



Cobb County Water System - Water Efficiency Program News - Spring 2013

WaterSense Partners Help Correct Common Irrigation Mistakes

On March 5, 2013, Cobb County Water System (Cobb Water) hosted the class *How to Correct Common Irrigation Mistakes in the Field*. The class was a hands-on training for landscape professionals to help them recognize problems typically seen with in-ground components, timers, and other irrigation technology. Cobb teamed with four WaterSense Irrigation Partners to develop this training. To be WaterSense Irrigation Partners these individuals obtained one or more certifications from the Irrigation Association.

Class Instructors:

Donn Mann, Rain Bird Corporation
Tom Shannon, Ewing Irrigation
Brian Watters, Watters Irrigation
Chris Williams, Landscapes of the South

To make the class more useful Cobb Water purchased several controllers, from basic manual controllers to the first WaterSense labeled Smart controller by Rain Bird. Students were able to see several controllers and the typical problems that can happen during set up, electrical failure, and scheduling. Instructors created displays using the technology purchased by Cobb Water. With rain sensors and soil moisture technology that could simulate field situations, the attendees learned to recognize failure and how to address these issues. Tom Shannon, with Ewing Irrigation, told attendees, "We have wanted to do a class like this with interactive displays for a long time, and Cobb Water System stepped up to purchase the materials and hold the class. So, we are testing this idea for the first time today."

The class was attended by 43 landscape professionals, several of whom were municipal employees charged with maintaining the parks and landscapes at public facilities. The class was approved by the Irrigation Association for 3.5 continuing education points. "We were happy to see more than 20 of our Parks and Recreation staff at the event. Cobb's Parks Department has a strong water stewardship ethic, and we were pleased to be able to offer this for their staff as well as other attendees," said Kathy Nguyen, Senior Project Manager for Cobb County Water System.

(Continued on Page 3)

Upcoming Events

For more information, or to schedule a civic or school presentation, contact us at waterefficiency@cobbcounty.org or 770.419.6244

- **4/17 - H2O in HD Video Contest**
submission deadline (Videos will be shown at a premiere event - date TBD)
- **4/30 - Green Industry Update**
Time: 8AM-12 PM
Where: Cobb County Water System's Water Quality Lab
Subject: Efficient Water Use
Audience: Landscape Professionals
- **5/18 - Control Your Controller**
Time: 10AM-11AM
Where: Cobb County Water System's Water Quality Lab
Subject: Hands-on class on understanding and setting your Irrigation Timer
Audience: residents

National Efforts:

- **4/22 - Earth Day**
- **5/3-5 - USEPA WaterSense's Sprinkler Spruce Up**
- **5/5-11 - National Drinking Water Week**

Program Highlights

The Water Efficiency staff visit elementary, middle, and high schools across the county to present outreach education programs. Our free, curriculum-based programs are designed to get students thinking about the importance of water conservation at a young age and to help them make it a priority throughout their lives.

One of the highlights of this semester was the debut of our new middle school program, *STEM for Streams*, at Lovinggood Middle School's Science Quest. During the program, students used a model river channel and their critical thinking skills to discover how scientists measure stream flows. The students then discussed how these measurements are used, some of the issues surrounding Georgia's water resources, and reasons why conservation is important for everyone. We also enjoyed presenting at Rocky Mount Elementary's inaugural Science Day, taking an Incredible Journey through the water cycle with the Acworth Intermediate Kiwanis Kids, and participating in Lovinggood Middle School's Reality U program.

On February 5th, *waterSmart*, a program of Cobb County Water System and Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority, celebrated the launch of the 2013 *Adventures with Allatoona Ally* coloring book, featuring drawings and water conservation tips from elementary school students in Cobb and Paulding counties (winners pictured below). The first place drawing, by fifth grader Cassandra Waldron, Mountain View Elementary, is featured on the cover of the book. Each of the winners received a poster of their drawing and spent time autographing the books for their adoring fans. You can visit www.watersmart.net to download the *Allatoona Ally* coloring book and learn more about water conservation.

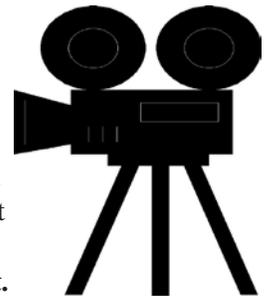


Science Day at Rocky Mount Elementary

H2O in HD Video Contest!

waterSmart, a program of Cobb County Water System and Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority, is proud to present the first annual H2O in HD video contest for Cobb County high school students! Working in teams, students will create 30-60 second video PSAs to help educate the public about water conservation. The winning video will earn **\$500** for the team and another **\$500** for their school!

