



News

> [Local News](#) > [News](#)

[Print this Page](#)

[←-back to story](#)

Despite low rainfall, county water usage better a year ago

POSTED: September 15, 2008

WAILUKU - Maui County continued to record below-normal rainfall and Upcountry reservoir levels began to fall, but demand on water systems remained stable - and below usage in September 2007.

Water Director Jeff Eng cited in particular the water use in West Maui, which has been up to 1 million gallons a day below the September 2007 consumption levels.

Last year, average demand on the West Maui system in September was 6.43 mgd; during the first two weeks of September this year, demand has been averaging 5.41 mgd and 5.72 mgd.

"I hope that continues. It has been extremely hot there, and people need to be conscious of their water usage," Eng said.

The state as a whole remained abnormally dry, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor, with sections of South Maui still listed as in extreme drought and all of Central Maui in severe drought.

A larger concern is the shortfall in the watersheds.

Over the two weeks since the beginning of September, the West Wailua Iki rain gauge in the East Maui watershed has recorded just 2.1 inches of rain, while Puu Kukui in the West Maui watershed received just under 2.5 inches.

In September, West Wailua Iki averages 11.8 inches while Puu Kukui averages 23.2 inches.

The low rainfall is showing up in the Upcountry supply. Reservoir levels are falling, while the flow in the Wailoa Ditch - a key source for Upcountry consumers - is running below 50 mgd and was at 36.6 mgd on Thursday.

"That's to be expected at this time of year," Eng said. "We are keeping an eye on inflows to make sure the reservoir levels stay steady."

For the department, an element of the concern is the cost of power. When water levels in the Kahakapao Reservoir feeding the Upper Kula system drop, the department must pump water up from the Piiholo Reservoir and the Kamole Weir Water Treatment Facility near Haliimaile. Use of electricity is a major expense when water from Kamole Weir at 1,120 feet is pumped up to Kahakapao at 4,200 feet.

"With high power costs, we don't want to pump water uphill any more than necessary," Eng said.

Fact Box	
AVERAGE DAILY WATER USE	
District	Sept. 4-10
Aug. 28-Sept. 3	Sept. 2007
Central Maui	25.01 mgd
24.99 mgd	26.76 mgd
Upcountry	7.71 mgd
7.87 mgd	7.30 mgd
Lahaina	5.72 mgd
5.41 mgd	6.43 mgd
Hana	0.36 mgd
0.34 mgd	0.29 mgd
Molokai	1.28 mgd
1.20 mgd	1.37 mgd
Total	40.08 mgd
39.81 mgd	42.15 mgd

[Subscribe to The Maui News](#)

Share:

Facebook
 MySpace
 Digg
 Stumble
 Buzz up!
 Mixx
 Fark
 del.icio.us
 LiveSpaces