

Least amount of rain on record since 1897 prompts Iron County to launch water campaign

Written by [or for St. George News](#)

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With Iron County in the midst of an exceptional drought, Coal Creek's flows are low and natural habitats and wildlife are in jeopardy. The Central Iron County Water Conservancy District Board adopted a resolution June 17 addressing the drought, Iron County, date unspecified | Photo courtesy of the Central Iron County Water Conservancy District, St. George News

CEDAR CITY — 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.

In the past 18 months, Iron County has received the smallest amount of precipitation in any 18-month period on record since 1897, and in response to the drought the Central Iron County Water Conservancy District Board adopted a resolution last Thursday urging stakeholders to implement conservation measures and resolving to take certain water-saving actions, according to a press release issued by the district.

Paul Monroe, district general manager, said in the news release that it is important to recognize the seriousness of the situation.

“Historically we have been in droughts before, but never to this extent,” he said. “The accumulation of record temperatures and well-below-average precipitation has left water resources and plants extremely stressed.”

https://www.cedarcityutah.com/news/archive/2021/06/23/prc-least-amount-of-rain-since-1897-prompts-iron-county-to-launch-water-campaign/?fbclid=IwAR11-6dWtmxE1BthU4XHk6FWQv6mhdZN_WisqVAicOOD-UQ3UBRqf4Yp2Uk#.YNSSvuhKiUk

With only 12.33 inches of precipitation in a year and a half, when the average amount is 22.24 inches, the area continues to suffer from exceptional drought. The primary source of water for agricultural and drinking water is the underground Cedar Valley Aquifer, which dropped 6 feet last year and is expected to exceed that next year, the release states.

Drought conditions are projected to persist, increasing and prolonging the threat of wildfire and creating a negative impact on wildlife and natural habitats as well as agricultural businesses and livestock production.



Gov. Spencer Cox speaks during a press conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, on April 22, 2021 | Screenshot from Gov. Spencer Cox Facebook page, St. George News

Gov. Spencer Cox declared a State of Emergency due to drought conditions on May 13, and on June 8, he directed all state facilities to reduce outdoor watering to twice a week, asking all municipalities, businesses and property owners to do the same.

The district's resolution urges community members and stakeholders including Cedar City, Enoch City, Kanarrville Town, the Iron County School District and Iron County to follow suit and limit water usage to two times a week on turf. It asks all water users to focus first on trees, then shrubs, then perennials, then annuals and lastly turf grass as they prioritize their water use.

The free water check program offered each year through the district will be increased, and community members are encouraged to use the service to ensure they are using the

appropriate amount of water for their landscapes. To schedule a water check, visit [the website](#) or call [435-865-9901](tel:435-865-9901).

Stakeholders in the Cedar Valley are urged to create a drought response committee and to review water ordinances and landscape ordinances including eliminating turf in park strips, creating water-smart landscapes during development and utilizing tools such as LocalScapes and rebates.

The news release states that the district resolution also commits to staff members working with stakeholders to identify areas of turf that are not “played on, or laid on” and can be converted to xeriscape. Such areas could have their irrigation turned off during the drought, with the ultimate goal of landscaping them in a more water-efficient manner.

The district will continue to investigate ways to adopt restrictions and prohibitions on the delivery and use of water in the area, so that the water supply can be conserved for the greater public benefit.

“If we all do a little we can make a large impact in saving water,” Monroe said. “Our goal is to maximize every drop of water in Iron County and to create sustainable solutions for the future.”