

SECTION 12 – CONSERVATION AND DROUGHT

Groundwater is the sole natural resource used to meet water demands in Searchlight, but there are other methods critical to managing and extending this physical resource – water conservation and sustainability principles in land development. Part of that effort implemented to date by the LVVWD is through conservation. Conservation initially involves no real infrastructure challenges or significant capital costs, yet it effectively provides an additional resource by freeing up water that was previously consumed inefficiently or wasted. In one sense, it is the cheapest source of water available to the community. It is also a resource over which we have complete control, because future availability depends more on our own efforts and less on influences outside the community.

Sustainability contains and expands the principles of conservation. For Searchlight, sustainability means addressing all natural and man-made resources, including water; sewage effluent; land use, building and site design; drainage; and power. There are some infrastructure challenges and costs to provide water in the least wasteful way possible to support approved economic activity. The full effects of sustainability require collaboration with other entities who provide or regulate these natural and man-made resources.

The condition of the Piute Basin is such that additional water resources may not be available or may be severely limited from time to time. The lack of reliable resources may affect development approval and the rate of growth of the Searchlight Community. Given this natural resource environment, conservation and sustainable practices are essential to a stable water system.

The LVVWD, as the owner and operator of the Searchlight water system, is committed to sustainability as part of its strategic planning process. The sustainability goal and objectives focus on reducing outdoor water use, which accounts for the greatest consumption of groundwater. Water resources will be extended by conserving water indoors to reap economic and environmental benefits and balance from the efficient use of water. Finally, the strategic plan objectives emphasize educating citizens, collaborating with other agencies involved in land use, design, reclaimed water, power, and drainage, as well as supporting examples of sustainable activities. Such examples include, but are not limited to, the solar arrays at the Las Vegas Springs Preserve and the Desert Research Institute, and the sustainable demonstration house at the Springs Preserve.

In keeping with its conservation efforts, the District will develop a community outreach program to establish conservation goals and standards appropriate to the conditions in Searchlight.