



“Currents”

January 2020

Water Conservation Continues to be a Priority

Generally, January is the driest month of the year with an average rainfall of only 1.6 inches. However, we have received almost 3 inches in Kerrville so far in 2020. The year is off to a good start, but it will take much more rain to overcome the incredibly dry conditions that persisted during the second half of 2019. Only five inches of rainfall was recorded in Kerrville from June to December of last year – less than a third of the normal amount. Despite the recent rains, conservation needs to stay at the forefront of our thinking and continue to be a priority both in our everyday lives and in future water planning.

Fresh water is inherently a scarce resource because it composes less than three percent of all water on Earth. People like us that live in a drought prone region are even more aware of this fact. The Texas Hill Country commonly experiences long periods of time with little to no rain. Therefore, we should all be extremely conscious of our water consumption. Conservation provides one of the most economical sources of water supply by making the most of what we have. As individuals, there are two main areas where we can save water: in our homes and in our yards.

Do you know what room in your house uses the most water? It is not the kitchen or the laundry room. In an average Texas home, about 75 percent of water use occurs in the bathroom. That makes this room a great place to start saving water by being conscious of the amount you are using, installing low water use fixtures, and fixing leaks. Although it is easy to postpone fixing a dripping faucet until it is convenient, that drip could be wasting up to 15 gallons of water a day.

There are many ways to save water in the rest of your home as well. Many newer dishwasher models effectively clean dishes without pre-rinsing. By washing only full loads in the dishwasher and not pre-rinsing dishes, you can save more than 20 gallons per load. In the laundry room, adjusting the load size setting on the clothes washer according to the amount of clothes being washed can also translate into big water savings.

Residential landscapes traditionally use up to 50 percent of the household water budget. Reducing irrigated turf and installing native or drought tolerant plants that need less water is the first step in conservation. You can reduce the amount of water lost to evaporation by watering only in the early morning or late evening. Incorporating water-wise practices like drip irrigation and rainwater harvesting can also save water and be better for your plants. If you purchase rainwater harvesting equipment, you may be eligible for up to \$200 from UGRA’s Rainwater Catchment System Rebate Program – contact us for more information.

Similar to conservation is the concept of water enhancement. Water enhancement seeks to maximize the effects of the rainfall we do get. One water enhancement technique being implemented by UGRA is the use of water and sediment control basins. Strategic placement of these structures in draws and drainage areas will slow down overland flood flows during rain events. The structures delay the runoff of flood flow which not only provides erosion control and protects water quality, but also sustains springflow by slowly releasing the flood water over time.

Since 2012, UGRA has worked with private landowners to install eight water and sediment control basins. We are currently looking for a location for the next basin in the Guadalupe River watershed in Kerr County. If you own a large property with a draw in Kerr County and are interested in having one of these structures on your property, contact UGRA or visit our website to learn more www.ugra.org/major-initiatives/water-and-sediment-control-basins.

Let's Keep *Our* River Clean

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