

Every Drop Counts!

As people who live, work, and play in North Fork Canyon, it goes without saying that we love it here! And, being in such a beautiful place, it's easy to recognize the need to protect it. However, the efforts necessary to accomplish this goal can't be accomplished by District employees alone; they require everyone's participation. And, one area that needs everyone's attention is conservation of our precious mountain water.

Watching the water tumble down the North Fork River as one drives up the canyon, or surveying the snow-covered beauty of Mt. Timpanogos, it's sometimes difficult to remember how limited our water resources truly are. The water that flows through our faucets, appliances, and sprinkler systems is actually collected high on the mountain from several underground springs. It is estimated that water in these springs has been in the mountain for 2000 years! Melting snow above our spring collection sites creates a hydraulic "push" that affects how much water is available in any given season. So, our water supply varies throughout the year with peak water flows occurring in June and minimal water available happening in February.

One might presume from this information that winter water use is critically important; and it is. But, water conservation from July through the first snow fall is also extremely important. Why? Fire! Summer and autumn are our highest-threat fire seasons and it doesn't take much effort to remember the raging fires that plagued the American West last year. Our area was also affected as we had 15 fires within our fire department's service area, including several structure fires. Many people are unaware that a single house fire can require nearly one half of our total water supply to extinguish! That means we need to keep our supply tanks full even when our spring flows begin to diminish and while there still seems to be plenty of water in the North Fork stream.

So, what do we do about this problem? We all need to participate in good conservation practices. We need to "BE WATER WISE" because "EVERY DROP COUNTS!" How do we do it? We become conscious of our water use and limit our use to what we need. In the summer and fall seasons, irrigation of plants and lawns is the greatest single use of water. Watering a ¼ acre lawn requires 3,000 gallons of water! Needless to say, watering more often than necessary, or watering for a longer period than what the ground and plants can absorb (about 20 minutes for grass), results in a strain on our water supply without providing any real benefit. Also, watering at a time of day when temperatures are down and humidity is up (before 10 am and after 6 pm) means more of the water you use is absorbed by your plants and less is lost to evaporation.

Additional irrigation tips can be found online at www.conservewater.utah.gov and www.slowtheflow.org. Please join us in making a difference. The District works hard at ensuring we have the water we need for fire protection and our personal use. By working together to preserve this precious resource, we can maintain the beauty of our canyon while avoiding the need for additional restrictions on water use. Remember – EVERY DROP COUNTS!