

Stage 1 water restrictions begin Friday

By Will Wright The Herald-Zeitung | Posted: Thursday, May 17, 2018 5:50 pm

New Braunfels Utilities has enacted Stage 1 water restrictions, effective Friday.

The Edwards Aquifer's J-17 test well had dropped to 659.5 feet above mean sea level (msl) for more than 24 hours Thursday, automatically triggering the call for Stage 1 drought restrictions.

"Due to insufficient rains and rising temperatures, as well as an increased demand on the water supply, the levels of the Edwards Aquifer began falling at a rate of one-half foot to 1 foot per day," CEO Ian Taylor said. "The aquifer has been at or below 660 feet for 24 hours, which triggers Stage 1 watering restrictions for NBU customers and New Braunfels."

Stage 1 restrictions limit the use of lawn sprinklers and/or irrigation systems to one day a week — before 10 a.m. and after 8 p.m. — on designated days assigned to residential and commercial customers.

Addresses ending in 0 or 1 may water on Monday, 2 or 3 on Tuesday, 4 or 5 on Wednesday, 6 or 7 on Thursday and 8 or 9 on Friday. No weekend watering is allowed.

The use of hand-held hoses, buckets, soaker hoses and drip irrigation systems is permitted on any day and time.

Stage 1 also prohibits outdoor fountains and waterfalls, requires variance confirmations from NBU's Environmental Affairs Division before watering new landscaping and limits home vehicle washing to assigned watering days and times and is conducted over pervious surfaces.

Other area utilities have different requirements for calling for water restrictions, such as lowered measurements for cubic feet per second water streams during a 24-hour period.

Taylor said the entire region is at or near the point of calling for Stage 1 restrictions.

He said NBU's direction follows the city's Conservation and Drought Management Plan.

The utility said 12,500 acre-feet of its water supply (about 40 percent) is subject to water-use reductions after specific trigger levels are reached. However, NBU's diverse water supplies enable it to do the same through encouraging reductions in non-essential water use.

"NBU is asking customers be attentive to landscape watering by ensuring they don't water outside allowable times and not create water waste that can lead to citations or fines," Taylor said. "By observing the current water requirements, together, we will work to manage through this dry period and agency mandated reductions with our water supply."

Stage 1 restrictions will remain in effect for at least 30 days after the aquifer's msl remains above the 660-foot level.

On Oct. 26, NBU ended Stage 1 restrictions that had been in place since July 11, 2017, and before that was last in force in December 2015.