SWEETWATER SPRINGS WATER DISTRICT

TO: Board of Directors **AGENDA NO. V-B**

FROM: Steve Mack, General Manager

Meeting Date: June 4, 2009

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION/ACTION RE RESOLUTION 09-14, APPROVING THE SWEETWATER SPRINGS WATER DISTRICT WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Consider approval of Resolution 09-14 approving the District Water Conservation Program which has the objective of assisting District customers to decrease water use up to 25% through October 2, 2009 and achieve water savings on a permanent basis.

FISCAL IMPACT: A 25% reduction in water sales would have approximately a $200,000 annual reduction in District revenues. There would be additional, relatively small District expenses associated with the water conservation effort.

DISCUSSION:

At the May meeting the District Board directed the General Manager to participate in the regional effort to reduce water use in the Russian River Watershed in Sonoma County by 25%. This regional effort is in response to a Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) request for a temporary urgency change to the permits which govern the minimum flow levels in the Russian River so that the minimum flows could be at the Critical Water Supply Conditions levels. Subsequent to that request the State Board issued Board Order WR 2009-0027-DWR which approves the temporary urgency change in SCWA Permits for the Russian River and, among other directions, directs SCWA to "submit a plan to the State Water Resources Control Board to obtain the cooperation and participation of agricultural and municipal Russian River water users to reach a water conservation goal of 25 percent in Sonoma County" through October 2, 2009. There was a hearing on the State Board Order on May 6, 2009 which may have changes to the Board Order. At the time of the writing of this Agenda Report, staff has not seen a revised Board Order.

The Order also states that should inflow to Lake Mendocino not reach 25,000 af by July 1, 2009, minimum flows would be at the Critical Water Supply Conditions level. This means minimum flow target would be 35 cubic feet per second (cfs) downstream of the Dry Creek confluence with the Russian River. The reduction in

minimum flows, regardless whether Dry Water Supply Conditions minimum flows (85 cfs) or Critical Water Supply Conditions minimum flows, would not impact the ability of the District to produce water this summer.

The Board Order is not direct regarding the participation of the Sweetwater Springs Water District participation in the Russian River conservation effort, nor has the District received any direct communication from the State Board. The District is a Russian River water user and is clearly intended in the language quoted above to be a participant in the conservation effort. A reduction in the amount of 25% will be a big achievement and will require the participation of all water users in the watershed. The District should set an example for others in this effort. And we must remember that water that is not diverted is water that stays in the river.

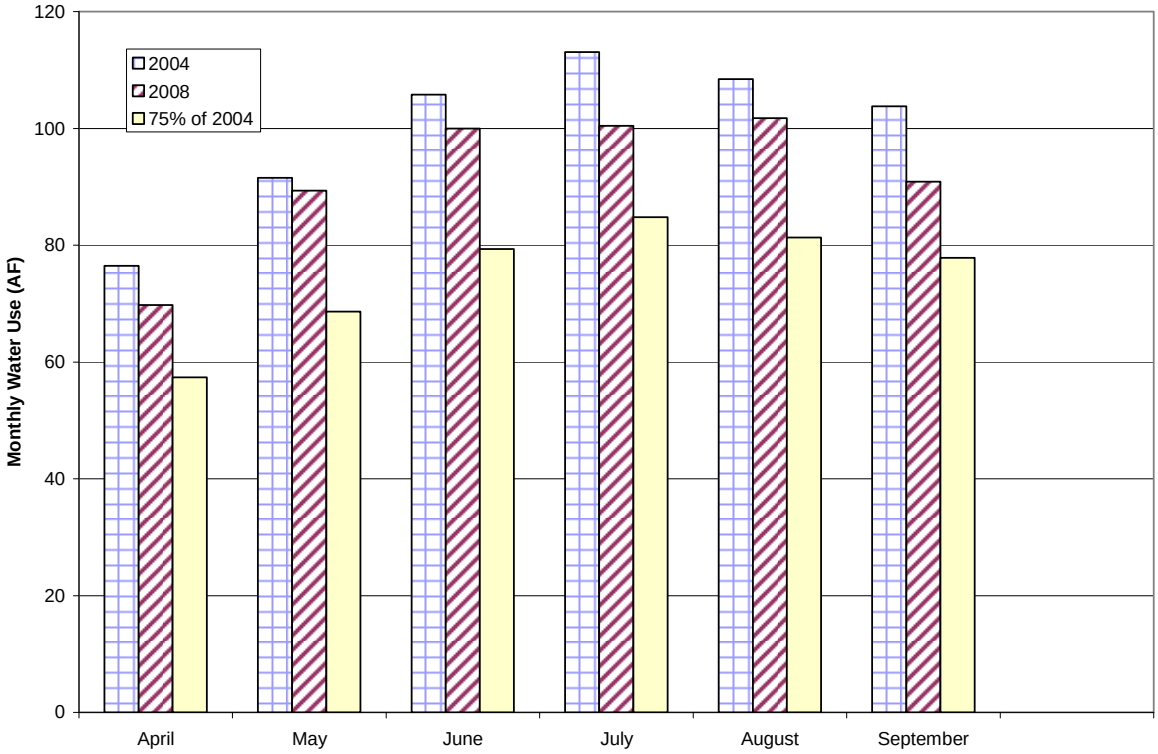
The District's 2005 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) has a chapter on water shortage contingency planning. Table 15, excerpted from the UWMP and shown below, shows that reductions in the 15%-25% call for voluntary conservation measures. Exhibit A to Resolution 09-14 contains the proposed elements of a District Water Conservation Program that are appropriate for this level of conservation. The Program is based on staff experience of working in the conservation field, of having participated in a drought conservation effort in the early 1990's at the City of Santa Barbara, and discussions with SCWA staff of what is available for regional programs. Because of the hurried nature of this conservation effort and the current lack of an overall regional coordination of regional water conservation, the Program must be considered subject to change. As we find better ways to achieve results, we will implement those better ways.

