

Hurley Park Newsletter



WINTER 2008

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Year-round Water Conservation

As I write this newsletter, a gentle rain falls. I've always enjoyed the rain, but now, after this summer's drought, there is something even more comforting and reassuring about it. After going around the Park with hoses in-tow all summer, the rain makes me feel calm and happy to know that the plants and animals are finally getting what they have been needing. Running around the Park turning water on and off, hooking up hoses and hand watering like a madwoman paid off for the most part. However, this summer was not without its fatalities. After a while, you start empathizing with the plants, feeling tired and limp, feeling like there is no end in sight. It has a maddening effect, watching leaves on trees decades old turn brown and die. The days become longer and the weeks creep by. Rain is a distant memory and you begin to long for it, even crave it.

For some reason, Salisbury seemed drier than surrounding areas. On my way home to Concord, the vegetation would slowly turn from brown to green. It would rain a little at my house overnight and I would go to work thinking how wonderful that there was a little relief for the Park. When I would arrive at the office, I would run up to the rain gauge like a kid running to the Christmas tree to see what Santa left and there would be nothing. Disappointment would set in and I would drag the hoses out again. Eventually, we stopped putting the hoses up and they lived in the back of the truck for the rest of the summer. When it came time to overseed the park, we decided against it. It was just too risky to put that much time and money into putting out seed when we were/are on voluntary water restrictions. Slowly it got better. Just when I was ready to turn the irrigation back on it would rain and now we seem to be getting a regular soaking. As I tuck the plants into their beds for their winter rest I tell them (yes, I talk to plants) that the worst is over and hopefully next summer will not be so difficult. We have asked the City Council for \$5,000 for replacement of trees and shrubs killed during the drought. We hope to replace them in the Fall of 2008. We also have invested in drip irrigation for some areas and will install it in the spring. Here are some things you can do around the yard to help with water conservation during a drought and really all the time.

Lawn Care: In some areas of the country, lawn irrigation accounts for 50% or more of the consumption of city water supplies during the summer months. With that in mind, here are a few steps to reduce that number.

1. Keep grass at least 2 inches high to help shade the roots. Higher grass grows slower, requiring less water and mowing.
2. Don't over water your lawns. As a general rule, lawns need to be watered only once a week. Apply water infrequently, yet thoroughly. This creates a deep, well-rooted lawn using water stored in the soil more efficiently. Use a rain gauge to make sure you are not over watering your lawn. Lawns usually need about an inch of water per week. I also read that if you are noticing runoff in applying an inch of water to your lawn per week, you can water in two applications. I wonder if this would create a shallower root system and therefore require more water?
3. Water in the early morning. Grass usually grows the most in the early morning hours. When watered in the early morning there is less chance for disease because water is not sitting on the lawn all night. This goes for gardens too.

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4. Make sure sprinkler heads are adjusted properly. Sprinkler heads that spray larger droplets are better than ones that spray a fine mist because it reduces evaporation and winddrift.
5. Remove thatch from lawns so it takes less water to saturate the rootzone. Aeration also helps with water absorption in the rootzone.

Gardens:

1. Mulch. Make sure there is 2-4 inches of mulch on your beds to help the soil absorb water slowly, reducing runoff and retaining moisture in the soil. Organic mulches are better to use than inorganic mulches. Stone, rubber mulches, ect. do not retain moisture as well as organic mulches and provide little to no nutrients to the soil that organic material can when decaying.
2. Check irrigation heads frequently to make sure you are not watering the street. As with lawns, sprinkler heads that spray larger droplets are better. The best irrigation method for garden beds is drip irrigation. It is easy to install and gets the water directly to the roots with almost no evaporation.
3. Plant native plants that are adapted to our climate and often have a higher survival rate during dry periods.
4. Mix in compost with the soil when planting. Along with providing nutrients to the plants, making for a healthier plant that can survive harsher times, it also helps the soil retain moisture.
5. Make/buy rain barrels to store water instead of letting it become stormwater runoff.
6. Create a rain garden. Rain gardens help keep more water on your property by capturing it and allowing it to absorb into the ground slowly.

These are just a few tips to help with water conservation. I encourage you to do more research on how you can conserve water in your own backyard. We should all remember that even though it is raining regularly now we are still inches under our normal yearly rainfall amount and it is still important to practice water conservation.

Every human should have the idea of taking care of the environment, of nature, of water. So using too much or wasting water should have some kind of feeling or sense of concern. Some sort of responsibility and with that, a sense of discipline.

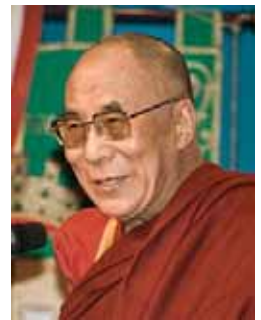
-The 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso

quoted in Peter Swanson's Water: The Drop of Life, 2001



"When the well's dry, we know the worth of water."

- **Benjamin Franklin**, (1706-1790), *Poor Richard's Almanac*.



WEDDINGS

If you are planning an outdoor wedding, or other ceremony, consider Hurley Park as a possible site. The Park has hosted many weddings over the years and there are still openings for the 2008 calendar year. Please contact Niki Castor at the Public Services office (704-638-5268) for more information and an application for facility use. The application can also be accessed online, along with pictures of the park, at www.salisburync.gov/hurleypark

Hurley Park's New Employee

We would like to announce our new park employee, Shelby Harrison. She will be working with us for at least 13 weeks. She is a recent graduate from Catawba College with a degree in Environmental Science. Currently she splits her time between working for us a couple days a week, working at Reedy Creek Nature Center as an Environmental Educator, and substitute teaching in Rowan County. At Reedy Creek Nature Center she teaches school groups, scouts, and adults about reptiles, mammals, birds, food chains, ecology and also leads wild walks. She is already helping me with my bird identification. She is not just an animal lover, but loves working with plants as well. She took several plant classes at Catawba, helped with the native landscaping around the Center for the Environment, and worked in the herbarium at Catawba with Dr. Baranski. Shelby enjoys the outdoors and feels that "each time we venture outside it is a unique experience." Here's what she says about working in Hurley Park.

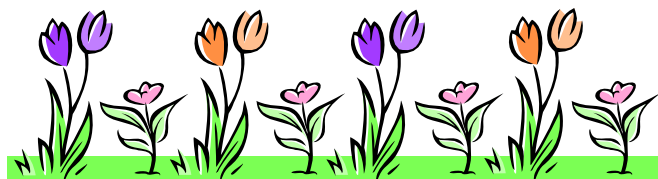


"I am working at Hurley Park because it is a special park and I want to help make it a special place...I also want to help make the park beautiful for the people who visit because I like doing things for others and this is my way of reaching out to people alongside Lana and Daphne."

We are so pleased to have such a dedicated and hard-working person help us in the Park. She is a wonderful and special addition to the Park. If you see her please give her a warm welcome.



Save The Date
Hurley Park Spring Celebration
Sunday, April 13th
2-4pm



DONATIONS

Donations may be made to the Park through The Elizabeth Holmes Hurley Memorial Foundation located at 126 W. Innes Street, Salisbury. Please make checks payable to the Hurley Park Foundation and send to P.O. Box 4354, Salisbury, NC 28145-4354. All donations are tax deductible and greatly appreciated.