



PSC Water Currents

The water conservation and efficiency newsletter of the
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin



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Water Saving Tip



Lawns require significant amounts of water. Adjusting your watering schedule to account for weather and using native plants can help your landscape thrive while conserving water. Native plants can also help reduce flooding due to their deeper root systems.

For more tips, visit http://www.epa.gov/WaterSense/docs/ws_watering508.pdf

Have a good idea to share? Email your tip to water.currents@psc.state.wi.us.

News

PSC approves Marshfield Utilities' toilet rebate program

Marshfield became the latest in a growing list of Wisconsin water utilities that are providing rebates to customers for replacing outdated toilets. The utility will offer its residential customers \$50



rebates for the purchase of WaterSense labeled high efficiency toilets (HETs). In approving the measure, Public Service Commission Chairman Eric Callisto remarked, "Reducing the volume of water wasted through leaky and outdated toilets is one of the easiest ways to save water. The PSC is actively working with utilities to implement water conservation programs, such as toilet rebates, that meet their unique water supply needs." The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that the average home can save up to 10,000 gallons per year by replacing an outdated toilet, resulting in savings on both the water and

the sewer bill. Another benefit of such conservation programs is that they reduce energy consumption, plant operating costs, and defer the need for costly supply expansion projects, which results in lower rates for ratepayers over the long run. A list of WaterSense toilets can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/pp/het.htm>.

Water legislation moves through Congress

The Water Advanced Technologies for Efficient Resource Use (WATER) Act introduced by Representatives Rush Holt (NJ) and George Miller (CA) in May has been incorporated by amendment into the Waxman-Markey climate bill, H.R. 2454, The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009. The bill would provide \$50 million dollars in funding for state and local water conservation rebate programs, authorize WaterSense as a permanent EPA program, and direct the federal government to purchase water efficient products and services. Another piece of important water legislation, the Water Infrastructure Financing Act (Senate Bill S. 1005), passed the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on May 14th with overwhelming bipartisan support, and has been referred to the full Senate for action. The bill reauthorizes both the Clean Water and the Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRF), and expands eligibility for funding for: storm water management projects; water efficiency or conservation projects; and reuse and recycling projects. The bill also authorizes up to \$10 million dollars in funding for EPA's WaterSense program. For more information, please visit the Alliance for Water Efficiency's "Legislative Watch" page at <http://www.a4we.org/Legislative-Watch.aspx>.

Georgia releases state water conservation plan

In recent years, much of the southeastern United States has suffered from severe drought, which has stressed the region's water supplies. On May 27, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division released the State of Georgia's Water Conservation Implementation Plan. The plan contains guidance on water conservation and efficiency measures for seven major sectors, including water service providers. The report identifies numerous goals and benchmarks designed to enable Georgia water utilities to operate more efficiently and encourage consumer conservation. Goals include:



- establishing comprehensive water conservation education and outreach programs,
- maximizing treatment and delivery system efficiency,
- implementing conservation-oriented rate structures, and
- providing programs that help customers use water more efficiently indoors and out.

To learn more about Georgia's Best Management Practices and goals for water utilities, please see Chapter 7 of the Plan at http://www.conservewatergeorgia.net/resources/WCIP_Complete2.pdf.

Upcoming Events

- JUL** Milwaukee 7 Water Council Water Summit. Discovery World, Milwaukee, WI.
<http://www.milwaukee7-watercouncil.com/> July 20, 2009.
- AUG** Central States Water Environment Association Management Seminar. Richfield, WI.
<http://www.cswea.org/wisconsin/events/> August 12, 2009.
- SEP** 5th International Conference on Water Resources Management, Malta.
<http://www2.wessex.ac.uk/09-conferences/water-resources-management-2009.html>
September 9-11, 2009.
- Pumptec Conference & Expo 2009. Atlanta, Georgia.
<http://www.pumpconference.com/index.html> September 14-15, 2009.
- 24th Annual WaterReuse Symposium. Seattle, Washington.
<http://www.watereuse.org/conferences/symposium/24> September 13-16, 2009.
- The Wisconsin Water Association (WWA) 88th Annual Meeting. Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI. <http://www.wiawwa.org/> September 23-25, 2009.
- OCT** National Ground Water Association (NGWA) Ground Water Management Issues Forum. Tahoe City, CA. October 14-16, 2009.
- WaterSmart Innovations Conference and Exposition. Las Vegas, NV.
<http://www.watersmartinnovations.com/2009/home.php> October 7-9, 2009.

Focus on Wisconsin Water

New Berlin expands use of Lake Michigan water

In a first since the ratification of the Great Lakes Compact, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) approved a diversion of Lake Michigan water for a straddling community. The City of New Berlin is currently supplied by a mix of Lake Michigan and groundwater sources. The city is expanding its use of Lake Michigan water to reduce its dependence on groundwater that exceeds state and federal health standards for radium. Under DNR's May 2009 approval, New Berlin can withdraw a maximum average of 2.142 million gallons per day to serve portions of the city outside the Great Lakes Basin. New Berlin will purchase this water from the Milwaukee Water Works and will return its treated wastewater to Lake Michigan through the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District.



“New Berlin made a strong water diversion application that outlines effective water conservation efforts and benefits public health,” said Todd Ambs, DNR Water Division Administrator. “We will continue to work with New Berlin and closely monitor this project.”

DNR’s approval is contingent on several factors, including that the city must implement a water conservation program and return all of the water it withdraws to the lake once it has been treated. New Berlin has committed to implementing a robust water conservation program to reduce its per-capita water use by 10 percent by 2020. Its program may include measures such as supporting conservation through lawn sprinkling restrictions, offering its customers rebates for water-efficient fixtures and appliances, undertaking public education initiatives through customer billings, conducting a leak detection program, and, pending PSC approval, implementing a conservation-oriented rate structure. Additional details of New Berlin’s water conservation plan, including updates on the city’s progress towards meeting its goals, are expected to be available later this summer. For more information about the New Berlin Water Utility, visit:

<http://www.newberlin.org/government/departments/utilities/water-utility.aspx>.

Highlight your community’s water conservation and efficiency efforts in a future issue of Water Currents. Send a summary of your program or water-saving idea to water.currents@psc.state.wi.us. Include your contact information, a link for more information, and an estimate of the amount of water saved or expected to be saved. Please limit your submittal to 250 words.

About this newsletter

Water Currents is published by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to provide information about water conservation-related news and events in Wisconsin. The newsletter is compiled and edited by Jeff Ripp, PSC Water Conservation Coordinator, (608) 267-9813.



To submit information for consideration in future newsletters, send an email to water.currents@psc.state.wi.us. Include your name, organization, and contact information in the body of the message.

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