



IWA PIPELINE



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WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE!! (AND STILL WE'RE IN A DROUGHT)



At the time this newsletter was being written, it was hard to imagine that the islands were still experiencing a drought. Rainfall over the last two weeks was approaching two FEET, as a result of a tropical wave, followed by tropical storm Barry. None-the-less, we were assured by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), the official expert on such matters, that we were still in a drought and water restrictions continued.

In June, IWA requested a variance from the water restrictions which were in force throughout South Florida, based on the fact that our very deep (700 feet) water source is largely unaffected by droughts such as the current one (?). We were experiencing very high peak water flow rates during the very limited period, only 16 hours per week, when the restrictions permitted irrigation. Although we did not have a shortage of water, we were experiencing problems pumping it at very high rates, as a result of the fact that our Members were complying very well with the restrictions. We had experienced flow rates as high as 8,750 gallons per minute (gpm), compared to our treatment plant capacity of 3,200 gpm. We became concerned about our ability to pump even higher rates in the event of a fire. We had made

changes to our equipment and controls to accommodate this situation, but that was resulting in increased wear and tear on our equipment. Discussions with other South Florida water utilities indicated that we were not alone in our problems and concerns.

The SFWMD approved our variance on a temporary basis on June 21st, and finalized their approval on July 12th. The revised restrictions will be in force until when/if they are removed across all of South Florida. Basically, the revised restrictions still limit individual water consumers to a maximum of 8 hours per week for irrigation, but now those 8 hours can be spread out over a total of 32 hours, thereby hopefully reducing our peak water flow rates and at the same time giving our Members more flexibility in their irrigation schedules. The revised restrictions allow irrigation according to the following schedule:

- Residential irrigation (single and multi-family) will be allowed for four hours, anytime from midnight to 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to midnight (instead of only 4:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.) on Wednesday and Saturday for odd addresses and on Thursday and Sunday for even addresses.
- Non-residential irrigation (commercial, public and governmental) will be allowed for four hours, anytime from midnight to 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to midnight on Mondays and Fridays.
- New landscaping irrigation (less than 30 days-old) will be allowed for six hours, anytime from midnight to 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to midnight on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

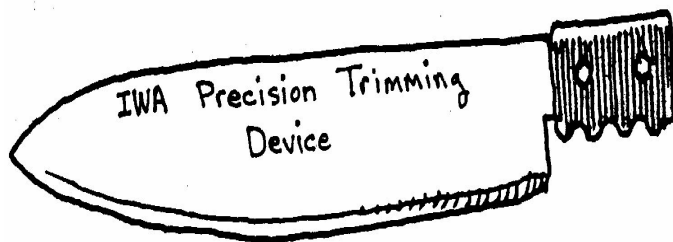
These revised restrictions apply to all water users of either IWA's potable water supply or private wells. They do not apply to users of reclaimed wastewater. Any other water users not mentioned

above should continue to follow the existing Modified Phase 2 restrictions of the SFWMD. Enforcement of the restrictions will be handled by the Sanibel Police Department and the Lee County Sheriff's Department (on Captiva), not IWA.

IWA strongly encourages its Members to reset their irrigation timers to time periods other than 4:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. on their allotted days. We also, even more strongly, encourage Members to turn their irrigation systems off when we have been receiving adequate rainfall. On Sunday, August 5th, after we had received nearly 2 FEET of rain in the preceding two weeks, our Members were still pouring over 1,100 gpm of water on lawns that were probably already flooded. If you are not in residence all year 'round, there are devices that will automatically shut your system off when it rains. One such device, that some members have used over the years, is the Mini-Clik, by Hunter Industries (<http://www.hunterindustries.com/Products/miniclik/miniclik.htm>). They are available in Fort Myers at Florida Irrigation Supply, Inc. (936-6556), or on the islands at the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (472-1932) for under \$30. If you have one of these devices installed on your system, you will probably pay for it in the first month, particularly during our rainy season.

Please feel free to contact us at (941) 472-1502, or the SFWMD at (941) 338-2929, if you have any ~~questions regarding the revised water restrictions.~~

Thanks! We appreciate your cooperation!



