



elco NEWS

Newsletter of the East Larimer County Water District

May 2010

Office Hours and Location

The ELCO office is located at 232 South Link Lane, Fort Collins, Colorado and is open from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number is (970)493-2044.

Emergencies

Customers in need of emergency service can call (970)493-2044 after regular office hours. Emergency calls are routed to an answering service which can dispatch on-call personnel.

For Your Information

ELCO customers have the ability to check their accounts and pay their bills via the Internet. Customers can access their accounts to determine the status of payments, monitor consumption, and authorize payment from their checking accounts using a valid check number. No credit card payments are currently accepted online. ELCO customer accounts can be accessed by logging on to the District's website at www.elcowater.org. Credit or debit card payments can be made by phone or at the ELCO office for a nominal fee.

No Lawn Watering Restrictions Anticipated

The mountains of northern Colorado received a near-average amount of snowfall this past winter. That bodes well for ELCO and other water suppliers in the area. Water rights owned by the District are expected to deliver enough water to meet customer demands this summer. If that projection proves accurate, no mandatory lawn watering restrictions will be imposed.

Even though water supplies should be sufficient to meet anticipated demands, customers are encouraged to voluntarily limit their water use. Controlling the amount and frequency of irrigation is an easy way to conserve water and save money. Typically, healthy lawns can be maintained with twice-a-week irrigation.

Sprinkler Audits

ELCO is offering free sprinkler audits for customers who have not had one in the past 3 years. A sprinkler audit includes:

- Visual inspection to pinpoint any problems in your sprinkler system
- Test to measure the precipitation rate of your sprinkler system

- Test to determine how evenly the water is covering the intended area
- Custom watering schedule

Contact ELCO at (970) 493-2044 to schedule an audit. Audit availability is limited and will be scheduled on a first-come first-served basis.

No Changes to ELCO Board

The terms of two current ELCO Board members expired in May. Since no additional candidates applied to run for their Board seats, Vern Sunset

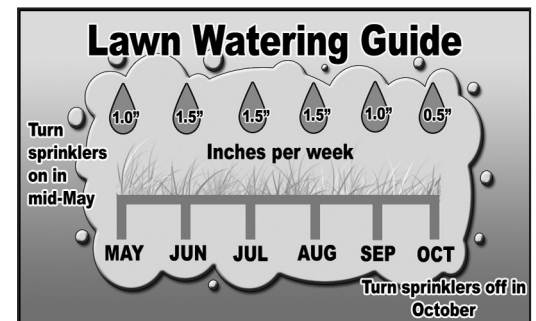
and Randy Siddens will each serve four more years on the ELCO Board.

Recommended Lawn Watering Schedule

The Lawn Watering Guide is designed to help you apply the right amount of water on your lawn. On average, landscape irrigation accounts for nearly half of the water used annually by most homes, and up to 70% of water demand on a summer day. Many lawns are watered too often and sprinklers are left on too long.

To find out how much water your sprinklers apply to the lawn, sign up for a free sprinkler audit. For information on how to do your own sprinkler audit, please feel free to contact the ELCO office.

Evapotranspiration (ET) is the loss of water from a vegetated surface through the combined processes of soil evaporation and plant transpiration. This lost water is typically replenished through rainfall and/or irrigation. The ET rates shown are the recommended inches of water that a typical lawn will require per week during the irrigation season for this area. ET is calculated based on temperature, humidity, wind and sunshine. Daily ET information can be found on Northern Water's website at www.ncwcd.org.



printed on recycled paper.



Outdoor Water Efficiency Tips

- Create an awareness of the need for water conservation at home and at work. Share water conservation ideas with your friends and neighbors. A general rule of thumb is, "Please use what you need, but don't waste it".
- Don't overwater your lawn. Water your lawn and garden only when needed.
- Watering cycles for your grass and landscaping should last no more than 10 to 15 minutes. Cycle times vary depending on sprinkler application rate, landscape slope, soil conditions and plant water needs.
- Water lawns during the early morning or late evening hours and when the wind is not blowing. This reduces evaporative losses.
- Keep weeds down. They rob your lawn and plants of nutrients and water.
- Don't water your street, driveway or sidewalk. Position your sprinklers carefully so the water lands on the plants and not the pavement.
- Install sprinklers that are the most water-efficient for each use. Regularly check sprinkler systems and timing devices to be certain they are operating properly. On a monthly basis, adjust your sprinkler system controller based on ET projections. Turn off the automatic sprinkler system when it's raining.
- Raise the lawn mower blade to at least three inches. A lawn cut higher encourages grass roots to grow deeper, shades the root system, and holds soil moisture better.
- Leave the clippings on the lawn as mulch after you mow, unless they are thick and matted. Mulching also helps to control weeds.
- Thatch and aerate lawns regularly. This will allow water to penetrate the soil more effectively.
- Avoid over fertilizing your lawn. Fertilizer increases your lawn's need for water. Follow instructions carefully during application.
- Cultivate soil regularly in planted beds so water can penetrate and allow root systems to develop.
- Plant native and/or drought-tolerant plants.
- Don't hose down your driveway or sidewalk. Use a broom to clean leaves and other debris from these areas.
- Outfit your hose with a shut-off nozzle which can be adjusted down to a fine spray so that water flows only as needed.
- Use hose washers on outdoor spigots and hoses to eliminate leaks. Check all hoses, connectors and spigots regularly.
- Consider using a commercial car wash that recycles water. If you wash your car at home, park it on the grass. Use soap and water from a bucket and a hose with a shut-off nozzle for rinsing.
- Avoid the installation of ornamental water features (such as fountains) unless the water is recycled. Locate them where there are minimal losses due to evaporation or wind.
- If you have a swimming pool, consider installing a cover that will help prevent evaporation losses.

Landscape Demonstration Garden

In an effort to promote water conservation, ELCO has created a landscape garden which includes a large variety of drought tolerant plants, including six varieties of

turf grass for low to moderate water use. ELCO will make the site accessible beginning in June. Customers interested in learning more should contact us to sched-

ule a visit. Additional information will also be available on our website.

Year to Date Water Use and Conservation Charges

To encourage efficiency, ELCO assesses a conservation charge when customers exceed their annual allotment. This charge reflects the value of water rights available to the District and plant investment fees assessed by the District. Plant investment fees are a one-time charge payable at building permits approval.

To the right is an example of a graph included on each monthly bill showing the monthly and year to date water use along with the customers' annual allotment. Once the usage exceeds the annual allotment for that calendar year for the property, an additional charge of \$1.93 per 1,000 gallons used is assessed. This conservation charge will continue until the new water year begins. Year to Date usage begins in January and ends in December. Your usage

is reflected in the bill you receive the month following that when the water was

used. For example, the bill you receive in July is for water used in June.

