

New Fort Lewis campaign to promote awareness of water conservation levels

By Rachel Young
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As summer approaches and the rain tapers off, Public Works encourages residents to learn more about water conservation regulations at Fort Lewis.

The post plans to reduce water consumption by two percent every year through 2015 in accordance with President George W. Bush's Executive Order 13423, passed in January.

One of the ways Fort Lewis plans to do that is through implementing and promoting awareness of the water conservation levels in Fort Lewis Regula-

tion 11-5, which was passed in May 2006.

"What we're doing this year...is (trying to) get the installation more aware that we actually have water conservation levels," said Brendalyn Carpenter, sustainability outreach coordinator for Fort Lewis Public Works.

The regulation sets forth specific guidelines for water consumption during three levels of conservation: normal, reduced and severe restriction.

Level one, the normal level, slightly restricts water use in an effort to reduce waste. At this level, post housing residents are restricted to watering every other day during certain times. Even numbered

houses water on even numbered days and odd numbered houses on oddnumbered days. Watering is limited to 30 minutes a day between 5 and 8 a.m. and 5 and 8 p.m.

At level two, reduced water use, the hours and amount of time housing residents may water remain the same. Even numbered houses may water Wednesday and Saturday while odd numbered houses may water Thursday and Sunday. Also, residents are asked to restrict washing their vehicles to once a month.

At level three, severe restriction, no watering is permitted in housing areas. Washing personal vehicles is restricted to commercial car washes on post.

The current conservation level will be posted on reader boards and other high visibility areas to make it easy for residents to be informed.

Even though washing vehicles is allowed at levels one and two, Joyce Chavez, water program manager for Public Works, still encourages use of the commercial car washes.

"The commercial car wash here on post (uses) recycled water," she said. Patronizing that car wash "helps with not using extra water."

Besides using the commercial car wash and restricting watering, Chavez encourages residents to do little things to pitch

in. "Anything anybody can do to help conserve water is always a big benefit," Chavez said.

Conserving water can be as easy as not letting water run while brushing teeth or shaving, or reporting leaky faucets so they can be repaired quickly.

Fort Lewis has a vast supply of water because the post gets its water from the Vashon Aquifer, a large underground body of water, Chavez said. "However, over time, aquifers can diminish, too," she said. "People just need to be conscious and have good stewardship about taking the actions now because future generations may not have that water resource."