

Using Water Efficiently

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A few months ago I was invited to attend the Colorado WaterWise Conference held across the street from the Broncos' Mile Hi Stadium. The Colorado WaterWise Council is the voice of the Colorado Water Conservation Community. Now known as Colorado WaterWise, it is a non-profit organization that promotes and facilitates the efficient use of Colorado's water.

The conference included Water Supply Producers and Planners, Environmental and Conservation Professionals, Elected Officials, City Planners, Landscape Professionals, and Green Builders and Developers. At the conference I heard about the enormous and complicated task of planning for future water supplies, about the importance of water suppliers reducing system loss (leaky underground pipes) and effective ways to get the public to conserve. Water used to be cheap, now conserving saves money in today's economy. There were also discussions on the complexities of pricing equitably by per capita use or density use.

I also learned that most Colorado water departments will do free home irrigation audits that recommend sprinkler head types, water cycle times, pressure, removing obstructions, etc. Some give away rain delay sensors and offer rebates on sprinkler clocks and sprinkler heads. There was even a talk on a new water efficient micro-brewery, which instead of using between 4 – 12 gallons of water to produce a gallon of beer, uses just 3.8 gallons per gallon of beer. I was also told about the following link that might be useful to display in your lobby, or given to your water supplier or local elected officials.

You might also want to check out the [Alliance for Water Efficiency](#) Board of Directors. They're from all over the country, and some might be from your area. However, the best part of the conference was seeing all the water department officials that I had gotten to know during Colorado's last severe drought in 2002 and continued to work with over the next couple of years on certification and best management programs.

It is important to keep in contact with these officials even when there is abundant water supply as we are experiencing now, so that we have contacts when the next drought happens. Call your water department and ask if there are any similar water use conferences in your area. Please attend them and search out the local officials to tell them about the efficient ways you use water and the benefits of washing at a carwash.

The WCA is working on brochures that could be given to local politicians and water suppliers explaining the benefits of using a carwash versus washing at home in the driveway.