

East Thornton Lake Natural Area secured, fund-raising underway

In November 2010, the City of Albany acquired a 27-acre property in North Albany with the intent to establish the East Thornton Lake Natural Area (ETLNA) and Kalapuya Interpretive Center.

ETLNA will be a place to discover plants and animals that are disappearing from the Willamette Valley and already gone from most cities. Visitors will be able to experience a recovering oak savanna on the only natural lake in the Albany city limits, a remnant of the Willamette River's ever-changing path through the region. Trails, a pavilion, and a nature-based playground will be built to teach children the history of the relationships between nature and humans -- the Kalapuya people and settlers of European descent.

More information about the project is available at <http://www.cityofalbany.net/parks/etlna/>.

The City of Albany has paid \$1.25 million in cash toward the purchase price of \$2.25 million. A promissory note



has been signed, giving the City a short amount of time to raise the remaining \$1 million. The City plans to raise the remainder through grants and private contributions.

At least \$100,000 must be raised toward acquisition costs no later than October 2011; private donations are critical to meeting that goal. Cash donations and pledges may be made through the City of Albany or the Calapooia Watershed

Council. Donations are accepted on-line at http://www.cityofalbany.net/parks/etlna/?page_id=12.

The project also needs volunteers to assist in raising money to complete the purchase.

For more information, contact:

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541-917-7769

Albany website in top ten for government transparency

The City of Albany's website was recognized this winter as one of ten great government sites by *Government Computer News*, a magazine for government information technology professionals.



The Top Ten list was featured in the January 14, 2011, issue of GCN: <http://gcn.com/articles/2011/01/17/public-sector-web-sites-intro.aspx>. The story was one of the most e-mailed articles for the magazine that week.

Albany was listed fourth in the Top Ten and is one of only two municipal governments on the list. Other agencies are Bay Bridge 360, San Francisco/Oakland, CA.; California.gov; Census.gov; DisasterAssistance.gov; LouisvilleKY.gov; Maine.gov; NASA.gov; Recovery.gov; and WhiteHouse.gov.

The magazine's article about Albany featured the website's "Where Does My Money Go?" page, which lets residents enter their address to find out how their property taxes are apportioned to various City services. Another feature is the Dashboard, which provides financial information, updated daily, showing total money spent and percentages used on each category of spending for any given program in the City budget.

GCN also complimented the City for "a clean, well-designed home page" with its "What's New?" section with links to getting building permits, paying utility bills on-line, and the Talking Water Gardens project.

Government Computer News is published on-line and in print. It covers how government agencies integrate, implement, and manage technology; technology developments; projects, purchasing, and compliance issues; and the tools, products, and solutions required to achieve agency missions. The print magazine has 100,000 subscribers, and the on-line version gets about 125,000 unique visitors each month.

Thornton Lakes' turtles

Of all of Albany's natural areas, Thornton Lakes is the only one classified as significant wildlife habitat due to the documented presence of two species listed by the state of Oregon as "sensitive-critical": the western painted turtle and the north-western pond turtle.

The western painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta bellii*) and the western pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*) are native to Oregon. Both species are listed as "sensitive-critical" on the Oregon

Department of Fish & Wildlife's Sensitive Species list. The "sensitive-critical" designation is a category for species whose numbers are in such severe decline that, without some recovery, they will become endangered. In Washington state, the pond turtles are currently listed as endangered.

Pond and painted turtles are thought to be in decline due to the reduction of suitable habitat, introduction of non-native turtles (sliders) into the wild, and other factors. Good habitat for turtles includes quiet backwater ponds and lakes with logs and other debris in the water for basking, adequate aquatic vegetation along the water's edge to provide food and cover from predators, and a sunny open area away from the water for nesting. Fortunately, East Thornton Lake has all these amenities. It is home to both turtles and is thought to be only one of a handful of places left in Oregon where breeding populations of both species exist.

Turtles have been observed basking on fallen logs in Thornton Lake. It is important not to disturb them during their basking because it is essential for synthesizing Vitamin D3, for the elimination of parasites through exposure to ultraviolet light from the sun, development of eggs, and other important life requirements. Turtles always keep a watch for danger and will seek out Thornton Lake's underwater hiding places to avoid predators. Both the

turtles and their eggs are preyed upon by raccoons, foxes, coyotes, otters, and herons, all of which can be found in the Thornton Lake area.

