

Helix Water District: Setting Standards of Excellence in Public Service

Helix area water restrictions relaxed

Ease on mandatory cutbacks allows changes to water use

Helix Water District customers can again water their landscaping on any days of the week they choose for as long as they deem appropriate for their landscaping. The change came after the agency's board of directors unanimously voted to eliminate watering day and time limits that had been in place since June 2015.

Short durations for each watering session are recommended to eliminate runoff.

The ease on restrictions came in response to the State Water Resources Control Board's end to using a one-size-fits-all-approach to conservation. Now, each agency performs a "stress test" to see if it has enough water available to meet customer demand for at least three more years of drought. For Helix and the rest of the San Diego region, the answer is yes.

Elimination of the Helix service area's



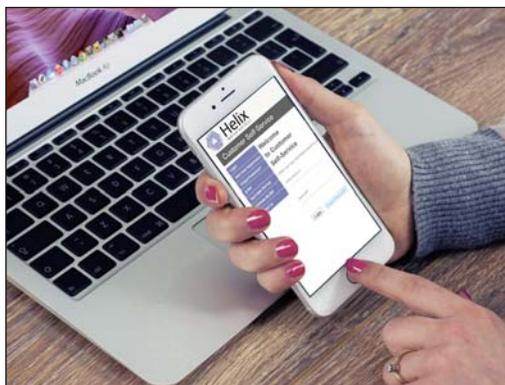
mandated reductions is recognition of district and regional investment in alternate sources, such as the recently completed desalination plant in Carlsbad.

Irrigation watering is the only restriction that Helix has relaxed. Permanent water-use

See "Restrictions..." on page 4

Helix Water District has relaxed restrictions to outdoor watering by allowing customers to irrigate with no limits on days or minutes.

Service improved through technology



As of June 2016, almost 30 percent of all district customer accounts had been registered on the new online customer portal. This represents a significant increase in customers accessing online services compared to November 2015.

Thirty-year-old billing system replaced with advanced software; other access tools also upgraded

Helix Water District recently implemented a new utility billing system, transitioning from a 30-year-old tailor-made customer information system.

This new system allows the district to provide improved service through better management of customer information, integration with other enterprise computer systems, and access to realtime payment information.

Working out in the field, district

See "Tech upgrade..." on page 4

“

The new system has allowed us to go virtually paperless...

”

— Brian Lawler
Customer Service
Manager

Local trees need some extra attention



Benefits of Trees



- clean the air
- provide food
- cool the streets
- prevent erosion
- block UV sun rays
- create oxygen

Drought-stressed trees require care to survive

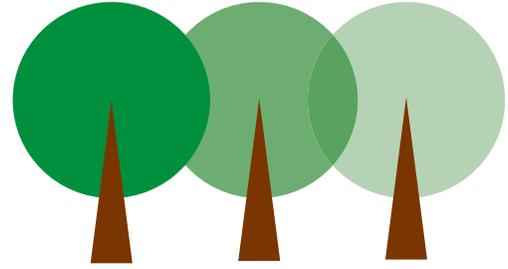
Although most people rarely think about it, trees improve our lives considerably. They give our houses a “homey” feel and increase property values. They purify our air, create oxygen and dampen noise levels.

But, while trees are our silent partners, they need our help. Years of drought in California are taking a toll on our tall friends. We need to hydrate them for their survival.

To help us accomplish this important task, the California Urban Forests Council provides the following tips:

1) Water young trees twice a week (about five gallons) and mature trees once a week in several places (the equivalent of 1 to 1.5 inches of rain);

2) Water the “drip zone,” the ground directly beneath the foliage and shaded by the tree. Also, add mulch to lower soil temper-



For more information on tree watering, see: caufc.org.

atures and reduce water evaporation;

3) Water early in the morning or after the sun has set, as this is when trees replace the water they have lost during the day. Also, less water is lost to evaporation at these times;

4) Plant native or drought-resistant tree species that require less water;

5) Water deep to help root growth;

6) Pay special attention to trees during winter and early spring, the critical time when new buds and leaves are forming. 💧

How to Water a Tree

May - October

- 1** Watering rate: 1 gallon per hour
Use a soaker hose OR a dripline with emitters 24 inches apart
- 2** Lay hose along outside edge of tree canopy

Canopy	Hose Length
20 feet	75 feet
30 feet	100 feet
50 feet	150 feet
- 3** Watering time @ 1 gallon per hour

Soaker	Dripline
3 hours	6 hours
4 hours	8 hours
5 hours	10 hours
- 4** When you should water

Every 2 weeks	medium-water-use trees
Once a week	high-water-use trees



Attend a free landscape design workshop

No charge for learning how to make your yard look fantastic with low-water-use plantings

Enhance your yard's curb appeal by turning it into a WaterSmart showcase!

Helix Water District and San Diego County Water Authority are sponsoring a free three-hour workshop taught by a local landscaping expert.

In the 9 a.m. to noon class, attendees will learn: how to convert grass areas to water-efficient landscaping; how to select plants that thrive in East County; how to analyze their yards, identify soil types, remove turf and irrigate efficiently and; how to create professional landscapes with planting and irrigation



designs ready for installation.

Helix customers can sign up for one of two scheduled Saturday classes, either Sept. 17 or Oct. 15, to be held at the district's operations center at 1233 Vernon Way in El Cajon.

