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### Rain Upcountry helps but can't erase drought woes

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WAILUKU - Light rain Upcountry overnight and Monday morning was welcome to the Department of Water Supply but not nearly enough to ease worries about the summer drought.

On Thursday, the Board of Water Supply will discuss whether to recommend reductions in consumption. Upcountry was under a voluntary 5 percent conservation order from May 2008 until March.

The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. in Room 105 (the Department of Liquor Control meeting room) of the David Trask Building on Kaohu Street in Wailuku.

It is still early in the dry season, which starts around May 1 and usually ends around Thanksgiving, but water storage levels are already low: only 73.3 million gallons Monday, or 40 percent of the capacity of 180 million gallons.

It has dropped by 4.3 million gallons in the past week, while demand has been on the high side - never less than 8.3 million gallons per day and as high as 9.6 million gallons on Sunday.

Water Director Jeffrey Eng said Friday that it has been dry enough to warrant use of the Pookela Well in Makawao. The department defers pumping the well when it can because of the cost. However, it has been running since June 9, providing 1.3 mgd.

The county prefers to get surface water, which comes into three treatment plants at Olinda, Piiholo and Kamaole Weir.

Kamaole gets the most water but has no storage. Olinda has the most storage but, because it is the highest, is the most expensive to supply by pumping when the surface water fails, as it often does.

The Waikamoi reservoirs are dry, typical for summer, and the 100-million-gallon Kahakapao reservoirs held only 31 million gallons on Monday.

Demand on the Upper Kula system was 1.7 million gallons on Monday, meaning that system could be out of water within weeks without expensive replenishment from below.

The middle plant, Piiholo, has a 50-million-gallon reservoir, which held 42 million gallons on Monday. Demand was 2.8 million gallons that day.

Kamaole is supplied by East Maui Irrigation Co.'s Wailoa Ditch, which was running at 83.8 million gallons Monday.

#### Article Photos



The Maui News / AMANDA COWAN photo

Motorists and pedestrians navigate soggy streets along Hana Highway in Paia on Monday morning. Many people woke up to gray skies and wet conditions as a rare summer shower dampened parts of the island, including areas of parched Upcountry. The National Weather Service was forecasting a 70 percent chance of rain in windward areas of Maui, including Wailuku, Hana and Makawao, through the week.

The ditch's flow varies depending on rainfall in the forests of East Maui, and it was as low as 20 million gallons on June 16 and less than 30 million gallons on four of the past seven days.

The department also was drawing 400,000 gallons per day from the Haiku Well.

Although worrisome, demand levels are lower than they were a year ago.

In June 2008, daily production was 43.96 million gallons. During the week of June 11-17, it was 40.94 mgd.

However, demand in the two areas that are closest to their maximum draws was close to last year's levels.

Upcountry was using 9.78 mgd last June, compared with 8.26 mgd this past week. Central and South Maui were consuming 25.85 mgd last June, compared with 24.95 mgd this past week.

The Iao aquifer supplied 16 mgd, and Eng said, "We will be watching this number closely as the summer progresses to ensure we stay below the maximum allowable pumping level of 18 mgd."

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