

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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Georgia's Plan for Conserving Water Released

EPD releases Water Conservation Implementation Plan for Georgia Businesses

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ATLANTA – May 27, 2009 – A plan to help Georgians use water more efficiently and foster a culture of conservation throughout the state was released today by the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (EPD). Georgia's Water Conservation Implementation Plan (WCIP) is a resource to guide Georgia's seven major water use sectors in an effort to help sustain the state's water resources and provide for a secure water supply in the future.

The WCIP, developed by the EPD in partnership with individuals representing the diverse water users of the state, includes sector-specific chapters for business owners, farmers, homeowners, water service providers, landscapers, golf courses and state agencies.

Details of the plan include long-term conservation goals for each sector, benchmarks for determining progress, a menu of optional best practices and implementation actions designed to reduce water waste, water loss and, where necessary, water use.

"The ultimate goal of water conservation is not to discourage water use, but to maximize the benefit from each gallon used," said EPD Director Dr. Carol A. Couch. "This plan will guide Georgians toward more efficient and sustainable water use to help ensure that our water resources will continue to support growth and prosperity while maintaining healthy natural systems."

The WCIP was developed for Georgia business owners, farmers, homeowners, water service providers and government officials to assist with decisions related to water use and water management. It is a go-to document that can be used to educate Georgia's citizens and to inform regional water planning councils, formed through Georgia's first Statewide Water Plan, Couch said.

Couch said the benefits of water conservation are realized on several levels. "Businesses can streamline operations and reduce operating costs through water-conserving technologies and water providers can reduce water treatment and production costs by addressing water lost within their treatment and delivery systems," she said. "Landscapes can also become less vulnerable to drought conditions when they are designed for efficiency and the plants utilized are of a variety that requires less water.

In terms of economic development, emphasizing water conservation can promote responsible management of finite resources. In areas where resources are not limited, water conservation practices contribute to retaining water for current and future uses, and a statewide commitment to conservation also promotes equity across regions and across water use sectors, Couch said.

The WCIP was developed as a result of executive orders issued by Governor Sonny Perdue in 2007 and 2008, and implementation actions in the statewide water management plan. For more information on the WCIP, please visit www.ConserveWaterGeorgia.net.

The **Environmental Protection Division** (EPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources is a state agency charged with protecting Georgia's air, land, and water resources through the authority of state and federal environmental statutes. These laws regulate public and private facilities in the areas of air quality, water quality, hazardous waste, water supply, solid waste, surface mining, underground storage tanks, and others. EPD issues and enforces all state permits in these areas and has full delegation for federal environmental permits except Section 404 (wetland) permits.