

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

TMWA Responds to Survey Feedback, including:

- Water and Growth in Our Community
- Planning for Drought
- Chlorine: Why Do We need It?
- TMWA's Conservation Programs
- And More!



OVERALL SATISFACTION: 84 PERCENT FAVORABLE

At its October meeting, TMWA's Board of Directors received results from the bi-annual Customer Satisfaction Survey. It was conducted to obtain feedback regarding customer service, water quality and other water-related issues. For the first time, the survey was sent to customers via email, rather than phone surveys as was done in the past. The list was randomly generated and responses were gathered by an independent research company.

The results were positive with overall customer satisfaction rating of 84 percent favorable or very favorable. Also, 80 percent agreed that the water they receive from TMWA is of high quality, and 81 percent trust TMWA's approach to effective management of our water supplies.

"We use the feedback in this survey as a benchmark for how well we are meeting our customers' expectations," said Marci Westlake, TMWA customer service manager. "Every survey offers the opportunity to connect with customers and improve our services."

Customers also had the opportunity to provide questions and comments. Every comment was read and the information in the rest of this issue addresses those questions and concerns. →

KEY SURVEY TOPICS ADDRESSED

Growth and How It Effects Our Water Supply:



TMWA's approach to managing water supplies has proven to be highly effective over the years. In fact, our community uses about the same amount of water now as it did 20 years ago. That's because of conservation measures such as metering, tiered rates and assigned-day watering.

Planning for the future is a top priority at TMWA. The Water Resource Plan (WRP), updated every five years, maps out water demand and supply strategies for the next twenty years and beyond.

"Our water resource planning utilizes population forecasting and water supply modeling tools available to ensure the community's water system continues to meet any future challenges related to population growth, climate change and extreme drought conditions," said John Enloe, Director of Natural Resources. "TMWA has the water resources and plans in place to meet projected customer demand well into the future. And we are always studying ways to manage our region's water more efficiently."

To learn more about growth and water, see the executive summary for TMWA's current WRP. It can be found at: tmwa.com/planning

Water Rights: Remember that TMWA does not approve new growth. When new developments are approved by the cities or county, builders must provide water rights, formerly used for agricultural irrigation, and dedicate those rights to TMWA to obtain service. In addition, dedicated water rights must not only meet a project's water demand, but also include an additional 11% of water rights, which are then allocated for upstream drought storage.

Are We Prepared for a Drought?



Under the terms of the Truckee River Operating Agreement (TROA), which went into effect in 2015, TMWA has the ability to store more water in federally owned reservoirs preceding and during a prolonged drought. Now, the water stored upstream can increase during a drought period to meet the demands of our customers.

In addition to drought storage at Lake Tahoe, Boca, Stampede and Prosser reservoirs, TMWA also owns storage in Donner and Independence Lakes. This provides additional resiliency for our community. Thanks to TROA, our region's upstream drought reserves reached record levels in 2022.

"TMWA has managed the water supply through many periods of extreme weather, from the lowest snowpack on record (2015) to the wettest year on record (2017)," explained Bill Hauck, Water Supply Supervisor. "We know the extreme variability of our climate, and we plan for it." For a deep dive into TMWA's drought resiliency, visit: tmwa.com/article/drought-resiliency.

Why Do We Need Chlorine?



The short answer is that it keeps our water safe to drink. Drinking-water chlorination is a disinfection process that kills microorganisms, bacteria, and viruses. Drinking water with small amounts of chlorine does not cause harmful health

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effects and provides protection against waterborne disease outbreaks. TMWA monitors and tests water regularly to provide customers with safe drinking water. Chlorine levels up to 4 milligrams per liter (mg/L or 4 parts per million (ppm) are considered safe. For chlorine levels in your area, visit TMWA's Water Quality Lookup Page: tmwa.com/quality.

Are We Really Conserving? Conservation programs have been in effect in the Truckee Meadows for much longer than many western communities. For example, Assigned Day Watering started here in the Truckee Meadows in the 1980s while many other communities have only recently introduced similar programs. Some of TMWA's other conservation efforts include the water watcher program, Water Efficient Landscape Guide (tmwa.com/landscape), school education, water audits, tiered rate structure, and the on-going transition into more advanced metering systems.

"We take our role as stewards of the region's water resources seriously," said Andy Gebhardt, TMWA Director of Distribution Maintenance and Generation. "Our commitment is to promote the efficient use of water every day, and what we have found is that on the whole, our community is just as committed."



Why Don't We Have a Turf Removal Program? Every water system is different. What works for some systems is not appropriate for the Truckee Meadows because of many constraints, including different legal requirements. TMWA's conservation programs are effective and consistently provide the conservation needed. Rest assured, TMWA plans for droughts and implements conservation programs that are designed for this area. For more information, visit: tmwa.com/turf.



Shouldn't High Water Users Pay Higher Rates? Several customers suggested that TMWA initiate conservation rates. TMWA's rate structure already disincentivizes the high use of water because of our tiered rates. When you use more water, you pay at a higher rate. The first tier (0-7,000 gals.) reflects the average household indoor water use. The rate is higher in Tier Two and usually includes some outdoor water usage, which every customer can moderate. And, of course, Tier Three is even higher: about twice as much as the first tier.

Online Credit Card Payments: Why Do We Charge a \$2.95 Fee? When you pay your water bill with a credit card, there is a \$2.95 fee. This fee is charged by the credit card companies, not TMWA. But there are many other easy payment options, including auto-pay through your bank, which is a great way to avoid paying a fee. All payment options are located here: tmwa.com/payments.



Leaks: Many customers are concerned about leaks and how to find them. Leaks in your home or business can be costly—for you and for our community's water supply. For help in detecting and fixing leaks, visit: tmwa.com/leaks.



The Ins and Outs of Water Pressure: Some customers had questions about the water pressure where they live or work. It's a very complicated topic! For a detailed look at our water system infrastructure, read: tmwa.com/pressure.

WHERE TO CALL

- GENERAL INQUIRIES 834-8080
- EMERGENCY REPAIR 834-8090
- WATER CONSERVATION 834-8005
- WATER QUALITY 834-8118
- WATER RIGHTS 834-8029
- OMBUDSMAN 848-0813

EVENTS AND PUBLIC MEETINGS

- STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**
FEB. 7, 3:00 P.M. TO 5:00 P.M.
- PRESIDENTS' DAY HOLIDAY**
TMWA OFFICES CLOSED
- BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**
FEB. 15, 10:00 A.M. TO NOON

Please RSVP for tours and find details for all workshops and meetings at tmwa.com/meeting



Truckee Meadows Water Authority is a not-for-profit, community-owned water utility, overseen by elected officials and citizen appointees from Reno, Sparks and Washoe County. TMWA employs a highly skilled team who ensure the treatment, delivery and availability of high-quality drinking water around the clock for more than 440,000 residents of the Truckee Meadows.

