

# AREA DROUGHT IMPACTS

## THE CORTEZ WATER SUPPLY



Southwest Colorado is experiencing extreme drought conditions this year; our snow pack is at record lows, similar to 1990 and 2002. Water supplies for homes and businesses are available this summer for City residents, but all water users will need to practice conservation of our water supplies. Water users are urged to practice beneficial water use as emphasized below and be extra careful not to waste water.

The City adopted a revised **Water Conservation Plan** in 2010 as a guide in the continuing effort to use water resources in the most efficient means possible. The Plan can be accessed on the City's website at: [http://www.cityofcortez.com/government/public\\_works/water](http://www.cityofcortez.com/government/public_works/water). The Plan contains information on the current level of water use in the City, with comparisons of historical usage, and the proposed programs the City will be providing to lower the per capita (per person) usage. In 2017, the City's per capita average use was 204 gallons per day. The City's goal is to reach a per capita usage of 180 gallons per day by 2020. With everyone practicing water conservation and participating in good water use practices, this goal can easily be achieved.

### **THE FOLLOWING CONSERVATION INFORMATION EXPLAINS THE BASICS OF HOW TO USE WATER WISELY.**

The phrase **"Use Water Wisely"** is the focal point of water conservation and the City of Cortez continues to promote water conservation as an important part of daily water usage. City water supplies are adequate, but residents should only water outside uses what they need while complying with the **"NO WATERING BETWEEN 10:00 A.M. AND 5:00 P.M."** restriction. The **"no watering during the hottest part of the day"** restriction is a permanent ordinance and will be enforced.



The City passed **Ordinance No. 1013, Series 2004, which permanently banned irrigation watering between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and is enforced from May 15<sup>th</sup> through September 15<sup>th</sup> every year.** On the first violation, the water user will receive a warning. On the second violation, the user's water will be turned off and it will require a **\$40.00 turn-on fee** to have the water turned back on. The best, and easiest, water conservation measure is to just not waste water.

**Recommended Watering Schedule** – It is recommended that residents implement a **two times a week watering schedule.** Residents can choose the days that best work for their lawns and garden. Those residents with automatic sprinklers for their lawns should be able to program their controllers to meet these recommendations.

**NO WATERING IS ALLOWED BETWEEN 10 AM AND 5 PM FROM MAY 15 - SEPTEMBER 15 EACH YEAR.** Since most water evaporates during the heat of the day, this helps to conserve our water supply.

**In-Home Water Conservation** – There are many water conservation practices you can perform in the home that will save water. Some of these include: taking quicker showers, not letting the water run while shaving or brushing your teeth, and only running full loads of clothes or dishes.



**Violations** – The City enforces Sec. 27-19 of the Cortez City Code: **“Wasting Water Prohibited”** concerning unattended hoses/watering systems or excessive waste due to poor watering practices. Residents violating the ordinance will be notified by the City with a courtesy warning; however, successive **violations will receive a citation subject to fines.** Should the City declare a water conservation emergency, restrictions will be specifically stated and notices delivered to residents as to the extent of necessary water conservation.



**Best Lawn Watering Practices** – Lawns should be watered in the early morning between 3:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. or late evening between 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. Wetting the soil 4 to 6 inches deep, with several days between watering, develops deep, solid roots. Lawns with deep root growth are more resistant to drought. Residents should try to use a plan of watering their lawn **twice a week for approximately 20 minutes per station.**

**LAWN WATERING CONSERVATION – BASIC LAWN WATERING CONSERVATION RULES:**

- Water in early morning and late evening hours. **Do not water in the heat of the day between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.** This is against City Ordinances and **finer will be imposed for violations.**
- Water lawns and landscaping only - not streets, sidewalks, or driveways.
- Avoid watering during windy weather - this wastes water due to increased evaporation and actually blows the water away from the area intended to be watered.
- Keep your grass height at 2½ to 3 inches - taller grass holds water better. Leave grass clippings on the lawn to form a temporary layer of mulch to conserve moisture.
- Mow often enough to cut only 25% of the length – this prevents excessive shock that causes grass to turn yellow.
- Monitor your lawn to water only when needed - typically when grass blades begin to look dull and bluish-gray.



**No Wasted Water** – Do not allow hoses to run unattended; fix plumbing leaks immediately; fix leaking toilets; and **report water main leaks in the street** to the Public Works Department by calling 970.565.7320.

**Xeriscaping** – When planning new areas for landscaping, consider flowers and plants that require less amounts of water to survive. In addition, residents can look into less water-intensive grass types such as fescues, blue grama, wheat grass, and buffalo grass, which all use less water than bluegrass. The landscaping at the City Service Center in the Industrial Park is an example of Xeriscaping with a fescue grass plot, gravel beddings, and low-water usage plants.



**New Lawn Permit Available** – Anyone who plans to start a new lawn this year and wants to water between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. must get a **“New Lawn/Exemption from Watering Restrictions Permit”** from the Public Works Department in the City Service Center. The permit will allow daily watering between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. for up to 21 days to start the grass growing. There is a \$25 charge for this permit and it should be displayed prominently in the front yard. **If you do not need to water during the restricted watering period, a new lawn permit is not necessary.** There are many grass variety alternatives available that use less water, with each variety having different characteristics to consider. Check out the books and information on Xeriscaping at the Cortez Public Library for more information on which variety would be the best choice for your lawn.

**Contact the Public Works Department in the City Service Center, 110 West Progress Circle, Cortez, CO 81321, or call 970.565.7320 for more information.**