

# Message From Marsha



June 17, 2008

## **RAINWATER HARVESTING, ITS TIME IS COME!**

Innovative approaches to conserving and managing our precious water resources are critical for Eastern El Paso County and Colorado! I have been working with Dick Wolfe, our State Engineer and Jennifer Gimbel from the Colorado Water Conservation Board on two bills that would allow families and developers to harvest rainwater: (1) rural families would be allowed to store up to 5,000 gallons of water in cisterns; (2) developers may participate in 10 pilot programs to capture rainwater and snowmelt in cisterns throughout their new developments. Since this water does not need to be treated, it can be utilized for lawns, parks, golf courses and fire protection services.

Rainwater harvesting has been used for over 6,000 years in China, India and Egypt. This is not a new concept, but is currently considered illegal in Colorado due to the "prior appropriations" doctrine.

Rainwater harvesting is legal in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Ohio and Oregon. Documents reflect that we can realize up to a 60% savings of treated water and energy costs if we use untreated rainwater and snowmelt to water our grass, gardens, parks & golf courses.

Since rainwater harvesting may interfere with senior water rights due to the "prior appropriations" doctrine, it is important for this legislation to have the proper protections and augmentation provisions so senior water rights holders will not be harmed.

Families in rural El Paso County who rely on ground water from a declining and non-renewable water supply such as the Denver Basin will find relief by storing rainwater and snowmelt in cisterns for fire protective services, landscaping and gardening.

This is an exciting project and I will keep you updated on the progress of this potential legislation! Please contact me at [MarshaLooper@gmail.com](mailto:MarshaLooper@gmail.com), or 238-5600 if you are interested in a copy of these bill drafts or my presentation to the Interim Water Review Committee on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008. We look forward to discussing this and other water issues at our Town Hall meetings scheduled for June 25<sup>th</sup>, at Calhan High School 7:00 – 9:00 pm, July 9<sup>th</sup>-Ramah Town Hall, 7:30 PM, July 10<sup>th</sup>, Edison School 7:00-9:00 PM.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments. Visit [www.gomarsha.org](http://www.gomarsha.org) for more information on legislation and issues that is important to your family! Thank you for the opportunity to serve you!

Respectfully,

***Marsha Looper***

Marsha Looper,

Colorado State Representative HD#19