



Item

Water Conservation Solutions for Douglas

Responsible Staff Contact

Josh Oberlander

Mary Nicol

Recommendation

Staff's recommendation to help minimize the overuse of the Douglas' potable water system can be broken into three distinctive parts. One, public education and outreach. Two, a quick to activate water use conservation system, and three, the discouragement of water over-use by a tiered rate structure that will allow Douglas to recapture the costs of providing water with our most costly production sources.

- Public Education
 - Public education and outreach will be accomplished through providing information regarding the best times to apply water to landscapes, how to apply an appropriate amount of water to various landscape types, information on how to check for leaking toilets and fixtures in homes, and encouragement of good stewardship of our community resources. This information will be provided to customers through all available media outlets. City stewardship, the City of Douglas will lead by example in being conservative with our water resources. Staff has put together a proclamation recognizing that water is a valuable resource and encourages all of Douglas to become water wise.
- Water Conservation System
 - Having a standardized tiered water conservation system in place for staff to activate quickly in the event of high periods of water consumption, or in the event of the inability to produce an adequate supply of water is critical for the success of our Douglas water system. The conservation system should be broken into four easy to understand tiers as follows:
 - **Voluntary**: Customers of Douglas water system are notified of high-water consumption. All water users are asked to reduce the application of water to landscaped areas or consider watering less frequently. Customers are asked not to water outdoors during the heat of the day (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)
 - **Moderate**: All water customers are required to reduce the application of water to landscaped areas by 25%. All customers are required to abide by alternate day watering. Properties with even numbers water on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Properties with odd numbers water on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. Public and commercial green spaces water on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
 - **High**: All water customers are required to reduce the application of water to landscaped areas by 50%. All customers are required to abide by alternate

day watering. Properties with even numbers water on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Properties with odd numbers water on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. Public and commercial properties water on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Public and commercial green spaces in excess of ½ acre water on Monday and Friday. A 25% water surcharge fee will be applied to all water rate tiers

- **Extreme:** No outdoor watering is permitted. Water use is limited to indoor uses only, unless water use is critical to business operations. A 50% water surcharge fee will be applied to all water rate tiers
- During all tiers of required conservation, the following uses of water are prohibited: Washing of hard surfaces, which include sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, etc., is prohibited except for safety and health considerations. Wasting water by allowing it to run in the street is prohibited. Any watering during the heat of the day (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.) is prohibited.

Water conservation measures shall be memorialized and enacted as necessary and appropriate with the concurrence of the water treatment supervisor and the city manager.

- Tiered Rate Structure
 - The implementation of a permanent tiered rate structure will provide a means for Douglas to discourage the overuse of our potable water system. The intent of the tiered rate structure is to allow flexibility to still encourage growth in Douglas, while providing a revenue stream to allow for improvements within the water system to boost water production and increase resiliency within our water system.
 - The different sources of water for Douglas cost significantly different amounts of money to produce water. The Little Boxelder Spring is the lowest cost, the Sheep Mountain #1 well is of moderate cost, and the surface water plant being the most expensive. Tiered rate structures target the largest consumers of water in the system while leaving the conservative water users relatively unaffected.
 - The Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP) has set benchmarks for the quantity of water that can be depleted from the North Platte River system. Douglas has been over our irrigation and non-irrigation benchmarks several times over the last ten years. Douglas has been over the non-irrigation (winter) benchmark more than the irrigation season benchmark. A permanent tiered rate structure will encourage all water customers to be water conscious year around.

Commodity charge, Per 1,000 gallons, per month	Rate
1,000 gallons to 30,000 gallons	3.03
31,000 gallons to 60,000 gallons	3.90
61,000 gallons to 90,000 gallons	4.88
91,000 gallons to 120,000 gallons	6.10
121,000 gallons to 150,000 gallons	7.63
151,000 gallons to 180,000 gallons	9.54
181,000 gallons and above	11.93

Background

Due to the ongoing higher-than-average temperatures and lower than average precipitation, water consumption has increased, causing Douglas to be near the limits of water production. Staff is working on solutions to encourage Douglas to become more conservative with our most precious resource, water.

Alignment to Strategic Doing (SD) and/or Other Plans

SD24 Outcome

SD24 Strategy

SD24 KPI

2014 Master Plan

2015 Downtown Master Plan

Budget/Fiscal Impact

Fund/Department

Project/Line Item(s)

Budgeted Amount

Anticipated Amount

Action Requested/Recommended Motion

Approve Resolution 2024-24, a resolution declaring Douglas as a “Water Wise City.”

Approve Resolution 2024-25, a resolution ratifying the establishment of mandatory water conservation tiers for the City of Douglas.

Approve Resolution 2024-26, a resolution amending user charges for municipal water system of the City of Douglas.

Reviewed/Approved

Community Development

Law Enforcement

City Manager

Public Works

Legal

Finance

HR

City Clerk