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Fix a Leak Week 2012

The New Mexico Office of the State Engineer (NMOSE) is planning the second annual Fix A Leak Week campaign, March 11-17, 2012. This is part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) ongoing "We're for Water" campaign. Fix a Leak Week encourages Americans to help stop the more than 1 trillion gallons of water wasted nationally from household leaks every year.

The NMOSE and several financial partners, including New Mexico Water Conservation Alliance (NMWCA), are planning a TV and radio campaign to encourage New Mexico homeowners to fix leaks in their homes. The media campaign will send residents to a website that has information on how to find and fix leaks. The site also has children's educational materials and information on local events.

The media campaign will encourage drinking water suppliers in New Mexico to



The media campaign will encourage drinking water suppliers in New Mexico to hold local events on March 17. These events will provide information to homeowners on how to fix their leaks, and participating agencies will give out other information about water conservation. The NMOSE will have brochures, posters and dye tablets that residents can use to find leaks.

Events are being planned in Santa Fe, Las Cruces, Rio Rancho, Albuquerque, Los Alamos and Gallup. If you are a smaller drinking water supplier who is interested in holding your own event, or partnering with existing events, please contact Cheri Vogel at NMOSE (cheri.vogel@state.nm.us or 505-827-4272). All events will be posted on the NMOSE website with links to your events.

The Fix A Leak New Mexico website is currently under construction, but will be available mid-January. That URL is www.FixALeakNM.org.

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Office of the State Engineer's Cheri Vogel Receives Alice Darilek Water Conservation Award

Congratulations to Cheri Vogel who was awarded the Alice Darilek Water Conservation Award!

Vogel is Senior Water Resources and Conservation Coordinator at the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer (NMOSE) Water Use and Conservation Bureau.

The Alice Darilek Award recognizes an outstanding contributor to the water conservation field within the Rocky Mountain Section of the American Water Works Association (AWWA). It is named in honor of Alice Darilek, whose dedicated work in New Mexico helped water conservation efforts throughout the region. The award can be given annually to recognize a water conservation professional for exceptional performance and commitment to water conservation in the region.



Vogel has been with NMOSE since 2000. Examples of her work include spearheading the Quantifying Leaks with Acoustic Loggers project; developing water conservation curriculum for elementary and high school students; promoting water use accounting within municipalities; and developing a systematic Gallons of Water Per Capita Per Day methodology and calculator. She is also credited with initiating, submitting, and managing several Bureau of Reclamation grants as well as initiating the Environmental Protection Agency's Fix A Leak Week campaign in New Mexico. Vogel has delivered regional and national presentations on conservation, has helped develop the Restaurant Audit Kit for water conservation, and has helped organize a landscape irrigation training seminar. She has also held many offices in the New Mexico Water Conservation Alliance.

"Cheri Vogel deserves the Alice Darilek Water Conservation Award because of her conservation experience, knowledge, and commitment to our state," said New Mexico Water Conservation Alliance President Marian Wrage, who nominated Vogel for the award.

Vogel's supervisor, Water Use and Conservation Bureau Chief John Longworth, said "Ms. Vogel works on the challenging task of creating and promoting effective urban water conservation programs with limited resources. This award is recognition of her determination."

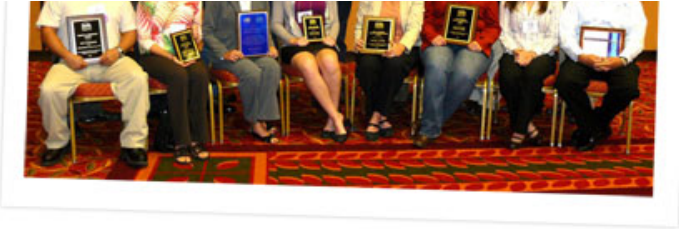
"She is a leader in the field of water conservation," said Former State Engineer John D'Antonio. "It would be a great honor to have Cheri's efforts in the arena of water conservation recognized by her peers in the Rocky Mountain Region of AWWA."

Vogel has previously been named Office of the State Engineer employee-of-the-year, has twice received the Environmental Education Association of New Mexico's Outstanding Environmental Service Award, and was recognized by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for outstanding achievement on water conservation.

The award was presented at the Rocky Mountain Section of the American Water Works Association and the Rocky Mountain Water Environment Association Joint Conference in Loveland, CO on September 19, 2011.

