



## “Currents” October 2017

### Top 5 Reasons to Harvest Rainwater and Available Cost Assistance Funding

On average Kerr County receives 31 inches of rain per year, but unfortunately we rarely experience an average year. Nearly every summer ends with trees, lawns, and waterways looking parched and shriveled. The feast or famine rainfall pattern of central Texas combined with increasing demand on water supplies has made water resource issues a top priority. Many of us do not have the opportunity to be involved in state-wide water supply planning but we can improve our individual water supplies through rainwater harvesting. Here are my top five reasons why you should give rainwater harvesting a try.

**Reason #1: Improve water quality.** Living in a flash flood prone region means that the majority of our rainfall comes during intense storms and then quickly runs downstream. Diverting the rainfall from your roof into storage tanks prevents it from becoming storm water runoff which can contaminate surface water with sediments, fertilizers, and pesticides. Storm water runoff can also cause erosion and flooding as the water races through the watershed on its way to the nearest creek or river.

**Reason #2: Plants love rainwater!** Have you ever noticed that your plants perk up after a good soaking rain? That is because rainwater is free of salts, minerals, and chlorine and will keep your plants and soil healthy.

**Reason #3: Reduce strain on water resources.** 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 a great first step. Also, utilizing rainwater catchment systems for landscape watering needs is an excellent way to extend water supplies. Harvesting rainwater can really add up; during a 1” rainstorm, a 2,000 square foot roof can capture up to 1,250 gallons of water!

**Reason #4: Emergency water supply.** In the event of prolonged power outages, stored rainwater can be accessed for household needs - even drinking if treated properly. Also, with the appropriate fitting, fire departments can draw from rainwater storage tanks to aid in fire suppression.

**Reason #5: Eligible for rebate and cost assistance funding.** UGRA’s Rainwater Catchment System Rebate Program offers up to a \$100 rebate for rainwater catchment systems installed at Kerr County addresses. Also, the UGRA Board of Directors approved a new Cost Assistance Program for up to \$2,500 towards a new rainwater catchment system. Guidelines and application can be found at [www.ugra.org](http://www.ugra.org) and applications are due November 30<sup>th</sup>.

There are a variety of ways to implement rainwater harvesting and the systems can be designed to meet various household needs and budgets. I hope you give rainwater harvesting a try!

### **Let’s Keep Our River Clean**

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