Spring 2023

Water Whys

The Latest from ECCV

Sustaining our community by providing safe, reliable water

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ECCV
Water & Sanitation District

Track Your Use

Saving water becomes a lot easier when you have the ability to see how much water your home is actually using. While ECCV provides usage information in monthly statements, many customers have access to a free tool that can help track use by the month, week, day, and hour.

The free Eye On Water app can be downloaded on computers or mobile devices. Simply download the app and connect it to your account. You'll then have the ability to see how all kinds of activities in your home, from showers to running sprinkler systems, use water. This is especially helpful for ensuring that sprinkler systems are running as intended when watering late at night or overnight. You can also set the app to notify you if usage indicates something in your home might be leaking—wasting water and possibly contributing to a higher bill.

Nearly 2,000 customers have already set up their Eye On Water accounts. Especially as we head into the season of higher water demand, this free tool is one of the most effective ways to help customers save water, and potentially save money by ensuring their indoor and outdoor systems are working as desired.

Want more information, or looking for help getting set up with Eye On Water?

Head to www.eccv.org/homeowner-information and click the Eye On Water link for tutorial videos, or email conservation@eccv.org.

ECCV
Water & Sanitation District
303-693-3800
6201 S Gun Club Rd
Aurora, CO 80016
info@eccv.org

Avoid Sprinker Surprises

Outdoor sprinkler systems are convenient ways to get landscapes the water they need. That makes it easy to treat them as "set and forget" systems when in fact they often need a little more supervision to ensure they're working as intended. A significant amount of unexpectedly high water bills are the result of sprinkler systems getting out of whack.

One of the biggest water waste culprits is an incorrectly programmed sprinkler controller. With multiple watering days, zones, start times, and run times that need to be set, things can get entered by mistake that cause sprinklers to run more often, or for longer, than desired.

ECCV's Water Efficiency Specialist hosts multiple virtual meetings each month May-September. These hour-long, live sessions are a great time to get questions answered and get tips on how to get more out of your system while using less water. Email conservation@eccv.org for more information. Also, getting set up with the free Eye On Water app (see the **Track Your Use** story in this newsletter) can help you monitor how much water your system is using when running. Finally, as you get your system ready for the year, head to www.eccv.org/outdoor-water-conservation and click the Sprinkler Inefficiency link to find a checklist of common sprinkler issues and how to fix them.

Forecasting Water Supplies

Renewable water from the South Platte River makes up a majority of our community's water supply. It's called renewable water because unlike deep aquifers, which don't refill, snow and rain replenish water levels in the river each year. Precisely how much water finds its way to the river depends on a variety of factors.

ECCV closely monitors conditions in the South Platte River basin and studies a variety of models throughout the winter to determine how water supplies may look come spring. As of the end of February, supplies fed by the river were 20 percent full. This is a result of the past two summers remaining drier and hotter than normal and bigger picture, a continuing multi-decade drought throughout most of the western United States.

Even with an average snowpack, supplies are starting in a deficit. Above average precipitation in the basin will be needed through the spring to help supplies start to recover as we head into the summer.

ECCV receives a majority of its annual water supply from the South Platte River. Both the river and its tributaries are fed by melting snowpack each spring.

Wait & See Watering

- **Avoid outdoor watering in April if possible**
- **If outdoor watering is needed, limit to one or two days per week April-May**
- **Watering is permitted from 6 p.m.—10 a.m. on scheduled days. No watering between 10 a.m.—6 p.m.**
- **Even-numbered addresses: watering permitted on Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday**
- **Odd-numbered addresses: watering permitted on Monday, Wednesday, Saturday**
- **NO watering on Fridays**

April weather patterns often require little to no need for outdoor watering. April is historically one of the wettest months of the year in our area with both rain and snow storms being possible. Overnight temperatures can also frequently hover near or below freezing which can damage outdoor valves and lines that have water inside them.

If your landscape needs a little extra water as it starts to exit dormancy, watering one or two times per week is usually plenty for this time of year. If April delivers its typical mild temperatures and several rain and/or snow storms, most grasses, shrubs, and trees shouldn't require additional watering.

ECCV continues to evaluate water supply projections (see story to left). While the District is currently moving forward with the standard, 3-day per week residential watering schedule, it will notify customers of any changes as summer water supplies come into focus.

What Is Sublimation?

For those of us who aren't chemists, science enthusiasts, or are many years removed from high school chemistry, sublimation is a word that likely doesn't come up too often. However, it's an important term this time of year as more sunshine and warming temperatures enter our forecast.

Most of the time, when you heat up a solid—snow for example—it melts into a liquid. If you keep heating it, the liquid then evaporates into a gas. Sublimation is when the middleman gets cut out and the solid turns directly to a gas.

This is important when thinking about water supplies which are fed by snowpack. Weather conditions can cause portions of our winter snowpack to sublimate: evaporate into the air rather than melt into runoff. That yields less water from the snowpack.

Sublimation is one factor that makes it challenging to predict exactly how much water a snowpack will send flowing into streams and rivers during spring runoff. Dry summers and falls also cause plants and soil to soak up more snowmelt before it can reach streams and rivers in the spring. These are all factors that go into modeling forecasts that ECCV studies to predict annual water supplies.