

Make Water Conservation a Part of Your Florida Lifestyle!

Planet Pinellas

A water conservation update from Pinellas County Utilities

volume 4, issue 2

Conserving the Florida Lifestyle

People from around the country and all over the world come seeking the Florida Lifestyle. Offering a popular version of paradise, our state continues to attract those pursuing the warm beauty of sun, sand and water. Lifelong resident or the newest tourist, we all have to understand that Florida's natural beauty must be protected or it will be lost.

Water is the lifeblood of our Florida lifestyle – a lifestyle that must include conservation. Consisting of a series of behaviors that make sense to both you and others in a specific environment, a lifestyle is your pattern of living. It reflects your attitudes, values and actions. It's more than a state of mind – it's how you live.

Pinellas County Utilities encourages residents to conserve drinking water by making conservation a part of their lifestyle. Conservation doesn't mean being deprived. It means using, wisely. The water we use must have a source; even desalination can't create "new" water. All the water that has ever existed or ever will exist is flowing today somewhere on the planet. As residents, we can't change our water situation, but we can change our lifestyles.

At Pinellas County Utilities, we offer incentives to make conservation easy and smart. You use less water; you help the environment. There are projects, rebates and initiatives to help you. Several successful

programs are offered to help residents decrease water consumption and lower their water bills. These include the Ultra Low Flow Toilet (ULFT) and Alternate Water Sources (AWS) rebate programs. The ULFT rebate offers up to \$100 for each high flow toilet replaced by an ultra low flow toilet and is available to single family, multi-family and commercial customers. The AWS rebate offers up to \$300 for the installation of an alternate water source for irrigation, i.e., shallow well, deep irrigation well, or surface water withdrawal system. Also, the Healthy Lawn program exists to help residents learn how to maintain a lush landscape without wasting water.

Without a lifestyle that includes conservation, we all lose. The Florida Lifestyle: conserving paradise one day at a time.

The latest information about watering restrictions and the drought can be found at: www.pinellascounty.org/conserv

If you would like additional information about rebate programs or ways to conserve water, please contact Pinellas County Utilities at 464-4000 or visit www.pinellascounty.org/utilities

For more information on Florida Friendly Yards, visit www.floridayards.org



For more information on building a sustainable Pinellas, call the Conservation Department at (727) 464-3896, or visit us on the Web at www.pinellascounty.org/utilities



OUTDOOR

TIP #1: Bring on the Mulch

Mulch makes your garden look attractive, but it also cuts down on watering and weeding chores.

Mulch blocks evaporation so you don't need to water as often. Use 2-3 inches of wood chips, leaves, grass clippings, or free recycled mulch.

TIP #2: Catch the Rain

Take advantage of our Florida rains (and save on your water bill) by collecting rain water to irrigate your plants. Sign up for a free workshop at Pinellas County Extension at 582-2100.

TIP #3: Don't let Pool Water Escape

Pool covers reduce evaporation when your swimming pool is not being used and save energy if you're heating the pool during cool weather. Check with your local swimming pool supply store to find the right cover or blanket for your pool.

TIP #4: Does your Lawn have a Drinking Problem?

Avoid over-watering your lawn. Most of the year, Florida lawns need only about one inch of water per week. Save water by using a rain shut-off device and inspecting sprinkler heads regularly to ensure that you are watering grass, not pavement.

INDOOR

TIP #5: Stop Flushing Money down the Toilet

Did you know the average American flushes the toilet over 140,000 times in a lifetime? Save money and water by installing a low-flow toilet. Rebates of up to \$100 are available.

TIP #6: Dish out the Savings

Run your dishwasher only with a full load. Place dirtier dishes facing toward the spray in the center and keep large items at the sides so they don't block the water. Use the energy-saving dry option when possible.

TIP #7: Lose the Leaks

Did you know that 50% of all households have a plumbing leak? Even a small faucet leak can waste more than 300 gallons of water a month. Learn how to detect – and fix – water leaks easily with our Leak Detector Guide.

TIP #8: Turn off the Tap

A simple way to save water every day is to shut off the faucet when brushing your teeth or shaving. When washing dishes by hand, fill the sink with soapy water instead of letting the water run continuously.

