



Cobb County Water System - Water Efficiency Program News - Summer 2017

How Fit is Your Sprinkler System?

Summer is almost here! This year we zoomed past warm weather right into hot weather. Even with drought restrictions, we have seen a significant increase in landscape irrigation. It is always important to make sure irrigation water is reaching your plants, but even more important during a drought. In order to maximize your water use, we want to help you to *spruce up your sprinkler*. Regular system maintenance can help save you a lot of money and water! Cracks in pipes can lead to costly leaks, and broken sprinkler heads can waste water and money. You could be losing up to 25,000 gallons of water and more than \$90 over a six-month irrigation season!

Now is the perfect time to spruce up your irrigation system. To get started, follow these four simple steps—inspect, connect, direct, and select:

- **Inspect.** Check your system for clogged, broken, or missing sprinkler heads. Better yet, go with a pro—find an irrigation professional certified by a WaterSense labeled irrigation program to do the work for you.
- **Connect.** Examine points where the sprinkler heads connect to pipes/hoses. If water is pooling in your landscape or you have large soggy areas, you could have a leak in your system. A leak as small as the tip of a ballpoint pen (1/32 of an inch) can waste about 6,300 gallons of water per month.
- **Direct.** Are you watering the driveway, house, or sidewalk instead of your yard? Redirect sprinklers to apply water only to the landscape. Water running off pavement or watering hard surfaces violates our water waste policy.
- **Select.** An improperly scheduled irrigation controller can waste a lot of water and money. Update your system's schedule with the seasons, or select a WaterSense labeled controller to take the guesswork out of scheduling.

Don't forget to add "*sprinkler spruce-up*" to your spring cleaning list each year. Learn more about maintaining a water-smart yard by visiting the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense website at www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoor.

Upcoming Events

For a full schedule of Cobb Water Efficiency Programs or to schedule a civic or school presentation visit <http://tinyurl.com/WaterEffEvents>, email waterefficiency@cobbcounty.org or call 770-419-6244

Family Fun Safety Days - Come join us to learn about water efficiency and the importance of H₂O. Thursdays, June 15 and 22, 2017, at the Cobb County Safety Village. Starting at 9 AM. We will have fun activities for the kids and a chance to meet Tappy Turtle, our mini-mascot.

To help customers mark irrigation problems for repair Cobb Water has free **Inspect, Direct, Connect** flags as well as web-based resources to help make simple fixes. Information can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/sprinklerinspect>. To receive free flags email waterefficiency@cobbcounty.org



Education Update

This summer has brought some changes to our program, as we wished our former co-worker, Amy Warnock, well. She has moved on to her next opportunity. Many of you had the pleasure of working with Amy in your classrooms. In her time here she added creative hands-on and STEM based lessons, increased our student outreach numbers, and diversified the age of students we were able to engage. She will be missed by Cobb Water and Cobb County's teachers and students. The water efficiency program is in the process of hiring a new team member. We will keep you posted and introduce them in our next edition of Water \$aver.

The education programs are essential to promoting efficient water use and raising our future water stewards, and they will continue. We have added a few new programs and said good-bye to a few less popular programs for the 2017/18 school year.

Our goal this year is to increase the number of schools we are able to reach. To do this we will limit the fourth grade series to 5 schools. Also please make your reservations for programs early. We will be scheduling a limited number of programs per school at the start of the year and will open our scheduling back up for schools that wish to add additional programs, as available, later in the first semester. Information on available programs can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/WESchoolProg>. For inquiries about school programs contact Kathy Nguyen at Kathy.Nguyen@CobbCounty.org or 770-419-6244.



Green School Update

The Cobb County Green School Initiative celebrated 11 years. It is a cooperative effort between Cobb County Water System, Keep Cobb Beautiful, and the Cobb County Parks and Recreation Natural Resources Unit. It encourages and recognizes Cobb County schools who demonstrate a commitment to environmental education. To qualify as a Green School, a school must have 5 or more Green Classrooms completing 5 lessons or projects, throughout the year, that help students learn how to protect and beautify their environment.

During the 2016/17 school year, 38 schools received Green School designations. This represents the work of 762 teachers, with over 8,600 hours of environmental education reaching more than 53,800 students.

The Green Innovation Award was created to recognize a school that has gone above and beyond the basic requirements of the Green School Initiative to create an innovative environmental program for its students or community. This year's winner is **Baker Elementary School**.

As part of an ongoing project, Baker Elementary School's fourth grade Advanced Learning Program students researched, designed, and built projects from repurposed materials to be installed in the Baker Life Lab as a Sensory Garden. According to Baker's principal, Alison Broughton, "the Garden will create an interactive, sensory driven area that will benefit our special needs population, as well as all the students at Baker Elementary."

2017-2018 Green School forms can be found under Forms and Apps on our website at www.cobbwater.org/greenschool.htm. If your school has a creative environmental education program or project, or if you are planning one for this year, you can submit it for the Green Innovation Award. Learn more about the award and find the application on our website.



Come Volunteer with Us!

