Decades ago, El Paso grappled with water security concerns, forcing the utility to become innovative in both water resource planning and conservation. El Paso is located in the Chihuahuan Desert, which typically receives about 9 inches of rain a year. With continued population growth trends and drought cycles affecting the Rio Grande, El Paso has developed an aggressive strategy to diversify water supply and increase conservation to ensure long-term sustainability.

In recent decades, expanded water reclamation, adoption of a conservation ordinance, new plumbing codes for water efficiency in new homes and businesses, as well as residential rebate and incentive programs have cut water consumption. With these measures in place, El Paso has successfully reduced per-person residential water use by 35%.

To continue their efforts to incentivize water conservation, El Paso Water has shifted focus to conservation in the non-residential sector and has created the Certified Water Partner Program with the mission of engaging commercial and institutional customers through increased awareness and recognition of best practices. El Paso Water also is conducting water usage audits and provides recommendations for improved water efficiency that will result in cost savings.

Launched in 2017, the Certified Water Partner Program started with a pilot project with El Paso’s restaurant sector, where over 40 restaurants are now Certified Water Partners. Depending on the size of a restaurant, water use can range from thousands to millions of gallons of water annually. By acting on water audit recommendations, businesses can save hundreds of dollars annually on water bills.

El Paso Water continues to engage with restaurants but has expanded its focus to engage the institutional sector with a current emphasis on city operations, including libraries, fire stations, recreation centers and more.

The utility’s water conservation strategies and collaboration with both businesses and the community will benefit the more than 800,000 people living in El Paso County. These efforts will help push back the need to construct a near-billion dollar water importation project to 2050.
El Paso Area Water Aquifers and Water Production Sources

MISSION

Texan by Nature is working with El Paso Water to broaden the awareness of the Certified Water Partner Program and to better engage El Paso businesses and the community. TxN is working with El Paso Water to create a model and a case study of the program that could be implemented in other Texas cities and beyond to encourage and increase water conservation strategies.

IMPACT

By reducing water consumption in city buildings and parks, this will reduce city operating costs, and the city will save taxpayers money. An estimated 1.2 million gallons will be saved per year as a result of water efficiency improvements at 23 specific library and police facilities. The cost savings to the City is estimated at $3600 annually.

Plans are underway to broaden the program to include top water-using commercial and institutional sectors, including schools, multifamily sector, car washes, and more. For businesses and facilities receiving the Certified Water Partner designation and seal, it will build awareness and pride in following best water efficiency practices. Water conservation strategies and supporting grants to those audited but not receiving a partner designation will result in reduced water bills for business and community customers.

The Certified Water Partner Program will increase water security for economic growth and business development, future generations, and conserve water in the Chihuahuan Desert, which is home to 130 mammal species and 3,000 plant species (this includes 500 of the world’s 1,500 species of cactus).

NEEDS

- **Media Support**: El Paso Water is seeking media partnerships with local and broader outlets to highlight the Certified Water Partner Program and those involved.

For more information visit texanbynature.org or contact us at programs@texanbynature.org or 512-284-7482.