Table 15
Water Rationing Stages and Reduction Goals

Shortage Condition	Stage	Customer Reduction Goal	Type of Rationing Program
15 – 25%	I	25%	Voluntary
26 – 35%	II	35%	Mandatory
36 – 50%	III	50% or >	Mandatory

What does a 25% reduction in production look like? The base year for comparison is 2004. Figure 1 compares production for 2004 with 2008 production and a 25% reduction from 2004.

Figure 1. April through September Monthly Water Use
Sweetwater Springs Water District



The regional conservation effort is not being done perfectly, and much can be done to improve regional cooperation. However, the District needs to be a participant in the conservation effort. Exhibit A shows a reasonable plan that can be presented to District customers to get the effort moving.

The Critically Dry designation is new territory for all parties. District staff will stay involved in participating in and monitoring activities through this summer and fall period and will report to the Board, as appropriate.

Resolution 09-14

A RESOLUTION OF THE SWEETWATER SPRINGS WATER DISTRICT
Approving the Sweetwater Springs Water District Water Conservation Program

WHEREAS, the California State Water Resources Board issued Board Order WR 2009-0027-DWR (the "Order") on April 6, 2009, which approves a Temporary Urgency Change in Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) Permits to Russian River water users. The Order directs SCWA to "submit a plan to the State Water Resources Control Board to obtain the cooperation and participation of agricultural and municipal Russian River water users to reach a water conservation goal of 25 percent in Sonoma County" through October 2, 2009; and

WHEREAS, the reservoirs in the Russian River system and the flows in the River are low and projections indicate that conditions will deteriorate further later in the summer and fall of 2009; and

WHEREAS, it is in the District's and SCWA's interest that a cooperative effort be developed to address the water shortage situation in the Russian River system; and

WHEREAS, the District adopted the 2005 Urban Water Conservation Plan (the "Plan") by Resolution 08-01 on February 7, 2008, which includes a water shortage contingency element: and

WHEREAS, the Plan's voluntary and mandatory rationing stages may be triggered by a water supply shortage; and

WHEREAS, the Order issued by the California State Water Resources Board indicates a water supply shortage exists thereby triggering the need for enhanced water conservation practices by all users of the Russian River; and

WHEREAS, the Plan provides for voluntary water conservation practices when the conservation target is below 25%; and

WHEREAS, this level of voluntary conservation by District customers may be achieved by adjustment to their interior or exterior water use, but still requires concerted effort by District staff; and

WHEREAS, attached as Exhibit A is a list of the programs and activities that will be undertaken by the District to assist its customers in achieving water savings of up to 15% compared to 2008 water use under the voluntary conservation program. This level of conservation is equivalent to a 25% reduction based on District 2004 water usage; and

WHEREAS, the conservation activities recommended by the District Program are important in all seasons and all years, regardless of State Board Orders and seasonal shortages.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the Sweetwater Springs Water District approves the District's Water Conservation Program, as described in Exhibit A and directs staff to begin implementation the programs and activities listed therein.

This Resolution was adopted this June 4, 2009, on roll call by the following vote:

Wanda Smith : _____
Victoria Wikle : _____
Jim Quigley: _____
Sukey Wilder: _____
Gaylord Schaap: _____

_____
Victoria Wikle
President of the Board

ATTEST:

_____
Julie A. Kenny
Clerk of the Board

Exhibit A
Resolution 09-14
Sweetwater Springs Water District Water Conservation Program
June 4, 2009

Reduction Target for the District is up to 25% reduction based on the 2004 water use and production for the months of May through September. For the District, as a whole, this equates to a 15% reduction compared to 2008 water use and production during the same summer months. This is not a rationing target or goal for individuals – some customers have little room for additional water use reduction, others can do much more.

District participation is based on the State Board Order directing the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) to "submit a plan to the State Water Resources Control Board to obtain the cooperation and participation of agricultural and municipal Russian River water users to reach a water conservation goal of 25 percent in Sonoma County" from May 1, 2009 to October 2, 2009, in response to SCWA's Temporary Urgency Change request for Decision 1610. The base year for the 25% reduction calculation is 2004.

The approach/strategy is voluntary conservation whereby District customers are encouraged and offered resources to use water wisely, and to search for and fix leaks on their property. The District will continue with its capital projects aimed at reducing system losses, pay attention to water wasting in the District, fix surfacing leaks as quickly as possible, and look for other opportunities to reduce system losses.

Program Elements:

- Public Education/Information, such as
    - Work with SCWA and other water providers in the region for coordinated message
    - Information on website
    - Mailer in May
    - Home Water Audits – self and assisted:
        - Instructions on meter reading.
        - Check for leaks inside and outside.
        - Evaluate all water uses in facility or home.
    - Office Display with handouts – rebates, low flow showerheads, faucet aerators
    - Provide information on rebates, incentive programs, and water conservation strategies for residents/businesses.
    - Media Spots – press releases, PSA's done on a regional basis
    - Connect with Statewide effort
- Waste of Water Prohibited, staff will be alerted to be on the lookout for wastage of water and contact customers, as appropriate.
- Rate incentives – rates scheduled to go into effect July 3 have increased financial incentive to reduce water use (higher incline to tiered rates).
- Capital Improvement Program – CIP IV-A is replacing water distribution mains as part of program to reduce system losses. CIP IV-A, Project 2 is starting May 11 and should help reduce losses this summer. CIP IV-A, Project 1 should be completed in mid May and also will reduce system losses.
- District staff fix reported and found leaks on a priority basis.