

Effluent water supply running out early

Golf courses, other users face restrictions

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Carson City's effluent water users, including the golf courses, faced usage cuts earlier than ever this year, and the regular water supply has been tapped to help.

"This year, for a variety of reasons, we ran out of water early," said David Bruketta, city utility manager, speaking of the previously

reclaimed and winter-stored supply. Reclaimed water now comes only from what gets treated at the wastewater plant, and the supply has had to be cut significantly for state prison farm land, city parks and the golf courses.

Bruketta said Brunswick Canyon Reservoir's reclaimed water stored up last winter reached such a low point in late July that restrictions were imposed Aug. 5. The



David Bruketta

gallons from domestic supplies had been expected.

For perspective, Bruketta said, overall city domestic supply usage for things such as drinking, bathing or showering and watering lawns is about 20 million gallons daily in August.

Reclaimed water that went through the treatment plant cannot be used for drinking, and the city follows federal oversight that

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requires a reuse system like the one in place.

Dumping wastewater in the Carson River was banned, which led to the current system. Because of ongoing drought conditions and other factors, the reduction in reclaimed water has turned golf courses brown and created additional problems the city is attempting to deal with, Bruketta said.

He said an altered allocation system for next year might be contemplated, but the one used for years is based on nine-hole equivalency at golf courses and among the other users. It will continue through this water season, he said.

Eagle Valley, the city-owned municipal course, has 36 holes. Empire Ranch and Silver Oak, the private-sector courses, have 27 holes and 18 holes, respectively.

Jim Kepler, manager at Eagle Valley, said aspects of the allocation methods amount to "kind of a silly thing" and that the lack of sufficient water isn't helpful.

"Yeah, it's a problem, but we're dealing with it," he said.

Jim Wiggins, general manager and superintendent at Empire Ranch, said his understanding is that part of the problem is drought and part is leaks at Brunswick Canyon Reservoir, east of the wastewater-treatment plant.

"We're doing OK here at Empire Ranch," he said. He acknowledged reclaimed water is in shorter supply earlier this year than in previous years.

Silver Oak's Garth

Richards, contacted about the restrictions, had no comment. He did indicate, however, that more on the matter and related concerns might come to light later.

In the allotment system, Bruketta said, golf courses and other users were within their contracted usage rights earlier in the year, though some did use more than others as warnings were issued about supply. He said the system allows the prison farm land first rights to the water, but officials there have cooperated with all users getting a share.

He also said curtailment to the point of lost revenue and economic impact from less golfing interest or capacity was kept in mind as city government grappled with the problem.

Bruketta is aware restrictions come against a backdrop of recent controversy over city government renegotiating Eagle Valley lease terms with the operators and as city staffers asserted the 36-hole complex was needed to be a continuing effluent water user. And he indicated working with everyone while not charging for supplemental water pumping is rational.

"For now, we're just going to eat the cost on this," he said.