

RESPONDING TO THE LOSS OF A COMMUNITY'S WATER SUPPLY

Suggestions for Residents and Small Water Systems

- Reach out to and help one another
 - Get and share all the facts
 - Share ideas on how to cope
 - Help each other get water to your homes
- Seek advice from the Rural Community Assistance Corporation – they get it and will help you through the process!
- Declare an emergency
 - Use media to get the word out to the broader community
 - Get your local government to declare an emergency
 - Be ready to act on realistic offers of assistance and politely reject the unfeasible
 - Develop and implement a short term plan to cope with emergency
 - Seek emergency funds to address plan (State, Federal)
- Get organized
 - Form MDWCA, if appropriate
 - Make sure organizational documents, budgets, etc. are current and in good order
- Engage public leadership
 - Contact agencies with jurisdiction – make them part of your team, they are your technical and policy advisors
 - Inform your elected leadership at all levels – they are your advocates, let them deal with the most senior government officials
 - Give neighboring communities a chance to help
 - Be polite, but persistent
- Maintain momentum, follow-through on projects and plans
 - Understand funding processes and timelines
 - Communicate with funders throughout application process
 - Keep community members, agencies, public leaders informed
- Give credit and praise to those who are helping

Suggestions for Local Governments

- Be helpful
 - Listen, accept criticism (valid and invalid)
 - Take charge. Use your managerial and financial capacity and political connections on behalf of your less capable constituents and neighbors
 - Realize **YOUR** people are hurting
- Plan (Now!!!)
 - Look for other vulnerable areas
 - Examine planning and zoning, change where appropriate
 - Advocate for and lead in regional planning
- Communicate with and educate the public
 - Keep the public informed of your actions
 - Be honest and manage expectations – there may not be a good solution to every situation

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Suggestions for State and Federal Government

- Assess the situation
 - Study our water resources and demand
 - Understand the implications of continued and future droughts
 - Learn how rural water system function (or don't function)
 - Work together
 - Build teamwork across agencies at all levels
 - Develop policies and procedures that allow multiple funding sources to be applied to a single project
 - Establish a joint planning framework
 - Lead
 - Create a mechanism for implementing regional water plans
 - Take charge of regionalization efforts, provide a framework, resources, and tools, not just incentives
 - Break political logjams that are getting in the way of wise resource management
 - Identify communities at risk of losing their water supplies and act to address their situations
 - Recognize that a top-down, well-resources program is needed to prepare our communities for our future water crisis
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