



**Cobb County Water System - Water Efficiency Program News - Summer 2018**

**What is Efficient Irrigation and How do I get More Efficient?**

July is the Irrigation Association’s SMART Irrigation Month. It can be difficult to understand what constitutes SMART Irrigation. Here are some common questions and answers. To learn about some typical irrigation issues: <https://youtu.be/7OQFko5zk3g>

***How often should I water my yard?***

Most plants and grass need about 1-inch of water per week, including rainfall. It is best if this supplemental irrigation is given once a week through deep watering. This will encourage deep root growth.

***How long should I water?***

That depends on how much water your irrigation system puts out. This is the precipitation rate of your system. You are trying to put out a total of 1-inch per week. You can calculate the precipitation rate using our Irrigation Audit brochure at [www.cobbcounty.org/outdoorwaterefficiency](http://www.cobbcounty.org/outdoorwaterefficiency)

***What time of day should I water?***

The best time to water is early morning after dewfall (around 4-7AM). The ground is the most receptive to water. There is less loss to evaporation and wind drift.

***What is a Smart Irrigation Controller?***

A Smart Controller utilizes weather data, plant data, and site information to create a customized irrigation schedule. The EPA WaterSense program labels these controllers. The price is comparable to standard controllers.

***How do I know if my yard or plants need water?***

Plants and grass will wilt and appear dry in the middle of a hot Georgia day. Check ornamental plants in the early morning or after dusk rather than in the middle of the day. Perform the step test to determine if your lawn needs water. Step on the grass, if your footprint fills in quickly, 30 seconds or less, the grass does not need water. If the footprint remains or fills in slowly the grass is dry and will benefit from irrigation.

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**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](mailto:waterefficiency@cobbcounty.org) or call 770-419-6244

**Green School Open House** - Enjoy pizza and snacks learning about the program. Tuesday, August 14, 2018, 3-5:30PM Cobb County Water Quality Lab Training Room - 662 South Cobb Dr. Marietta, GA 30060

**SMART Irrigation Month** - July 2018. This is the time of the year to focus on the efficiency of your irrigation system. For information on more efficient irrigation visit: [www.cobbcounty.org/outdoorwaterefficiency](http://www.cobbcounty.org/outdoorwaterefficiency)



# Education Update

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This year we wanted to thank the 8,000 students and their teachers that we met on our education journey. Our education programs are essential in establishing the water saving habits students learn and adopt for the rest of their lives. Engaging schools in our STEM based lessons allowed students of all ages to learn problem solving skills, cause and effect concepts, and debate strategies. We will continue next year by adding even more lessons where students cannot only interact with our activities but also with each other. This summer we have been fortunate to continue educating Cobb's youth through the Cobb County Library summer programs, Cobb's Family Fun Safety Days, and working with our local girl scout camp.

We are excited for the 2018/19 school year! Look for a few new lessons and some important improvements to our Fourth-Grade Series. We have new lessons that will challenge your students to use their problem solving skills to address the most complicated water problems across the world. New lessons for middle and high school will add some variety to your classroom. It is easy to schedule our free STEM and PBL-based debate lessons.

Our Fourth-Grade Series was fun for each of our 5 schools, so this year we wanted to expand our program. We are adding an additional school to our series along with a new application/contract process. This ensures we can provide your students the best experience and allows us to offer this program to more schools.

Spaces for the 2018/19 school year are filling up! 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. Schedule your fun and informative day in the classroom by contacting [WaterEfficiency@cobbcounty.org](mailto:WaterEfficiency@cobbcounty.org) or (770) 419-6374



## Green School Update

Another successful year for the Green School Program. In its 11th year, the Green School program had 35 schools receive the Green School designation for the 2017/18 school year. These designations represent the work of 651 teachers, with over 7,000 hours of environmental education reaching more than 51,000 students. It is easy being green. To kick off this year's green school program we will be having an Open House from 3:00-5:30 PM on August 14, 2018. Come and enjoy pizza and snacks, find out how to be a green school, get lesson ideas, meet other coordinators, and learn about our free programs to help you achieve green school status. All information on Green School can be found at [www.cobbcounty.org/greenschool](http://www.cobbcounty.org/greenschool).

# Cobb and Paulding County High School Students Earn Top Honors

## in H2O in HD PSA Video Challenge

Five videos produced by teams of Cobb and Paulding County high school students have been selected as winners of the seventh annual H2O in HD video challenge.

H2O in HD – which is presented in partnership with the Cobb County Water System and the Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority (CCMWA) – invited Cobb and Paulding County high school students to showcase their video production skills by creating a 60-second PSA to promote water conservation and highlight the value of water. There were 28 entries from various area high schools submitted.