Turtles are omnivorous; they'll eat both plants and animals. Both species will eat algae, aquatic plants, insects, worms, crustaceans, small fish, tadpoles, mol-

lusks and other animals.

The western pond turtle prefers a diet of caddis fly and dragonfly larvae. These turtles are brown on top and creamy yellow on the bottom shell with creamy, blotchy head and legs; they can grow up to 10 inches in length and live 40 years or more. They spend a part of each year in grassy, sunny areas for nesting and in wooded or brushy thickets for winter hibernation. The western pond turtle is not fully aquatic and in the summer months will often remain in upland forest aestivating (a form of warm

weather hibernation) in or under wood debris.

The western painted turtle can grow up to 12 inches long and live 20 years or more. It has a green upper shell, a bottom shell with red, black, and yellow markings, and distinct yellow lines along its head and neck. These turtles prefer lakes, ponds, and marshes with muddy bottoms and hibernate in the winter by burrowing into the mud underwater where they survive under extremely low oxygen conditions. The pond turtle will also spend part of the year in upland forests.

Mating season for both species occurs from late spring to mid-late summer. Female turtles of both species dig their nests anywhere from close to the water's edge to 200 yards away from a water body. Turtles usually choose well-drained, native soils with good sun exposure and little or no vegetation. Painted turtles usually lay 4-23 eggs, depending on the size of the female turtle. Female pond turtles lay 1-13 eggs per clutch. It is important not to disturb turtles while they are nesting or they may abandon the nest site.

Many species of turtles lack sex chromosomes, including our native turtles.

These chromosomes are needed to determine gender in most other animals. The sex of the turtle is determined instead by the temperature of the eggs during incubation. Higher temperatures (around 87°F) produce females. Lower temperatures (77°F) produce males; at around 84°F, both males and females can develop.

For more information about turtles native to Oregon, visit <http://www.oregon-turtles.com/>.

What do you call a group of turtles?

Answer: A "bale."

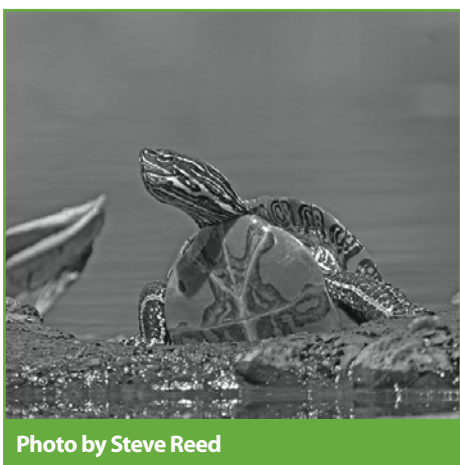


Photo by Steve Reed

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Library and Senior Center smooth 2010 tax season

AARP is again providing free help with preparing income tax returns and filing them electronically this spring at the Main Branch of Albany Public Library and the Albany Senior Center. Help at the Library, 2450 14th Avenue SE, is available by appointment only; walk-ins are welcome at the Senior Center, 489 Water Avenue NW. Call the Library for a complete schedule or check the Library's tax page, <http://library.cityofalbany.net/reference/Taxes2010.php>.

Individual and business taxpayers no longer receive income tax packages in the mail from the Internal Revenue Service. The packages contained the forms, schedules, and instructions for filing a paper income tax return. The IRS has taken this step because electronic filing continues to grow, many options for preparing returns are now free, and the agency is trying to reduce costs. In October 2010, IRS sent a postcard to individuals who filed paper returns last year and did not use a tax preparer or tax software explain how to get the forms and instructions for filing their 2010 return.

Among free options:

- Taxpayers can still get forms and instructions on-line at IRS.gov, by visiting IRS offices or at participating libraries (Albany Public Library is one) and post offices.
- Individuals making \$49,000 or less can use the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program for free tax preparation and, in many cases, free electronic filing.
- Individuals aged 60 and older can take advantage of free tax counseling and basic income tax preparation through Tax Counseling for the Elderly.
- IRS Free File provides options for free brand-name tax software or on-line fillable forms plus free electronic filing. Everyone can use Free File to prepare a federal tax return. Taxpayers who make \$58,000 or less can choose from approximately 20 commercial software providers. There's no income limit for Free File Fillable Forms, the electronic version of IRS paper forms, which also has free e-filing.

