

Village Gray Water ... Down and Dirty

By Water Man Iddings

The Three Keys to the Kingdom!

- I. Conserve Water
- II. Screen your Gray, Keep your Chunks
- III. Through the Filter, EVERYTHING goes through the Filter!

Conserve Water:

1. Keep your clean water clean, don't waste it, don't 'gray' it up just because you finally realize you have enough to spare. Conserve water the entire time you're there. At the end you should take any unused water home, or it can be used for dust abatement within your camp.
2. Keep your 'green' water 'green'. If your ice melts in your cooler, you might not want to drink it, and you should hesitate before you dump it on the playa, but it's not really fully 'gray', is it? There is no soap or grease or conditioner or dye/color in it, there might be an odd particle or two in it, and it might smell like food, but it's not really 'gray water', so I call it 'green water'. You can keep your green water for washing things, or you can bring your green water to me over at Gray Water Reclamation, but put it in with the Green Water Collection, not the nasty gray water filter.
3. Most important of all, elevate your consciousness to conserve water. This year we may actually be paying money, real money, to have the pumper trucks pump out and haul out some, or all, of our Village gray water. So it's all about the gallons and reducing the number of gallons and the number of times we have to pay for those gallons to be pumped out and hauled off the playa.

Screen your Gray, Keep your Chunks

1. I don't care if you get an old T-shirt, stretch it over a 5 gallon bucket and screen your water that way, or it you bring Brita water filters and shove all your Gray through those little white miracles; Screen your Gray water before you bring it to me.
2. Once you've collected your chunks and particles, throw them away or burn them. You might want to bring enough old T-shirts from the Thrift store to go through two per day and just throw the old chunky T-shirt screen capture onto the burn pile.
3. When you bring your screened gray water over to the evaporation ponds at Water Reclamation Central, **be sure to pour it through the filter.**

Through the Filter, EVERYTHING goes through the Filter!

1. **Never** just pour your collected water into a pond over at Water Reclamation Central. There is a filter it needs to go through first, find it and pour your collected water through the filter - **or** - leave your water in it's transport container to be poured in later. This goes for both gray water and green water.
2. If you're lost about this, read the posted instructions, or ask someone.
3. PLEASE DO NOT POUR YOUR GRAY OR GREEN WATER INTO ANY SHOWER'S EVAPORATION POND. It just gums up the shower's evaporation pond and slows evaporation, especially since there is probably no filter at the shower's evap pond.
4. While I'm on the topic, sort of, please go to the porta-potties to pee. In the past, I may have encouraged people to pee in my pools for various reasons, but this year, it's all about the gallons and reducing their numbers, so, off to the porta-potties we go!

Burnin' Water: A further note on Water Conservation

Sometimes, in the past, us beautiful people participating in the Human Carcass Wash have had what I might call a WashFest. It's usually at the end of the day, most everyone is gone, the HCW is starting to be cleaned up and downsized. Then someone realizes we've got plenty of water, gallons and gallons of it, mostly from donations, and wouldn't it be nice to really soak and stroke the last 5 to 7 people who have stayed to help clean up? WooHoo! And we're off to Niagara as cups and pints of gushing clean and soapy water flow over the last few participants.

We really need this to NOT happen, I, Water Man, really need it to not happen this year, ... at all.

Conserve Water. Stay with the 'squirt, squirt', not the 'pour and gush', no matter how tempting it is, and most of the water just burns off in the daylight. On a normally hot day, 250 people can go through a well-organized HCW and leave behind less than 10 gallons of gray water, but the minute the WashFest starts, that number of gallons begins to soar with the eagles...

Keep the extra water clean, don't gray it up.

What is the Overall Plan?

A. *Think ahead about all of the different soaps, conditioners, lotions, sun screens and coloring agents you'll bring to the playa.* Better to bring things that breakdown and wash off easily, and then use them appropriately, not too much, not too sparingly, so you use less water in getting them off of you and your dishes.

B. *Do the same for trash & recycling.* Minimize the size and shape of your trash and recycling you'll be bringing to the playa. You might repackage things in burnable

containers or thin plastic bags (which make less trash).

C. *Then collect it all: the trash, the recyclables and both the gray & the green water.* Please follow the camp and village plan for making sure all of it is dealt with appropriately. And do more than your share of hauling the trash & recycling off the playa when you leave.

D. *Conserve water when you shower and only shower at a showering structure that is designed to capture your splashy run-off into an evaporation pond or some sort of collection device.*

E. *Collect and screen your gray water and 'green' water* (green water is water only 'slightly-off' from clean, like melted ice). Bring your screened gray & green water and pour it through the appropriate filters over at Water Reclamation Central where it can flow into evaporation and processing ponds where it will continue to be filtered, treated and evaporated. Some water will evaporate, some will be successfully treated and returned safely to the playa, and some may be professionally pumped and hauled off the playa. Though we are frugal, all of this costs time, effort and money, so do your part by conserving water, screening your collected water, and bringing it over to our filter and evaporation ponds.

Why is any of this important?

We have an opportunity to participate in an example of Leave No Trace that echoes all over the world and helps to set a standard of co-existence between humans and the environment that will sustain us all for many generations to come. We will be presenting our Village as a community supporting water conservation, filtration, evaporation and processing as well as trash and recycling collection and removal which will inspire others to tread more lightly on the Earth. We will, as always, be working closely with the Earth Guardians and DPW to support the Burning Man event as well as the health of our planet.