

PANEL DISCUSSION:
THE WHY AND HOW OF UTILITY WATER CONSERVATION

Sponsored by: Georgia Water Wise Council

MODERATOR: Jeffrey L. Jordan, Associate Professor, Dept. of Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of Georgia Experiment Station, Griffin, Georgia 30223.

REFERENCE: *Proceedings of the 1993 Georgia Water Resources Conference*, held April 20 and 21, 1993, at The University of Georgia, Kathryn J. Hatcher, Editor, Institute of Natural Resources, The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.

Moderator: Jeffrey L. Jordan, Associate Professor, Dept. of Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of Georgia Experiment Station, Griffin, Georgia 30223-1797.

Panel Discussions:

**Why Should Utilities Practice Water Conservation?
Perspectives from Large Water Utilities,**

Philip Karr, General Manager, Cobb County - Marietta Water Authority, 1660 Barnes Mill Rd, Marietta, Georgia 30062; and Dan Quill, General Manager, Cobb County Water System, 680 S. Cobb Drive, SE, Marietta, Georgia 30060-3313.

**Why Should Utilities Practice Water Conservation?
Perspective from a Small Water Utility,**

Jeffrey L. Jordan, Chairman of Spalding County Water Authority and Associate Professor, Dept. of Agriculture and Applied Economics, Georgia Experiment Station, Griffin, Georgia 30223-1797.

**How Should Utilities Practice Water Conservation?
The Conservation Program of a Water Utility,**

Susan V. Waters, Communications Coordinator, Cobb County Water System, 680 South Cobb Drive, SE, Marietta, Georgia 30030-3113.

**How Should Utilities Practice Water Conservation?
A Statewide Water Conservation Program,**

Fox McCarthy, Water Conservationist, Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority, 1660 Barnes Mill Rd., Marietta, Georgia 30062.

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

Why Conserve? This session addresses two questions regarding water conservation. First, why should water suppliers want their customers to conserve water? After all, water utilities are in the business of selling water -- the more water used, the more revenues to the utility. However, as clean water regulations expand, and as the expense of facility improvements increases, utilities are looking to conservation measures as "capacity without construction."

The first part of this session will explain why water utilities should be interested in water conservation measures. Three perspectives will be offered: a large water supplier, a large water system that also deals with wastewater, and a smaller less urban water system.

How to Conserve? The second question to be addressed is: How should water utilities encourage the conservation of water? In this portion of the session, new and innovative programs for water conservation are presented from the perspective of a water utility and from the viewpoint of a statewide water conservation program.

The target audience for this session will include utility representatives and government decision-makers. This session is intended to let the audience understand why conservation makes sense and to present some ideas about how to practice water conservation.

PERSPECTIVE FROM LARGE UTILITIES

by Phil Karr

Water utilities anticipating significant growth within their service area can achieve substantial savings through delayed plant expansions and water resources development as a result of developing a good water conservation program. The costs associated with conserving water are a fraction of those associated with expanding treatment

plants and paying for additional raw water resources.

This is especially true when the customers of the utility consume large amounts of water on lawns and landscapes. During drought periods, the amount of outdoor water used can equal the amount being used indoors. If these frequent summer "peaks" can be reduced by water conservation, then existing treatment plant capacity can be used to meet the demands of future growth without expanding the treatment plant and developing additional water supplies. This represents savings of millions of dollars to the water utility and its customers. It also reduces the headaches associated with developing new water supplies in today's environmentally sensitive climate.

PERSPECTIVE FROM LARGE UTILITIES

by Jeffrey L. Jordan

Note: This topic is presented as a separate paper, located immediately after this panel discussion in the conference proceedings.

HOW SHOULD UTILITIES PRACTICE WATER CONSERVATION?

A WATER UTILITY'S CONSERVATION PROGRAM

by Susan V. Waters

There have been five major projects which the Water Wise Council has undertaken. These are: (1) Xeriscape Booklet; (2) Workshops, Seminars, Presentations; (3) Water Intern Program; (4) Water Curriculum for Public Schools; and (5) Water Wise Home.

The xeriscape booklet is a 40 - page manual written by seven University of Georgia Extension Specialists. Its purpose is to assist homeowners who wish to install a Xeriscape landscape or for those who plan to retrofit their existing landscape.

Throughout its four year existence, the Water Wise Council has educated homeowners, landscape professionals, water utilities, garden club members, and school children about the importance of water conservation and how to achieve significant water savings indoors and in the landscape. Water Wise officers and Board members have planned workshops, given presentations, and organized tours for interested groups.

During the summer, water utilities in Cobb, Gwinnett, and Spalding counties have sponsored a University of Georgia landscape architecture student to visit homeowners and provide assistance in reducing water use outdoors. Each participating homeowner received a free consultation on design and water use as well as a packet of conservation brochures and the Xeriscape booklet.

The Water Wise Council is guiding a committee of Cobb educators in writing a water curriculum for the public schools in the K - 12 grades.

The Atlanta Home Builders Association and the Water Wise Council teamed up to train homebuilders in water conservation and to provide certification so that they can build Water Smart Homes and also pass along this knowledge and information to homebuyers.

A STATEWIDE WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM

by Fox McCarthy

The Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority is a wholesaler of water to seven municipalities and five counties. Each Customer is responsible for its own water conservation program. In order to offer these customers the most effective and least expensive water conservation program, the Authority has joined a statewide public-private partnership with the Georgia Water Wise Council, Inc.

The following are activities that the Authority has performed through the Council: the development and promotion of a water curriculum for grades K-12 across all disciplines; the publication and distribution of 51,550 copies of the book, Xeriscape, a guide to developing a water-wise landscape; the conduct of an annual Xeriscape to the 16 state Souther Nurserymen Association; development with the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association of their "Water Smart Home" program; and participation in 34 of 40 presentations and conferences the Council supported. These type of programs enable the Authority through the council to involve businesses and other entities affected by water problems in their solutions. This translates into more effective water conservation programs for the Authority's customers.