



Central Iron County Water Conservancy District
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PRESS RELEASE

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Water District Launches Regional Drought Info Campaign, 'Get to Know Your H2O'

To educate the community and stress the importance of water during an exceptional drought period, the Central Iron County Water Conservancy District has launched the Get to Know Your H2O campaign and is working with communities in the area and the Washington County Water Conservancy District.

Central Iron County Water Conservancy District General Manager Paul Monroe and WCWCD General Manager Zac Renstrom were interviewed on KSL 5 TV on April 27 about the importance of visitors and residents each being aware and reducing their water use.

They stressed the "3 Things You Can Do" part of the campaign, asking everyone to reduce unnecessary water use by shortening showers, fixing leaks, and waiting to water, or watering only when necessary and after dark.

Monroe said he realizes those things can sound oversimplified, and may not all apply to everyone, but "as we think about the ways we can save water it just keeps water top-of-mind. We all need to think about our water situation and how we are going to manage that in the future."

The District is working with Cedar City Mayor Maile Wilson Edwards, Enoch City Mayor Geoffrey Chesnut and Kanarraville Mayor Betty Gould to explore and create solutions for the Cedar Valley. Recently, the mayors and District demonstrated their collaboration by hosting a Community Drought Briefing to announce the collaborative public information campaign, broadcasting that in a drought, every drop counts.

Paul Monroe, Central Iron County Water Conservancy District General Manager, said the District is charged with managing the valley's water on a regional level, and working with the communities is critical for both emergent needs and in creating solutions for the future.

“Water is not limited by city boundaries and is a regional resource, so to have an agency that can oversee that and be able to help all of these entities come together, both on the agricultural and municipal side, that’s what our focus is,” he said.

The District has board members representing each city and town within its borders, as well as an agriculture representative, and Mayor Wilson Edwards said collaborating is common sense.

“Water is critical to every aspect of our lives,” she said. “As such, it only makes sense to work together and capitalize on the various resources (both personal and financial) to come up with solutions and move projects forward. Not only does partnering ensure that efforts and valuable time isn’t wasted or duplicated, but it also provides the opportunities to leverage our efforts to be able to get outside funding for a project that a single entity alone would not be eligible for.

“I also believe that partnerships will become even more critical in the future as we continue towards large projects and the complexities that will inevitably be associated with securing new water sources,” she added.

Mayor Chesnut said he is glad Enoch has the opportunity to work with other partners in the area. “Working together collectively, that’s a super exciting place to be,” he said.

Mayor Wilson-Edwards said each individual can make small changes in their water use, and many small changes make a difference.

“While there are large projects that the City and our other agency partners are working on, each of us can make a difference, especially this year with our drought,” she said. “Through being conscious about your water use and doing the small simple things, it will add up. No one person can solve the water issues, but together, each doing our part, we can make a difference.”

Mayor Gould said it is important to understand the value of water is only second to air. It is a basic need and it’s finite.

“We have to be really responsible with our water,” she said.

Monroe said the area has experienced drought 15 of the past 20 years, and is drawing more water from the aquifer each year than is recharged.

Additionally, in an effort to bring the aquifer back into balance, the state of Utah has adopted a groundwater management plan that will restrict the future use of certain water rights, so those who own water rights issued after a certain date may not be able to use them anymore. The plan will take place in five phases, with the first reduction taking place in 2035. By 2080, more than half the water rights owned in the valley will be affected, which places even greater significance on the need for Cedar Valley to explore reuse and import strategies to meet future needs.

In an effort to reduce the draw on the aquifer, put more water underground, and be prepared for the future, the District has been hard at work for years to encourage conservation and explore

more efficient watering systems, recharge water that would normally evaporate, and secure water rights in valleys northwest of Cedar City.

Monroe said reducing water waste in agriculture is a high priority, since 75 percent of the valley's water is used in agricultural applications. The District, along with the Enterprise and Iron Conservation District and the State of Utah, helped farmers convert pivots on more than 2,000 acres of agricultural land to more efficient low elevation sprinkler nozzles during the 2018-2019 fiscal year. Additionally, Monroe serves on Utah's Agricultural Water Optimization Task Force.

In cooperation with local government agencies, the District began an extensive recharge program in 2016 that now includes seven recharge facilities in Cedar Valley and has already added more than 14,000 acre-feet of additional water to the aquifer. Approximately \$700,000 has been put into these recharge projects.

In an effort to diversify the valley's water supply, the District filed for water rights in three valleys northwest of Cedar City in 2006. Efforts to import 15,000 acre-feet from the Pine Valley area west of Cedar City are currently in the early planning stages.

The Get to Know Your H2O campaign aims to make the community aware of all the District has been doing to secure the valley's water supply into the future.

As part of the public information campaign, the District is partnering with SUU Physics Professor Brandon Wiggins in producing a series of educational videos about the impact of this year's exceptional drought on southern Utah. Joining with mayors of Cedar City, Enoch, Kanarrville and the WCWCD, the District's videos are circulating throughout the region to inform residents that "in a drought, every drop counts," and sharing ways everyone can help conserve.

Additional efforts include social media messages, press releases, posters and fliers, community briefings and a weekly feature story recognizing community water stewards in the Iron County Today newspaper. Media is also available at www.cicwcd.org and those who wish to learn more are encouraged to visit the website, and follow the District on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

"Our combined effort is critical to letting southern Utah residents and visitors know that doing the '3 Things' helps keep their minds on water conservation," Monroe said. "Working together, we can all make a difference."

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Photo Caption: SUU Physics Professor Brandon Wiggins demonstrates that precipitation in southern Utah is at approximately half the average precipitation expected for the area.

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