



**Cobb County Water System - Water Efficiency Program News - Summer 2014**

## Spruce Up Your Sprinkler System and Save

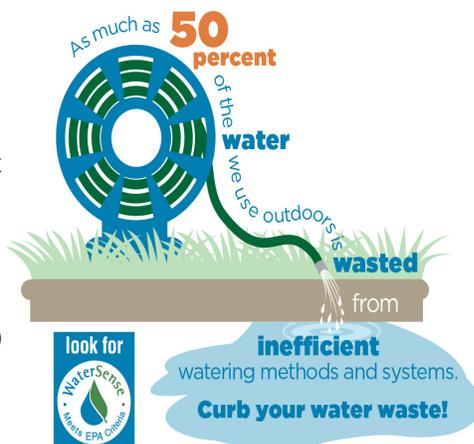
It's been a long, hard winter for your yard. While your plants go dormant to cope with the colder weather, your sprinkler system can feel the effects of winter, too. Cracks in the pipes can lead to costly leaks, and broken sprinkler heads can waste water and money. You could be losing up to 25,000 gallons of water and more than \$250 over a six-month irrigation season—the cost of over 300 daffodil bulbs!

Now is the perfect time to spruce up your irrigation system before you ramp up your watering efforts this spring and summer. To get started, follow these four simple steps—inspect, connect, direct, and select:

- **Inspect.** Check your system for clogged, broken, or missing sprinkler heads. If you're not the do-it-yourself type, go with a pro—look for an irrigation professional certified through a WaterSense labeled irrigation program. Visit [http://water.cobbcountyga.gov/Files/Ef\\_irrgAudit.html](http://water.cobbcountyga.gov/Files/Ef_irrgAudit.html) and walk through Cobb County's at-home Outdoor Water Audit.

- **Connect.** Examine points where the sprinkler heads connect to pipes/hoses. If water is pooling in your landscape or you have large wet areas, you could have a leak in your system.

A leak as small as the tip of a ballpoint pen (1/32nd of an inch) can waste about 6,300 gallons of water per month.



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## Upcoming Events

For information or to schedule a presentation visit [www.cobbwater.org](http://www.cobbwater.org), email [waterefficiency@cobbcounty.org](mailto:waterefficiency@cobbcounty.org) or call the Water Efficiency Office at 770-419-6244

### 7/12/14 - Smart Irrigation Class: Good For Your Landscape, Good For Your Wallet

A class covering irrigation timer scheduling, best practices for watering your landscape, drip irrigation, and new technologies to save water while maintaining your yard.

**Time:** 9am-12pm

**Location:** Cobb County Extension Office

### 7/30/14 - Elementary Education Science Teacher Training

Pre-planning presentation covering programs that Cobb County's Water Efficiency Program has available for elementary school students.

**Time and Location:** TBA

### 7/30/14 - Middle and High School Science Teacher Training

Pre-planning presentation covering programs available from the Water Efficiency Program for middle/high school students, focusing on STEM lessons.

**Time and Location:** TBA

### Month of July - Smart Irrigation Month

The Irrigation Association declares July Smart Irrigation Month to promote efficient irrigation technology. Cobb County Water System will have a WaterSense Labeled Smart Controller set up in the lobby for citizens to test. As available Water Efficiency staff will demonstrate the controller and discuss the benefits of installing a smart controller.

# Education Update

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SUMMER 2014

Another school year has come to a close, and Water Efficiency staff are busy preparing for next year's school programs and teaching outreach for summer camps around the county. We're also taking time to look back on some highlights from the 2013/14 school year. We introduced some new and exciting programs this year, and had the opportunity to meet many new teachers and students. This year, we reached over 7,500 Cobb County students with programs on water conservation, water management, drinking water treatment, and the water cycle.

Upper elementary and middle school students put their environmental engineering skills to the test designing and building water filters with our *Filtration Station* lesson. Middle school groups became hydrologists for the day, measuring streamflow on our model river with the *STEM for Streams* program. Many students learned about animal adaptations for water conservation with the *Animals and Epiphytes* lesson, or about the water cycle with the *Incredible Journey* and *Water Cycle Puppets* programs. We also enjoyed planting flowers with garden clubs while learning about water smart landscaping, helping Kemp Elementary students develop projects for their Eco Fair, discussing water dilemmas with Hillgrove High School students, and talking about the many career opportunities in water with students at several schools.

It has been a great year as well for the waterSmart program. We celebrated our *Adventures with Allatoona Ally* coloring book artists with an autograph signing party at the South Cobb Regional Library, admired the amazing artwork of Cobb County middle school students at The Art Station-Big Shanty during the *waterSmart waterArt* calendar contest gallery opening, and honored some very talented young filmmakers at the second annual *H2O in HD* video contest premier party at Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority.

We look forward to another incredible school year in 2014/15. If you are interested in learning more about our education programs, or if you would like to schedule a program, contact Amy Warnock at 770.419.6374 or email [amy.warnock@cobbcounty.org](mailto:amy.warnock@cobbcounty.org).

