



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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Attachment
MRCA 6/3/2015
Item VI(i)

Water Conservation Plan DRAFT 5/20/2015

Water, particularly the cycle of its presence and absence, is perhaps the defining characteristic of Southern California's natural resources. The region is currently in the midst of a record-breaking drought and climate change is expected to introduce additional stresses on the environment. Meanwhile our water infrastructure remains a single-purpose anachronism, designed to protect lives and property against catastrophic floods and facilitate development of natural lands.

Managing MRCA's natural lands, developed parklands, recreational facilities, infrastructure, and visitor services requires the use of water. Responsible stewardship of water resources must be achieved through both long-term management decisions as well as daily maintenance practices. Accordingly, the water conservation plan is a set of actions, organized into 6 areas:

Landscape and Plants – Decisions regarding plant choices and care shall consider the long-term and short-term effects on water use as a primary consideration, with both a site and regional scale perspective.

Irrigation – The use of water for horticultural needs shall be actively managed to achieve the highest value for the water used.

Plumbing Fixtures – Plumbing fixtures shall be selected with high efficiency as a primary consideration.

Maintenance BMPs – Maintenance practices shall be conducted in a manner to achieve lowest possible water use.

Education – Park visitors shall be provided interpretation to increase their understanding of natural water processes, and provided information about landscape choices and water conservation practices, both in the parks and to increase stewardship of water resources at home.

Land Use and Stormwater Parks – Improvements to new and existing parklands shall incorporate measures to conserve rainfall and reduce water consumption.

LANDSCAPE AND PLANTS

- 1) Turf:
 - a) Assess turf areas to identify amount and types of use.
 - b) Install artificial turf in areas dedicated to athletic use.
 - c) Selectively reduce amount of turf in areas of high public and practical use.
 - d) Install turf alternatives in areas of lower use.
- 2) Install California native or drought-tolerant plants whenever possible. Plant selection shall be based on suitability to local climate and site conditions and the ecosystem benefits offered.
- 3) Conserve and protect native habitat areas and restore natural water systems (*i.e.* creeks and river) to sustain water quality and quantity.
- 4) Maintain tree health to sustain the water conservation and climate adaptation benefits provided.
- 5) Use mulch around plants, trees, and over bare ground to minimize soil moisture loss.
- 6) Condition plants to thrive using the least amount of irrigation water possible, and actively manage watering schedules to achieve that.

IRRIGATION

- 1) Assess irrigation systems for appropriate watering schedules, coverage, and functioning fixtures.
- 2) Post watering schedules in irrigation controller cabinets.
- 3) Explore alternative methods of irrigation, such as sub-surface drip and use of non-potable water, and plan for conversions where appropriate.
- 4) Put trees on separate valves from other plants, so that tree health can be maintained without watering other plants.
- 5) Maintain separate meters for irrigation vs. other uses, so that irrigation supply can be monitored and converted to reclaimed water without major alterations to park infrastructure.

PLUMBING FIXTURES

- 1) Install new and replace fixtures (sinks, toilets, urinals, etc.) as needed with efficient fixtures and waste reduction features such as spring-loaded faucets.
- 2) Replace water utility lines to reduce leaks and improve efficiency.
- 3) Convert decorative fountains to recirculating water and reclaimed water.

MAINTENANCE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- 1) Conduct a water use education campaign for staff and tenants.
- 2) Enlist active participation from staff and tenants to report leaks and non-functioning fixtures.
- 3) Limit use of power washing.
- 4) Limit exterior window washing.
- 5) Reduce vehicle washing.
- 6) Conduct training and refreshers for staff on plant health and irrigation technologies.

EDUCATION

- 1) Educate visitors about steps the agency is taking with programs, literature, and signs.
- 2) Provide spaces for the public to experience and interact with natural water processes, to expand their understanding of the environment.
- 3) Educate visitors about the importance of water and how to reduce water pollution.
- 4) Educate visitors about water conservation actions and stewardship activities that can be taken at home.
- 5) Provide native plant gardens to demonstrate the use of drought-tolerant native plants.
- 6) Request visitors to report leaks and non-functioning fixtures.

LAND USE AND STORMWATER PARKS

- 1) Explore the feasibility of connecting to the recycled water system for all allowed uses.
- 2) Remove impermeable surfaces and convert to stormwater infiltration areas.
- 3) Design and build parks that promote water conservation and implement aquifer recharge through infiltration.
- 4) Design and build parks that manage stormwater flows for local watersheds through natural systems and built infrastructure.
- 5) Explore the feasibility of water catchment and diversion for irrigation use, and plan for implementation where appropriate.