Only eight percent of individuals who filed tax returns last year received tax packages in the mail. The rest used a paid tax professional or software or e-filed their tax returns. More than 96 million individual tax returns were e-filed in 2010 and an estimated 20 million paper returns were filed through paid preparers, according to the IRS.

Albany Public Library can help with access to a computer, paper forms, and tax preparation instructions; forms from prior years or other states; and reference copies of forms and instructions for preparing state of Oregon tax returns.

Free fitness, wellness preview week at Albany Parks & Recreation

Albany Parks & Recreation Department is offering a free preview of exercise and wellness classes for all ages the first week in April as a way to say thank you to regular participants and to welcome new exercisers. The free preview is sponsored by Samaritan Albany General Hospital.

Exercise not only helps people feel better by reducing anxiety and depression, it can help children do better in school, improve cognitive performance in adults, and reduce age-related memory loss.

For children, classes can help build coordination, strength, and love for physical play. Four- to six-year-olds can enjoy Mini-movers on Tuesday, and Tap & Ballet, Tap & Tumble, and Ballet on Wednesday. Physically-fit kids sleep better and are better able to handle physical and emotional challenges. Active children are more likely to become active adults.

Adults: Look for specially-marked aerobic fitness classes in the Spring Parks & Recreation Activity Guide. Regular participation in a fitness class helps you feel better and have more energy for work and leisure time. In addition to fitness classes, try revitalizing yoga at City Hall on Monday and Wednesday. Yoga provides a number of well-documented benefits including reduced blood pressure, enhanced feelings of relaxation, stress reduction, improved digestion, better posture, increased strength and flexibility, and improved balance. Popular Zumba classes are on Tuesday and Thursday; it's exhilarating and an excellent choice for group fitness.

Arthritis and Interval Cardio & Core Training previews are available for seniors and boomers that week. Preview arthritis exercise on Monday and Interval Cardio & Core Training on Wednesday. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) report that even moderate exercise and physical activity can improve the health of seniors who are frail or who have diseases that accompany aging. Growing older doesn't mean you have to lose strength or your ability to do everyday tasks. Exercise can help older adults feel better and enjoy life more, even those who think they're too old or out of shape.

Old or young, you've never been physically active before, or you just want to get moving again, Albany Parks & Recreation offers classes to put you on the road to active good health. More information is available in the Spring Activity Guide, at www.albanyparksandrecreation.org, or by calling 541-917-7777.



The river is yours; show it some love

Much of the pollution that gets into our rivers doesn't come from industrial plants; it comes from us. You and your family can make a difference in making Oregon's rivers healthy.

The rain that falls on your driveway and water that goes down your sink or tub drain end up in a local river or stream. Do you know how to keep it clean?

The Oregon Environmental Council's Love Your River website provides monthly action tips, information on how clean your favorite rivers are, and offers prizes like camping gear when you commit to cut river pollution.

Check it out: www.loveyourriver.org.

Fun for kids at Albany Public Library

Here are some of the programs and activities for kids this spring at Albany Public Library. The Downtown Carnegie Library is located at 302 Ferry Street SW; the Main Library is at 2450 14th Avenue SE.

Check the Library's web page, <http://library.cityofalbany.net/>, for details:

- 2:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 22: Finley wildlife program, for kids of all ages, Downtown
- 2:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 23: "Dance around the World with Jennifer," puppets and dance with Jennifer Carroll, for children of all ages, Main
- 1:00 p.m., Saturday, March 26: Clever Cooks Contest XXVII, cooking contest for kids 0 to 18, Main
- 2:00 p.m., Saturday, April 16: Procession of the Species mask-making, crafts and music, Main
- 1:00 p.m. Saturday, April 23: "Why Art?," interactive workshop for parents and children age 7 to 12, Main