WEED (AND BUSH) WHACKERS

It's rainy season again! That means it's time for our plants (and weeds!) to grow at a rate that would amaze people who live in cooler climates. It sometimes seems like you can actually see the plants growing right before your eyes. While this rapid plant growth is one of the things that makes our islands the attractive place that they are, it also has a tendency to quickly turn our home landscaping into an impenetrable jungle.

This very rapid plant growth also creates a

number of problems for our IWA meter readers. Previously accessible water meters quickly become completely overgrown and inaccessible. In addition to slowing down our meter readers in their work, some of our plants are not too "user friendly" and are either poisonous or covered in thorns and other nasty things. This makes reading the involved meters a real safety problem. For example, we have had meter readers who have gotten serious cases of poison ivy, cuts from bougainvillea thorns, etc., etc.

Our Service Rules and Regulations, which every IWA member agrees to follow when they purchase a membership, states that meters are to be kept "unobstructed and accessible at all times to the meter reader." We would greatly prefer that members keep their own meters clear of excessive vegetation, and when time permits, we notify members who have an accessibility problem and ask them to remedy the problem themselves. However, with over 4,500 meters to read every month and our rapid plant growth, that would be a full time job for a couple of employees in the Summer months. Therefore, we sometimes resort to "trimming" the vegetation ourselves, sometimes with results that dismay our members. While we try to do a good job, our idea of trimming sometimes looks like butchery to some of our members. We apologize if you are one of those members!

So please help us out and make sure your vegetation is trimmed so that we can quickly and safely read your meter. Remember, the quicker we read your meter, the less it costs and the lower we can keep your water rates. If we trim around your meter, please try to understand that we are not professional landscapers, and we are only trying to do our jobs in a safe and efficient manner.

On a related subject, those members who have installed backflow prevention devices on their water service lines also need to keep the area around these devices clear. While we understand that the devices are not pretty, and a little vegetation hides them from view, please keep the vegetation at least 18 inches from the devices in all directions, with clear access from one direction. We periodically test these devices for our members ~~(at no cost), and clear access is again a necessity.~~

Thanks for your assistance with this "growing" problem.

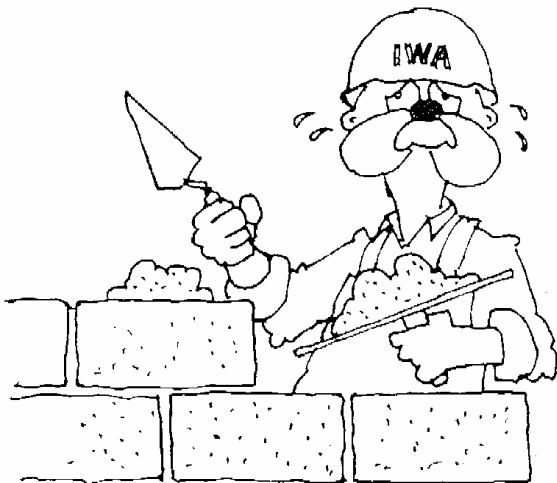
LOWER PRESSURE = LOWER WATER RATES

At IWA, we are always looking for ways to save

money and to thereby keep your water rates as low as possible. Since our rates haven't gone up since 1992 (they actually went down 7.5% in 1994), we must be doing a pretty good job! One of the primary ways we save money is by spending money. We spend money on capital improvements to save money on ongoing operating costs. The most recent example of this involves our reverse osmosis membranes.

Shortly after the RO plant was first started up, back in the early 1980's, an RO train (we have 6 of them) produced 275 gallons per minute (gpm) of potable water at a pressure of over 500 pounds per square inch (psi). The membranes have been replaced several times over the years, whenever membrane technology improved to the point where the electricity saved from lower pressures and/or higher flows offset the cost of new membranes. We have never had to replace membranes due to failures of any type. We have worked closely with our membrane supplier, Dow Filmtec, to ensure that we are always on the cutting edge of membrane technology. We have frequently tested new experimental membranes in our plant.

