A well conceived drought management plan can take the “crisis” out of a water shortage situation. It can lessen any public perception that the Water Commissioners’ actions are ill considered or arbitrary. A drought management plan can enhance public acceptance of the actions to be taken in response to a water supply emergency. (American Water Works Association)

Three elements are specific to a drought situation

1. Drought indicators and drought level triggers
2. Water use restriction measures
3. Water restriction by-laws or regulations

Signs of drought and severity of drought can be of environmental origin and/or water system failures.

Some examples of environmental triggers are groundwater levels, precipitation data, precipitation conditions, etc.

The Massachusetts Drought Management Plan defines five environmental drought management action levels: 1 Normal, 2 Advisory, 3 Watch, 4 Warning, and 5 Emergency.

The Massachusetts Drought Management Task Force is comprised of water resource specialists from the Water Supply Businesses, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and Federal Government. These professionals determine the management action levels for each geographical area of the State, including Cape Cod.

The Chatham Drought Management Plan should adhere to the same management levels. To avoid confusion the Board of Selectmen, as Water Commissioners, should declare the same management action levels as the Massachusetts Drought Management Task Force.

Water Use Regulations of Chatham Drought Management Plan

1. **Normal:** No water use restrictions

2. **Advisory:** Voluntary water use restrictions
   
   1. Outdoor watering by water users with odd numbered addresses is permitted only on odd numbered days. Outdoor watering by water users with even numbered addresses is permitted on even numbered days. No one should use outside water on the thirty first day of any month.
   
   2. No water should be used for cleaning driveways and walkways.

3. **Watch:** Voluntary water restrictions

   Outdoor watering is permitted only between the hours of 7:00 PM through 7:00 AM, as follows:

   1. Outdoor watering by water users with odd numbered addresses is permitted only on odd numbered days. Outdoor watering by water users with even numbered addresses is permitted on even numbered days. No one should use outside water on the thirty first day of any month.
2. No water should be used for cleaning driveways and walkways.

Mandatory water use restrictions with required penalties for violations of the following outdoor water use restrictions:

Outdoor watering is permitted only between the hours of 7:00 PM through 7:00 AM, as follows:

1. Outdoor water shall only be performed by hand held sprayer with person in attendance. Exception: Water use for commercial purposes, such as nurseries.

   2. Outdoor watering by water users with odd numbered addresses is permitted only on odd numbered days. Outdoor watering by water users with even numbered addresses is permitted on even numbered days. No one should use outside water on the thirty first day of any month.

3. No water should be used for cleaning driveways and walkways.

5. **Emergency**: Mandatory water use restrictions with required penalties for violations of the following outdoor water use restrictions:

   1. The watering of lawns, shrubs, flowers, vegetable gardens, edible fruit bearing shrubs and trees shall be prohibited. Exception: Water used for commercial purposes, such as nurseries.

   2. The washing of driveways and sidewalks shall be prohibited.

   3. Other specific outside usage that shall be prohibited:
      a. The outside washing of buildings;
      b. The outside washing of boats and other water crafts;
      c. The outside washing of cars, trucks, motorcycles and bicycles; and
      d. The filling of swimming pools and the outside washing or spraying of water on children and pets.

6. **Infrastructure Failures**:

   Drought management action levels due to water system’s infrastructure failures may be requested by the Director of the Water Department and approved by the Water Commissioners. The Director shall also recommend the action level to be implemented which shall have the same restrictions as for the environmental action levels. He will also recommend whether the appropriate restrictions should be implemented across the entire Town or portion of the Town.

   Infrastructure failures such as, but not limited to, are:

   - Loss of use of a water storage tank from June to October;

   A well’s draw down is within the range that may start the well to shut down or may break suction;

   - Loss of use of one or more wells; and

   Loss of use of a major water main feeding the Town or portion of the Town.