CITY OF ALBANY Directory

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Sharon Konopa 541-926-6812

Ward I Councilors

Dick Olsen 541-926-7348

Floyd Collins 541-928-2961

Ward II Councilors

Bill Coburn 541-928-0649

Ralph Reid, Jr. 541-928-7382

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Bessie Johnson 541-791-2494

Jeff Christman 541-926-0528

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Wes Hare 541-917-7505

City Hall Phone Numbers

General Information 541-917-7500

Ambulance Billing 541-917-7710

Building Inspection 541-917-7553

Carnegie Library 541-917-7585

City Manager 541-917-7500

Engineering 541-917-7676

Finance Office 541-917-7500

Fire Department 541-917-7700

Human Resources 541-917-7500

Main Library 541-917-7580

Mayor/Council Line 541-917-7503

Municipal Court 541-917-7740

Parks & Recreation 541-917-7777

Planning and Zoning 541-917-7550

Police Department 541-917-7680

Public Information Office 541-917-7507

Senior Center 541-917-7760

Transit 541-917-7667

Water/Sewer Billing 541-917-7547

Water/Sewer/Streets 541-917-7600

Publishing Information

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Emergencies (Fire, Police, Ambulance)

DIAL 911

Public hearings set on protection of natural resources

Oregon's land-use planning program addresses 19 statewide planning goals. Periodically, the City is required to review and amend its comprehensive plan and development code so they are consistent with the statewide goals. To address statewide Goal 5: Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Open Space, the City is required to inventory wetlands, riparian corridors, and wildlife habitat inside the City's urban growth boundary, identify which resources have the highest value and function, and adopt measures to protect them.

The City is beginning the process to adopt amendments to the Albany Comprehensive Plan and Development Code to protect those significant natural resources through a series of public meetings:

- Albany Planning Commission: 5:15 p.m. Monday, March 21, 2011.
- Albany City Council: 7:15 p.m. Wednesdays, April 13 and April 27, 2011.

The hearings will be in Council Chambers at Albany City Hall, 333 Broadalbin Street SW. If you can't attend but have written comments, please mail them to: Community Development, City of Albany, PO Box 490, Albany, OR 97321.

Every person who owns property within the Albany urban growth boundary where significant natural resources are found received mailed notice of the hearings in mid-February. Such property includes:



Photo by Steve Reed

- Open Space zoning subject to proposed changes to land uses allowed within the zone
- Wetlands subject to regulations of the proposed Significant Wetland Overlay District
- Riparian resources that are subject to the regulations of the proposed Riparian Corridor Overlay District
- Potential habitat for the northwestern pond turtle or western painted turtle in and around Thornton Lakes subject to regulations of the proposed Habitat Assessment Overlay District.

What is being proposed?

Amendments to the Albany Comprehensive Plan and Development Code that are proposed to protect significant wetlands, riparian corridors, and wildlife habitat and to implement Statewide Planning Goal 5 are:

- Amend uses allowed in Open Space Zone. Proposed uses allowed would be more restrictive than those currently allowed to better meet the purpose and intent of the Open Space (OS) zone. Provisions for amending the OS boundary are proposed.
- Adoption of local wetland and riparian corridor inventories. Wetlands and riparian areas were inventoried ten years ago and updated in 2009. An inventory of potential wildlife habitat was conducted in 2009. These inventories identify which resources are designated as "significant" (considered to have high function and value).
- Adoption of new Significant Wetland Overlay District. Development activities in all wetlands are regulated by the Oregon Department of State Lands and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The City is required to adopt regulations to protect wetlands designated as "significant."
- Adoption of new Riparian Corridor Overlay District. For most fish-bearing waterways in Albany, a 50-foot buffer is proposed from the ordinary high-water mark where development activities will be limited. The buffer also extends around any adjacent wetlands.

- Adoption of new Habitat Assessment Overlay District. Development activities within 100 feet of the ordinary high-water mark from Thornton Lakes may require a turtle habitat assessment to determine and limit impacts on the habitat for pond turtles and painted turtles, which are listed as "sensitive-critical" species by the state of Oregon.

The earliest these regulations could become effective is April 27, 2011.



Photo by Steve Reed

How will the natural resource regulations affect what I can do with my property?

The proposed regulations are intended to balance the protection of significant resources with reasonable economic use of property. They represent the minimum level of protection to meet the state natural resource protection requirements. The impact of the proposed regulations on existing development is as limited as possible.

Many normal residential activities are exempt from the regulations. Provisions address situations where the lot would become unbuildable or when a use that could be reasonably expected to occur in the current zoning district would not be allowed. The proposal also allows for

changing the district boundary and changing the program to protect the significant resources.

