



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

July is Smart Irrigation Month

This winter and spring have brought welcome relief from the drought of the last few years. For many, that may signal that there is no need to worry about efficient outdoor water use. In our region, water remains an ongoing challenge, and water used outdoors for irrigation is particularly valuable for us because that water does not return to streams in a timely manner for reuse. The Irrigation Association has declared July *Smart Irrigation Month*. What is Smart irrigation? Smart irrigation refers to irrigation timers and associated components that use real-time site climate data or web-based climate data to adjust your irrigation system's output to your landscape's actual water needs and the current conditions. These products can be very helpful in reducing runoff and overwatering when they are set up correctly and monitored. There is no such thing as Smart irrigation without an informed and educated user.

To celebrate, Cobb Water will have a sample WaterSense Labeled Smart Irrigation Controller System on display in the Customer Service lobby. Your yard only needs water when evaporation exceeds rainfall. While we are receiving regular rain, it can be difficult to determine how much irrigation your yard truly needs. For help, visit http://water.cobbcountyga.gov/Files/Ef_Calculator.html to use the irrigation calculator. It is simple to use: put in the dates for the current week from the drop down menu, and it will tell you how much water needs to be applied to maintain your plants and yard. If the balance is a positive number, no irrigation is needed. It has received enough natural rainfall. If the balance is negative, applying water with a deep soaking results in the deepest roots and strongest plants.

There is more information on outdoor water use at our website: http://water.cobbcountyga.gov/Files/Ef_Outdoor.html

To get more info on any of these programs e-mail: waterefficiency@cobbcounty.org



Upcoming Events

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

7/25/13 - Green Plumber's Caring for our Water Training

Free class for plumbers to learn about innovative water efficient products and practices. Part of the Green Plumber's USA Training Program.

Time: 8AM-5PM

Where: Cobb County Water System's Water Quality Lab

Audience: Plumbing professionals

<http://www.greenplumbersusa.com/cfw-cobb-county>

8/1/13 - Middle and High School Science Teacher Training Day

Presentation: Greening Your School By Being Blue: Overview of the Green School Program and available free water resource lessons for middle and high school students

Time: 9:30AM-1:30PM

Where: Kennesaw Mountain High School

Audience: Middle and High School Teachers

8/27/13 - Green Industry Update

Training on landscape industry topics

Time: 9AM-12PM

Where: Cobb County Water System's Water Quality Lab

Audience: Landscape professionals

Contact: Extension Office 770-528-4070

National Efforts:

Smart Irrigation Month – July 2013

World Water Week – September 1-6, 2013

Education Update

WATER \$AVER

2

SUMMER 2013

The 2012/13 school year was a great one for Water Efficiency outreach programs. With new staff and new programs, we were able to visit new schools while keeping up with established partners. We enjoyed teaching about water conservation with fun games like Alligator Tag, water relays, Water Jeopardy, and lots of other fun activities. We visited several schools for Earth Day, participated in the Children's Water Festival, spent a day with Kemp Elementary students and parents at their Eco Fair, and showed Green Acres Elementary students some of the great water careers available.

This has also been another great year for the *Cobb County Green School Initiative*, a partnership between the Cobb County Water Efficiency and Watershed Stewardship programs, the Cobb County Parks and Recreation Natural Resources Unit, and Keep Cobb Beautiful. The purpose of the Initiative is to recognize teachers and schools that demonstrate a commitment to environmental education. A teacher can become a Green Teacher by completing five environmentally themed lessons throughout the year and submitting an activity log to the program. A school with at least five Green Teachers will be designated a Green School for the year. This year we had 32 Green Schools and 474 Green Teachers! 7 schools were recognized as Silver level schools, with 10 or more Green Teachers, and 16 schools were Gold level, with 15 or more. To learn more about the program or to view the full report, visit www.cobbwater.org/greenschool.htm



Kemp Elementary 5th graders teach younger students about water conservation



Cobb Water's Amy Warnock teaches Green Acres Elementary students about water careers

This year, waterSmart, a program of Cobb County Water System and Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority, held the inaugural *H2O in HD* high school video contest. Students were asked to create an informative and engaging public service announcement to emphasize the importance of water conservation. Students from eight different Cobb County high schools submitted a total of 21 videos for the contest, and the winner was announced at a video premiere event. The grand prize winners, in addition to taking home cash prizes for their team and for their school, will have their video shown on Cobb County's TV23. To view the contest entries, visit http://water.cobbcountytga.gov/Files/Ef_Indoor.html

After wrapping up the busy school year, we have already started our camp outreach programs, and look forward to more summer fun throughout the next couple of months. We will also be updating our programs and designing some exciting new programs to make the 2013/14 school year our most engaging yet.



Glenn Page of CCMWA and Amy Warnock of CCWS with H2O in HD contest winners



Acworth Elementary 4th graders learn about conservation and drought with the Alligators and Epiphytes program

Celebrating USEPA WaterSense's Fix a Leak Week

The week of March 18-24, 2013 was a busy one at Cobb County Water System, as the WaterSense program celebrated their 4th annual *Fix a Leak Week*. The goal of this week is to bring attention to the amount of water lost through leaks, and help make citizens more aware of how to detect and repair leaks. This year Cobb County Water System had a display in the lobby, with a poster with simple tips for detecting leaks and free toilet dye tablets for checking for leaks. In addition, there were two major events to draw attention to *Fix a Leak Week*.

