

# WATER CONSERVATION

## Why is water conservation important?

Even if your home is served by a well, conserving water is an important step in maintaining water quantity and improving water quality in the watershed, protecting a natural resource that is vital to all living things. **Surface water and groundwater are inextricably linked** in very complex ways. Maximizing water resources is particularly important during droughts conditions like those experienced in many parts of western North Carolina in 2007 and 2008. Water conservation can present major environmental, public health, social-economic, and personal benefits. Water efficiency measures can also provide other direct benefits to homeowners in the form of water and energy bill savings, as well as preventing septic system failure. We all must do our part to keep our lakes full and streams flowing, as well as to maintain the ability to drink groundwater from wells.



*Lake Nottely viewed from U.S. Hwy. 19 South in mid-September 2007 during “Exceptional” drought*

## What are some ways one can conserve water around the home?

Listed below are several ways you can easily conserve water at your residence.

### Indoor water conservation practices

- ⇒ Don't let the faucet run while you are washing dishes or brushing your teeth.
- ⇒ Check your house frequently for leaking faucets and toilets, and fix any leaks promptly.
- ⇒ Wash dishes by hand whenever possible and only run dishwashers and washing machines with a full load.
- ⇒ Minimize the length of your showers.
- ⇒ Install pressure-restricting or “low-flow” devices on all faucets. You can also install shut-off valves in conjunction with low-flow showerheads to turn water off temporarily while shampooing or soaping up.
- ⇒ If you have an older toilet, consider replacing it with an Ultra-Low Flush (ULF) model. If this is not feasible, be sure to regularly check toilets in your home for leaks.
- ⇒ If necessary, remind family members that trash should be disposed of in wastebaskets, not the toilet.
- ⇒ Check your water meter for leaks by reading the meter at night after family members have gone to bed and the following morning before anyone starts using water. If the number has changed and no one has used any water, you will have detected a leak. It is then recommended that faucets and your piping system be examined to trace the source of your water leak(s).
- ⇒ Consider purchasing an energy efficient, water-saver washing machine.

### Outdoor water conservation practices

- ⇒ Use native drought-tolerate plants in your landscaping.
- ⇒ Use mulch around shrubs and plants to retain moisture and reduce evaporation from the soil surface. This also reduces weed growth.
- ⇒ Water your yard during the coolest part of the day (morning or evening) and avoid watering on windy days.
- ⇒ Use soaker hoses or trickle irrigation for watering trees and shrubs. If you use a sprinkler system for your lawn or other landscaping, install a moisture sensor on the system and be sure you are watering your plants and lawn, not sidewalks or roadways.

- ⇒ Raise the blades on your lawn mower. Longer grass blades can shade other blades, reducing evaporation and discouraging weed growth.
- ⇒ Sweep driveways, patios and steps rather than rinsing them off.
- ⇒ If you have a pool, use a pool cover to reduce evaporation when the pool is not in use and consider purchasing a water-saving pool filter.
- ⇒ Avoid use of recreational toys and games that require a constant supply of water.
- ⇒ Do not install ornamental yard features that require water unless they are set up to recycle water. Avoid use during drought conditions.

**The following web sites offer additional information on ways to achieve greater water conservation and efficiency around your home:**

Georgia Environmental Protection Division, Water Conservation Clearinghouse  
<http://www.conservewatergeorgia.net/>

Georgia DNR Environmental Protection Division  
*waterSmart Program*  
<http://www.watersmart.net/>

The University of Georgia, Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering  
*Conserving Water at Home Tip Sheet*  
<http://www.engr.uga.edu/service/extension/publications/c819-1.html>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
*WaterSense Program for Water Efficient Product Purchases*  
<http://www.epa.gov/watersense/>

State of North Carolina  
<http://savewaternc.org/>

**For more information about drought:**

U.S. Drought Monitor  
<http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html>

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, Drought Information Center  
<http://www.drought.noaa.gov/>

North Carolina Drought Management Advisory Council  
<http://www.ncdrought.org/>