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QWEL Training Certifies Professionals in Water-Efficient Landscaping

All too often, landscape irrigation wastes up to 1.5 billion gallons of water every day across America.

To help mitigate this waste, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense Program has recognized the Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) as a qualifying irrigation auditor training. QWEL professionals can be certified as "partners" through WaterSense labeled programs for their expertise in water-efficient irrigation technology and techniques.

To become a WaterSense irrigation partner, professionals in the industry must first become certified through a WaterSense labeled certification program. This process helps ensure that WaterSense irrigation partners are trained on designing, installing, and maintaining water-efficient irrigation systems.

Irrigation professionals can become certified in the following areas:

- **Designers** establish specifications and design drawings for irrigation projects.
- **Installation and maintenance** professionals install, maintain, and repair irrigation systems.
- **Auditors** gather irrigation water-use data and test landscape irrigation systems.

WaterSense Partners and/or their products meet a high standard in water efficiency and performance. EPA provides resources for partners to promote WaterSense and water efficiency with its partner-only website. Partners can save time and effort using templates and other WaterSense-developed materials, gain visibility for programs, promote the WaterSense label, and get connected with other partners to share ideas.

The WaterSense program and QWEL share the common goal of conserving water resources and promoting the importance of water efficiency. QWEL is one of three approved EPA WaterSense Irrigation Auditor certification programs in the nation and was developed in cooperation with the California Landscape Contractors Association (Cagwin & Dorward, GardenWorks, and Pacific Landscapes); the Sonoma County Water Agency; the City of Santa Rosa; the Marin Municipal Water District; and the Colleges of Santa Rosa and Marin.

QWEL provides 20 hours of educational foundation customized for northern New Mexico. The training is based on the principles of proper plant selection for the local climate, irrigation system design and maintenance, and irrigation system programming and operation.

Qualified water efficient landscapers must:

- Pass a written exam on the principles and practices of auditing with a 75% or better. (Students who want to self-study may audit the class by scheduling a proctored exam.)
- Submit a satisfactory irrigation audit to fulfill the requirements. (Students taking the class satisfy this requirement as part of Class 6.)
- Submit a minimum of two hours of continuing education units annually to maintain active status.

As a WaterSense Partner, you will:

- Be listed on the EPA website
- Be able to use the WaterSense logo
- Have access to EPA tools and resources
- Be able to conduct third party LEED irrigation inspections
- Be eligible for irrigation points of NM Green Build
- Be listed on the Partner-only website



Landscape Changes Come to the City of Rio Rancho

On October 12, 2011, the Rio Rancho Governing Body amended nine sections of Chapter 154 of the municipal code for the purpose of requiring water-wise landscaping throughout the city. The ordinance changes were sponsored by Councilor Michael J. Williams, District 1.

One change impacts the installation of cool season turf. Residents may no longer install this turf in their front yards. They may install it in side and rear yards, but the turf must not exceed 1,000 sq ft or 20% of the total lot area, whichever is less. When landscaping their front yards, residents should choose plants that use little water.

The City of Rio Rancho has a plant list that residents can refer to when landscaping so they know which species are okay to plant. This list is in the booklet "Xeriscaping, the Complete How-To Guide" published by the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA). The plant list contains a total of 656 plant species; all but 53 are low-water use. The landscape ordinance also places restrictions on high water-use plants.

Multi-family residential and commercial customers can plant cool season turf grass only in areas designated for recreational use. The turf is limited to no more than 15% of the total lot area. These customers must also use landscaping plants that conserve water.

Cool season turf grasses include, but are not limited to, the following species:

- Poa pratensis (Kentucky Bluegrass)
- Festuca spp. (Fescues)
- Lolium spp. (Ryegrasses)

Existing turf and other plants installed prior to October 31, 2011 are exempt from this regulation. After October 31, future homeowner association bylaws or new restrictive covenants must have requirements that conform to the new landscaping restrictions.

As we all know, water is one of our most valued natural resources. In order to protect this resource, water conservation practices are becoming increasingly important. The use of xeriscaping is a good practice and a great alternative to landscapes that requires large amounts of water. The goal of the Rio Rancho Comprehensive Plan is to "embrace the use of xeriscaping."

Changes to the landscape ordinance accomplish goals and action items from the city's comprehensive plan and will help conserve the city's water supply.

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A Newsletter Published by the New Mexico Water Conservation Alliance

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