

OWASA to Impose Stage 2 Restrictions

By JAMIE DOUGHER
Assistant City Editor

The Orange Water and Sewer Authority announced that Stage 2 drought restrictions will go into effect Friday, limiting irrigation practices and hindering some area businesses.

The drought is the worst on record for Orange County.

"We are continuing to have a very severe drought," said Greg Feller, director of public affairs for OWASA. "We have had very limited rainfall over the last several months."

According to the OWASA Web site, weather forecasters predict that the drought will continue.

Feller said there is no way of telling how long Stage 2 restrictions will be in place, but he said a growing El Niño weather pattern that could mean more rain in the late fall and in the winter. "Typically in the late fall and winter there is more rain, but we can't assume we'll have the typical rainfall pattern this winter," he said. "Last winter we got some rain that only partially filled the reservoirs."

There are three reservoirs OWASA uses to judge water levels and determine what drought restrictions to implement - Cane Creek Reservoir, University Lake and Stone Quarry Reservoir. Cane Creek and University Lake are now estimated to be about 40 percent full.

"We estimate that the water in our lakes now would last 123 days," Feller said. The last time the lakes were full was June 2001.

With the onset of these new restrictions, homeowners can irrigate their lawns, gardens, trees or shrubs only one day a week unless they use a hand-held hose or a watering can. Odd-numbered houses are allowed to irrigate on Mondays, while even-numbered houses can water only on Thursdays.

Overall, no more than half an inch of water may be applied in one week, even when using hoses or watering cans.

No water can be used in decorative fountains, ponds or pools. Homeowners cannot fill their pool water except to the minimum level necessary for swimming.

One new restriction that will be put in place Friday is that no commercial car

wash can make use of OWASA water. Feller said one option for car washes is to use well water to remain open.

Feller said Grey Moody, owner of the AutoBath car wash on Airport Road, has been using well water for quite some time now, and Feller encouraged other car washes who have the means to do the same.

The water restrictions will be enforced by local governments and OWASA employees in the community, and in case of repeated violations the Chapel Hill or Carrboro police will intervene to impose a fine of no more than \$50 or an imprisonment of no more than 30 days. OWASA reserves the right to disconnect water service.

Feller said the restrictions will be in place as long as necessary to increase the county's water supply. "The main point is that we need to have a greater level of conservation because we estimate that when people reduce their water use, the supply will last longer."

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.

Heel Notes

Stage 2 water restrictions that will go into effect August 23:

- The use of sprinklers and irrigation systems is limited to one day per week.
- Customers with odd-numbered street addresses may irrigate only on Monday.
- Customers with even-numbered street addresses may irrigate only on Thursday.
- Irrigation and sprinkling systems may only use one-half inch or less, one day a week.
- Sprinklers and irrigation systems are limited to one-half inch or less per week and may only be operated either before sunrise or after sunset.
- OWASA water cannot be used to fill decorative fountains or swimming pools but may be used to replenish swimming pools to the extent necessary for operation.
- Washing vehicles, buildings, sidewalks, driveways and other impervious surfaces is prohibited.
- Restaurants are not supposed to serve OWASA water except upon request.

SOURCE: WWW.OWASA.ORG DTH/STAFF

Officials Ask Students To Limit Water Usage

Dining halls switch to disposable plates

By ROB LEICHER
Staff Writer

On-campus residents are being asked by the UNC Department of Energy Services to conserve water as a result of the worst recorded drought in Chapel Hill history.

Reservoir levels have fallen from 75 percent capacity April 1 to 40 percent Aug. 13 due to a lack of precipitation, according to the Orange Water and Sewer Authority.

OWASA is currently enforcing Stage 1 restrictions, with stricter Stage 2 restrictions slated to go into effect Friday.

Students moving into some residence halls have received information with suggestions on how they could use less water in the bathroom and in everyday life, but the matter has been ignored in other halls.

"I think everyone needs to realize that water is a valuable commodity," said Ray DuBose, UNC director of energy services. "The one thing we need to do is to bring attention to the seriousness of the situation."

Students are asked to limit their showers to five minutes or less and to turn off faucets while brushing their teeth and shaving. Statewide restrictions also have been placed on watering lawns and irrigation, and students are asked to call 962-3456 to report sprinklers running during the day.

Carolina Dining Services is also cutting back on water use by using disposable plates and silverware, DuBose said. This will enable Lenoir and Chase halls to save 100,000 gallons of water weekly by eliminating the need to use automatic dishwashers.

Signs in Lenoir say students cannot get water from the soda fountain in Mainstreet Lenoir, but soda and iced tea are still available.

Even though the University is techni-

cally exempt from the town's usage restrictions, it is still trying to do its part, DuBose said.

"The University is part of the community and has to preserve water to conserve resources," he said.

"We need to make use of every drop."

But many students said they had not heard anything about the drought or water conservation techniques. They said the University is not making the students feel like the drought is a major issue.

"I've seen fliers on tables and a note on our door, but they didn't seem too serious," said freshman John Coggin, a resident of Mangum Residence Hall.

Jennifer Good, a sophomore living in Cobb Residence Hall, said she was not aware that individual efforts by students in the residence halls would make a difference.

"The only thing I saw is the styrofoam plates in Lenoir because they don't want to wash the dishes," Good said. "They didn't promote it in the dorms though."

Ellen Jones, the resident director of Hinton James North Residence Hall, said her residents received a flier in their information packets about the water shortage and how to conserve water while checking in.

Jones used to live in Florida, and said she has lived with these types of water restrictions for years because of the constant threat of drought and wildfires.

"I think it is important that the residents adhere to the guidelines," she said.

"We have to do what we can."

Students have not complained about the situation, Jones said, and she believes it is because the guidelines cannot be enforced. She said the University cannot do much about students wasting water, but she hopes they will do their part voluntarily.

"We are not timing their showers or anything," she said. "We're going on good faith that they will adhere to this."

"The University is part of the community and has to preserve water to conserve resources."

RAY DUBOSE
UNC Director of Energy Services

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