

# Editorial: Mayors take smart step on water conservation

Dallas News, Published: 29 March 2012 08:56 PM

Even if you got caught outside without an umbrella, all the recent rain brought generally good news. For one thing, the lakes that store the water we need today and tomorrow are full, a good place to be headed into summer.

The drought is broken here, if not everywhere. Three-fifths of Texas remains seriously parched.

But the pressure is off for us, right? Not exactly. And this is worth remembering as the temperatures rise toward triple digits, as they inevitably do.

Just think of every gallon of water swirling down a drain or flowing into your neighborhood storm drain as money out of your pocket. Sure, water is necessary to life, and we have our needs. But is it necessary for the typical American to run through about 100 gallons a day, about double what a typical European needs?

The mayors of four of North Texas' most populous cities — Dallas' [Mike Rawlings](#), Fort Worth's Betsy Price, Arlington's Robert Cluck and Irving's Beth Van Duyne — are taking a forward-thinking approach to water and the way we use it.

Their idea is to make twice-a-week landscape watering restrictions the norm in North Texas, not a desperation move for those times when cracked mud separates lake docks from the actual water.

But wait, when the lakes are full to overflowing, what's the point? Don't they just release water downstream? This is true. There's no [Bank of America](#) for excess water from which we can withdraw thousands of gallons when we lack rainy days.

The larger point is how we behave. In flush times — say, when the lakes are full — we run the sprinkler as often as we like. We wouldn't want the neighbors to have greener lawns or nicer flower beds, would we? In lean times — you remember last summer, right? — we grouse at our city's watering restrictions and try to remember if we live at an even- or odd-numbered address.

What Rawlings, Price, Cluck and Van Duyne will announce at a news conference Wednesday is a regional effort to make twice-a-week watering permanent. They must

persuade their city councils to approve new restrictions, which Dallas will take up with a briefing April 9 and possible vote April 18.

Our hope is that other North Texas municipalities will join the effort. It only makes sense. Get in the habit of conserving a valuable resource when you can, and it's less painful when you must.

Lawn care experts will tell you that twice-a-week watering is plenty, even in the driest part of a North Texas summer. Unless you live in a rice paddy, anything beyond that becomes mud or runoff for the storm drain. It's no better for your prized [Bermuda](#), it's money you don't need to spend, and it's water we can't afford to waste.

### Watering tips

Hand water or use a soaker hose. They're permitted at any time.

Maintain your sprinkler system. Repair any broken, missing or misdirected sprinkler heads.

Install rain and freeze sensors on your sprinkler system.

Monitor your total water use. If you use more than 15,000 gallons a month, you'll pay a surcharge on the overage.

Don't water during any form of precipitation.

Don't allow your sprinkler system to water driveways, sidewalks and streets.

Don't waste water by allowing runoff onto a street or other drainage area when you're watering.

Don't water your yard between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. between April 1 and Oct. 31.

SOURCE: [SaveDallasWater.com](#)

<http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/editorials/20120329-editorial-mayors-take-smart-step-on-water-conservation.ece>

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