For more Green Tips, visit:

www.pinellascounty.org/utilities/green

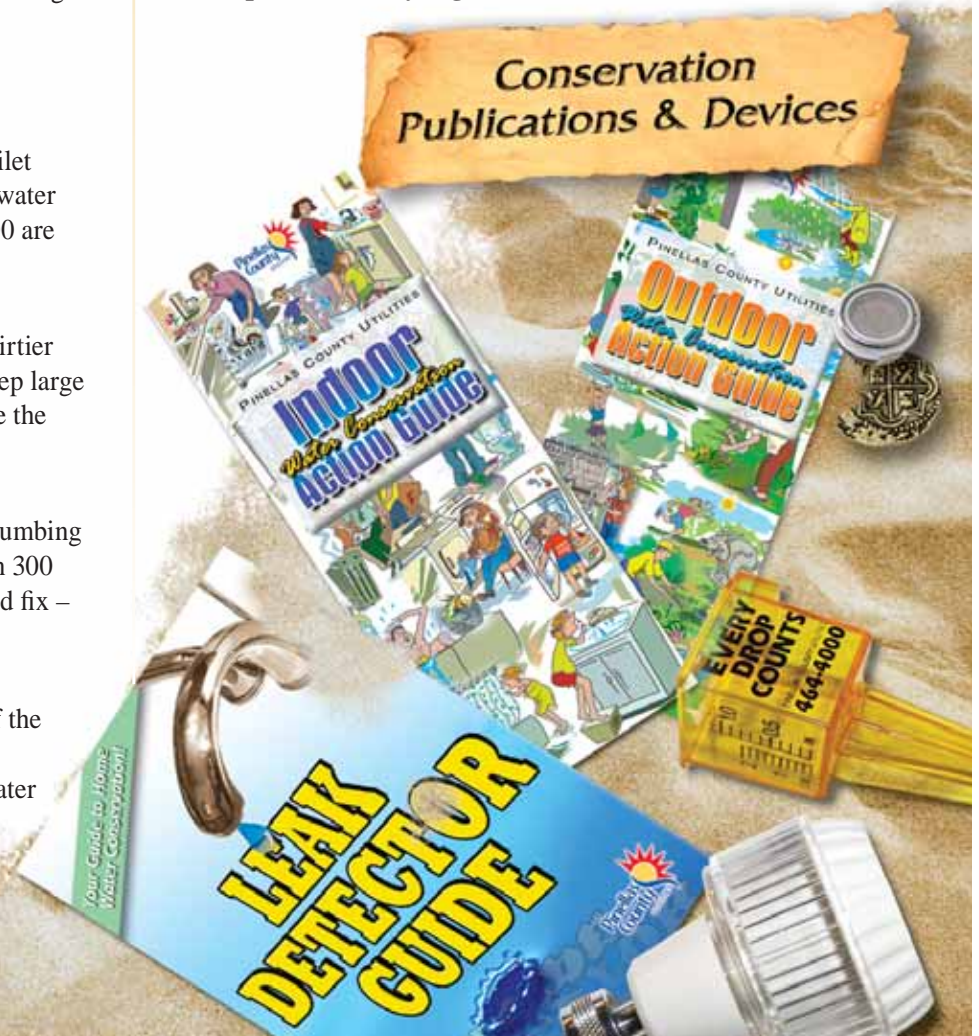
Enforcement

Be sure to follow the current watering restrictions! The Pinellas County Utilities Web site has a color-coded reference guide to answer the question, "When can I water?" It covers the schedules for potable (drinking), well and reclaimed water and other restricted water uses.

Pinellas County Utilities provides code enforcement for water restrictions specified by the Southwest Florida Water Management District and the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners. During this time of critical water shortage, the law does not allow for any warnings, and a fine of \$188 is issued for every observed violation.

Utilities' enforcement officers patrol the service area around the clock, including nights and weekends. The officer's first step in the field is to test the water at the sprinkler to determine the water source: potable, well, surface or reclaimed. Watering days and times are based on the address, source of water, property size and watering method. When a violation is observed, a notice is left on the door or mailed. Later, a citation with the fine is issued and delivered.

Get informed. Avoid fines and save water. For more information about the current watering restrictions, call **464-4000** or visit www.pinellascounty.org/consERVE



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