Recently, we became aware of another step forward in membrane technology, which our calculations indicated would again justify replacing the membranes in 4 of our 6 trains. We have already installed the new membranes in one of the trains, and they are producing 500 gpm of water at a pressure of under 160 psi. At that performance level, we calculate that we will recover the cost of the new membranes in around 4 years of electricity savings. If we keep these membranes as long as we did the ones which they are replacing (9 years), the electricity savings will be "money in the bank" for the last 5 years. That's a great investment!



CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

IWA is currently in the middle of several construction projects. This year, we estimate that we will spend over \$2.5 million on such projects, which help us keep our facilities up-to-date, so that we can continue to provide our Members with a safe/reliable water supply.

Construction has begun on our new hurricane-resistant parking garage. The footers and stem walls are complete, with pouring of the floor slab next on the schedule. Recent heavy rains have slowed us down a little, but we currently hope to complete this project sometime this Fall. Total estimated cost of the garage is around \$600,000.

You may have noticed the recent start of construction activities on Palm Ridge and Sanibel-Captiva Roads. We are upgrading our water main from 8" diameter to 12" in this area, running from Rabbit Road to Periwinkle Way. Recent high water demands (see article on water restrictions elsewhere in this newsletter) caused us to advance this project, originally scheduled for 2003. Again, recent rains have complicated the project and have resulted in our having to spend additional money to keep our construction trenches safe and dry. We hope to complete this project in the next 2 to 3 months, depending on Mother Nature, at a cost of around \$500,000.

We have recently purchased a new 1,000 gallon diesel fuel storage tank. All of our construction equipment and now 5 of our service trucks are diesel-powered, and sources of this fuel on the islands are very limited (and expensive). We were concerned about our ability to obtain diesel fuel in emergencies, particularly after a major storm event. By installing our own tank, we will save money on every gallon we use, plus we will have an assured supply under our own control. We estimate that this new tank will cost us around \$11,000.

Finally, you will often see our trucks and employees in the areas where the City of Sanibel

is currently installing new sewers. We are locating our underground facilities and helping the City's contractors to avoid breaking them ... most of the time. Of course when the inevitable water main breaks still occur, then we have to shut off water in the area while we and/or the contractor make emergency repairs. We apologize for any ~~inconveniences that these activities may cause our Members.~~

THANKS!!

In the last issue of this newsletter, we made our periodic appeal to use our automatic bill payment option, so that both IWA and its Members can save money. The response was great! If anyone missed that article and would still like to eliminate the monthly task of mailing us your payment, just give us a call at (941) 472-1502 and ask for Karen, Jan or Lori. We will be happy to mail/fax/e-mail you an application to sign-up for this service option. Alternatively, the application can be printed off of our website at (<http://www.islandwater.com/customer.htm>) under Customer Service Forms.

IWA'S MOST VALUABLE ASSET

Does it seem like you have seen that IWA employee before ... the one who reads your meter or the one who shows up when you have a problem? Well, you're probably not imagining it; you probably have.

At IWA, we believe the major key to our success over the years, including our ability to have only one rate increase in the last 23 years, is our employees. We believe we treat our employees well, and they return the favor by looking out for IWA's interests in many ways.

One measure of our success in this area is the ~~ton-~~



geivity of our employees. We do not have a lot of expensive turnover. Twenty-two of our 33 employees have been with IWA for over 5 years. Five employees have been with us between 5 and 10 years. Twelve have been with us between 10 and 20 years, and five have been with us for over 20 years. The current record is held by Jay Bourne, our Maintenance Supervisor, who has over 27 years of IWA service!! Joining Jay in the over-20-years category are Dick Derowitsch at 23.9 years, Tom Cali at 22.1 years, Rusty Isler at 21.2 years, and the youngster of the group, John Leiter at 20.0 years. Although it is impossible to put a dollar value on it, the knowledge of our facilities and operations in the minds of these long-time employees is probably our single most valuable asset.

LIZZIE UPDATE



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