

Does the Cedar Valley have any historical precedent for conservation during water shortages?

## 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.*



Answered using Clemont Adams' book "A History of Water in Iron County"



*This week's question from the community is answered by the Central Iron County Water Conservancy District using information from Clemont Adams' book "A History of Water in Iron County."*

### **Question: Does the Cedar Valley have any historical precedent for conservation during water shortages?**

**Answer:** Ever since Cedar City was founded, ensuring area residents have been supplied with enough water has been a major challenge for city and county leaders.

A 1934 report by a Utah State University Extension Agent stated "The most serious limiting factor in Iron County's progress and prosperity is water."

Cedar City was settled in 1851. The first city water system was agreed upon during a 1902 election, and was installed using only water from Coal Creek. Within six years, water was being piped from springs, and just 11 years after that, in 1919, a "lawn sprinkling" water restriction was adopted. In 1924 water meters were installed to create some accountability for those suspected of overuse.

By 1934, drought was affecting the community and the state's Drought Relief Committee drilled six large irrigation wells in the Cedar Valley. The Cedar Valley was no longer limited to surface water and spring water use, making life easier, but many were concerned about an already-declining underground aquifer.

In 1952 water rates were increased, with water use above 30,000 gallons costing more. The per-capita use that year was just more than 222 gallons per day. Per-capita use has fluctuated throughout the years, sometimes increasing above 240 gallons per person per day. However, the 2019 numbers were 223 gallons per person per day, earning Iron County a top-four ranking for low water use among the 29 counties in the

state. Officials hope to reduce that further through education, tiered water rates, and other conservation programs.

A portion of the 1959 Cedar City Water Report read, "It is generally recognized that the life blood of a community is a good, safe and adequate water supply. For a growing city in a very dry region it becomes even more important. The year 1959 proved to be one of the driest years ever experienced in this area and the problem of supplying water became one of real concern to City officials."

The western U.S. is currently experiencing the worst drought in more than 1,200 years. From the 1950s to the present day securing and supplying water from new sources has been a high priority for area officials, and several possibilities have been examined. Currently the Central Iron County Water Conservancy District is working on a project to utilize water from the Pine Valley, northwest of the Cedar Valley. Those working on the project are acutely aware that the Pine Valley Water Supply Project is just part of Iron County's water solutions. Aquifer recharge projects and conservation are also crucial.

**HISTORICAL WATER CONSERVATION IN CEDAR VALLEY**

 <b>1919</b> LAWN SPRINKLING RESTRICTION ADOPTED	 <b>1924</b> WATER METERS INSTALLED	 <b>1952</b> WATER RATE INCREASE FOR OVERUSE	 <b>1934</b> WELLS WERE DRILLED DUE TO DROUGHT
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**2022**  
EXTREME DROUGHT, MANY WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAMS ARE IN PLACE, AND RESIDENTS ARE URGED TO "WATER LESS"

  **CICWCD.ORG**

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*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>.*

