

New Conservation Water Rates

As recommended by a citizens advisory committee, effective April 1, the Utility Department will implement a revised residential conservation rate plan that will further promote conservation. The purpose of conservation pricing is to reward low users with lower pricing and charge more to those using excess amounts of water, primarily for outdoor watering. The Oconee County conservation rate structure, implemented in 1999 and unchanged since then, uses a base rate and three consecutively higher priced tiers as follows:

0-2000 gallons	2001-5000	5001-12000	over 12000
\$14.04(Base Fee)	\$3.80/1000 gal.	\$4.17/1000 gal.	\$4.80/1000 gal.

The new plan will have two additional steps so that conservation minded customers can stay in the lower tiers as much as possible such that their bills will not increase significantly. The new rate plan, effective April 1 will be as follows:

0-2000 gallons	2001-5000	5001-8000	8001-12000	12001-20000	over 20000
\$14.04(Base Fee)	\$3.80/1000 gal.	\$4.58/1000 gal.	\$5.38/1000 gal.	\$6.24/1000 gal	6.72/1000 gal.

Customers that are low users, below 5000 gallons per month, will not see an increase on their bill. Customers that use up to 8,000 gallons will see an increase of \$1.23 per month. Users beyond 8,000 gallons per month will see increasingly higher bills according to how much water they use.

Oconee County has Non-Potable water for sell @ \$ 2.00 per thousand gallons.

Outdoor Water Use Registration Program

Anyone, homeowners or business owners, watering a new landscape must participate in the Outdoor Water Use Registration Program as determined by the EPD and developed by the Urban Ag Council and the UGA Cooperative Extension Service.

Beginning March 15 this program will be available online at www.urbanagcouncil.com. Anyone that does not have access to the internet may call the Oconee County Extension office at 706-3960 to participate in the program. After completing the registration program and passing the required test with at least 70% correct answers, participants will be eligible to register and print a certificate, as well as sign a pledge that you will reduce your overall water use by at least 10%. This certificate should be on the premises at all times and be available for inspection while watering is being conducted for the 10 week period.

In addition to the Outdoor Water Use Registration Program, anyone watering new landscape in conjunction with the State rules must also obtain an Oconee County Watering Permit from the Oconee County Utility Department. You may call or come by the department to receive your free permit. OCUD will be enforcing the new watering restrictions, so with your assistance and cooperation we can avoid erroneous citations being issued. Any questions concerning the program may be directed to the Oconee County Utility Department or the Oconee County Extension Service.

More plants are killed in Georgia from over-watering than from drought!