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Conservation key in long-term water solutions

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Special to the Sentinel

All summer, the Drought Response Information Project campaign has shared information with you on how to conserve water at home. Okay, in some cases DRIP has nagged and pleaded with you to change your water-wasting habits. We've even tried the guilt-trip ridden "waste not, want not" angle.

Ultimately, the power to make every drop count lies with water users. You are the one with the leaky swamp cooler dripping down your roof. You are the one watching TV while the sprinklers water the street. You are the one taking 15-minute showers.

And, yes, most of you are the ones paying your water bills. And why can't you use what you paid for however you want? Of course, you can. But SHOULD you? That's the real question.

Regarding water in the Grand Valley, we're faced with these truths:

- We live in an arid, high-mountain desert, receiving less than 8 inches of precipitation per year, on average.
- This place would mostly look like the desert hills by the Bookcliffs if we didn't store water in reservoirs and transport it for later use.
- Other places in Colorado and the West are hankering for more water (remember that thirsty beast called California?).
- The population of the Grand Valley is expected to double by 2030.
- The drought in the Colorado River Basin is NOT over. Even when the hydrological drought has subsided, in some places there isn't enough water for the population even in the wettest years.
- There are other water uses which may complicate matters further, such as endangered species.

We need to be prepared to deal with the situation as this list gets longer, and making every drop count is part of that solution.

Thanks very much to The Daily Sentinel for helping DRIP to spread the word on how to conserve water this summer. The DRIP campaign will be back in full force next spring, helping you save water at home.

The Drought Response Information Project (DRIP) is a collaboration between the valley's domestic water utilities and CSU Cooperative Extension to provide information and educate the public about drought and the importance of water conservation. Visit www.thedripwebsite.com.