Do you enjoy working with students or meeting people? Do you have a passion for preserving our environment and want to help educate others about our precious water supply? We are looking for individuals, clubs or organizations that enjoy volunteer community service. Whether it is just for an hour, or if you want to be involved on a regular basis, the Water Efficiency Program appreciates the commitment that you have to the environment and your efforts to assist us in educating others on water conservation.

There is always a need for extra help:

In the classroom

- Assist staff person during classes
- Keep students engaged
- Take photographs
- Set up demonstration area / pass out materials
- Assist students with craft projects or experiments

At civic presentations and community outreach events

- Greet visitors
- Pass out information
- Register people for our newsletter
- Play games with the visitors
- Hand out prizes and giveaways

This is an especially important time for us. Cobb County is under a Level 2 Drought Response Declaration. You can be a significant part of the water conservation programs offered to help others in Cobb County.

Thank you for sharing your time and talents and we look forward to speaking with you.

For more information or if you have questions, please email Gwen.Baldwin@cobbcounty.org. To fill out an application online click on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/UNeedH2O>



Tips from Tappy



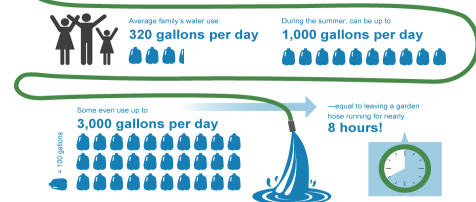
- While the water warms up, place a bucket in the shower to catch excess water for watering plants.
- When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run.

Ask for one of our free kitchen sink aerators with a flow interruptor switch. Email waterefficiency@cobbcounty.org

- Don't let the water drain away when you're rinsing fruits and veggies. Collect it in a bowl and use it to water your houseplants.
- Use a broom to clean driveways, sidewalks, and patios.
- Only wash full loads of laundry. Your favorite pants can wait until they have a washer full of company.
- Think about how you use water everyday. Make it a game for your family to find new ways to save water. Take the 40 Gallon Challenge and pledge to do your part. <http://mydropcounts.org/pledge-to-conserve>
- Plants are great actors check them in the early morning or late evening to see if they really need water.
- Don't waste pop up showers use a rain barrel and share it with your flowers when it is hot and dry.
- Set your irrigation timer to water one zone at a time for 6 minutes. Once it has been through each zone, you can begin again. This lets water penetrate deeply, and drives roots down, while preventing runoff.
- Before watering your lawn on your day perform the step test.
 1. Step on the lawn. Remove foot.
 2. If your footprint fills in (30-45 seconds or less) don't water.
 3. If your footprint remains for a minute or more give your lawn a drink.

SAVE WATER IN THE YARD THIS SUMMER

As temperatures rise in the summer, so does our outdoor water use, mostly on lawns and landscapes.



Simple Things We Can All Do



Simple Things Irrigation System Owners Can Do

Homes with automatic irrigation systems can use about 50% more water outdoors.

Timing is everything:

Plan to water in the early morning or evening to beat daytime evaporation.

Go with a pro:

Contractors certified through a WaterSense labeled program can audit, install, or maintain home irrigation systems so no water is wasted.

Look for the label:

If your system uses a clock timer, consider upgrading to a WaterSense labeled controller that acts like a thermostat for your lawn, using local weather data to determine when and how much to water. They can reduce irrigation water use by 15%, saving nearly 8,800 gallons of water per year.

Tune up your system:

Inspect irrigation systems, and fix leaks and broken or clogged sprinkler heads.

Make sure you're watering the lawn, not the sidewalk or driveway!

Just 1 broken sprinkler head could waste up to 25,000 gallons of water and \$90+ over a 6-month irrigation season — the cost of about 300 daffodil bulbs.

WaterSense, a partnership program by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply. For more tips on reducing outdoor water use, visit www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoor.



Water Source Climate Update

Rainfall this spring has been normal, but temperatures have been unusually high. Cobb's drought status has improved according to the US Drought Monitor. Allatoona's current level is 839.84 feet. The streamflow in local water bodies that feed the Chattahoochee River have varied, but Lake Lanier remains approximately 7 feet below normal. Cobb Water depends on releases from Lanier into the Chattahoochee River. Visit <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/> to keep up to date on the current drought conditions.

Declared Water Restrictions Status: Level 2 Drought Response

For Irrigation – Outdoor irrigation is permitted twice a week on the odd/even schedule. Even and unnumbered addresses may water on Wednesdays and Saturdays and Odd addresses may water on Thursdays and Sundays before 10 AM and after 4 PM on your designated days. Visit: www.cobbcounty.org/outdoorwateringrestrictions for more information on outdoor watering rules.

Rainfall March-May 2017

MAR–3.29- Inches
APR –3.89- Inches
MAY–6.37- Inches

2017 YTD – 20.75
JAN-MAY AVG – 20.71
SOIL MOISTURE-(14.98-Inches)

Cobb County Water System Water Efficiency Program

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For more information:
www.cobbwater.org



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This is an official publication of the Cobb County Water System, an agency of the Cobb County Board of Commissioners.

To keep up with our water resources and efficiency programs and take advantage of our contests please follow Tappy Turtle on Twitter and Facebook



Set up your school and civic programs for the summer and upcoming school year by emailing waterefficiency@cobbcounty.org