We're accepting entries now, and the deadline to enter is April 17th, so grab your classmates and start filming. To learn more about the contest and how to enter, visit www.watersmart.net.



WaterSense Partners continued...

The class also had a field component. Instructors used the irrigation system at the Water Lab and walked the students through problems seen when irrigation systems are operating. They received information on identifying and addressing these issues.

As active WaterSense Partners, this class gave Cobb Water a chance to highlight new irrigation technology that WaterSense only recently started labeling and to partner with other regional WaterSense Partners. The displays, purchased by Cobb Water and designed by our instructors, are now a permanent resource that Cobb Water can use for other projects. Water Efficiency is already planning a hands-on workshop for citizens in May to celebrate WaterSense's new *Spruce up Your Sprinkler* program. The displays are easy to set up for Smart Irrigation Month and to bring to civic fairs and festivals. They are also available for landscape professionals and municipal entities that wish to borrow them for their own training. They can be checked out by contacting Water Efficiency staff at **770.419.6244**.

This program was a successful collaboration. Irrigation is necessary in the region for maximizing our landscapes, parks, and sports fields. Efficient irrigation will help extend our water resources and save our customers money. This program and the materials created for the class will help Cobb County educate more citizens and professionals about efficient technology and irrigation management. The Water Efficiency staff wish to thank our partners in this class who shared their time and expertise so we could offer this training at no cost to attendees.



Spring is here, and it's time to start thinking about getting your irrigation system up and running. Your system probably sat dormant for the last few months, so it is time to check it out to make sure it is in good working order. Here are some tips to help you maintain an efficient irrigation system and use water wisely this spring.

- Use weather-based irrigation scheduling to save up to 37 gallons of water per day.
- Inspect your irrigation system monthly to eliminate leaks, broken or clogged heads, and other problems.
- Use a soaker hose! These drip systems irrigate efficiently without water loss to evaporation. They also eliminate accidental watering of impervious surfaces such as driveways and sidewalks.
- Water early! Watering first thing in the morning limits water loss and curbs fungal growth by allowing grass blades to dry out before it gets warm.
- Water less frequently! Irrigating less often, but deeply, will encourage roots to grow deeper and survive better in the heat with less watering.



Water Efficiency Kits

Cobb Water offers indoor and outdoor efficiency kits to our customers to help save water and lower bills.

If you live in an older home (built before 1993), you may still have some older fixtures such as high-flow faucets and shower heads. These older fixtures can use quite a bit more water than newer, more efficient models. By making some small changes around the home with our retrofit kit, you can make a big change in your water use. Our indoor efficiency kits include bathroom and kitchen faucet aerators, a low-flow (but still powerful) shower head, dye tabs to help you check your toilet for leaks, and other materials to help your toilet use fewer gallons per flush.

We also offer our customers outdoor efficiency kits. These include rain gauges and soil moisture probes, along with other materials, to help you water more efficiently.

To request an indoor or outdoor kit free of charge, contact Water Efficiency staff at **770.419.6244** or email waterefficiency@cobbcounty.org.

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MARCH 2013

Cobb County Water System Water Efficiency Program

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Water Source Climate Update

After 2 years of drought, the recent rains have greatly improved the climate picture. A wet January and the wettest February in 15 years moved Cobb from severe drought status to abnormally dry. This rainfall has recharged Allatoona Lake and improved streamflows in the rivers and creeks that feed our water sources Allatoona Lake and the Chattahoochee River.

The base stream flow for the waterways in Cobb still remains in the lower percentile. The Climate Prediction Center indicates high likelihood of above normal temperatures and below average to average rainfall through the spring. We should start the irrigation season with stable water sources.

Water Restrictions Status: Non-Drought

For Irrigation: No watering between 10AM-4PM (No day of the week restrictions)

For Other Outdoor Uses: (car washing, pressure washing, etc.) Odd/Even Schedule (No hourly restrictions)

- Even and Unnumbered addresses: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays
- Odd addresses: Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays

Rain Fall December 2012-February 2013

- December – 4.97 Inches
- January – 6.54 Inches
- February – 12.5 Inches

Follow these simple steps to check for leaks in your home:

- Turn off all faucets and water-using appliances
- Take a reading on your water meter
- After two hours take a second reading

If the dial has moved, you have a leak!



Follow **waterSmartSM** on Facebook for more tips!

www.facebook.com/waterSmartPrograms