

## TONTO HILLS DOMESTIC WATER IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

**MAILING ADDRESS**

11228 E. Hohokam Lane  
Cave Creek, AZ 85331

**PHONE:** (480) 595-0128 office

**EMAIL:** board@tontohillsdwid.org

**WEBSITE:** www.tontohillsdwid.org

**WATER EMERGENCIES**

(480) 745-1427

### Conservation Newsletter Fall 2016

Dear Members,

The Tonto Hills DWID has been providing updates concerning the ongoing severe drought conditions in the southwest and the impacts on Arizona's water supply. Our water, supplied by Central Arizona Project (CAP), comes from the Colorado River and Lake Mead. As you may know, when the water level of Lake Mead falls below the 1,075-foot elevation level at year's end, water made available to Arizona will automatically be reduced by 20% the following year. The water level in August was 1,074 feet and year's end level is predicted to be just at the 1,075-foot threshold. CAP has said it is unlikely that a reduction in water from the lake will be triggered in 2017.

Over the last 3 years, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and CAP have used all available resources to forestall automatic reductions. The uncertainty over if and when cuts might be implemented makes it difficult for water providers and water users to plan beyond a yearly basis. The lake level projections have motivated the states that use water from the Colorado River to initiate some reductions before the 1,075' level is reached.

Last month, CAP announced an agreement with other Colorado River user states to reduce their unallocated water flow out of Lake Mead. Arizona's reduction will be 192,000 acre-feet. This will eliminate the possibility of mandatory cuts for 2017 and hopefully 2018. This multi-state agreement will ensure the lake level remains above the "cut line" for the time being. However, the long-term outlook still forecasts an additional 320,000 acre-foot reduction in the future. The THDWID Board of Directors' goal is to keep you informed of the latest information pertaining to CAP decisions. The URL for the CAP presentation titled, "CAP Tribal, M&I and Agricultural Stakeholder Meetings" which details the multi-state agreement is:

[http://www.cap-az.com/documents/departments/planning/colorado-river-programs/CAP\\_Stakeholder\\_Workshops\\_July\\_25-26-2016.pdf](http://www.cap-az.com/documents/departments/planning/colorado-river-programs/CAP_Stakeholder_Workshops_July_25-26-2016.pdf)

It is a data rich and large presentation. Pages 23 and 24 give the best view of the reductions and how CAP hopes it will alleviate the pressure on Lake Mead.

Last Spring's newsletter focused on ways to minimize water usage and loss from pools. This quarter we are offering up suggestions on how to save on irrigation watering using smart irrigation tips.

**Reach Your Roots:**

Water to the depth of plant roots. Any water applied beyond the root zones is water wasted. A simple way to measure how deep the water has penetrated the soil after irrigation is a probe, such as a piece of rebar or a long handled screwdriver. Push the probe into the ground after irrigation. It will easily push through wet soil and stop as dry soil

is encountered. If the probe penetrates more than 18-24 inches, over watering probably is occurring.

There are more sophisticated options for determining soil moisture. There are commercial soil moisture sensors that measure the water content in planting areas. They range in price from \$50 to \$300. RainBird, Hunter, Ugmo, and Toro are suppliers of soil moisture sensors. RainBird and Hunter have sensors that connect by wire to a control, which in turn interfaces with the irrigation timer. If the sensor detects moisture, the control unit turns off the irrigation timer for that cycle. There are also wireless moisture sensors, which eliminate the need to trench and bury wires to the timer location. The probe senses the moisture content of the soil around plants. The sensor then sends a signal to the control unit, which determines the duration of the watering cycle and commands the system timer to start and stop.

**Watch Your Watering:** Leaks, missing drip emitters, or broken sprinkler heads can seriously affect the performance of an irrigation system. Besides allowing water to be wasted, these problems can result in plants not receiving sufficient moisture deeper in the root zone. Since most systems run early in the morning, or at other times when no one is around to look for leaks or other problems, it is a good idea to periodically turn the irrigation system on and observe for problems.

Past THDWID conservation newsletters have identified water conservation tips, described how to detect water leaks, and provided a list of leak detection companies. Log on to the Tonto Hills DWID web page at [www.tontohillsdwid.org](http://www.tontohillsdwid.org) and, under DWID tab, select the Documents icon, then Newsletters.

We are looking at other water conservation opportunities and will report on ideas that are applicable to our community and users' needs in future newsletters.