

## Boiling Point



This summer has been a hot, dry one for many parts of the U.S., which created concerns about drought, wildfires and water availability. Much of the nation has suffered through a crippling heat wave during at least one point this summer; Colorado experienced a surge in wildfires in late June, which caused several deaths and considerable damage; and, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Midwest saw the worst drought in five decades, which skyrocketed the price of corn on the world market.

These conditions should serve as a reminder to the storm water and erosion control industry of the importance of rainwater harvesting. Collecting rainwater not only is an economical and fairly inexpensive way to reduce municipal water use, but it can provide some relief during dry weather for businesses and facilities, as well as on farms—where it can be used to provide water for livestock and for irrigation.

In addition to providing a source of water during drought conditions or water restrictions, rainwater harvesting and infiltration-based practices offer yet another benefit as well: They can lower peak storm water runoff. Reducing runoff is especially important for the 772 U.S. municipalities with combined sewer systems; too much runoff during rain events can lead to combined sewer overflow, which can pollute bodies of water—especially now, in late summer, when storm water carries the most pollutants because of fewer rain showers.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, using green infrastructure controls in cities with combined sewer systems is likely to cost less than conventional controls, and green-grey approaches can reduce expenditures on storm water infrastructure. In light of ever-tightening budgets, finding new and creative ways to fund operations with less money is key to regulatory compliance and effective storm water management.

How has the summer weather affected your organization or community? Have the recent weather conditions across the country made you think about storing and reusing rainwater, if you don't already? Let us know at [swseditor@sgcmail.com](mailto:swseditor@sgcmail.com).

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