It is in the interest of the District to engage in long term planning to minimize the effects of future droughts, and to engage in near term planning to minimize the impacts of a drought in future water years.

The Kennewick Irrigation District differs from other irrigation districts in our inability to call upon storage. We divert our water allotment straight out of the Yakima River at Prosser, which creates special challenges that are magnified during a low water year. For this reason KID leadership began preparing for a drought scenario in advance. Throughout the year KID crews stay busy with projects which help us to more beneficially put to use the water we receive, such as lining canals, upgrading aging infrastructure, and installing automated gates.

When Governor Inslee declared the 2015 drought, leadership knew it would take innovative and dynamic thinking to make things work. The decision was made to implement a required watering schedule, which for the first time in KID history, took into account the fluctuating peak use patterns of on-demand urban water users. A watering schedule was a new concept to many of the District’s customers and when paired with the dynamic nature of the 2015 drought conditions many customers understandably had questions. Those questions and answers have been compiled here:

**(Q) Why was my neighbor watering off schedule?**

(A) Certain areas such as Elliot Lake, Gage, PSA 54 & PSA 178 were not on the watering schedule because their water comes from a different source. Additionally, some homes within the District’s boundaries do not receive irrigation water from KID and may be using city water, while other residents elected to supplement their irrigation days with city water.

**(Q) Why can’t we just water every other day?**

(A) With over 23,000 unmetered customer accounts, usage is not evenly distributed on an even and odd schedule. The schedule was developed using data on customer usage by address. The canals hold an extremely large volume of water creating challenges with an even and odd schedule. If enough water is not used the canal can spill over; likewise if too much water is used the canals will run dry and it can take several days to refill. Customers scheduled to receive water on those days would not experience an outage; they would not receive water.

Because there are more parcels with addresses ending in the same numbers, watering times were arranged with the more and less popular address numbers staggered. This schedule allowed the canal to fill during the times in which less parcels were being watered and the canal to drain during the times when more parcels were being watered.

**(Q) What if I own property with an “undetermined” address?**

(A) If the undetermined property is adjacent to the owner’s house, use the house schedule for both the house and property.

If the property locations do not reside next to each other, contact our engineering team and a schedule will be assigned to the “undetermined” address.

**(Q) Why did KID begin serving Red Mountain during a drought year?**

(A) The Red Mountain project was already completed when the drought news was announced. The water being used to serve Red Mountain is recalibrated water from areas no longer using their allotted water for such reasons as changes in land use or from hard surfaces, such as streets. Because water allotted to the District must be put to beneficial use or permanently relinquished to the State, water identified as unused in the recalibration process had to be applied to other land that would put it to beneficial use in a timely manner. The District maintains a list of requests for new allocations, and when recalibration of streets in the District was completed, allocations were granted to properties on that list, in this case, the Red Mountain properties. Without granting those allocations, the water would have been surrendered and lost to the state.

Additionally, Red Mountain customers’ allotments are just 1.5 acre feet of water as compared to the 3.5 acre feet allotted to everyone else. This benefits the whole District in a drought year because the other 2 acre feet of water are held as trust water to be accessed and used by the whole District during droughts. In 2015, KID removed this water out of trust and used it to serve all customers.

Also, water for Red Mountain is turned out of the Yakima River downstream of the Chandler Pumps turnout that serves the rest of the District. The amount of water available to the District in a drought year at the Chandler turnout is not impacted by the draw for Red Mountain.

**(Q) The area is growing rapidly and I have noticed the new developments going in. Are these new customers taking water from the already limited supply available?**

(A) No. The maximum number of acres (20,201) to which the KID can apply water does not change, so while it may seem that the number of acres being watered has been increased by new development, that is only because the corresponding acres no longer being watered are less obvious to an observer. Water allocations for new developments come from one of three sources: historic allocations that stay with the parcel regardless of change in land use from agricultural to residential, allotments granted in direct proportion to allotments given up by other parcels or they may receive water recalibrated from hard surfaces, such as streets in order to be put to beneficial use. The KID cannot remove a parcel’s allocation if the land use changes from agricultural to residential; those areas retain an equitable share of whatever water was available to the District in a particular year, which could be beneficially used on a property.

