

USU Extension Water Check Program Saves Water and Money

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Approximately two-thirds of Utah's drinking water is used to water lawns. In addition, it is estimated that the typical homeowner irrigates approximately twice as much as is needed. With those two factors in mind, it is important for residential water users and landscape managers to know how to efficiently use water to conserve this precious resource and also save money.

According to Kelly Kopp, USU Extension water conservation and turfgrass specialist, many thousands of gallons of water are used every time a sprinkler system completes a cycle, but most homeowners aren't aware of waste and where it occurs.

Kopp said most homeowners are doing what they think is best, but educating them can go a long way to improve efficiency and save money.

"USU Extension, along with the Metropolitan Water District of Salt Lake and Sandy and the Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, cooperate in a program that has been of huge benefit to homeowners," she said. "Our Slow the Flow Water Check program provides a team of trained irrigation system evaluators who will come to people's homes to conduct an on-site analysis of in-ground, automatic sprinkler systems. This can help them determine where water is being wasted, and the team provides education to homeowners and groundskeepers so they can improve the efficiency of how water is distributed. In the Salt Lake City and Sandy areas alone, more than 175,427,000 gallons of water have been saved since 1999."



Kopp said the Water Check program currently provides assistance in Cache, Carbon, Davis, Iron, Morgan, Salt Lake, Summit, Washington and Weber counties. In addition, catch cups that measure how evenly water is applied across the landscape and information on how to do a water check are available to homeowners through every USU Extension county office in Utah.

Homeowners are not the only ones concerned about water conservation. The Utah State Legislature showed that water conservation is a high priority and a critical part of future water management and planning by approving ongoing funding for the USU Extension Water Conservation Initiative at the 2016 session. By approving the initiative, legislators cleared the way for increased applied research and outreach education for water conservation.

Kopp said the funding will enable the university to better collaborate with the Utah Division of Water Resources, water conservancy districts and agricultural and urban water users throughout the state to more efficiently use water resources.

"We were very pleased this initiative was funded," she said. "It will be of tremendous long-term benefit to the state in helping us all preserve our water resources."

To participate in the Water Check program, visit slowtheflow.org or call 877-728-3420 (SAVEH2O). The program runs through mid-August.

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