

# District Digest

The Quarterly Newsletter of the  
South Tahoe Public Utility District Spring 2011



## Spring Water Conservation Update

Spring in Tahoe is an elusive season. After a winter that began in early November, stalled in January, then roared back to life in March, spring and summer water conservation may seem a bit premature. Yet, as quickly as winter can come, spring too will be upon us before we know it.

It is not too soon to begin thinking about spring and summer gardening plans. The District encourages you to consider the limited use of turf. Turf is, by far, the most water intensive landscape option you can select. Instead, consider using native and water-efficient plants and shrubs that can be every bit as attractive, yet only use a fraction of the water that turf requires. And don't forget—turf doesn't mow itself! Save yourself some work and don't over turf. If the only time you walk on your lawn is when you mow it—you have too much turf!

Consult your local landscaping experts to help design and select landscaping options that minimize the use of water and fertilizer. Lake Tahoe Basin soils are primarily decomposed granite and have limited water holding capacity, so over-watering and over-fertilizing can flush nutrients from your lawn into the watershed. From there nutrients make their way into Lake Tahoe and will provide food for algal growth that impairs the Lake's legendary clarity. A seemingly simple decision, like limiting turf in your yard, can have a significant long-term effect on Lake Tahoe's water quality, and also helps keep District summer water demands reasonable. If you are a metered account, the less turf the better—your pocket book will thank you.

If turf you must, please take the time to properly amend the soil to increase its water holding capacity. Consider a professionally installed irrigation system as they are generally more efficient and will ensure your lawn will receive all the water - not your driveway, decks or the street! Automatic timers allow you to water only on your designated watering days (see article below) and can be programmed to go on in the early morning or early evening rather than during the heat of the day, the least effective time to irrigate. And, when your on vacation, no worries about the neighbor kid forgetting to water your lawn!

### Designated Watering Days—What Day am I?

The District's water conservation program has been cooperatively crafted by the District, landscape professionals, the City of South Lake Tahoe, LTUSD, and regulatory agencies within the Tahoe Basin. At the heart of the program are designated watering days. They are:

- **Homes with addresses ending in an even number, water on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.**
- **Homes with addresses ending in an odd number, water on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday.**
- **No landscape irrigation on Saturday. It is our peak demand day.**
- Drip and low flow irrigation systems are exempt from designated watering days.
- Do not hose driveways, decks, or other impervious surfaces. Use a broom instead.
- Hand-watering, with an automatic shut-off nozzle attached to the hose, is acceptable at any time.
- Exemptions exist for those meeting TRPA BMPs, however, ***you must call the District at 544-6474 during regular business hours to qualify for an exemption.***