On Saturday, March 16, 2013, the utilities in metro Atlanta came together for the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's inaugural *Water Drop Dash 5K and Water Festival*. The 350 race participants, and citizens from the area, ended the race by visiting vendors at the water festival. There were 28 vendors, many local utilities with games, activities, and information for citizens on water. The Home Depot was the presenting sponsor for the race, held at the Chattahoochee Nature Center. It was a perfect location; citizens were running for water along the main drinking water source for the region. The event was a big success and plans are already underway for next year.

On Tuesday, March 19, 2013, Cobb County Water System partnered with Marine Plumbing, Georgia's first Green Plumbing company, for Save Water Cobb Day. The staff of Marine Plumbing brought displays and two WaterSense Labeled toilets to be raffled at the event. The raffle winners were David Price, with Water's Central Maintenance Unit, and Deborah Durham, a Cobb Water Customer. Water Efficiency staff had the "We're for Water" WaterSense Plinko game out and provided materials for customers to check for leaks, twist on a new aerator, and replace a shower head. Marine Plumbing met with staff and citizens and answered questions about leaks, water heaters, pressure reducing valves, ongoing plumbing issues, and shared information on new innovations in plumbing. This is the third year Marine Plumbing has partnered with Cobb Water for *Fix a Leak Week*. Cobb Water is grateful to all the partners that helped to make this week a big success for the metro Atlanta region.

Water \$aving Tips

The heat is on and summer is here, when usage peaks for seasonal activities like swimming and irrigation. Cobb County Water System depends on its residents to use water efficiently during these hot summer days. Here are a few tips to help you save water this summer:

- **Water your lawn in the early morning** to reduce evaporation by 30 percent or more. The ground is wet from dew and more likely to absorb applied water.
- **Avoid watering during high winds**, which can evaporate water or blow it away from the target area, lowering the efficiency of your sprinkler system.
- **Avoid overwatering:** a healthy yard only requires about an inch of water per week (including rain).
- **Consider Xeriscaping:** the goal of xeriscaping is to design an attractive, low maintenance landscape using plants that thrive in the local climate and grouping plants with similar needs together.
- **Use rain barrels** to collect rainfall and store it for use in your garden or yard.
- **Check your sprinkler heads** to make sure they are watering your grass, and not the street or sidewalk.



Cobb Water's Kathy Nguyen and City of Gainesville's Conservation Crusader at the Water Drop Dash



Cobb Water's David Price at Save Water Cobb Day with Marine Plumbing

Give Them an Inch...Grow a Yard!

We all want our homes and yards to look nice, but sharp peaks in water usage from summer irrigation can strain our water resources and our wallets. The *Give Them an Inch...Grow a Yard!* program helps ease that strain by giving customers information and materials to help them achieve the beautiful landscapes they want while saving water, saving money, and raising healthier plants.

Neighborhoods can become *Give them an inch...Grow a Yard!* Communities by having Water System staff come out and give a presentation on efficient outdoor water use, or by distributing our educational materials to their residents. Local businesses can become *Give them an inch...Grow a Yard!* Partners by carrying our educational materials for their customers.

To learn more or to see a list of *Give Them an Inch...Grow a Yard!* Partners and Communities, visit http://water.cobbcountyga.gov/Files/Ef_Inch.html

To schedule a presentation or request materials, email waterefficiency@cobbcounty.org or call the Water Efficiency office at 770.419.6244

Cobb County Water System Water Efficiency Program

Contact Us

660 South Cobb Drive
Marietta, Georgia 30060
waterefficiency@cobbcounty.org
770.419. 6244

Staff

Kathy Nguyen
Amy Warnock
Candice Crawford

For more information:
www.cobbwater.org



To sign up for this newsletter or to be removed from this mailing list, submit an email to waterefficiency@cobbcounty.org. Be sure to indicate "Sign Me Up" or "Remove Me from Your List" in the subject line.

Cobb County Board of Commissioners

Tim Lee, *Chairman*
Helen Goreham, *District One*
Bob Ott, *District Two*
JoAnn Birrell, *District Three*
Lisa Cupid, *District Four*

David Hankerson, *County Manager*

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

Water Source Climate Update

Following a very wet Spring, all area lakes, including Lake Allatoona, are at or above full pool. The streamflows in local water bodies that feed the Chattahoochee River are within the normal percentile. Utilize a rain gauge to determine how much rainfall your yard is receiving each week. An established yard only needs about an inch of water a week, and that includes rainfall. A rain shutoff sensor is an affordable way to ensure that your irrigation system does not water during or immediately after a rainfall event.

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 March 2013-May 2013

- March – 5.00 Inches
- April – 5.27 Inches
- May – 5.06 Inches
- YTD – 27.83 Inches
- AVG – 20.7 Inches

Keeping your mower blade sharp will help keep your grass healthy.

Healthy grass is more drought-tolerant and requires less water to maintain saving you time, water and money.



Follow waterSmartSM on Facebook for more tips!

www.facebook.com/waterSmartPrograms