



Utah Water Conservation Forum
P.O. 1255
Salt Lake City, UT 84110

Washington County Developments

reported by Julie Breckenridge, WCWCD

Southern Utah has a new reservoir. The construction of the Sand Hollow Reservoir was completed in the spring of 2002. On March 18, 2002, the reservoir began to fill. Dedication for the new reservoir was held on April 18, 2003. Many dignitaries attended this event including former Senator Bennett, Senator Hatch and Governor Leavitt.

A significant period of time is needed to fill any new reservoir. It is estimated it will take three to five years to fill this one. The tenacity of the current drought situation in southern Utah may lengthen that time period considerably. Over the long term, the reservoir will hold a 20,000 AF drought reserve. This reserved storage will not be allocated to any water user, but will be held in reserve for drought emergencies (such as these times).

Besides water storage, the reservoir touts many other benefits. Sand Hollow is recharging the aquifer. Storage of water in the reservoir has allowed nearly 2,500 AF of water to penetrate to the aquifer. This water will become accessible to the Washington County Water Conservancy District through several wells placed around the reservoir basin.

A side benefit of Sand Hollow is recreation. The recreation plan for the new reservoir includes fishing, boating, camping, picnicking, ATV staging area, and equestrian and hiking trails. The recreation will be managed by Utah State Parks and Recreation. A great feature of this reservoir's recreation is that it adjoins sand dunes, making recreating on a sandy beach in southern Utah possible. The reservoir was stocked last year with bass, with fishing at the reservoir opening up perhaps next year. With some water in the reservoir, the reservoir has been open to boating this year.

But don't get the boat hitched quite yet. To meet the water needs of the county, water will be gravity flowed from Sand Hollow back into Quail Creek Reservoir to be treated in the Quail Creek Water Treatment Plant for distribution. So, boating will have to wait until next year.

Washington County Water Conservancy District is hosting Irrigation Auditor training in July. Registration deadline is June 17. Call Julie Breckenridge at 435-673-3617.

What's going on in your neck of the woods? We would love to hear about your water conservation projects and challenges! Send newsletter contributions to nancy@cuwcd.com.

Summer 2003



THE Waterline

Sustainable Water Use for Utah's Future

Utah Water-Wise Plant Tagging Program Launched

The Utah Division of Water Resources and Utah State University Extension Services, along with several cooperating agencies, have announced their newest public education program.

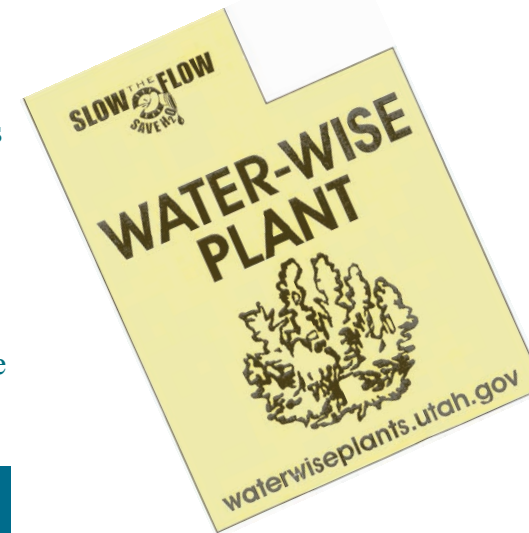
The Utah Water-Wise Plant Tagging Program provides nurseries with a list of water-wise plants suitable for Utah's climate, and free plant tags to mark the plants in their shops.

"This program will allow customers at nurseries to make more informed decisions about what they buy and plant in their yards," says

Molly Waters, Water Conservation Coordinator for the Utah Division of Water Resources and one of the administrators of this program.

"We are very excited about this program," says Dr. Teresa Cerny, Assistant Professor at Utah State University and an administrator of this program. "Representatives from various agencies have been working on this program for several months - we feel it is a great public education campaign."

Cooperating and funding agencies for the Plant Tagging Program include Utah Division of Water Resources; Utah State University Center for Water-Efficient Landscaping; Utah State University Extension; Utah Nursery and Landscape Association; Red Butte Garden; Salt Lake City Corporation; Sandy City; Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District; US Bureau of Reclamation Utah Botanical Center; Utah Native Plant Society; Washington County Water Conservancy District; West Jordan City; Central Utah Water Conservancy District; and the **Utah Water Conservation Forum**.



Residents of Utah can now go into their local nursery, locate tags with the bright yellow picture of Utah, and know that they are buying a plant that is more suitable for this climate than other, more thirsty plants. Specific information for the plants, as well as a list of cooperating nurseries, is available at the program's website, www.waterwiseplants.utah.gov.

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**UTAH WATER
CONSERVATION FORUM**
P.O. Box 1255
Salt Lake City, UT 84110
www.utahwaterforum.org

Meet Our New Officers

Kelly Kopp, PhD., new Forum President, is a native of Texas who received her Bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University in Soil Science. She received her MS in Hydrology and PhD in Agronomy and Turfgrass Science from the University of Connecticut.

Kelly is currently on the faculty of the Department of Plants, Soils and Biometeorology at Utah State University where her research efforts are focused on landscape water conservation and turfgrass science. She is also an Extension Specialist at USU and has traveled extensively throughout Utah giving seminars, presentations, and other educational programs in her areas of expertise. Kelly is an executive board member of USU's Center for Water Efficient Landscaping.

