

# WATER - our MOUNTAIN GOLD



Suggestions from the  
Central Sierra Watershed Committee

## *Practical and Economical Water Saving Tips for Home and Business*

As residents of the foothill and valley communities, we are becoming increasingly aware of how important it is to protect our precious water resources. During the last few summers we have received numerous requests to reduce our use of water. We have also been notified that water we drink exceeds quality standards set by the EPA. Whether you have a private well or septic system, or are connected to a centralized water and sewage system, the challenges we face in our communities are the same: we all need a reliable source of quality water for drinking, cooking and general use for our homes and businesses. **The U.S. is the wastes more water than any other country in the world!**

### ***Simple ideas to save water***

There are simple and convenient ways to save water:

- ✓ We can begin to achieve savings by how efficiently water is pumped, pressurized and heated!
- ✓ Inexpensive water saving devices can be purchased at the local hardware store, plumbing supply or even by mail order.
- ✓ Many of us are well acquainted with the "low tech" approach of putting a brick in the toilet reservoir.
- ✓ There are now many brands of water efficient toilets that can save hundreds of gallons of water annually.
- ✓ Taking a shower rather than a bath can also save water. To save even more water replace that old showerhead with a 1.8 to 2.5 gallon per minute flow rating unit, and if possible, include a shut-off lever. Both these items can save water and reduce your energy costs.
- ✓ Fix leaking faucets and water hoses to conserve water. A slow, steady drip can waste 350 gallons per month.
- ✓ Change to drip irrigation systems with timers, rather than using sprinklers or open watering for landscaping and gardening.
- ✓ When buying a new washing machine, purchase a water and energy saving model and remember to look for the *Energy Star*.
- ✓ Decrease your wash cycle time and increase your load of laundry.
- ✓ Using your dishwashers efficiently can also save water. Wait until it has a full load of dishes rather than washing partial loads. Wash small loads of dishes by hand to reduce your water use and energy costs.
- ✓ Fall is the best time of year to mulch landscape plants to protect them from winter weather and allow mulch to assimilate into the soil for water conservation in the spring and summer.

- ✓ Shut off the water while brushing your teeth.
- ✓ Don't wash your driveway.

### ***New water saving products available***

- There are new products that provide instant hot water at the tap or "on demand" tankless water heaters that are triggered by turning on the faucet to heat as much water as needed instantly, saving both water and gas or electricity.
- Relatively inexpensive circulation pumps are available which can be installed on hot water systems. The system works well by providing hot water on demand to all plumbing fixtures thereby eliminating unnecessary water use while waiting for the water to get hot.

### ***How can businesses help?***

Households can help save water but that is not enough. Businesses can conserve water and realize significant energy savings by:

- Utilizing landscaping that is fire resistant and drought tolerant, augmented with drip irrigation systems with timers.
- Planting native oaks that require little or no watering instead of coast redwood trees that may be attractive, but use large quantities of water.
- Restaurants can reduce their use by serving ice water upon request only.
- Using new technology such as low flush devices, or better yet, "no flush" devices, which can save thousand of gallons of water and reduce the amount of material sent to our water treatment facilities.

### ***What else can you do?***

Your local town or county government wants and needs to hear from you. Request that water saving approaches and technologies for new construction and remodel projects be approved. In some counties in California, "gray water," that is, water used for showering and washing in the home and routed to special purple pipes, may be reused for landscaping and other purposes. Talk to your local officials about using this and other technologies in your community.

### ***Where can I go for more information?***

- Try out your nearest hardware or plumbing supply store. They can be a wealth of information.
- The internet is also a good source of information. Check out the California Department of Water Resources web sites for more water saving techniques at:  
DWR Office of Water Use Efficiency: <http://www.owue.water.ca.gov/>  
DWR Office of Water Education: <http://www.owe.water.ca.gov/>
- For more information on water-free types of devices click onto: [www.falconwaterfree.com](http://www.falconwaterfree.com)

The CSWC meets on the last Wednesday of every month at the Sierra Ambulance Office, 40755 Winding Way, Oakhurst, at 9 AM, and is open to the public. For information, please email [leavesofgrass@netptc.net](mailto:leavesofgrass@netptc.net).

***The mission of the Central Sierra Watershed Committee is to promote the quality, quantity, and aesthetic values of our water resources through the conservation and restoration of our watersheds.***

CSWC members include: Interested citizens, ranchers, homeowners; local Native American tribes; North Fork Community Development Council; Chowchilla-Redtop and Coarsegold Resource Conservation Districts; Chowchilla City Council; Upper Merced River Watershed Council; California Water Institute; Sierra Foothill Conservancy; Madera Irrigation District; Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation & Development Council; US Army Corps of Engineers; Regional Water Quality Control Board; Madera County Environmental Health & Engineering; CA Department of Water Resources; Madera County Board of Supervisors; Madera Agriculture Commissioner; San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District; Natural Resource Conservation Service; and the United States Forest Service.

Note: The contents of this article do not necessarily reflect the views of the State.