



## **USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference**

### **Factors in Saving Water**

Since the early decades of the 20th century, the study of attitudes has been a predominant theme in contemporary social psychology. Therefore, the attitude concept is a common tool utilized in attempting to understand human behavior. My literature review examines this concept in relation to what we know about pro-environmental behaviors in residential landscapes. Recent evaluations of energy conservation, water conservation and recycling behaviors show that the overall theory of attitudes influencing actions is useful. However, using evidence from studies of residential landscape water consumption behavior and energy conservation behavior, I show that local environmental education campaigns, discussions with friends and family, the strength of habits, and socio-demographic variables also shape environmental behaviors. Municipal officials trying to convince residents to implement water conservation practices in their domestic landscapes should concentrate on policies that will provide them with opportunities to implement public education, promote social discourse, work with existing habits and focus on people typically not practicing pro-environmental behaviors as well as addressing the pro-environmental attitudes and values of people already practicing water conservation. Analysis of this aspect of the social/human dimension of landscape challenges policy makers to integrate social science with biophysical science for a broader landscape perspective.

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