

7-19-2006

Education to Increase Water Availability to Pennsylvania Homeowners

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Abstracts of presentations given on Wednesday, 19 July 2006, in session 26 of the UCOWR Conference.

Recommended Citation

Swistock, Bryan and Sharpe, William, "Education to Increase Water Availability to Pennsylvania Homeowners" (2006). 2006. Paper 22.

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EDUCATION TO INCREASE WATER AVAILABILITY TO PENNSYLVANIA HOMEOWNERS

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Recurring droughts in all or part of Pennsylvania over the past ten years have resulted in increased conflicts and questions about water availability. In response to this demand, Penn State Cooperative Extension created a variety of educational resources in 2002 to assist homeowners with water supply management and conservation. Publications were created on household water conservation, managing a well during a drought, intermediate storage water systems, and water system planning along with table-top displays on water conservation. These resources joined existing publications dealing with rainwater cisterns, saving water during an emergency and community water conservation. A web site was also created in 2002 to house water availability publications and to provide links to drought indicators in the state. Twenty-five county extension agents received training in water supply and conservation in 2003 following a severe drought. In the last two years, these educators have utilized these resources to educate hundreds of Pennsylvania residents on water conservation practices. Many have used the table-top displays at fairs or offered specific programs related to water conservation. For example, rain barrel workshops were offered in 2005 to about 100 homeowners. Thousands of homeowners have visited the water availability web site, especially during dry weather in the summer of 2005. The network of trained county extension agents, web visibility and educational resources have provided valuable education for Pennsylvania residents to increase water availability through water conservation and improved household water management.

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