

Boone fights water waste

Written by Lauren Ohnesorge
Thursday, 19 July 2007 20:39

Last night Boone Town Council took steps towards improving the town's water situation by amending its water and sewer ordinance.

Now rainwater can be used to flush toilets- an option restricted in the old ordinance. According to Public Utilities Director Rick Miller, it's a step in the right direction.

"It helps conserve the water we're making at the plant so those numbers are lower, and the rainwater is basically free," Miller said.

Under the amended ordinance, projects like the new Watauga High School will be able to implement rain harvesting catchment systems.

"It's just a collection system that catches rainwater," Miller said.

It can be as simple as a rain barrel.

Amendments were passed on a unanimous vote. This is another step towards what the Council has been working towards for years, according to Councilman Buck Spann.

"This buys us some time as well as reinforces the conservation ethic in our community," he said.

In 2004, a report concluded Boone did not have enough raw water sources to meet its twenty-year needs. The report estimated the town would be in a moratorium situation as early as 2009, Miller said. While the heaviest day last month utilized 1.933 million gallons, the town is permitted to treat 3 million gallons, he said. That means we're in good shape- but for how long?

The town of Boone is under a Voluntary Water Conservation ordinance- but that may not be enough for the peak months of September and October, he said. Miller advised residents to be diligent with their conservation efforts- and to limit lawn watering and other non-vital uses of potable water.

For more information on how to utilize rainwater in your home, contact an Every Drop Counts conservation officer at (828) 266-1183.

Zoning ordinances dealing with Appalachian State University were taken off the agenda at the last minute. Discussions on University District zoning will resume next meeting.