

La Mesa Water Cooperative

WaterGram – July 2021

Leak Problem Solved

We recently received this message from one of our residents.

I live at ___ in Sundance Mesa. As you know, I had a small leak problem last week. The first leak alert email came on June 1, reporting 0.4 gallons/hour. Until I got the alert, I had no idea that there was even a problem. Once we knew about the problem, we searched but couldn't see or hear any signs of a leak. Subsequent leak alert messages on June 2, 3 and 4 confirmed that the problem continued and was growing, up to nearly 2 gallons/hour. We relied on the EyeOnWater and leak alerts system to narrow the possibilities by shutting off various systems to see if the change stopped the leak. By Friday, we concluded the problem was probably a swamp cooler on the roof. Then we called a plumber who did find a hole in a water line in a swamp cooler that was shooting out water. The plumber was able to identify and fix the problem in 15 minutes. The final alert message on June 5 confirmed that the repair was successful and the leak was stopped.

I think this is a good success story. Your smart meter and tracking systems let us know there was a problem and helped us identify where it was and set up a simple solution. Without that, who knows how long this would have continued and what kind of problems might have occurred? Thank you so much for selecting and installing and operating the system we have. I really appreciate all that you do.

EyeOnWater lets you see your water use on an hourly basis with a web page or smartphone app, without any charge. See the Cooperative website.

Drought

As we all know, New Mexico (and most of the Western United States) is experiencing a sustained drought. According to the National Integrated Drought Information System (NDIS, Drought.gov):

The most intense period of drought occurred the week of January 19, 2021, where D4 [Exceptional Drought] affected 54.27% of New Mexico land.

Since we do not rely on surface water (Rio Grande, streams, springs, etc.), the drought does not immediately (weeks to months to years) affect our water supply, but is a major determinate of demand. Our two producing wells (#5 and #6) can meet current and projected demand. Bringing well #3 back into service in 2022 will provide additional capacity and resilience.

Our wells draw fairly old water (hundreds to thousands of years), which is replenished very slowly (decades to centuries), if at all. Think of our water as a non-renewable resource, like natural gas or oil.

The drought is a significant factor in our water demand. The volume of water provided each day is directly correlated with how hot and dry it is, since most of the water used in our community goes for landscaping. In the long term, we can all help adapt to drought by replacing plants with those that can thrive in the "new normal".

During these drought conditions, we can extend the life of the aquifer for the foreseeable future with reasonable water use and conservation.

The New Mexico State Engineer website, ose.state.nm.us, has a number of useful documents on water conservation, drought planning, Xeriscaping, plant lists, etc.

The Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority has an excellent website, www.505outside.com, that provides watering advice, plant recommendations, etc.

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