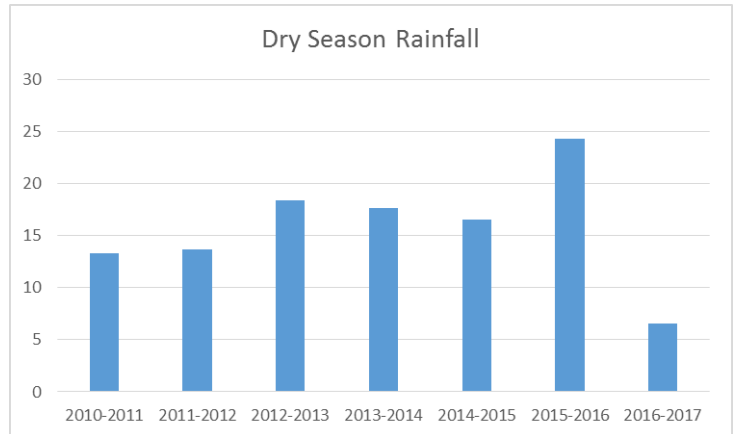




Irrigation Lake Levels – Spring 2017

Winter and spring are often a dry period throughout Florida. Historical rainfall from the beginning of October through the end of May is less than eighteen inches. Thus far during the 2016-2017 dry season less than 40% of that annual total has been received. The chart to the right illustrates dry season rainfall over the past seven years clearly indicating the severity of this season's crisis. The link below is to an article in the Naples Daily News earlier this week. The report indicates South Florida Water Management District has requested those in that area voluntarily conserve water until rainy season which is more than a month away.



<http://nplsne.ws/2oP8tdq> Water management districts and municipalities in other areas throughout Florida have made similar requests due to severe drought.

The severity of the 2016-2017 drought is exacerbated by the higher than normal temperatures experienced during the drought period. Temperatures have been constantly five to fifteen degrees above normal throughout Florida over the past six months. In addition to increased temperatures winds have also been more prevalent during the winter and spring.

Severe drought coupled with higher than normal temperatures and wind have created a serious issue with lakes used for irrigation purposes. As expected water in these lakes is lower than normal due to lack of rainfall. Higher temperatures has caused a greater level of evaporation from lakes decreasing lake levels as well. Increased temperatures and wind have also created a greater demand for water by landscapes which has caused increased irrigation usage further depleting lakes. A combination of these factors has caused water levels within lakes used for irrigation to become critically low in many cases.

Irrigation team members have monitored irrigation lake levels and managed irrigation consumption conservatively to avoid excess usage. Unfortunately conditions have continued to deteriorate causing a need to cut back on irrigation to allow water supplies to last longer. While this isn't required in all cases irrigation team members have begun to discuss cut backs with clients in extreme cases.

The result of the recommended cut backs will cause landscape performance to decline. However irrigating at a reduced level will help keep landscapes alive until rain season begins, typically in early June. A complete lack of water for an extended period of time could be fatal to most lawns and plants.

We encourage clients using lake water for irrigation to communicate the current crisis to their stakeholders and take necessary action to conserve lake water wherever possible. Those with recharge wells should verify they are functioning properly. Should clients have questions regarding their irrigation water supply irrigation leadership team members are prepared to provide professional insight and answer any questions.

