

**Independent, locally owned and operated!**

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published September 23rd, 2015

## Orindans Doing Well on Water Conservation

*By Victor Ryerson*

East Bay Municipal Utility District board member Marguerite Young reported on the state of Orinda's water consumption at the Sept. 1 City Council meeting. The news was good for some, but there is room for improvement for others.

Five percent of Orinda households are excessive water users, meaning that they use more than 1,000 gallons per day. This is four times the median use during a non-drought year. These households are likely to be hit with an excessive use penalty, which can be costly, Young said. California is in the fourth year of a historic drought. For EBMUD, which serves Orinda, conservation efforts are of particular importance, because it gets about one half of its water supply from the Sierra Nevada snowpack - and this year, there is none. An additional 10 percent comes from our three local reservoirs. "Our water is our water," Young declared, meaning that EBMUD does not obtain its supply from a major river or water system. In current parlance, it is locally sourced. EBMUD's goal for inside use under the present situation is 35 gallons per person per day, a 20 percent reduction compared to the 2013 level. Most homeowners are well aware of the commonsense actions to get there, and Orindans have generally been doing a good job employing those measures.

The familiar litany of ways to conserve outside use includes watering no more than twice a week, and not within two days of measurable precipitation such as that which occurred here recently; washing your car with a hose equipped with an automatic shutoff valve (or at a carwash that recycles water, or not at all); sweeping or air-blowing hardscapes; and refraining from watering during the period of high evaporation, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Most Orinda homeowners seem to accept that brown is the new green and are cutting back. Through May, according to Young, Orinda's consumption was down 22 percent compared to 2013, an impressive figure considering that there has been a 1.4 percent increase in the number of Orinda households over the same period.

What lies ahead with Orinda's water situation? "I don't know exactly," admits Young. While we hear much about El Nino conditions coming to the rescue next year, previous experience suggests that Southern California usually receives the majority of the benefit. And if the white stuff does not fall on our northern Sierra peaks, 2016 could be a very tough year indeed.

Reach the reporter at: [victor@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:victor@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA