

Background Information

2020 MAWD Resolution

Proposing District: Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District

Contact Name: Terry Jeffery, Administrator

Phone Number: 952-807-6511

Email Address: tjeffery@rpbcwd.org

Resolution Title: RESOLUTION to limit excessive use of groundwater for the purpose of watering urban and suburban landscapes during summer months

Background that led to the submission of this resolution:

Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District seeks to address depletion of valuable groundwater resources in Minnesota. 60% of homeowners with irrigation systems in the Twin Cities Metro Area used far more water than they needed to water their lawns¹. The use of groundwater to irrigate urban and suburban lawns during particular hours of the day during the summer poses needless use of such water during times when evaporation rates are highest, thus wasting precious water resources, many of which take thousands of years to replenish.

Watering lawns (either via landscape irrigation system or manual watering) between noon and sundown generally results in higher evaporation rates than watering morning hours. Watering lawns in the evening has the potential to make lawns susceptible to disease when hot and humid conditions are combined with excess moisture. Watering lawns in the early morning is the most ideal as evaporation demands are low and wind deflection is less of an issue.²

Irrigating urban and suburban lawns during or shortly after precipitation events, when soils are saturated, not only wastes a significant amount of groundwater, but also increases runoff and potential pollution of streams, lakes and wetlands.

Ideas for how this issue could be solved:

¹University of Minnesota Extension, *Planting Grass Seed? Most Twin Citians water lawns 'way too much'*, 2017, <https://twin-cities.umn.edu/planting-grass-seed-most-twin-citians-water-lawns-way-too-much>

² University of Minnesota Extension Turfgrass Science and Metropolitan Council, *Efficient Water Use On Twin Cities Lawn Through Assessment, Research, and Demonstration*, 2016, <https://metro council.org/Wastewater-Water/Publications-And-Resources/WATER-SUPPLY-PLANNING/Twin-Cities-Lawn-Irrigation-System-Surveys-And-Ass.aspx>

Background Information

2020 MAWD Resolution

Encourage the Department of Minnesota Natural Resources to investigate statewide regulations of urban and suburban lawn watering practices. Including but not limited to:

- Restricting the hours during which irrigation of lawns is allowed (with the exception of irrigation from water capture and reuse systems)
- Enforcement of Minnesota State Statute 103G.298 requiring that “all automatically operated landscape irrigation systems shall have furnished and installed technology that inhibits or interrupts operation of the landscape irrigation system during periods of sufficient moisture. The technology must be adjusted either by the end user or the professional practitioner of landscape irrigation services.”
- Require all companies engaged in the installation or maintenance of landscape irrigation systems to be trained and certified in the installation and use of EPA water sense technologies.
- Require all companies engaged in the installation or maintenance of landscape irrigation systems to register with the DNR and pay an annual fee to be divided among the cities and counties in which they do business based upon the amount of business done in each city and county.
- Require all companies engaged in the installation or maintenance of landscape irrigation systems to certify that the systems comply with restrictions regarding sensor technology as well as time restrictions.

Anticipated support or opposition from other governmental units?

Cities faced with providing adequate water supplies should support reasonable restrictions on the use of ground water to avoid the expense of drilling new wells and building new treatment facilities.

(Check one) This issue is of importance to:

Only our district _____
Only our region _____
The entire state X _____

Background Information

2020 MAWD Resolution

Resolution to Limit Excessive Use of Groundwater for the Purpose of Watering Urban and Suburban Landscapes During Summer Months

Whereas groundwater resources are often used in excess to water urban and suburban landscapes, primarily lawns.

Whereas evaporation rates are highest during the hours between noon and dusk and watering landscapes in the evening has the potential to increase susceptibility to plant diseases.

Whereas the ideal time to water lawns and urban and suburban landscapes is in the early morning, due to the low evaporation demands and lessened effects of wind deflection.

Whereas excess watering of urban and suburban landscapes can cause increased runoff and therefore pollution to streams, wetlands, and lakes.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts encourages the Department of Minnesota Natural Resources to investigate statewide regulations of urban and suburban lawn watering practices. Including but not limited to:

- Restricting the hours during which irrigation of lawns is allowed (with the exception of irrigation from water capture and reuse systems).
- Enforcement of Minnesota State Statute 103G.298 requiring that “all automatically operated landscape irrigation systems shall have furnished and installed technology that inhibits or interrupts operation of the landscape irrigation system during periods of sufficient moisture. The technology must be adjusted either by the end user or the professional practitioner of landscape irrigation services.”
- Require all companies engaged in the installation or maintenance of landscape irrigation systems to be trained and certified in the installation and use of EPA water sense technologies.
- Require all companies engaged in the installation or maintenance of landscape irrigation systems to register with the DNR and pay an annual fee to be divided among the cities and counties in which they do business based upon the amount of business done in each city and county.
- Require all companies engaged in the installation or maintenance of landscape irrigation systems to certify that the systems comply with restrictions regarding sensor technology as well as time restrictions.