



Iron County Water Stewards

Recognizing Paul Monroe

As the General Manager of the Central Iron County Water Conservancy District, Paul Monroe has a huge responsibility on his shoulders. He actively works with the District Board and local and state leaders to find solutions for Iron County's overdrawn aquifer, increased water demands due to growth, and an unprecedented drought period.

Monroe began working for the District in 2013, and District Board Chair Brent Hunter called him a strong leader who is "way ahead of the curve" when it comes to understanding what the area needs now and into the future. Iron County Commissioner

Paul Cozzens also praised Monroe, calling him an excellent organizer, presenter and leader.

"I know Iron County would not be where we are in regards to water without his leadership abilities," Cozzens said. "We are fortunate to have him leading our Water District."

Hunter said leaders at the state level have recognized Monroe's talent, intelligence and foresight. He was appointed to the Utah Agricultural Water Optimization Task Force when it was formed in 2018, and last year he was also appointed to the Utah Water Users Association Board. With the task force he works to identify critical issues facing the state's long-term water supply, particularly in regard to optimizing agricultural water supply, use and future needs, in light of expected population growth.

Monroe said finding ways to optimize agricultural water use is important statewide and locally, because about three-quarters of Cedar Valley water use is designated agricultural. Efficiency is crucial, and Monroe's experience growing up on a six-generation farming and ranching operation in Scipio enables him to understand farmers and ranchers and their needs.

"Water is life and has always been a part of my life," he said.

In an effort to get the best use possible from what water we have, the District, with the state, the Enterprise & Iron Conservation District and other partners, was recently involved in converting pivots on nearly 2,000 acres of agricultural land to more efficient low-elevation sprinkler nozzles. The change has netted a significant water savings.

Monroe said the state task force has also been able, through grants, to help with a Utah State University Extension comprehensive study that includes three different sites in the state. One of those sites is the Southern Utah University Farm, and he said he is really looking forward



to seeing the data that is gathered, since it studies irrigation technologies, crop genetics, cover crops, tillage practices, and alternative crops, through the lens of water optimization.

Monroe is always looking for solutions and working with the board and local agencies and landowners, an extensive aquifer recharge program has been developed with multiple recharge facilities along Coal Creek, and one in the Enoch area. The facilities capture water that would previously have run out to Quichapa Lake and evaporated. It is estimated about 14,000 additional acre-feet of water has been recharged since the program began in 2016.

During his tenure, the District has also been awarded water rights it applied for in the West Desert, and is currently in the environmental permitting process with the Bureau of Land Management as it takes steps toward importing 15,000 acre-feet of water from the Pine Valley area, northwest of Cedar City.



To help bring awareness to the valley's water situation and encourage conservation, the District has implemented a yearly water fair for elementary students, and a summer water festival for the community. It is continually working to develop conservation programs, and offer free water checks for residents to help them identify the appropriate amount of water to use on their landscapes. The District's Get to Know Your H2O campaign is working to educate residents and keep the water conversation going.



"We realize there is still more to do, and we are open to new ideas and solutions," Monroe said. "Our goal is to maximize every drop of water in Iron County and to create sustainable solutions for the future."

This month, Monroe led the District's Board in the creation of a drought response resolution, which urges local water stakeholders to implement conservation measures and resolves to take certain water-saving actions. Among those actions are the increasing of the water check program and a plan to work with stakeholders to identify turf that is not "played on, or laid on," that would be a good fit for removal and xeriscaping, and could have its water shut off during the drought.

Before being hired by the Central Iron County Water Conservancy District, Monroe earned a bachelor's degree in communication and a Master's Degree in Business. He then worked for the Kane County Water Conservancy District as a project manager and public information manager. In addition to his work with the District, he values community involvement, and has served as Cedar City Rotary Club president for the past year.

Hunter said Monroe is great at finding solutions to challenges. He is also "just a really good guy to work for," and the rest of the dedicated District staff excels under his leadership.

"He's absolutely the best thing that's ever happened to the District," Hunter said. "He's just really a godsend to this county," especially in a time of severe drought and population growth.

The purpose of the Iron County Water Stewards program is to recognize community members for contributing to the effort to optimize every drop of water in Iron County. The Central Iron County Water Conservancy District (CICWCD) is actively engaged in education, conservation, reuse and import projects to meet the growing demands on local water supply.

For every effort you make to conserve, we consider you a water steward, too. To Get to Know Your H2O, visit <https://cicwcd.org/>.

GET TO KNOW YOUR



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