The annual Celebrating Sustainability Festival is a full morning of events to celebrate Earth Day, hosted by Stanford’s Office of Sustainability. This year, many of Stanford’s sustainability partners participated, hosting various tables on different aspects of sustainability for University students, staff and faculty to explore. The Water Planning & Stewardship (WP&S) team hosted two tables: one focusing on water stewardship and quality and the other focusing on water efficiency. The WP&S table had a lot of great information on Stanford’s environmental stewardship, response to the current drought, and water efficiency achievements displayed through fact sheets, as well as a map of the Hetch Hetchy Water System and water use graphs from 2013-2016. They also featured an interactive game to engage visitors. With the recent conclusion of California’s drought and regulations being lifted, the WP&S team was prepared to answer any questions that faculty, staff or students might have. The game featured a display board with six interesting topics that helped narrate and facilitate the conversation around the drought and University water management. Visitors were also encouraged to sign-up for one of the WP&S’s upcoming Earth Day service projects by volunteering at either the Arizona Garden or in the Foothills.

Got Rain? Now what?

Does this all rain mean the drought is over?

This exceptionally wet winter has vastly improved the water situation in California. On April 7, 2017, Governor Brown ended the drought state of emergency in most of California. While the drought emergency has been lifted, the state prohibitions against water waste are still in effect. Provost Persis Drell recently issued a letter to the campus community that lifted the two day per week domestic watering restriction and the 25% reduction of non-potable irrigation water; but still emphasized that water conservation is a way of life in California and at Stanford.

Should I still conserve water?

Yes. Since California is naturally prone to cyclical droughts, which may increase with the threat of climate change, it is important to continue to practice water conservation as a way of life. When it comes to saving water, even small amounts can have a big impact. Check out Stanford’s Water website for some great conservation tips! suwater.stanford.edu

How does Stanford manage its water? Will these efforts continue?

Stanford has an effective water efficiency program, which started in 2001, and offers assistance and rebates for efficiency projects on campus. Even with the copious amounts of rain, Stanford will continue to closely monitor water consumption, groundwater levels, and water quality on campus. This helps ensure that the university will be able to continue to provide high quality drinking water to the campus to support campus residents, students, faculty, staff, and research, as well as non-potable water for irrigation to cultivate beautiful landscapes and fields that can be used for sports, recreation, and other activities.