

THE DROUGHT CONTINUES

Peoria has not received any significant rainfall over the past two months. This trend is disturbing and will likely continue as June is traditionally our driest month of the year with very low humidity. This puts additional pressure on our irrigation systems to provide needed water to our plants, trees and turf. Most water use is outside of the home for our pools, plants and trees and turf. More than likely, another cutback of water for Arizona is in the very near future.

In Tier 1, Arizona was hit the hardest with nearly one fifth of the state's water supply being cut off. Arizona lost 500,000-acre feet of water that was allocated to it, which equates to 162,925,500,000 gallons of water. Tier 2, if it's declared, will cut another 80,000 acre-feet of water from our base or 26,068,080,000 gallons. To put it in perspective, an acre-foot of water would generally supply three average Phoenix households with water for a year. According to Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR), 41% of the state's current water supply comes from groundwater, 36% from the Colorado River, 18% from in-state rivers, and 5% from reclaimed water.

Lake Powell and Lake Mead are at record low levels due to a two-decade long drought. A few weeks ago, the Bureau of Reclamation kept 500,000 acre-feet of water in Lake Powell to ensure that Glen Canyon Dam could stay functional and continue to produce hydro-electric power for our cities.

We will need to be diligent in our water management practices in order to get through this. Here are some tips to use water wisely in your landscapes:

- Irrigate turf in the early morning to avoid evaporation
- Eliminate or minimize non-functional turf areas
- Ensure matching nozzles in your turf zones
- Utilize pressure regulating heads where possible
- Utilize desert adapted plants and trees in your landscape
- Avoid shearing of plants as they require more water to recover
- Water trees and shrubs deeply and infrequently to encourage deeper root systems
- Repair leaks in a timely fashion
- Upgrade poly tubing to PVC pipe for longer life span
- Monitor water bills and look for unusual spikes in usage
- Reprogram irrigation controllers weekly based on weather

There is always a fine line between saving water and having a vibrant and healthy landscape. A lot depends on Mother Nature regarding rainfall and high or low temperatures daily. SDL, year to date, has saved \$12,462 and used 1,501,122 less gallons than in 2021 through May even though we have only received .62" of rainfall since January 1st. Rainfall in the last three years has steadily dropped through the first five months of the year:

2019 (4.89") 2020 (3.97") 2021 (1.54") 2022 (0.62")

Awareness of the challenges around saving water will enable better decisions to be made for our future.