

Water Shortage on Mount Lemmon & Why

Introduction

Pre-Aspen Fire there were around 425 water meters for residences and there were one to two lodges historically in Summerhaven at any given time. Today we have around 340 water meters for residences and the equivalent of two lodges. We also reserve 500,000 gallons of water at all times for firefighting.

So why did we go into Stage 3 water restrictions for the first time in history? There are several reasons.

Our shortage occurred for the following reasons:

1. Less rain and snow than last year
2. **Leaks - #1 cause of water loss**
 - a. Large Leaks
 - i. Residential – no one in residence & the meter is left on.
 - ii. Snowplow damage to a fire hydrant drained 500,000 gallons of water last winter. It took a while to recover the water loss.
 - iii. Commercial –large leaks are rare because someone is at these properties daily, and leaks are discovered right away.
 - b. Small Leaks that can lead to Large Leaks
 - i. Residential – when occupied, leaks are usually discovered early. Causes include toilet flappers & dripping faucets.
 - ii. Commercial – open year-round so discovered early.
3. **Excessive water use - #2 cause of water loss.**
 - a. Residential
 - i. Residential rentals are the **biggest** water consumption – far above normal use even when rented only on weekends.
 - ii. Residents with lack of conservation education
 1. Water harvesting tanks supplemented with potable water.
 2. Watering landscaping & driveways.
 - b. Commercial

Water Shortage on Mount Lemmon & Why

- i. Our lodging and restaurants use a reasonable amount of water when looking at the large number of people they serve, both public and residents. Permanent conservation practices are in place. For example, the Mount Lemmon Lodge uses the same amount of water in 7 months as one recent large residential leak.
 - ii. Current Commercial Business
 - 1. Lodging (ML Hotel 15 units & ML Lodge 16 units)
 - 2. Restaurant/Cafe (Sawmill, Beyond Bread, Cookie Cabin, Coffee Shop)
 - 3. Gift Shops – no water use.
4. Reasonable water use
- a. About 97% of our property owners normally use a reasonable amount of water, which is 3,000 gallons per month or less.

Conclusion

We will see no Stage 3 water restrictions if we as property owners eliminate large leaks and use a reasonable amount of water per household, which must include rentals.

Future

Your Water District is looking at conservation measures which include more efficient meter monitoring systems to catch leaks sooner, improving infrastructure, and increasing storage capacity to supplement during dry or drought conditions while maintaining water reserves for firefighting.

There is plenty of water for all to enjoy a healthy happy experience on the mountain if we all do our part.

Mount Lemmon Domestic Water Improvement District Board