

## Saving water: Conservation pays big dividends

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El Pasoans continue to respond positively to the need for conservation of water. Statistics from the El Paso Water Utilities show that while peak day consumption was 164.3 million gallons in 1997, it dropped to 144 million gallons in 2006.

Peak-day consumption is the most amount of water used on a summer day.

Per capita consumption also has fallen, from 149 gallons of water per person per day in 2003 to 134 gallons per person per day in 2007.

These admirable figures are a tribute to both good planning on the part of the water utility and smart water use on the part of consumers.

El Paso's recent and continuing spate of hot, dry days is a reminder of just how important water is, particularly in a desert area.

El Paso Water Utilities General Manager Ed Archuleta said Thursday, "We're in great shape in terms of water supply and water policy."

Consumers upset with the recent stormwater-fee controversy might not be in agreement with the "policy" part of that remark, but it can't be denied that El Paso is ahead of the game when it comes to ensuring supply.

The utility has decreased dependence on the Hueco Bolson, which is shared with rapidly growing Juárez.

And a desalination plant that is operated jointly with Fort Bliss produces 27.5 million gallons of fresh water per day.

But these encouraging figures don't indicate that El Pasoans can let up on conservation efforts.

Some well-known water- conservation suggestions include:

- Replace your water-sucking lawn and shrubbery with xeriscaping that requires a minimum of water, yet reflects the beauty of the Southwest.
- Fix dripping faucets and toilets that keep running. They can waste an incredible amount of water.
- Replace your water-hog toilets with low-flow versions. That will save both water and money.
- Use water-saving showerheads.
- Consider replacing your evaporative air conditioner with refrigerated air.

El Pasoans have shown in a big way that they realize the importance of conservation and know how to conserve that precious resource.

Keep up the good work.

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