

TAWWA Drought Planning Survey – Effective Drought Tools

Mini Case Study: New Braunfels Utilities

1. Please describe your water service area by demographics (i.e. population served, age of properties, average seasonal water use, lot sizes).

- ~45k water connections, total population served ~110k residents
- Age of properties runs the gamut. We provide programming for brand new homes up to 100+ year old homes.
- Average seasonal water use is currently tracked at 6k per month for indoor use and 6k per month for irrigation usage. We see summertime usage increase to ~12k per month.
- The average lot size in New Braunfels is .12acres, however we serve smaller garden-style homes up through multi-acreage sites.

2. Which drought tool that you use do you consider the most effective? Why?

I think our most effective tool in New Braunfels is our drought enforcement methods. We rarely have escalating issues with residents (92% of violations stop with a warning), however our builder community is prevalent. We use our ordinance to pursue builder properties similar to those with landlords, by applying penalties to their model homes and sales offices. By utilizing this method, we are able to achieve drought compliance much quicker than with fines alone.

3. What is the response you get from your customers or community, when using this tool?

Private residents are mostly unaware of this practice as it is not applicable to them. Builders understand the rule and comply in most cases, however the turnover of local builder staff can sometimes cause issues to resurface.

4. How long has it been in effect?

We have utilized this method since 2015.

5. Anything else you'd like to add – something different you are thinking of implementing this upcoming, what you have determined you will not utilize again, etc.

We are currently revising our DCP to match our growing and evolving population. A few ideas that have been floated are volumetric violations, excess usage fees, and permanent limitations on new turfgrass installation.