## Green School Update

The Cobb County Green School Initiative continues to grow year after year, and 2014/15 was again our biggest year yet. This year 34 schools were designated as Green Schools, with 19 Gold Level schools and 10 Silver Level schools. These designations represent the work of 542 teachers, with over 3,360 hours of environmental education reaching more than 21,900 students. We also presented our first *Green Innovation Award* to Nickajack Elementary in recognition of their *Growing Green Students for the 21st Century* program. To learn more about the Initiative or to see the full 2013/14 report, visit <http://water.cobbcountyga.gov/Files/GreenSchool.html>.



Winning students and teachers at the 2nd annual H2O in HD video premier party



Dowell Elementary students learn about the water cycle



Kathy Nguyen helps a Ford Elementary student with a garden planting

## Cobb County Hotels Can Help Save Water

In 2014 the USEPA WaterSense program launched a new initiative targeted at the hotel and lodging industry. The *H2Otel Challenge* is a free program where the Cobb County Water System and the WaterSense program provide resources and recognition to hotels and motels that take the H2Otel Challenge Pledge: [http://www.epa.gov/watersense/commercial/challenge\\_pledge.html](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/commercial/challenge_pledge.html). Taking this pledge to save water and educate guests and staff about saving water in the hospitality industry gives a hotel access to monthly technical webinars, water savings tips, a water survey and water saving calculator from USEPA WaterSense, as well as information that can be found in WaterSense at Work, the technical guidance document that helps businesses evaluate their current water use and make changes to save water and money: <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/commercial/bmps.html>.

Cobb County Water System (CCWS) wanted to take the H2Otel Challenge a little further. Local participants not only get the resources and recognition from the national effort, but CCWS provides a free audit with water saving recommendations, designation window clings for the properties' entrances recognizing their participation, room information tents giving guests conservation tips and again identifying the property as both a H2Otel Challenge Participant and an environmental steward. CCWS will also provide the participating property a report at the end of the program, outlining the activities and water savings to be shared with media and corporate management. Cobb Water will recognize the participants at the end of the program. Currently, Cobb County Water System is working with The Doubletree by Hilton Atlanta-Marietta. The property has had an initial water survey and been provided all of their H2Otel Challenge materials. We are pleased to recognize the Doubletree and commend them for their commitment to preserving Cobb's valuable water resources.

If you would like more information on this or other programs please contact [waterefficiency@cobbcountry.org](mailto:waterefficiency@cobbcountry.org).



## Water \$aving Tips

An average summer can double household water use, with much of that water used for irrigating lawns. Establishing a water conservation plan does not mean you have to give up having a fantastic lawn and garden or stop using your sprinklers – it just means doing it smarter.

- **Let the weather work for you:** Installing a simple rain shutoff sensor can save water and money by interrupting irrigation when we have rainfall.
- **Timing is everything:** Know how much water your landscape actually needs before you set your sprinkler. It's best to water lawns and landscapes in the early morning and evening, after the sun goes down, because significant amounts of water can be lost due to evaporation during the heat of the day.
- **Look for the label:** If your system uses a clock timer, consider upgrading to a WaterSense labeled controller which acts like a thermostat for your lawn, using local weather data to determine when and how much to water, reducing waste and improving plant health.
- **Tune up your system:** Inspect irrigation systems and check for leaks and broken or clogged sprinkler heads. Fix sprinkler heads that are broken or spraying on the sidewalk, street, or driveway.
- **Play zone defense:** When planting, assign areas of your landscape different hydrozones depending on sun/shade exposure, soil and plant types, and type of sprinklers, and then adjust your irrigation system or watering schedule based on those zones' specific needs. This helps you avoid overwatering some areas or underwatering others.

For more tips, visit the WaterSense website at [www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoor](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoor)

## Spruce Up continued...

- **Direct.** Watch your system run to make sure no heads are directed at obstacles like fences or telephone poles. Check to see if you are watering the driveway, house, or sidewalk instead of your yard. Sprinkler heads get clipped and twisted during yard work. Redirect sprinklers to apply water only to your lawn or prized plants.
- **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 this 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](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoor).

If you would like to speak with a member of the Water Efficiency staff about having a landscape and irrigation system that make WaterSense e-mail [waterefficiency@cobbcounty.org](mailto:waterefficiency@cobbcounty.org). Water Efficiency staff is happy to come out and speak with you or your community about efficient outdoor water use and practical and attractive options for your yard.

## Cobb County Water System Water Efficiency Program

### Contact Us

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### Cobb County Board of Commissioners

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

## Water Source Climate Update

This spring was unusually cool for the region and brought nearly normal rainfall. Allatoona Lake is nearly at full pool with an elevation of 840.5 feet. The streamflow in most local water bodies that feed the Chattahoochee River are in the normal range; a few resources in southern Cobb are flowing in the 25th percentile, a little below normal. No part of Georgia is currently in drought status.

**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

### Rainfall March-May 2014

MAR – 3.79-Inches  
APR – 6.40 – Inches  
MAY – 2.99 - Inches  
YTD – 18.47- Inches  
AVG –20.71-Inches

You can view all of the videos from the 2nd Annual H2O in HD video contest on the waterSmart Facebook page!

Learn more at:

<http://watersmart.net/action/program4>



Follow waterSmart<sup>SM</sup> on Facebook for more tips!

[www.facebook.com/waterSmartPrograms](http://www.facebook.com/waterSmartPrograms)