

Drip by Drip

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The clear plastic hose at the top of the toilet tank comes from the reservoir of cold shower water that is stored, rather than drained, from the shower.

Photo Chris Lavin

Other ways to conserve are less obvious. On one small community water system in Canyon, usage dropped dramatically when board members started printing the average daily use of each user on the back of the quarterly bills. Some households were using an average of 60 gallons a day, others more than 200. The largest users immediately began to curtail their usage. “They just didn’t know how much they were using,” said Stanley when told this anecdote. “Most people don’t.”

And diverting the water that goes down the drain while the user waits for it to get warm is yet another way to save.

“Every house is unique,” Stanley said. In some houses, the water to the kitchen sink might come out hot almost instantly, while the shower water stays cold for a minute or two until it gets

warm. In other houses, that situation could be reversed. “It all depends on where the water heater is located,” he said, “and how big the house is.”

Stanley’s patented shower invention, which is a DIY \$125 kit, fills a plastic, stand-alone reservoir that can then be used for anything – drinking by people or pets, watering plants, you name it. When asked why use good, treated water to flush a toilet, Stanley replied, “Otherwise it would be going down the drain.” Good point. (But Stanley and Gompertz are developing a gray-water system too. “Just wait,” Stanley said.) More information can be found at www.housewatersaver.com.

“As a community, as a state, as a country, we need to conserve water,” Stanley said. “Why should you waste something just because you have it?”

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