



"When the Well's Dry, We Know The Worth of Water"

- Benjamin Franklin

One could argue that Ben meant this saying more metaphorically about taking things for granted that seem abundant until they are no longer available, but the quote can also apply literally. In general, the availability of clean water is taken for granted, and as such, little thought is given to it. We have things that are part of our daily routines that require its use such as laundry, cooking, cleaning, bathing, etc. This water-demanding routine usually increases as temperatures do, and we need to keep things like gardens, flowerbeds, and grass from succumbing to the Georgia heat. This increase in demand usually doesn't make that big of an impact since it is usually a short period of time before we get our next summer shower. It gets a little more interesting when those summer showers don't show up like they should. Indicators such as precipitation, stream flow, groundwater levels, reservoir levels, water supply conditions, short-term climate predictions, and soil moisture play a factor in whether the State of Georgia gets involved and issues a Drought Declaration.

Declarations of Drought come in three stages, starting with level 1 (lowest) and ending with level 3 (highest). The Rule on Drought Management (391-3-30) says that if Drought Level 1 is declared, we must educate the public with the following: **1.** A drought has been issued **2.** Drought specific public service messages about using less water through one or more of the following platforms: newspaper advertisements, bill inserts, website home-page, social media, and notices in public libraries.

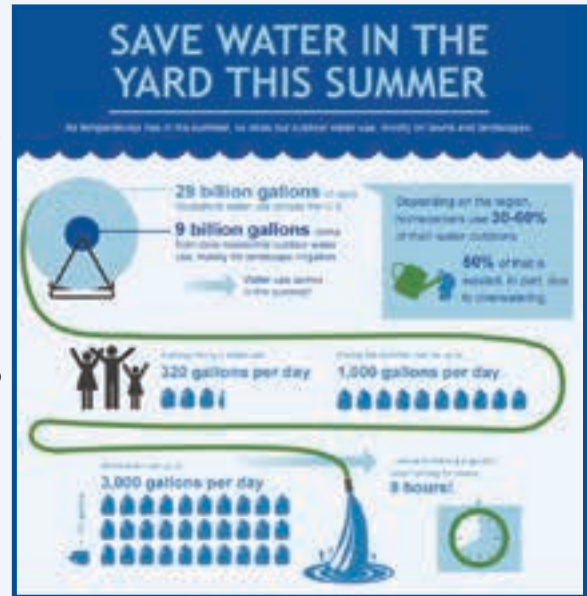
Things get a little more interesting once the drought conditions elevate to level 2 Drought Declaration. Under normal conditions, Georgia residents have watering restrictions on irrigation between 10 AM and 4 PM based on the Georgia Water Stewardship Act of 2010. A Level 2 Declaration goes a step further and requires even-numbered addresses to only irrigate on Wednesday and Saturday between 4 PM and 10 AM. Odd-numbered addresses may irrigate on Thursday and Sunday between 4 PM and 10 AM. Additionally, the following actions are prohibited under a Drought 2 Declaration: **1.** Washing hard surfaces such as streets, gutters, sidewalks, and driveways, except when necessary for public health and safety. **2.** Using water for ornamental purposes, such as fountains, reflecting pools, and waterfalls. **3.** Use of fire hydrants, except for firefighting, public health, safety, or flushing. **4.** Washing vehicles, such as cars, boats, trailers, motorbikes, airplanes, or golf carts. **5.** Non-commercial washing, or pressure washing, of buildings or structures, except for immediate fire protection. **6.** Charity or non-commercial fund-raiser, car washes.

The 3rd and final level of the Drought Declaration is when the rules get the most restrictive; this is only issued under dire circumstances of extreme drought. These restrictions include the following: **1.** Revision of the current rate schedule to add a Drought surcharge for usage. **2.** Many more restrictions on outdoor watering except in certain situations. **3.** Implement monetary penalties or water termination for water waste. This summary greatly oversimplifies the Level 3 rule, but you get a general idea of some penalties involved.

We realize many people would say, "I pay my bill, and as long as I continue, I should be able to use as much as I like. The Cherokee County Water and Sewerage Authority (CCWSA) is in the business of selling water, so sell it to me." There are several problems with this mentality, the first of which is that we are tasked to be good stewards of our local resources. Continuing to drain an already depleted system can cause real issues to our local environment. The second problem is that Georgia Law requires the requirements detailed in the Drought Management (391-3-30).

At this time (7/8/24), we are not in a Declared Drought; instead, we find ourselves in a unique situation. The lake levels are normal, and our source water (Etowah River) is also normal, but it has been drier than a typical summer. This condition has led to an unusually high demand for direct and indirect outdoor water usage. To help us accommodate this abnormal situation, we kindly ask you, our customers, to continue to use water wisely, limit your outdoor watering to outside the hours of 10 AM and 4 PM, and be conscious of how your actions as an individual can affect the more extensive system. Please help us continue to be good stewards of our water resources.

For more information about the CCWSA Drought policy, check out <https://ccwsa.com/drought/>



Just as a reminder, if you have a particular topic or question you would like us to address, please send it to - ccwsaea@gmail.com