

Story last updated at 2:57 a.m. Friday, October 17, 2003

Lubbock's Water

THE REDUCTION OF Lubbock's water supply from the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority is nothing to panic about, but it might have given Lubbock a troubling view of what the future holds if things do not change.

The CRMWA board recently voted to reduce the allocation of Lake Meredith water to Lubbock and its other member cities by 5 percent. City water utility engineer Ches Carthel said the city typically uses 90 percent to 95 percent of its CRMWA allocation anyway, so the cut does not appear too serious from one point of view.

And it is not as if Lubbock does not have other water resources. Local residents will not be going thirsty in the near future.

However, the long-range perspective is not so pretty. The Lake Meredith area is in a serious drought. The lake level reached a record low in August and is currently about 40 feet below normal storage capacity.

If the drought continues, the lake will be unusable as a water supply in slightly more than two years, according to projections. Getting 95 percent of an allocation is not serious, but getting zero percent would be.

Residents of the CRMWA member cities obviously need to pray for rain, but they also need to evaluate the way they use water.

We still are seeing a lot of water running down the street in Lubbock. And we have no doubt that water is being wasted in many other ways as well.

The CRMWA board did not have much choice but to reduce the allocation, and they will not have much choice but to do it again if things continue. We need rain, and we need to get used to using only the amount of water we actually need. Water is not an inexhaustible resource, and the wasting of it must stop.