

The University of Texas at Austin Supports City Drought Plan

September 2, 2009

AUSTIN—Fans attending The University of Texas at Austin's first football game on September 5 may notice that familiar landmark fountains are not flowing on campus.

On August 24, 2009, the university turned off the fountains, except as needed for maintenance, as one of several water conservation measures, according to Steven Kraal, senior associate vice president for the university Office of Campus Planning & Facilities Management.

"Recognizing the severity of the drought, we are working with the City toward meeting the goals of their Stage II Drought Contingency Plan," he said.

The university follows the City's landscape watering schedule in all but the highest pedestrian traffic areas and irrigates recreation fields two evenings per week instead of six. The university waters athletic fields twice weekly except as needed for athlete safety when temperatures reach 105 degrees.

Kraal noted that recent water conservation projects at the university also provide long-term water savings.

"By updating thousands of plumbing fixtures in 2008, we are saving 60 million gallons of water annually," he said. "Replacing Memorial Stadium turf with artificial turf has reduced stadium water usage by about 80 percent compared to the previous year."

Assistant City Manager Rudy Garza commended the university for its efforts to conserve.

"Although the campus has grown by five million square feet of space over the past thirty years, the university has cut annual water use by 47 percent per square foot since 1980 through innovative recovery and reuse," Garza said. "Once the City's reuse water system is operational in 2011, UT will be the major agency actively using reuse water."

City and university officials will continue working together on water-saving strategies and conservation awareness.

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