Register at hwd.com/classes-events. 💧

Date:

Saturday, Sept. 17
or
Saturday, Oct. 15

Time:

9 a.m. to noon

Register:

hwd.com/classes-events

Helix names landscape contest winner

Helix Water District named Marie Venable of Lemon Grove as this year's winner of its California-Friendly Landscape Contest, an annual competition that recognizes a customer whose residence displays great beauty achieved through water-wise planting.

Venable's single-family home sits on a half-acre lot but sips a mere six units of water per two-month winter billing cycle and not too much more in the summer months. One unit is 748 gallons.

"My husband and I work very hard to conserve water and make what we have go further," she said. "We have rain barrels that hold about 1,000 gallons and we use mulch and decomposed granite in several areas of our landscaping."

Venable received gift cards totaling \$250 and an award certificate. More photos of her yard can be seen at landscapecontest.com.

Judges look for overall attractiveness; appropriate plant selection; effective design; appropriate maintenance; efficient methods of irrigation.

Call for entries for the contest usually begins in January of the competition year and the deadline for submissions is in early April. More information can be obtained through hwd.com, [Facebook.com/HelixWater](https://www.facebook.com/HelixWater) or Twitter @HelixWater. 💧



The Venable home in Lemon Grove boasts a half-acre of drought-tolerant plants and trees that display bright-color blooms and create shade for outdoor relaxing.



Marie and Joe Venable

District proud to treat, deliver top-quality water

Are you following the news about the drinking water in Flint, Mich., and wondering, "Could it happen here?" It's very unlikely and there are a couple of reasons why.

Household plumbing made of lead is the primary source of high lead concentrations in Flint drinking water.

There are between 15,000 and 20,000 homes in Flint with lead service lines that carry water from the city's water mains into the homes.

Helix's distribution system includes 725 miles of water mains with service lines to 56,000 metered accounts.



Helix has no mains or service lines made of lead.

In 1991, the Environmental Protection Agency passed a regulation called the Lead and Copper Rule. In compliance, Helix has tested for lead and copper at the tap in about 50 homes every three years. In 2015, district lead levels were below the detection limits in all samples. Results have been consistent since testing began.

The district's annual water quality report provides additional information about your drinking water supply. View it at hwd.com. To request a printed copy, call (619)

466-0585 or email: helix@helixwater.org. 💧



Last year, as in years past, your tap water met all U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and state drinking water health standards.

Restrictions eased for local water use

Continued from page 1

efficiency measures required for everyone statewide include:

- Eliminate runoff from irrigation.
- Do not water during or for at least 48 hours following measurable precipitation.
- Washing down paved surfaces such as driveways, sidewalks and parking lots is prohibited, unless necessary for health or safety hazards.
- Use a shut-off nozzle on your hose when washing vehicles.
- Water fountains and decorative water features must use recirculated water.
- Watering turf on public street medians is prohibited.

● Serve water at restaurants only upon request.

● Offer hotel guests the option of not laundering towels and linens daily.

Helix customers responded to the call to save by lowering their per-person use level to just under 90 gallons per day.

Relaxing of watering restrictions will allow customers more flexibility this summer to save drought-stressed trees, restore defensible space in fire-prone areas and establish water-wise landscaping where grass was allowed to go brown.

Helix also recommends watering before 10 a.m. or after 6 p.m. to reduce evaporation.

More details are available at hwd.com. 💧

Tech upgrade includes facelift for hwd.com

Continued from page 1

employees are able to receive service requests via mobile devices, which allows them to respond more quickly and efficiently.

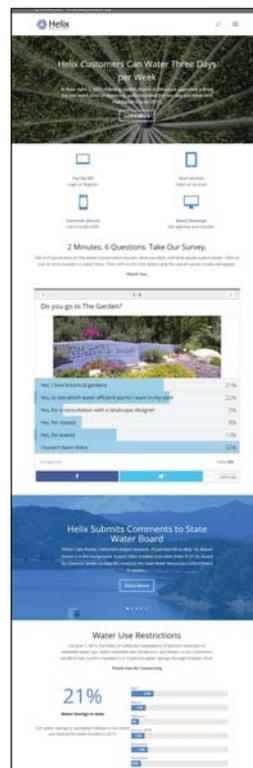
“Our new online portal has realtime access to our billing system,” said Quince Lunde, enterprise applications manager. “This enables our office and field staff to make more accurate decisions when customers make last-minute online payments.”

The upgrade also has improved the way Helix and its ratepayers interact.

“The customer self-service online portal enables easy access to customer account information and to make payments,” said Lisa Stoia, director of administrative services. “Customers also have access to their recent bill statements, payment history, historic water usage and forms to start and stop service.”

The online portal is accessible through the

district website, hwd.com, which also has been renovated to benefit customers. The new site works across computers, tablets and smartphones and is easy to navigate. The site has a news blog and customers can sign up for email notification of new postings. 💧



“

We're adding and changing content on the site regularly to keep it interesting and useful...

”

— Mike Uhrhammer
Senior Public Affairs Rep



The project team works on implementation and testing of the Cayenta application to ensure a fully functioning system for Helix staff and customers alike.

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www.hwd.com



Helix Highlights is published three times each year. Helix Water District is a public agency governed by a board of directors elected to four-year terms by registered voters in the divisions in which the directors live. The board meets the first and third Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. and the fourth Wednesday at 3 p.m. at 7811 University Ave., La Mesa, Calif.