A Natural Resource Impact Review will be required for all development activities in the Significant Natural Resource Overlay Districts that are not specifically exempted from review. The review will be concurrent to any land use application or building permit. In rare instances when neither is required, the review will be conducted independently. Activities subject to review include:

- Land divisions
- New structures or exterior expansion of any structure
- Increases in impervious surfaces
- Site modifications including grading, excavation, fill, or native vegetation removal
- Installation of utilities
- Construction of roads, driveways, or paths

Where can I get more information?

Overlay district maps can be viewed on the City's on-line geographic information system, InfoHub (<http://infohub.cityofalbany.net/infohub/>). Enter your address (without 'RD' or 'ST,' etc.), then click on the Wetland Overlay, Riparian Overlay, or Habitat Overlay layers to see where they are on your property. If you need help using InfoHub, call 541-917-7550.

A copy of the text amendments is also available for inspection at the Community Development Department on the second floor of Albany City Hall.

The proposed natural resource regulations are available at <http://www.cityofalbany.net/goal5/>.

Call or visit the Community Development Department, 541-917-7550.

E-mail heather.hansen@cityofalbany.net.

Complying with the requirements of Statewide Planning Goal 5 by protecting significant natural resources demands thoughtful consideration of the associated benefits and costs, opportunities and challenges, both to individuals and the community as a whole, now and in the future.

Arson fires bring interagency collaboration

At 11:30 p.m. October 22, 2010, citizens called 911 to report a fire in a vacant home in the 1200 block of Geary Street SE. Albany's Police and Fire personnel responded. The structure was deemed structurally unsafe to enter, and the fire was labeled as suspicious because there was no electrical power to the house.

This was the beginning of ten apparently related arson fires over the next 44 days, the last one set on December 5, 2010. Once a pattern of arsons became apparent, investigators returned to the Geary Street house, conducted a more in-depth investigation and determined it was arson.

Two additional apparently unrelated arsons occurred from December 6 through December 28, 2011.

After the sixth arson, Albany public safety personnel began to feel the strain. Certified federal fire investigators from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; Federal Bureau of Investigators; Oregon State Police arson investigators; Benton and Linn County law enforcement agencies; the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office; and

Corvallis Fire Department met in Albany to review the situation and offer assistance. The response from these organizations was tremendous, and their support and expertise proved invaluable. Albany public safety personnel would not have been able to successfully investigate these cases without their help.

Albany's Public Works, Parks & Recreation, and Information Technology Departments provided administrative support. Building Division staff inspected and provided lists of abandoned or vacant buildings throughout the community. Each City department responded immediately to requests for support and made a very challenging situation more manageable.

Citizens of Albany were also asked to watch for suspicious activity in their neighborhoods, and many responded as community partners to actively address these crimes.

Owners of the burned buildings incurred \$1,236,460 in property damage. As of January 15, 2011, the arsons cost the Fire



Albany firefighters at the November 18, 2010, fire at 6061 Columbus Street SE.

Department nearly \$76,000 in overtime and more than \$10,000 for materials and supplies. The Police Department overtime exceeded \$40,000 plus \$5,700 in materials and supplies.

The arson investigations continue; however, much progress has been made and the court process has begun for two suspects. Fire Chief John Bradner

noted that arson investigations are very difficult; and, nationwide, only 18% are ever solved.

Albany residents are still encouraged to keep an eye open for any suspicious activity and to report it to police immediately by calling 9-1-1. For information about the 2010 arson fires, visit www.albanyarsoninvestigation.com.

They have an app for 9-1-1?

Wow, I just found an app on my smart phone that will allow 9-1-1 to get me help with just the simple tap of a button. Seem too good to be true? Good, because it is.

A common misconception is that 9-1-1 systems nationwide can receive incoming text messages, instant messages, and video feeds. Although the 9-1-1 system is continuously working to update its capabilities, these apps and text messages don't always work. The best way to get the appropriate help quickly is to call 9-1-1 via a landline, voice-over-internet protocol (VOIP), or cell phone. Make sure you stay on the line and know your location.

The 9-1-1 number should be used for emergencies only; however, if you are in doubt, make the call and the dispatcher will be able to quickly determine what level of help you need. The nonemergency business number for the Albany Police Department is 541-917-7680. Someone is available to answer your call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



Dispose of yard waste properly

When spring weather lures you outside to mow the lawn, pull weeds, trim shrubs, or start the garden, please keep our streams in mind. You can help prevent stormwater pollution, flooding, and increased street maintenance costs in Albany by disposing of yard waste properly.

