

With the drought continuing to worsen, what changes can I make to save water?



ANSWERED BY:  
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## Iron County Water Stewards

### *Answering Community Questions*

*Get to Know Your H2O: Central Iron County Water Conservancy District appreciates questions submitted by community members about the Pine Valley Water Supply Project and local water needs. As part of its role as steward of water in Cedar Valley, the District is working with a group of experts, community members and elected officials to help prepare viable solutions for the future and to respond to community questions and concerns about emergent water issues.*

*This week's question from the community is answered by*

*Candace Schaible, Professional Practice Extension Assistant Professor of Horticulture and Water Conservation for the Utah State University Extension.*

### **Question: With the drought continuing to worsen, what changes can I make to save water?**

**Answer:** Unfortunately, what started out as a good snow year dropped off quite quickly, and the drought continues to hold strong. According to the United States Drought Monitor, the majority of Iron County is already in extreme drought. This is concerning, especially at this time of year, and everyone needs to do their part to help save water.

There are many things you can do. Because approximately 60 percent of residential water use is outdoor irrigation, the biggest residential savings can come through our landscaping choices.

The simplest thing we can all do is wait to irrigate. Resources, including a weekly lawn watering guide, can be found at [www.slowtheflow.org](http://www.slowtheflow.org). Lawns don't need to be watered until temperatures are in the mid-70s for several consecutive days. Eliminating just one watering can save about 3,000 gallons of water for the average quarter-acre Utah yard. In Iron County, we don't need to be watering our lawns yet as we are still seeing cool weather.

For those who would like to landscape their yards beautifully and conserve water, the Localscapes program is a great resource. A local in-person course is offered by the Utah State University Extension and Central Iron County Water Conservancy District and online courses are available at [localscapes.com](http://localscapes.com). The Localscapes concept helps maintain curb appeal, is customized to your needs, and can be very waterwise. It starts with a central open shape, then gathering and activity areas, then paths, and planter beds fill in the gaps. A Localscapes yard is easier to maintain, and irrigation is more efficient.

Residents, businesses, and municipalities can convert park strips and other unused lawn areas to desert hardy plants, so they aren't watering the sidewalk or otherwise watering unnecessarily. If a lawn is only walked on

when it's mowed or fertilized, it's a good idea to evaluate whether it should be removed. Areas of lawn that are smaller than 8 feet by 8 feet, or that are sloped, make irrigation inefficient and are also a great place to start when removing lawn.

Users can also sign up for a free water check offered by the District and USU Extension to learn how to water their existing lawn more efficiently. Call 435-865-9901 to schedule a free water check.

Water users in the District and local municipalities pay their water bills based on conservation rates, which discourage high water usage. Those who use larger amounts of water pay more. With Cedar City's recent rate changes, those who overuse water will have much higher rates than they've had in the past. Those who use more than 20,000 gallons a month will see their rates more than double over the next four years, so residents are encouraged to prepare now by making any needed landscape changes.

Many resources are available. Learn more about responsible water use and landscaping at <https://extension.usu.edu/cwel/> and <https://cicwcd.org/>. In a drought, every drop counts, and if each person does a little bit to conserve, it will make a large impact. It has never been more important to optimize the water we have available in Iron County.



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*Several special interest groups have recently moved their focus to Cedar Valley water and have been spreading misinformation. The Central Iron County Water Conservancy District was created by a vote of Cedar Valley residents more than two decades ago. It has consistently been dedicated to developing and stabilizing the valley's water supply through conservation, recharge, reuse, and importing of water for the benefit of all current and future water users in the region. The District utilizes scientists, experts and professionals to understand the valley's underground aquifer and to determine responsible solutions for the community as it strives to meet local water challenges. For reliable information on the Pine Valley Water Supply Project specifically and the Cedar Valley's water situation in general, please visit <https://cicwcd.org/>. For more detailed information about the Pine Valley Water Supply Project and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, please visit <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/1503915/570>.*

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