

News Release
Bowling Green Municipal Utilities
Warren County Water District

For Immediate Release

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The Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet has issued a water shortage watch for 61 counties in Kentucky, including Warren. A water shortage watch is issued when drought conditions have the potential to threaten the normal availability of drinking water supply sources. Based on the Cabinet's action and the potential for continued lower than normal rainfall, Bowling Green Municipal Utilities and Warren County Water District are asking all water customers to voluntarily conserve water in hopes of averting the need for mandatory restrictions in the future.

"Currently, Barren River Reservoir is seven and a half feet below the normal level for this time of year," said Mike Gardner, BGMU water and sewer systems manager. "Since the Barren River is the source of the water we serve to customers, it's important that we keep a close watch on conditions and do our part to preserve supplies."

Alan Vilines, WCWD general manager said that there are no mandatory conservation requirements in place but it's the right time to ask customers to use water wisely. "We want to make sure customers have the water they need and that they also think about ways to conserve where possible. This may help us to avoid the need for mandatory restrictions this summer."

To help in this effort, BGMU and WCWD have developed a number of water conservation recommendations for both residents and businesses to use throughout the year and especially from June to October:

1. **Reduce lawn watering.** During the summer, established lawns typically require only one inch of water per week. Deep watering once a week, versus frequent short-term watering, is healthier for lawns as it more effectively reaches the deeper roots of shrubs and trees. Purchasing a rain gauge can assist in determining how much water or rain the yard has received.
2. **Install water-efficient sprinkler systems** such as drip irrigation and/or soaker hoses. Position sprinkler heads to water the landscape only and not paved areas. Be sure to override your automatic sprinkler system if it does rain, or install a rain sensor that will help control the system for you.
3. **Water lawns and landscape during cooler times of the day (6:00 pm to 8:00 am).** These are the hours when plants are most active in the uptake of water and nutrients. Temperature and wind speeds are also lowest during these hours and this tends to reduce evaporation.
4. **Plant native and drought tolerant grasses, ground covers, shrubs and trees.** Once established, native plants do not require water as frequently and will better tolerate drought conditions. Group plants together based on similar water needs and use a three- to four-inch deep layer of mulch around plants to help them retain moisture. This layer will also help to control weeds. Contact a landscape service, greenery or the City's landscape architect for a list of native plants.

5. **Raise the cutting height of your lawn mower blade.** Taller grass encourages deeper root growth, shades the root system and reduces evaporation.
6. **Use a broom instead of a water hose** to clean leaves and other debris from the porch, driveway or sidewalk.
7. **Use a shut-off nozzle on your garden hose** when watering plants by hand or when washing cars. Never leave a sprinkler or water hose on and unattended. **One garden hose can pour out 600 hundred gallons or more of water in only a few hours.** Use a kitchen timer to remind yourself to turn off your sprinklers.
8. **Avoid over fertilizing your lawn.** Fertilizer applications increase the need for plants to absorb water. Apply fertilizers containing slow-release or water insoluble forms of nitrogen.
9. **Use a commercial car wash that recycles water.** If you wash your own vehicle, park it on the grass and use a "bucket" and "sponge" and a hose with a shut-off nozzle.

"These may seem like simple steps," Vilines said. "But they can go a long way in reducing water use."

Gardner echoed that sentiment and added that additional conservation measures could be required if these voluntary steps are not effective in balancing water demand to the reduced water supply. "We hope all our customers will take these easy steps now so we can avoid more stringent requirements later on."

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