“The students who participated in our seventh annual H2O in HD video challenge really captured the inherent value of clean water and the need to conserve this precious resource,” says Kathy Nguyen, Water Resource Manager at Cobb County Water System. “The message driven by these PSAs will encourage people of all ages to make water smart decisions now, and in the future.”

### Honorable Mention

Water is Precious Paulding County High School

- Angelica Santiago
- Danielle Davis
- Samuel Tukua

Teacher: Tricia Pedersen

### Honorable Mention & People’s Choice Award

Not All Water is Fresh North Cobb High School

- T J Bolden

Teacher: Daniel Knode

### 3rd place

Phresh Water Blues Paulding County High School

- Michael Sheppard
- Nick Capalbo
- Harrison Moudry

Teacher: Tricia Pedersen

### 2nd place

waterSmart Allatoona High School

- Justyn Ford

Teacher: Benjamin Baxley

### 1st place

The Importance of Water Paulding County High School

- Jacob King

Teacher: Tricia Pedersen

All entries along with the winning videos can be seen at <https://tinyurl.com/YouTube-Tappy>



## Did You Know?

An average summer can increase a household’s consumption by 100 percent. Much of that use goes

towards irrigating lawns.

With less than 1 percent of the planet’s water usable for human consumption, conservation is not really optional. It is up to each family to do their part. 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. We have compiled a list of water saving tips that can help our customers save some green and go green at the same time.

**Mulch is Essential:** Mulch helps the soil retain moisture and protects the plant’s delicate roots from heat. When choosing mulch choose a bark type mulch like pine over shredded mulch like cypress. It will last longer. When using mulch do not mound it at the base of the plant leave an area around 1-inch in diameter.

**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.

**Maximize rainfall:** Collecting rain with a rain barrel saves potable water and reduces pollution in our waterways by minimizing runoff. Rain barrels can be used to water non-potable plants, like flowers and shrubs.

**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. Adjust your irrigation system or watering schedule based on those zones’ specific needs. This helps you avoid overwatering some areas or underwatering others.

## Smart Irrigation Cont.

### How can I make sure my irrigation is helping my plants?

Watch your system run briefly through each irrigation zone.

- Re-direct any sprinkler heads watering pavement, signs, or fences to plant materials.
- If sprinklers are blocked by established plants or bushes consider capping those sprinklers.
- Practice Cycle and Soak to avoid water runoff
- Check your system after cutting grass to make sure heads are not missing or misdirected.
- If water is misting from the sprinklers, the system is over pressurized. You can replace the heads with pressure compensating heads or add pressure controls to the system.

### What is cycle and soak?

Cobb's soil is clay and clay/loam; it has a very short water absorption window. Cycle and soak allows water to be better absorbed by watering each zone for short periods and then repeating the cycle. For example: you have a 4 zone system and want to water for 20 minutes in each zone. Start with zone 1 and water for 7 minutes, move to zone 2 for 7 minutes, zone three for 7 minutes, and then zone 4 for 7 minutes. Start again and do the same. End with each zone running for 6 minutes. This method allows time for each zone to absorb the applied water while minimizing runoff.

### What affects my plant's water need?

Maintenance can have a big impact on your plants water demand. Frequent mowing and a blunt blade will damage grass and increase the water demand. Frequent fertilization and failing to use mulch or grasscycling can increase water demand.

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## Cobb County Water System Water Efficiency Program

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[www.cobbwater.org](http://www.cobbwater.org)



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

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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

Rainfall this spring has been above normal.

Cobb is in normal conditions on the US Drought Monitor. Allatoona's current level is 839.66 feet, normal for this time of year. The stream flow in local water bodies that feed the Chattahoochee River are flowing at or above normal ranges, and Lake Lanier is above normal. As summer temperatures rise, the efficient use of our water resources is even more important. Please find information about how to use water wisely at [www.cobbcounty.org/waterefficiency](http://www.cobbcounty.org/waterefficiency)

### Declared Water Restrictions Status: Non-Drought Status

For Irrigation – Outdoor irrigation is permitted daily before 10 AM and after 4 PM. There are no restrictions on other outdoor water uses: car washing, pressure washing, and hand watering. Visit:

[www.cobbcounty.org/outdoorwateringrestrictions](http://www.cobbcounty.org/outdoorwateringrestrictions)

For more information on outdoor watering rules.

### Rainfall Dec. 17- Feb. 2018

MAR– 4.88-inches  
APR – 4.44-inches  
MAY – 4.92-inches

2018 – 23.02-Inches  
JAN - MAY AVG. – 20.17-Inches  
SOIL MOISTURE- 13.03-Inches

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



Don't forget to fill out your school's Green School Application for the 2018/19 School year so we can send information and updates to your coordinator throughout the year!  
[www.cobbcounty.org/greenschool](http://www.cobbcounty.org/greenschool)