

Extension Connection

May 1, 2020

Gilpin County CSU Extension's
Virtual Education

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GILPIN COUNTY UPDATES

BY CLAIRE SKEEN

The Board of County Commissioners issued a press release extending the Gilpin County Stay-At-Home Order until May 8th.

The next Gilpin County Virtual Town Hall will be on May 4th at 6:00pm. All press releases, town hall information and more can be found at:

<https://stories.opengov.com/gilpincountyco/published/xUOjgcjGk>

Community Development is currently working on a new Comprehensive Plan for Gilpin County. To get community thoughts and input, they have published their first community survey and will be hosting a virtual community meeting on May 5th at 6:00pm

Read more here:

<https://stories.opengov.com/gilpincountyco/published/NX9D3VvrZ>

The Gilpin County Library Board of Trustees has made the decision to suspend a large portion of library services and close the library from May 2 through at least July 10, 2020. Read their newsletter to learn more about their limited services, changes in staffing and future plans: [https://mailchi.mp/cd6074cfcfd2/gilpin-library-service-newsletter-1160864?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/cd6074cfcfd2/gilpin-library-service-newsletter-1160864?e=[UNIQID])

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COLORADO WATER

BY JENNIFER COOK

There's an old saying in Colorado, "whiskey is for drinking, water is for fighting." This still holds true today since our water is a very limited and precious resource. Gilpin County receives an average of 21 inches of rain per year, and although our average snow fall is 147 inches, once melted, our snow accounts for roughly only 5 to 15 Inches of water, depending on the temperature of the air. [Learn more about snow to water ratios here.](#)

Water Law and Wells

We are part of the arid west, so every drop of water is accounted for. That's why we have water laws. Colorado water law requires that water users have assigned designated uses and amounts of consumption. For example, many of us in Gilpin County have household wells. Your well permit states how the water can be used. Many are "household use only wells," meaning the well water cannot be used for anything outside the house - gardens, trees, or livestock, etc. Learn more about your well water rights by visiting [Colorado Division of Water Resources](#). On the 'More Options' dropdown, select 'Address' to search for your well based on your address.

Rainwater Harvesting

Rainwater collection, also called rainwater "harvesting," is the process of capturing, storing and directing rainwater runoff and putting it to use. In Colorado, rain barrels can be installed at single-family households and multi-family households with four or fewer units. Each household can collect up to 110 gallons of rainwater. Rain barrels are used to capture rainwater from rooftop downspouts and the captured rainwater must be used outdoors (to water lawns, plants and/or gardens) on the same property from which the rainwater was captured. Rain barrel water cannot be used for drinking or other indoor water uses.

- Register for this upcoming webinar to learn more about using rainwater in your garden - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/using-rainwater-in-your-home-garden-tickets-102807718654>
- [Watch a recorded webinar on Residential Rainwater Harvesting basics.](#) Recorded in 2017.

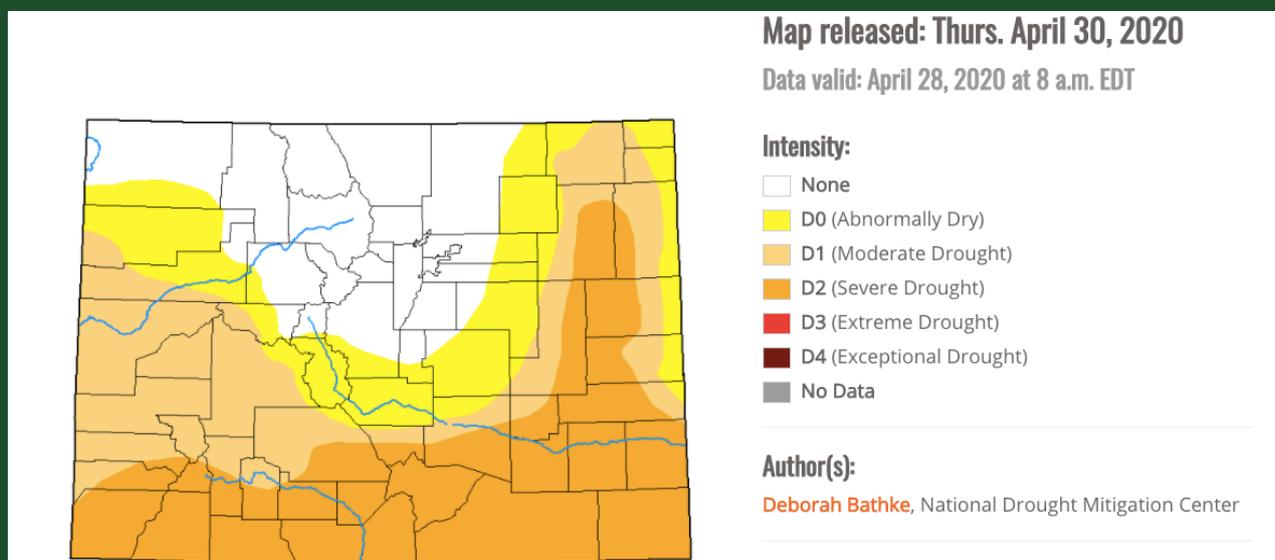
Water is Essential to Life

About 1 percent of Earth's water is suitable for drinking, and yet water is essential for human survival. Water makes up the majority of our body weight and is involved in many important functions such as regulating body temperature and helping our brain function. It is vital that we all conserve water when possible.

