

## Practicing a Conservation Lifestyle

Our remarkably extended rainy season has given us a taste of a more tropical climate this summer. These rare episodes ease the pressures on the aquifers, surface water levels and irrigation needs. A lovely consequence is having it so green this deep into the summer experience. The grazing acres and hay surplus is impressive. The demands on yards and grounds have kept so many busy! What a summer as we move out of the deep freeze recovery and the reopening of public space from the extended pandemic of covid-19. Toddlers and summer adventurers along with fawns, kid goats and calves are exhibiting such a jolly leaping and happy time!

Our meteorologists seem almost bewildered that their seasonal attention to aquifer levels and other measures allow for other facets to their reporting. Perhaps it is just such a time that lends itself to pondering the deeper questions about water quality and availability for our local and Hill Country region.

A piece of sacred land rights in Texas dedicates water and other “gifts” subsurface to the deed holder of the land at the surface. In recent decades we have learned enough to note that just as much as surface waters are a common precious gift, so, too, we share in common the rich water sources and gifts beneath us. Our meteorologists remind us of this as they report measures from the “test wells” daily. The head spinning rapid growth and developments across the region mounts pressures on our supply of good waters. It is past time to assess and review our management measures. Indeed, more and more become dependent on our common water sources. The circumstance suggests and cries out for some updated understandings of how we protect and oversee these life resources.

The tired and outmoded “stages of conservation” measures we live through in our very dry periods that both lengthen and become more extreme, require attention! Is it not more appropriate to develop policies and lifestyles built around conserving and protecting our water resources year-round? The demands would not be interfering or disruptive.

Can those with oversight of our subsurface source aquifers be given sufficient authority to develop stringent practices that reduce frivolous and excessive drawdowns of our water supplies? Can we promote even more conservation measures that celebrate in landscaping drought resistant practices and xeriscapes where appropriate? Featuring native items for residential and commercial gardens to enhance open space seems so smart. Developing curricula for our schools that teach the most basic careful use of water and practices that avoid

needless waste of good water helps shape the future practices for those who follow us. Likewise, encouragement for reuse of waste waters and runoffs can enhance the efforts and contribute to the conservation mindset. Expanding the models for rainwater retention and use certainly fits this lifestyle as well.

One cannot move about in our community and surrounding area without noting some of the signs of positive steps toward improved water practices. A visitor asked me about the big storage capacities now visible by NBU throughout our area. Likewise, some of the measures at rainfall capture evidence good planning and a responsible look toward the future. The first conversations about a self-sustaining, self sufficient water use and reuse building model could help demonstrate a way into a responsible future. All such measures precluding a necessitated move toward desalination processes are worthy of considerable effort and resource. The alternatives are far more costly and challenging.

Let's keep the conversation going. Explore discussions at [www.comalconservation.org](http://www.comalconservation.org)! You'll be glad you did!