**(Q) Can I water my vegetable garden, trees, shrubs or arborvitaes on days that I am not scheduled to water?**

(A) During 2015 low demand devices, such as micro spray, soaker hoses, and drip lines were allowed for to water gardens and perennials at will. A hose and sprinkler were also acceptable for this purpose. Low demand (high efficiency) devices were allowed, because they cause much less drain on the canal system than the use of underground sprinkler systems. *However, watering of lawns off schedule was not allowed by any means.*

**(Q) How is KID handling multiple address locations with one address but different lot numbers?**

(A) In this instance customers should contact our engineering department to be assigned a watering schedule based on your specific address and lot number.

**(Q) What if I operate multiple properties with the same ending address number?**

(A) These customers should contact our engineering department to be assigned a watering schedule.

**(Q) The watering schedule allowed me 20 or 30 minutes of watering time. What if my soil will not absorb 20-30 minutes of water at one time?**

(A) The time allotted to each customer may be split up throughout the allotted days/times to allow maximum absorption, but is not to exceed the total allotted time.

**(Q) What do I do if I recently planted new sod or reseeded my lawn?**

(A) In 2015, the District allowed newly laid sod and reseeded lawns to be watered according to the guidelines set for trees, shrubs, gardens and perennials: new sod and reseeded lawns may be watered using high efficiency and low demand systems, such as micro spray, drip line, hose and sprinkler, and soaker hoses, as needed. Please note that watering the recommended amount is more beneficial than over watering, which can make vegetation less drought tolerant.

**(Q) Can I supplement with city water?**

(A) KID does not enforce the usage or directives of the cities. Customers should contact the city with questions on use of potable water for the purposes of irrigating.

**(Q) How will reporting of watering schedule violations and enforcement be handled?**

(A) KID has established an enforcement policy designed to promote adherence and help ensure all of our customers receive an equitable share of the water available to the District. Most suspected violation reports were neighbors who noticed frequent watering, flooded lawns, or experienced damage to their property due to a neighbor over watering. Those that reported violations were most often doing their part to follow the schedule, to help ensure that they and their neighbors had water and were frustrated by those jeopardizing the availability of water through unrestricted use.

**(Q) Why can’t KID take water out of the Columbia River?**

(A) A valid water right is necessary to take or use water from our rivers, streams, and lakes. KID applied for and was granted a water right to the Columbia River in 2003. However, the new water right was challenged in court and was adversely decided to the District. At this time, no new Columbia River water rights are being issued without 100% replacement mitigation, due to the federal “No Net Loss” rule. If other entities and agencies were to support a new withdrawal permit, water would need to be purchased upstream to fill the hole of the water taken out at a hypothetical Columbia River pump station. The cost of litigation, mitigation and new infrastructure makes pursuit of Columbia River water a distant and expensive venture, which would cost an estimated 100-200 million dollars. However, in response to customer feedback, KID is continuing to pursue this matter.

**(Q) What is KID doing to make sure that we have water in the future?**

(A) KID is always looking for ways to defend our water rights, seek new resources and to best steward what we have through conservation and efficiency methods, capital improvement projects and public education. Currently, KID is working on a project that would electrify our pumps at Chandler. The project would be funded by Congress. Electrification will help provide water security during times of drought by replacing the less efficient hydro pumps currently being used. The hydro pumps require the use of 1.50 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water to pump an amount of 1 cfs of *deliverable* water into the main canal. The additional water needed to *drive* the pumps comes out of the District’s allotment and is released back into the river and is not available for irrigation in a year of full water supply: electrification would allow KID to pump the water back into the canal during a drought year. Electrification allows for better management of the KID water right providing many benefits for KID customers and the environment.

**(Q) In 2015 the City of Kennewick and other irrigation districts didn’t issue restrictions, why was KID saying we were in a drought?**

(A) In 2015 Governor Inslee declared a statewide drought, which included the Yakima Basin. The cities and some irrigation districts receive their water from a source other than the Yakima River, such as the Columbia River. KID has a Yakima River water right, meaning that our water comes from the Yakima River. The source of water for the Yakima River is the Cascade Mountain range. The mountain snowpack, which slowly melts, replenishes the water in the Yakima River. However, in 2015, the State of Washington experienced the lowest snowpack ever recorded in the Yakima Basin. Additionally, the river levels fluctuate for many other reasons including air temperatures, return flows from irrigators up stream, and precipitation. All of the water held in reservoirs feeding the KID and other irrigation districts was not enough to supply all water users for the entire water season, including the KID. Without adequate snowpack our District could face extreme or historic drought conditions. It was critical that KID take action to best steward the water available with the most current information available.