Treasurer Greg Graves, A.S.L.A., is a landscape architect with over 18 years of private and public sector experience throughout the western U.S., including Utah, Arizona, and California.

Greg has completed numerous projects for residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational clients, with particular emphasis on irrigation and efficient landscaping. He is currently the head of the landscape architecture department at Bingham Engineering.

Forum Leadership Changes

UWCF President Tom Ward stepped down and Kelly Kopp stepped up as the new Forum President at the Board's annual meeting May 1. Molly Waters became the Vice President, and Greg Graves agreed to serve another term as Treasurer.

Many thanks are expressed to previous officers and board members for their time and effort in the promotion of water conservation. Lyle Summers, 2001-2002 Forum President, has retired from full-time Utah DNR Water Resources employment and will not be as actively involved in the Forum as in the past. We wish Lyle, Tom, and others who have moved on to new responsibilities and challenges much success!

Molly Waters, Vice President, is Water Conservation Coordinator for the Utah Division of Water Resources. It is her responsibility to coordinate the Division's water conservation efforts throughout the state, as well as to educate Utah citizens regarding a wise water-use ethic.

She holds a BS in Horticulture and an M.S. in Plant Science with a Water Conservation emphasis from Utah State University.

Molly's previous work experience includes working for the Center for Water-Efficient Landscaping at Utah State University and as a programs consultant to water utilities in Southern California.

Molly currently resides in Salt Lake City with her dog, Billy Pilgrim.

Efficient Water Management in Your Landscape

Teresa A. Cerny, Ornamental Horticulture Specialist and Kelly L. Kopp, Turfgrass and Water Conservation Specialist

The heat and drought that Utah is currently experiencing have made landscape management more challenging than in cooler and wetter years past. There are, however, many efficient water management practices that will help you to maintain a desirable landscape while minimizing water use.

In early spring, prior to the use of your irrigation system, get in the habit of performing general maintenance to ensure it is providing uniform coverage of your lawn and ornamental plants. This is a good time to look for and fix broken or damaged sprinkler heads and nozzles as well as sprinkler heads that are tilted away from vertical or buried too deeply. Confirming the application rate of your irrigation system will also help you to determine the irrigation run times that will be required to apply the desired amount of water within a given time period. Your local USU County Extension agent can help you determine the amount of irrigation required based on plant needs and weather conditions. In addition, watering less frequently, but more deeply will help your lawn to establish a healthy and deep root system that will better withstand drought conditions. And remember to water between 6 p.m. and 10 a.m. to minimize water losses due to evaporation.

There are also some simple management strategies to help keep your lawn healthy during drought conditions. One option is to let your lawn go dormant. Dormancy is a physiological process grass uses to protect itself in drought and heat. You may notice the grass turning a golden or brown color. Often times, grass that has turned a golden or brown color as it enters dormancy is mistaken for dying grass. However, as the temperatures begin to cool and more moisture is available to the grass, it will recover from dormancy easily.

If you choose to let your lawn go dormant, eliminate all traffic on the grass including mowing. Mowing will not be necessary due to the slowed growth rate of the grass. Also, adjust the automatic irrigation timers or use hose-end sprinklers to apply approximately 1" of water per month. This is known as "survival" watering and will be sufficient to maintain the grass through the drought period. After drought conditions subside, begin regular applications of water to bring your lawn out of its dormant state.

If the appearance of a dormant lawn is not acceptable to you, still try to reduce traffic on the grass to minimize wear and soil compaction. Also, withhold fertilizers (particularly nitrogen) except for small amounts of potassium that will aid in root development and reduce your mowing frequency to avoid further stressing the grass.

Remember, while you may be letting your lawn go dormant, your ornamental plants still require adequate irrigation. Landscape plants have much deeper root systems than grass so, depending on the size and type of the tree or shrub, they should be watered to a soil depth of 18-20 inches. Trees and shrubs located in grass areas benefit from normal lawn irrigation. However, during the warmer parts of the year (July and August) an extra, deep watering 1-3 times per month (either by the lawn irrigation or hand watering), depending on your location in the state, may be needed where you have trees and shrubs in grass areas.

The amount of water you should apply in any landscape situation also depends on the soil type. Sandy soils absorb water the fastest, followed by loam soils. Clay soils have the slowest water intake. By allowing irrigation water to penetrate deeper into the soil profile you will encourage deeper, more drought tolerant root growth. Frequent, light irrigations will lead to plants that have a shallow root system and are more prone to water stress. However, more frequent watering of newly planted trees and shrubs is encouraged until the trees have good root establishment.

If you are planning a new landscape, try incorporating low water use plants or smaller plants into your design when possible. Higher water requiring plants do not have to be completely excluded from the landscape design, but they should be grouped together with other plants having similar water requirements (either in one area of the yard or a specific zone of the irrigation system), remembering that more water and attention will be required to maintain them.

Many routine landscape maintenance practices can help reduce water use as well. For example, by weeding regularly your landscape plants will not have to compete with weeds for water or nutrients. Mulching around the base of trees will reduce weed growth as well as reduce the amount of water lost by evaporation from the soil. Regular pruning of the plant material in your landscape will improve the current and future form of your plants and reduce the amount of water loss due to reduced leaf surface area and transpiration. When fertilizing your plants, try to use slow release fertilizer to eliminate flushes of growth that stimulate the plant's demand for water and do not over-fertilize.

While the current drought and high temperatures have made landscape management in Utah particularly challenging, the previously described methods will help you to maintain your landscape at the desired level of