

# Town Manager Advises Water Alert

[www.thepatagoniaregionaltimes.com/2014/02/town-manager-advises-water-alert.html](http://www.thepatagoniaregionaltimes.com/2014/02/town-manager-advises-water-alert.html)

By Donna Reibslager

Patagonia Regional Times

2/9/2014

Patagonia's well water levels are at an all-time low and have been so for the past three months.

Town Manager David Teel has recommended that the town declare a water alert and will begin discussion with the town council during the next few weeks as to when and how to begin implementing water use restrictions.



Pumping data for Patagonia's wells over the past six years indicates that the depth to which the pumps must go to access water has gone from an average of 21.7 feet in 2008 to an average of 39.4 feet in 2013. Teel says that, although water consumption can affect well pumping levels, the town's water use last year was only about 10% above the average for the past six years, and the sustained drought that is occurring statewide is considered to be the primary cause for the lower water (continued on page 3) level. Arizona has been experiencing drought conditions for nearly 15 years, which, according to The National Drought Mitigation Center, is the longest recorded period of drought in 110 years.

In accordance with the town's drought emergency plan, residents will be asked to reduce their water use by as much as 50% and to limit outside watering to only that which is essential. A watering schedule may be enacted, limiting outside water use to certain days. Teel says that he anticipates a mandated reduction in irrigation by the town and the school district to begin within the month.

The town manager pointed out that taking voluntary action now should help assure the town's compliance before the major watering months of March through June arrive. But in view of the long-term forecast for continuing drought, he also proposed that the town begin thinking about alternative sources and has suggested that they consider purchase of a property for sale north of Sonoita Creek that seems to have some excellent wells. He urged that this be explored "before it becomes a mitigation source for one of the proposed mines."

Although restrictions have not yet been mandated, residents are urged to begin the practice of monitoring and curbing their water use now. The sooner this is begun, the less drastic the restrictions may need to be and the better prepared we will all be for the water demands of the warm weather months ahead.