Albany Municipal Code 12.10 says: "No person shall cause any pollutant to be discharged to public rights-of-way, municipal stormwater system, or any Waters of the State or cause any pollutant to be placed in a location where such pollutant is likely to escape or be carried into the public rights-of-way, municipal stormwater system or Waters of the State." The list of prohibited pollutants includes any solid or viscous substance that may cause obstruction to the flow in the stormwater system, such as grass clippings, sand, or mud.

These pollutants clog storm drains, causing flooding and increased infrastructure maintenance costs, and also can cause water pollution. Rainwater runoff flows into storm drains in streets and parking lots which flow directly into our creeks and rivers. Rainwater runoff can pick up harmful pollutants, such as grass clippings and sediment blown into a street, on its way to a storm drain.

Grass clippings carry excess nutrients, like fertilizers, that cause algae blooms. Sediment that settles on the river bottom smothers the eggs of salmon and steelhead. In addition, sediment suspended in the water makes it more difficult for juvenile fish to feed.

Please follow the Code: do not blow or hose grass clippings, leaves, sand, dirt, or mud into streets and storm drains. Place grass clippings and leaves in a yard debris bin or bags, compost bin, or haul it offsite for disposal. Sweep dirt into the yard, or sweep it up and place it in a garbage bin.

We need your help! When you see pollution in or near a storm drain, please report it. Call the City of Albany Public Works Department at 541-917-7600.

Remember, catch basins lead to our rivers and streams.

If you have questions or would like to request a school or group presentation, please contact the City of Albany Environmental Services at 541-791-0087.



How do you spot pollution? Watch for:

- anyone dumping waste into a storm drain
- off-colored discharge, stains (like oil or paint) or unusual odors in gutters, catch basins, and storm drains or in a stream, especially near a stormwater pipe



IT'S SPRINGTIME! Have you checked your emergency kit lately?

Daylight Savings Time began on Sunday, March 13, this year. The Albany Fire Department hopes you remembered to test all of the smoke detectors in your home that day and change out the batteries, if necessary.



On March 11, tsunami waves from the 8.9 Japan earthquake hurt people and property in Oregon and California. It's time to make your kit.

Go to Ready.gov to find out how.

The changing season is also a great opportunity to review disaster response plans and restock disaster kits.

Have you looked at your kit lately? Take a moment this spring to make sure your kit is ready for you and your family.

A basic emergency supply kit should include: water, food, a battery-powered/hand crank radio, flashlight and batteries, first-aid kit, whistle, dust masks, wrench, can opener, and local maps. Depending on the makeup of your household, you should include diapers and formula, pet food, prescription medications, and extra eyeglasses. You can find a more detailed list at Ready.gov along with information on putting together and maintaining your emergency kit.

Wasting Water

Doesn't Make Cents.

Live or have a business in Albany?

You qualify for a FREE outdoor irrigation audit. Let our trained staff show you practical ways to reduce your water usage and maintain a healthy lawn.

Call 541-220-0312 to schedule your audit.

Conserve water (and money) with a **FREE Outdoor Water Conservation Kit***. Get yours today from the Public Works Department, City Hall, 2nd fl.

*Limited quantities available
May 1 - July 31.



Save water, save money

Albany offers a free irrigation audit to City water customers to help you learn how to water your landscaping and garden efficiently. A trained City staff member will examine your irrigation system and schedule and evaluate the amount of water that you use on your landscape. The audit results in a report customized for you with advice on how to reduce water use while maintaining a healthy and attractive landscape.

The audit is especially valuable to those who notice higher water bills in the summer. Albany homeowners often use four or five times more water during the summer than they do in winter. Many yards are overwatered; it's wasteful, expensive, and can also lead to plant disease.

The irrigation audit takes 30 minutes to an hour. In addition to the inspection and report, participants receive literature with water conservation ideas and a free water conservation kit.

Audits and limited quantities of water conservation kits are available May 1-July 31, 2011. To sign up for an audit or get more information, contact Kim Kagelaris in the Albany Public Works Department at 541-220-0312 or kim.kagelaris@cityofalbany.net.