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## **EBMUD gives water conservation tips for current drought conditions**

*By Vera Kochan*

The Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church sponsored an informative water conservation Zoom meeting on Sept. 9, featuring representatives from the East Bay Municipal Utility District. Ben Glickstein, a community affairs representative, who focuses on recycled water projects and Anya Kamenskaya, whose specialty is water conservation, gave an easy to follow presentation concerning the current state of affairs regarding California's second year of drought.

EBMUD's water comes from the Mokelumne River Watershed in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. This in turn flows to the Pardee Reservoir before traveling to the EBMUD Mokelumne Aqueducts. A second source of water is the Freeport Regional Water Facility.

This is the second driest year on record in the Mokelumne watershed, and the driest year on record in the East Bay. At this point in time, customers are at a "voluntary" conservation level. EBMUD is asking for at least a 10% reduction in water usage per household. By the same token, they are purchasing supplemental water from the Central Valley Project in preparation for a possible repeated drought next year, and are looking into the concept of groundwater banking (a water management mechanism using dewatered aquifer space to store water during the years when there is abundant rainfall).

A common myth is that more dams and reservoirs can be built, but EBMUD states that most rivers already have dams and the expense of building new ones would be costly. Another myth is using desalination technology to utilize sea water for in-home use. Once again, the cost is prohibitive, not to mention the amount of energy required to complete the process and disposal of the brine after treatment.

The process of recycling wastewater by cleaning and retreating it to make it safe for use has already begun. While not quite safe to use for drinking, it could be used for other projects. Southern California has already begun making potable water out of wastewater. EBMUD plans to follow suit in the future.

Some easy conservation tips for homeowners include: irrigate efficiently by using sprinklers that help target water better; don't water turf more than three times per week; water at dusk or dawn; use self-adjusting irrigation controllers; while mulch is good for retaining soil moisture, it is frowned upon in high-fire risk zones due to its flammability; find and fix leaks both in and outside the home; be mindful of indoor use (take shorter showers and use a bucket to catch cold water while waiting for the water to warm up).

EBMUD offers many cash rebates. The Lawn Conversion and Irrigation Upgrade Rebate Program can give residential customers up to \$2,000 back, and up to \$15,000 for commercial customers or multi-family (5 or more units).

For questions regarding water conservation or additional rebate offers contact: [ben.glickstein@ebmud.com](mailto:ben.glickstein@ebmud.com) or [akamensk@ebmud.com](mailto:akamensk@ebmud.com).

For more water conservation tips, visit [www.ebmud.com/water/conservation-and-rebates/watersmart-tips/](http://www.ebmud.com/water/conservation-and-rebates/watersmart-tips/)

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

[back](#)

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