

Post's water conservation plan reduces useage by 500 million gallons annually

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With Arizona stuck in a long-term drought, water conservation efforts at Fort Huachuca are increasingly important, according to Bill Stein, energy coordinator and utilities sales and purchases officer for the installation.

Stein said that over the past decade, water conservation efforts have reduced the fort's water usage from one billion gallons per year to its current 500 million annual gallons — a reduction of 50 percent.

Gretchen Kent, National Environmental Protection Act coordinator for Fort Huachuca, said the post's population has remained relatively stable during the period water usage fell.

"It's been, including all the people who live inside the fence, about 9,000, plus or minus 500," she said. "We dipped lower a few years

ago, and are now up to about where we were 10 years ago."

Kent said the reduction in water usage means the same number of people are using half the amount of water used before the conservation efforts started to take effect.

Not all the conservation measures are obvious, even though they can lead to large changes in the amount of water used on the installation.

"In 1994, we went from irrigating four months a year, four times a week, in the housing areas, to irrigating two months a year, and twice a week," Stein said. "That was a significant drop, something like 140 million gallons per year."

Stein said the post acted in the mid-1990s to reduce leaks throughout its water system.

"There were some dusesies out there, there was actually one two-inch pipe that was valving open and creating a wet-lands environment, a

man-made one, near the front gate," he said.

"There was a significant effort to find and repair leaks," he said. "Stopping the leaks saved an additional 120 million gallons per year."

Less obvious, but equally effective, has been the post-wide replacement of showerheads, and the use of water-free urinals.

"Virtually all of the rest of the water savings has been from the use of technologies like that," Stein said. He said the showerheads used on Fort Huachuca inject air into the water stream to increase the force of its flow.

"These use 1.5 gallons per minute. If you buy a low-flow showerhead, most of them are 2.5 gallons per minute," Stein said.

He said the low-flow showerheads are now used in most places on the installation. In addition, Fort Huachuca has 375 waterless urinals, and is gradually replacing the washing machines on post with "horizontal access" (front loading) washing machines that use less water and

energy than their top-loading counterparts.

"We've placed them in virtually all the housing for single soldiers," Kent said. "We have about 300 units on post right now."

Kent said the washing machines are not exotic. "We're using off-the-shelf Sears Kenmore washing machines," she said. "According to their literature, based on a number of factors, they use 40 to 50 percent less water than a regular washing machine."

Stein said more conservation efforts, including another change to irrigation, may take place in the future.

"We'd like to build a new holding tank on Reservoir Hill. That would let us move to nighttime irrigation. If you can irrigate in the evening hours, you miss out on the evaporation and it can lead to a significant water saving."

If you live on Fort Huachuca and want to help in the water conservation efforts, follow the tips included in the table below.

Water use policy table

Activity	Family housing	Facilities	Remote facilities (unmanned)
Watering with hand held hoses	Authorized at any time	Authorized at any time	Authorized at any time
Watering with unattended hoses	Not authorized at any time	Not authorized at any time	Not authorized at any time
Use of sprinklers	Twice a week in May and June, from 6 – 8 p.m. Bonnie Blink may sprinkle on Wednesdays and Sundays. All other family housing may sprinkle on Tuesdays and Saturdays.	Twice a week, 3 p.m. – 10 a.m., May through September. No sprinklers will be used between 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. except at the Golf Course, Chaffee field and the Eifler sports complex.	Twice a week, 3 p.m. – 10 a.m., May through September. No sprinklers will be used between 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. except at the Golf Course, Chaffee field and the Eifler sports complex.
Use of treated effluent sprinkler irrigation	Not authorized	As effluent is available to meet mission requirements.	As effluent is available to meet mission requirements.
Vehicle washing	No hoses running unattended. On/off nozzles must be used to minimize water waste.	Official vehicles: In authorized wash racks only. Fund-raisers: Parking lots at Thrift Shop and Cochise Theater only.	Not authorized.
Required showerheads	2.5 gallons per minute or less	1.5 gallons per minute or less	1.5 gallons per minute or less
Drip irrigation	Not authorized	Authorized. Must be used within allowable hours. Must be reset within one day after power interruption.	Authorized. Must be used within allowable hours. Must be reset within one day after power interruption.

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