Did you know?

Cities in Dakota County pump an average of four million gallons of water per day during the winter months compared to between 10 and 12 million gallons per day during the summer months? And, on some peak use summer days; cities might pump as much as 14 to 16 million gallons. The vast majority of this increase is attributed to lawn watering.

Practice smart irrigation

Most cities in Dakota County follow an odd/even and time-of-day lawn watering schedule. However, that does not mean you need to water that frequently. If your association’s irrigation system cannot be programmed on a schedule less than odd/even watering – such as twice per week – use the system’s manual operation to turn the system on/off, as needed.

One inch per week

Watering two times per week, providing a total of one inch of water per week, including rainfall, is all that is needed for watering a lawn. Watering too much not only wastes water, it also reduces root growth. And a shallow root system needs more water.

Associations can encourage root growth by minimizing lawn watering in the fall and spring. This will encourage the roots to reach for water deeper in the soil and create a strong, deep root system to prepare for the hot, dry weather in summer.

Follow lawn watering rules

Despite living in the land of 10,000 lakes, Minnesota does not have an unlimited supply of affordable, high quality water. Together, we can help sustain our current and long-term water supply by simply scaling back current lawn watering practices. Remember to:

- Follow any odd/even day water restrictions that may be in place in the community.
- Make sure to see if there are prohibited hours during the day where watering is not allowed.
- Check for any special watering permits for new sod and seed.
Check out these helpful tips for your association’s irrigation system!

Just like any other appliance, irrigation systems need to be maintained and used properly to achieve optimal efficiency. Follow these irrigation tips to reduce water use and save money on your utility bill.

- Ensure the irrigation system is equipped with a working rain sensor, which detects when it’s raining and shuts off the irrigation system.
- Install a soil moisture sensor that directly links the lawns moisture requirements to the irrigation system; only watering when your lawn needs it and shutting off when the optimal moisture content is reached.
- If you notice an area of the lawn needs more or less water, change the setting on that zone or adjust the sprinkler heads watering that specific area.
- Consider replacing existing heads with low-volume, low-angle heads with pressure-reducing valves. Adjust heads so the water is delivered as close to the turf as possible. This minimizes water lost to evaporation.
- On a monthly basis, visually verify that all sprinkler heads are attached and in working order.
- Observe the system in action. Adjust nozzles and irrigation duration as needed to ensure most efficient use of water possible. Make sure water is not sprinkling impervious surfaces such as sidewalks, roadways and driveways, and there is not excessive runoff during irrigation system operation.
- If the association has an old irrigation controller, consider upgrading. “Smart” irrigation controllers use local weather data and site conditions to manage systems responsibly. They have varying levels of complexity, ranging from models that simply shut off the systems when it’s raining to more advanced models that make adjustments to conditions such as ground moisture, soil type, sun exposure, and much more.
- Turn the system’s automatic function off. Adjust the controls manually when the lawn needs water. Pre-programmed sprinklers continue to run when there is adequate rainfall, overwatering the lawn.
- Stop watering altogether. Grass will go dormant for several weeks without dying. In cases of severe drought watering weekly will keep grass alive, even if it is still brown.
- Contact a qualified contractor to learn more. The Environmental Protection Agency lists its WaterSense® partners on its website at www.epa.gov/WaterSense.

Save Money

Associations investing in irrigation improvements may significantly reduce water use and save thousands of dollars over the life span of the irrigation system through utility bill savings.

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Vermillion River Watershed
Joint Powers Organization
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The Vermillion River Watershed encompasses an area of approximately 335 square miles, including portions of two counties and all or portions of 20 cities, towns, and townships. The main stem of the river begins in southeastern Scott County in New Market Township flowing east through central Dakota County, passing over a waterfall in the City of Hastings, and then discharging to the Mississippi River both through a northerly flowing outlet near the City of Hastings as well as through a southerly flowing outlet near the City of Red Wing, Minnesota.