The average American uses 80-100 gallons of water for indoor use per day.

Easy ways to save water everyday:

- Turn off the water when washing hands and dishes, or brushing your teeth. Letting your faucet run for five minutes while washing dishes can waste 10 gallons of water.
- Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth to save 8 gallons of water per day.
- Fix leaky faucets. The average family can waste 180 gallons per week, or 9,400 gallons of water annually, from household leaks. That's equivalent to the amount of water needed to wash more than 300 loads of laundry.
- Wait until the dishwasher is full before running it. Running the dishwasher only when it's full can eliminate one load of dishes per week and save the average family nearly 320 gallons of water annually.
- Look for WaterSense labels when replacing toilets, showerheads, and faucets. The average family can save 13,000 gallons of water per year by replacing all old, inefficient toilets in their home with WaterSense labeled models.



With all the mud and moisture in Gilpin County right now, it's hard to believe that the southern half of Colorado is experiencing drought. [For more information, visit US Drought Monitor.](#)

KID'S CORNER: UNDERSTANDING WATER

BY KIRSTEN SPRINGER

Water is important to life.

When we look at the globe we see that the majority of Earth is covered by water. Most of this water is found in oceans. We can't use that water to grow food because it is too salty. So, we rely on fresh water for most of our needs.

Start a water diary and track how much and for what purpose you use water. It will be easy now that you are at home. Here are some ways you use water and some ways a farmer does, who do you think uses the most? You can **GOOGLE** to compare.

My family uses water:

- To drink
- To cook
- To bathe
- To flush the toilet
- To wash your hands (especially these days)
- To water lawn or garden
- To wash dishes (look up and compare hand washing vs machine)
- To wash clothes
- To water house plants
- For fun
- To brush teeth
- To make ice cubes
- To fill a fish tank
- For pets to drink

A farmer uses water:

- For all the household uses listed on the left.
- To water crops (look at requirements for different crops: corn, vegetables, wheat, nuts)
- For livestock to drink (look at requirements for different animals – sheep, cows, horses)
- For wildlife to drink

WATER IS A NATURAL RESOURCE

Start your diary, keep track of the water you use:

- Today I have used water to:

- I have seen water being used by someone else to:

CHOICES AND PREFERENCES, WATER INDEX

Adapted from Project WET

In this activity we will prioritize the way you and others use water to see if there are any ways you can limit or do without. Your list of favorite or needed uses may be different from someone else's, maybe you can play with a brother or sister or your parent/s.

The Situation:

A meeting has been called with representatives from agriculture, industry, recreation, energy, wildlife, transportation, communities and other water user groups. They are looking to you to decide which one of the water user groups is the most important and why?

1. Assign your rank (priority) to each of the uses on the chart. Give a 10 to what you think is most important, and a 1 to the least important.
2. After you rank your thoughts, do a poll of your family or a friend, compare your answers. Write down how others ranked the items, then calculate an average rank. How do you feel if the group ranks one of your uses lower than you do?

WATER USE	EXAMPLE	YOUR RANK	YOUR GROUP'S RANK	AVERAGE
Ecological Value	Wildlife Habitat			
Energy Development	Hydropower			
Fish and Wildlife	Drinking, home for aquatic life			
Human Consumption	You			
Irrigation	Farmer growing crops			
Livestock	Drinking			
Manufacturing	Everyday items like cars and computer			
Recreation & Aesthetics	Fishing, Camping, Hair Salons, etc.			
Transportation	Shopping			
Urban Development	Golf Courses			

Learn what water uses Colorado citizens find most important in the recently developed Colorado Water Plan.

THE RAINSTICK

As you know, water comes to us in many forms. The snow of winter melts, the mist of the valleys evaporates, the rivers and streams carry water from the mountains to the plains. Water comes in liquid, solid and vapor. Now that it is Spring, we will be seeing water in its liquid form, as rain. Let's make a craft project to imitate the rain, or maybe use it to do a rain dance and ask for more rain.

The rainstick is a tubular rattle used since the earliest cultures. It has many uses but the most common is as an instrument for children. It is played to imitate the coming of the rain. A rainstick is a hollow tube with the inside made of cactus spines or wooden pegs, and filled with pebbles, seeds, beans, rice, or tiny shells. Each end of the tube is sealed. The outside may be decorated with paint, string, bark or sheathed in a basket like woven cover.

A rainstick is a product of the environment where it is found. It is widely used by rainforest people to imitate the sound of rain in the forest. It can be shaken or just tipped to let the materials fall through like raindrops.

[Click here to download instructions of one way to make your own rainstick.](#)

Practice playing the one you make until it sounds just like the spring rain!

