



Waterlines

NOVEMBER 2020
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF MEDFORD WATER COMMISSION

As the weather turns cold, don't think twice; turn off your sprinkler system, to avoid slipping on ice!

Our winters are often mild, making it easy to head into winter without much worry for your irrigation system, right? Actually, we occasionally get an extreme cold spell that can do a lot of damage to components like sprinkler heads, pipes, and valves.

*In addition to this damage, running sprinklers during a freeze can create an icy hazard on your sidewalks. To avoid these dangers, winterize your irrigation system **before** cold weather hits. Find a helpful guide on the Conservation tab of our website, or by scanning this QR code:*



Go to our homepage to find out what we're doing to safeguard water quality following the Alameda and Obenchain Fires.

We're here for you:

Our office is currently closed to the public due to COVID-19 precautions and to protect the health and safety of our essential employees, but we're still here to help! Contact us:

(541) 774-2430
customerservice@medfordwater.org

medfordwater.org

8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday - Friday

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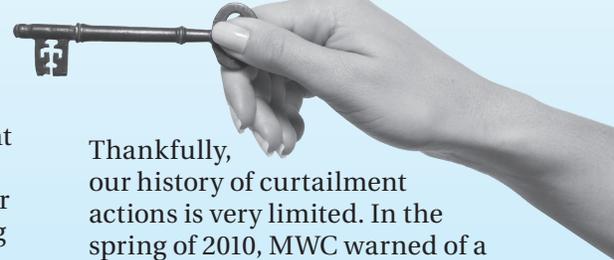
COOPERATION IS KEY TO PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Many of us take for granted the ability to have cool, refreshing, high-quality water at the turn of the tap.

However, while changing watering habits or reducing water usage dramatically is not ideal, curtailment is sometimes necessary due to an emergency situation, such as a power outage impacting a vital facility, long term drought, contamination of a water source due to fire or chemical spill, or a natural disaster.

Medford Water Commission's (MWC's) Water Management and Conservation Plan recognizes five stages of increasingly strict curtailment response to preserve water for public health and safety purposes. These stages range from voluntarily watering only during certain times of day, to the

prohibition of all non-essential water use.



Thankfully, our history of curtailment actions is very limited. In the spring of 2010, MWC warned of a possible water supply shortage and of restrictions that might become necessary due to the combined impact of several events: a major infrastructure project at the water treatment plant was scheduled within the peak summer months that followed an already dry winter, reducing withdrawal capacity and lowering springflows.

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BUCK ROWDEN: A LEGACY OF SERVICE

We were saddened to learn of the passing of George "Buck" Rowden, former caretaker/operator of MWC's Big Butte Springs (BBS), in late July.

At 77, Buck was part of a legacy that still benefits our utility and the customers we serve today. Buck's dad, George Sr., also served as BBS Operator, taking the job in 1948 when Buck was five years old. As he grew up, Buck learned a lot about the Springs and the watershed from his dad and often worked with him.

George Sr. retired in 1962, and Buck took over at just 19 years old, eventually overseeing the construction of disinfection facilities, the expansion of the watershed, and many other projects crucial to our organization's growth.

Buck continued to operate and care for the Springs facilities full time until

2003, and on a semi-retired basis for several years after that.

In 2008, MWC completed construction of the Rowden Pavilion at the Springs to honor the contributions of Buck and his family. He is pictured below next to the pavilion with a plaque that bears his name as well as that of his father and his son.

We honor Buck's extensive service to Medford Water Commission as an integral part of our history and success.



ROWDEN PAVILION
In recognition of Service
from
George, Buck, and Jed

COOPERATION

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The actions ended up being unnecessary, but this combination of events is similar to what happened in early September of this year, when an extended period of extreme temperatures in addition to extensive firefighting activity resulted in sustained high demand levels. This neared the total system production capacity of both of MWC's water sources (Big Butte Springs and the Rogue River).

On September 8th, to assure adequate flow for fire protection during the Almeda and other fire events in addition to other essential water requirements, we asked customers to immediately restrict non-essential water uses.

We would like to thank our customers, as well as our Partner Cities of Central Point, Eagle Point, Phoenix, Talent, Jacksonville, and White City for their cooperation and sacrifice in restricting their water usage during these events.

This allowed reservoirs to reach stable levels and MWC staff to increase the flow from the Springs to help meet demand.

Our communities are facing many challenges, and your help to protect public health and safety is immensely appreciated.

NEW COMMISSIONER BRINGS EXTENSIVE PUBLIC SERVICE EXPERIENCE TO ROLE



Newly appointed Commissioner Michael Smith was sworn in on September 2nd, filling the vacancy created when former Commissioner Rick Whitlock resigned to take a position with the City of Medford in March.

Smith has served on multiple city, county, state, and federal boards, and is a former Sherman County Commissioner as well as a former Moro City Councilman. This extensive public service experience will give him significant insight and knowledge in his new role.

We offer our immense gratitude to Rick for the guidance he provided during his term on the Board, and welcome Michael to our organization.

FUNDING IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS IS A LONG-TERM STRATEGY

As our organization approaches its 100th birthday in 2022, Medford Water Commission is already thinking ahead to serving our customers for the *next* 100 years. This includes the construction of resilient facilities, replacing aging infrastructure, and improvements in the facilities that store, treat and transport water to our 140,000 customers.

As the Rogue Valley's trusted municipal water provider, we have a responsibility to provide our customers with a reliable, high-quality water supply at the best value. To do this, we conduct annual studies

through an independent consultant to analyze revenues and identify the funding needs for these projects.

Our recent studies generally show that yearly rate modifications are needed to prudently fund short and long-term projects. To reduce the impact on our customers, the Commission's strategy is to spread any increases out over time to eliminate the need for a substantial increase all at once.

This strategy will allow us to continue a tradition of safely and effectively delivering water to the growing population of the Rogue Valley.

Concrete station marker surrounded by forest burned in the Obenchain Fire

Medford Water Commission

Established in 1922 and governed by the Board of Water Commissioners.

Commissioners

Daniel Bunn • Greg Jones • John Dailey
Jason Anderson • Michael Smith

General Manager

Brad Taylor

Serving Partner Cities:

Medford, Central Point, Eagle Point, Jacksonville, Phoenix, Talent and Ashland*

Also serving:

White City area and the Elk City and Charlotte Ann Water Districts

*Emergency intertie only

