assessment. These provisions became law when the FY 2014/15 State Budget was passed and signed into law (Ch. 35).

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- **SB 1168 (Pavley)** - would empower local agencies to regulate groundwater and require that they develop groundwater management plans. California is the only western state that doesn't manage groundwater. (Assembly Appropriations – No hearing date set).
- **AB 2100 (Campos)** - would bar homeowners associations from fining property owners who stop watering their lawns during drought emergencies. The governor declared such an emergency last January and the State Water Resources Control Board last week authorized up to \$500 per day fine for over-watering (Signed into law 7/21/14, Ch. 164).

Then, Mr. Albert Napoli, the Principal Government Affairs Representative from Metropolitan Water District (MET) provided a regional perspective of the water supply conditions in California. The following summarizes Mr. Napoli's presentation:

- MET is a regional water wholesaler that serves 26 member agencies including 6 counties that amount to approximately 19 million residents in a 5,200 square mile service area
- MET's water supply is imported from the State Water Project (2.0 MAF), Los Angeles Aqueduct (.5 MAF) and Colorado River Aqueduct (1.25 MAF).
- Rainfall plus snow melt equals runoff (MAF).
- This year, the Colorado River's hydrologic conditions from the upper Colorado Basin were above normal with water exceeding normal levels and snowpack recorded above average with 112 percent recorded on April 1st.
- Lake Powell's runoff, which comes from Upper Colorado River Basin during its 14th year of drought, was at a normal level of 10.88 MAF.
- On the other hand, Northern Sierra overall was at below average precipitation for 2014. It had below average water content at about 1.1 inches, the driest January snowpack on record, making Northern California runoff for 2014 below average at 7.2 MAF while 18.26 MAF is considered normal. It is the fourth lowest runoff in over 100 years.
- Governor Jerry Brown declared the Drought in 2014 and asked to facilitate the management of water.
- In response, MET declared a regional water supply alert, doubled its budget to \$40 million to focus on conservation and is helping address water supply challenges state-wide.
- Currently, the demand for water exceeds the available supply. In order to keep the Colorado River Aqueduct full, it is necessary to have basic apportionment, conservation programs, land fallowing, and storage programs.
- An improvement to the State Water Project can increase supplies while conservation would reduce storage depletion.
- MET offers various rebate programs, incentives for landscape, agricultural, and commercial business, irrigation surveys, and classes. To learn more, please visit www.bewaterwise.com

Subsequently, Mr. Joe Berg, Water Use Efficiency Programs Manager from Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC), made a presentation related to the drought response from water districts. His presentation included the following:

After Governor Jerry Brown declared a drought and requested 20 percent reduction in water use, MET and MWDOC adopted a Stage 1 alert calling for a 20 percent reduction in water use.

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The retail agencies are enforcing water use restrictions (no car washing, no hosing of driveways, time of day for watering, etc.). Each retail water agency has specific restrictions, which can be accessed through their respective website.

The rebates and incentives currently offered by MWDOC include, but are not limited to the following:

- Smart Timer Rebate Program— provides rebate incentives to install automated self-adjusting weather based or soil moisture sensor based controllers for residential and commercial use.
- Rotating Nozzle Rebate Program – provides a rebate for replacing nozzles to spray heads.
- Turf Removal Rebate Program – provides rebate for removing turf and replacing it with California friendly plants and permeable surfaces.
- Rain Barrels Rebate – provides rebate for the purchase of 50 gallon rain barrels.
- Toilet and Clothes Washer Rebates – provides rebate for high efficiency toilets, ultra high efficiency toilets, and high efficiency clothes washer.
- For more information, visit www.mwdoc.com/rebates

MWDOC also offers landscape surveys and classes:

- Landscape Irrigation Survey – survey for commercial, industrial, institutional, and common area landscapes. A certified landscape irrigation auditor surveys and provides written recommendations for qualifying non-residential properties within MET's service area at no cost. For more information, please contact Deneice Cotton at 213-217-6616 or dcotton@mwdh2o.com
- Water Smart Landscape Program – a free program that establishes landscape irrigation budgets for dedicated landscape meters. The program provides customized monthly irrigation performance reports to property owners, property managers and landscape contractors.
- For more information, please contact Julio Sanchez at 949-215-2168

Finally, Mrs. Jenna Voss from OC Public Works/OC Environmental Resources provided an overview of the Overwatering Is Out campaign, the importance of multi-organization collaboration, the value of having a “spokesgnome” and methods for tracking and highlighting residential engagement.

In partnership with the MWDOC and the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), the Orange County Stormwater Program developed the Overwatering Is Out campaign focused on water use efficiency and reduction of runoff from irrigation. The Overwatering Is Out campaign relies on a synergistic multi-agency approach to assist meeting regulatory requirements by changing public perception of a water efficient landscape and encouraging residential retrofits to reduce runoff.

Utilizing community-based social marketing (CBSM) techniques, the Overwatering is Out campaign targets behaviors identified by experts in the fields of stormwater and water use efficiency that are the most likely for residents to adopt and that can have the biggest impact on runoff reduction. Progress with meeting goals is tracked with pre- and post-campaign phone

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surveys and interim metrics such as geospatial tracking of “sign-ups” and number of residents directly taking an action toward more sustainable water use.

CBSM techniques stress elimination of barriers to action and community involvement in the solution. Overwatering Is Out does both through the OC Garden Friendly program by spreading awareness of rebates on water efficient irrigation devices and teaming up with home improvement stores to provide California-friendly plants at a more enticing price. The OC Garden Friendly program, a branch of the Overwatering Is Out campaign, presents another example of multi-organizational collaboration, in tandem with a successful public-private partnership.

What do garden gnomes have to do with residential landscaping, urban runoff and water use efficiency you might ask? Gnorman the OC Stormwater spokesgnome, named by Orange County residents and an expert on what happens in residential yards is the voice of Overwatering Is Out. Gnorman, as the face of Overwatering Is Out, is a layer removed from the jurisdictional or agency representative, providing an affable proxy for residents to become acquainted with the program. Through this folksy approach, the Overwatering Is Out puts a face on a complicated topic and has been a successful draw for residents. For further information, please visit <http://www.overwateringisout.org/>