

Buckingham Township Press Release July 13, 2010

Drought Warning with Voluntary Restrictions in effect for the Furlong and Cold Spring Water Systems

Per the Buckingham Township 2007 Drought Contingency Plan, a Drought Warning with Voluntary Restrictions has been imposed for the Furlong and Cold Spring Water Systems. Formal notice of the Drought Warning with information on Non-Essential Water Use Restrictions has been posted on the Buckingham Township website at www.buckinghampa.org and will be mailed to all Furlong and Cold Spring Water System Customers. With the cooperation of our residents and hopefully a little more rain, we hope to avoid mandatory restrictions and the accompanying water rate increases.

In June 2007, Buckingham Township adopted the 2007 Drought Contingency Plan for the water systems it operates in compliance with Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) regulations. This plan has a section for each water system operated by the Township including trigger points for applicable production wells and basic action plans. These trigger points and resulting action plans are designed to make sure water remains available for essential purposes.

The combination of lack of rainfall and the recent heat have resulted in excessive water use that has more than doubled the amount of water consumed in both the Furlong and the Cold Spring water systems. As a consequence, pumping levels in the wells serving these water systems have dropped to levels that warrant a Drought Warning under the Drought Contingency Plan. As you may know, rainfall has been five (5) inches below normal since April 1, 2010. In June alone, average rainfall was 2.4 inches below normal. The first week of July saw only a trace of precipitation and unprecedented high temperatures including two of the hottest days on record with temperatures of 101 degrees and 102 degrees on July 6th and July 7th respectively (per Pennsylvania State Climatologist). The rainfall (1.31 inches) we received on Saturday, July 10th along with the corresponding decrease in usage helped greatly, but has not alleviated the overall problem.

Water usage in the Furlong system has increased dramatically from a 30 day average of 160,000 gallons per day (gpd) in March 2010 to 304,000 gpd in June and to an average of 407,000 gpd for the first 6 days of July. In the Cold Spring system, water consumption has increased from a 30 day average of 317,000 gallons per day in March 2010 to 420,000 gpd in June and to an average of 637,000 gpd for the first 6 days of July.

These figures equate to 372 gpd per home of water used in the Furlong system and 353 gpd per home of water used in the Cold Spring system. Normal usage as defined by the PA Department of Environmental Protection and the Delaware River Basin Commission is 75 gallons per person per day or an average of 225 gallons per day per home.

In order to avoid mandatory water restrictions, it is necessary to ask that you curtail your non-essential water use as follows:

1. No watering of established lawns, gardens, landscaped areas, trees and shrubs.

Newly Sodded or Seeded areas, Gardens, Landscaped Areas, Trees and Shrubs may be watered by bucket, can or hand-held hose or unattended with an automatic shut-off equipped nozzle only between the hours of 7 PM to 9 AM and only every other day (hereafter “designated days” as described below). Homes with even or no numbered addresses may water on even numbered dates. Homes with odd numbered addresses may water on odd numbered dates.

Definitions:

Newly Sodded Lawn – a sodded lawn installed prior to May 15th is considered newly sodded for three months after the installation date. A sodded lawn installed after May 15th is considered newly sodded for six months after the installation date.

Newly Seeded Lawn – a seeded lawn that is less than two months past germination or the third mowing, whichever is longer. Germination is up to six weeks after actual sowing of seeds.

2. Avoid washing vehicles in your driveways – patronize a local car wash facility.

3. Don't use water to wash outdoor surfaces.

4. Turn off your decorative water fountains, artificial waterfalls and landscape ponds.

5. Don't fill or top off your swimming pool unless it is equipped with a recirculating filter.

The Township is working on several projects to bring more water into the systems to accommodate seasonal increases in use but like any well based system, in a drought, we cannot sustain water usage at over two times the normal use. The Township will continue to monitor water consumption and well pumping levels of all Township water production wells. If you need additional information, please refer to our website for periodic updates and please do not hesitate to contact the Township at (215) 794-8854.