**(Q) Will KID continue using a watering schedule in 2016 if there is no drought?**

(A) No.

**(Q) We use our KID allotment to water our horses, cows, etc. Can we use it outside of our schedule?**

(A) Irrigation water is for the sole purpose of irrigating. The water is untreated and may pose a health risk to humans and animals and is not for uses other than irrigating.

**(Q)         We use our KID allotment to water the fields to provide grass for our horses, cows, etc. Can we use our KID water outside of our schedule?**

(A)          In 2015, all customers with less than 3 acres of land were required to adhere to the District Watering Schedule. Customers with more than 3 acres of land or those served from a canal turnout were asked to contact the District for a custom schedule that would allow them to receive an equitable portion of the available water. Some customers needed to supplement with feed or city water. KID recommended that customers considering the use of potable city water for the purpose of watering fields contact the city to learn more about their policy on water usage.

**(Q) Who is responsible for adhering to the watering schedule in a rental property? Who is required to pay the penalty when a renter waters outside of the schedule?**

(A) The owner of the property is responsible for ensuring adherence to the District Watering Schedule and will ultimately be responsible for all fines assessed. If a violation has occurred, a door hanger with a warning will be left at the property and KID will send a certified letter to the homeowner when the mailing address differs from the property address.

**(Q) I have heard that lawn grass uses a lot of water. Will KID be offering incentives to have my lawn grass replaced or removed?**

(A) At this time, KID is not offering any incentives for the removal of lawns. The District recommends that customers who are concerned about the impacts of drought to lawn grass consider converting their lawn to other less water intensive vegetation or consider Xeriscaping.

**(Q) Do agricultural customers and vineyards receive more water than residential customers?**

(A) No. All KID customers were curtailed in 2015. The schedule was developed in order to most equitably deliver water to all of KID’s customers. The total water supply available to the District was reduced and everyone carried the burden together. That being said, not all customers use water the same way. Wine grapes only used about 1/3 of the amount of water used by residential customers. Customers with over 3 acres and public entities are given a separate schedule to help balance the constantly changing water levels in the canal. When the water levels fluctuated in the canals our large land owners provided the District with the ability to prevent waste and use the excess water quickly to avoid over topping the canals. Additionally, when water levels were low, schools, cemeteries and HOA’s were shut off.

**(Q) If water was not available on my scheduled day, due to an issue on KID’s end, will I have the opportunity to make up a watering day?**

(A) During the drought the District could not allow makeup days. Make up days would alter the demand on the system creating additional challenges and therefore, we were not able to adjust the schedule to provide make up watering days. Customers were allowed to water perennials, shrubs, vegetable gardens, and trees with high efficiency irrigation systems or a hose and sprinkler connected to the riser, at will. Some customers supplemented with city water until their next scheduled day. Please note, KID does not promote the use of city water for irrigation purposes and encourages all customers to contact the city regarding the use of potable water to supplement irrigation.

**(Q) Why can’t I get a refund or a portion of my assessment back when I do not receive my full allotment of water?**

(A) KID does not meter the water that is used and therefore, we do not bill for the water that is used as the city water and utility companies do. Your KID assessment pays for the operation and maintenance of the irrigation system and the repayment of the USBR loan to the District used to build the multimillion dollar Kennewick Irrigation District infrastructure and facilities and KID’s portion of the related Yakima Project storage reservoirs located in the headwaters.

Your assessment dollars help pay for capital improvement projects, such as canal lining and automated gates. KID operations and maintenance, customer service, public information and education all *increase* during a drought year.

**(Q) Can we use water outside of our schedule for dust control?**

(A) Irrigation water is for irrigation purposes only and is not to be used for dust control. Some customers may need to supplement with city water to control the dust. Contact the city to learn more about what they allow.