

Drought Press Release

From Justin O. Ramsey

Date Mon 9/21/2026 10:55 AM

To Joshua Pike; Bill Hudson

Cc Andrew Connor; Renee Lewis; Justin Stone; Cyndi Foster; Kyle Tjelmeland

So far, September has been a welcome wet month, with precipitation currently at 108% of the median. However, annual precipitation in Pagosa Springs remains at only 58% of the median. While drought conditions are improving, continued diligence in water conservation remains important.

The San Juan River is up from last week and is currently flowing at 113 cfs. Hatcher Reservoir is currently 43 inches below full.

The median San Juan River flow for this date is 87.55 cfs, compared with 78.5 cfs on this date last year. The National Integrated Drought Information System has also downgraded all of Archuleta County from Extreme Drought to Severe Drought.

Given the recent rainfall, improved river flows, and current water level in Hatcher Reservoir, Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District will reduce its drought designation from Stage 2 to Stage 1.

Stage 1 requirements are:

- Irrigation permitted only between 9 PM to 9 AM based upon address
- Irrigation is permitted Monday – Friday Only. Weekend watering is prohibited.
- Gardens (edible and ornamental) may be hand watered using a hose or drip irrigation.
- Restaurants shall serve water only upon the request of customers.
- Hotels encouraged to replace towels and bed linens for new guests and at the request of existing guests.

The goal of Stage 1 restrictions is to reduce District wide water use by 10 to 20 percent. In our area, it's most effective to irrigate between evening and early morning because the cooler, calmer conditions allow water to soak into the soil instead of being lost to the sun and wind. During the day, high temperatures, low humidity, and frequent afternoon winds drive up Evapotranspiration, meaning much of the sprayed water evaporates or drifts away before it can benefit plants. By irrigating from about 9 PM to 9 AM, more water reaches the root zone, coverage is more uniform, and plants are better able to absorb moisture, making the process both more efficient and healthier for vegetation. Alternating irrigation days by address reduces daily peak demands. Disallowing weekend irrigation reduces overall water consumption.

Water rate tier multiplier of 1.25x for residential flows above 5,000 gallons be in effect.

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