

Report: North Texas Water Conservation Improving But More Can Be Done

KERA News for North Texas.

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The Sierra Club says one seemingly simple effort could greatly help North Texas meet water conservation goals.

Maintaining pretty, green lawns and luscious yards is wasting a scarce supply of water. So says the Sierra Club which claims about half of all the municipal water consumed in the DFW area is used for landscapes.

A [Sierra Club report](#) released Thursday says Mesquite, Garland and Grand Prairie are on target to meet a state goal for lower per person use, but in most North Texas cities water consumption is so high their utilities won't meet the goal for more than 40 years.

The Sierra Club's Ken Kramer says Dallas, however, may be turning things around by implementing year-round restrictions that limit lawn watering to twice a week at certain times of day.

"I think if other water suppliers in the Dallas Fort Worth area were to take that approach of focusing a lot more attention on outdoor landscape watering you could see a substantial amount of progress in a relatively short amount of time," said Kramer.

The report also credits the City of Fort Worth with reducing water use through public education and free checks of irrigation systems, and the North Texas Municipal Water District for saving billions of gallons by reusing wastewater.

But the report singles out Plano for being an example of growing suburban communities that don't have strict watering limits and strong incentives to turn off the tap.

Kramer and the Sierra Club believe more aggressive conservation along with greater use of existing water sources could eliminate the need for large new reservoirs many North Texas water utilities want to build.

“We definitely don’t feel there’s a huge need for an investment in new reservoirs, new impoundments in order to meet the regions future water needs,” said Kramer.

In addition to conservation Kramer believes water needs can be met by transporting water from regions with surpluses to areas that need it. He says recovering groundwater and wastewater will become less costly.

The issue of whether Texans are conserving enough water will be a big one when state lawmakers meet in January, and consider ways to quench the thirst of a growing population.

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