

City of Rio Rancho
 Utilities Division
 3200 Civic Center Circle NE
 Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87144

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Our mission:
FIGHT WATER WASTE!



NEW!
 Earn **\$30**
WATER BILL CREDIT
 when you purchase a
Swamp Cooler
THERMOSTAT

Postal Customer
 Rio Rancho, New Mexico



RRioRancho
 City of Vision



SUMMER 2015

Rio Rancho Neighborhood Success Stories

Two Communities Actively Reduce Water Bills

High Resort Village Community Association

Debbie Baker with HOA Management Professionals has served as the manager for the High Resort Village Community Association (HRVCA) for over 12 years. As water costs increased, she and the Board of Directors looked for ways to reduce water costs, as well as save a precious resource. This resulted in removing the sod from one of its larger common areas and replacing it with xeriscape. The Association, working with Leeco Grounds Maintenance, expects close to a **60% reduction in their water costs** for this one area.

Over the last several years, the HRVCA found it necessary to increase quarterly assessments due in part to the high cost of watering large grassy areas that beautified the community's common areas. The Board of Directors was determined to cut costs and reduce water use.

Although it was not an easy decision to make, each homeowner was given an opportunity to vote on whether or not they wanted to remove the grass and replace it with xeriscape. In the end, the majority voted in favor of xeriscape, saving the homeowners' association the expense of watering it.

Leeco replaced the sod with rock, kept the existing trees, and added colorful native plants that will mature in several years. A few large boulders were placed here and there as accent pieces.

Xeriscaping was the best option for cutting water costs, and the added benefit of the project will be a reduced use of our limited water supply.

Right: The HRVCA had to increase quarterly assessments due in part to the high cost of watering the community's large grassy areas like the one pictured to the right. Below: The homeowners voted to replace the sod with rock, xeric plants and a few boulders. They expect to save almost 60% on their water bills for this common area. The new plantings are expected to flourish in this design.



Northern Meadows Community

Mike Doyle, CMCA® works for Canyon Gate, which contracts with Rio Rancho's Northern Meadows homeowners' association. He serves as Community Manager, and was kind enough to share Northern Meadows' success story:

"In early 2014 the community invested approximately \$65k to retrofit all turf lawns with water-saving MP Rotators spray heads. Prior to this, the water usage at the end of 2013 was 50,567,000 gallons of water for the community. After installing the MP Rotators in March of 2014, we saw a savings of 7% with usage dropping to 47,097,000 gallons. In 2014 we learned about excess drainage at the end of lines at the bottom of the hills so we have been installing SAM (Seal-A-Matic™) heads throughout the community

to seal that off and prevent any excess drainage. Through the end of May 2015, by comparison to this time last year we have used 4,127,000 fewer gallons of water. **Even with the 8% increase in 2013, and the 6% increase in 2014, our water expenses in Northern Meadows are approximately \$18k lower than they were at this time last year.** As we continue our work to save water we expect to pay for the entire retrofit by the end of 2015 with the water savings alone.

In addition to the retrofit, we are working with Heads Up to provide discounted xeriscaping options to homeowners for backyards, constant upgrades to existing lines, and extensive non-stop work to drip systems. We are working tirelessly to reduce water usage in Northern Meadows."

UTILITY PHONE NUMBERS

- Administration 505-896-8715
- Utilities Billing 505-891-5020
- Report Leaks
NEW! waterleaks@ci.rio-rancho.nm.us
 505-891-5020
- Emergency/
 Leaks After Hours 505-975-1581
- Line Spots, NM811 811
- Water Conservation 505-896-8715
- Engineering 505-891-5016
- Environmental
 Programs 505-896-8737
- Water Waste Hotline 505-896-8299



Timer Tips

The Smart Way To Water Outdoors:

- **THREE TIMES A WEEK IN JULY AND AUGUST**
- **TWICE A WEEK IN SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER**

It's as easy as 1-2-3-2-1!

If you need help setting your timer, call

896-8715

We'll be happy to help.

Get the most from your irrigation system

A Word from the Irrigation Association

SMART IRRIGATION MONTH is a public awareness campaign to promote efficient water use. Using water wisely:

- Saves money on your utility bill.
- Nurtures green spaces that deliver real environmental benefits.
- Protects your community's water supply for generations to come.
- Minimizes needed investments in infrastructure to store and carry water, which must be paid for by water users or municipal bonds.

Efficient irrigation systems:

- Minimize overwatering while keeping your lawn and garden beautiful and healthy.
- Adjust watering automatically to account for rain and other conditions.
- Put every drop of water to work by minimizing evaporation and waste.
- Make maintaining your yard easy and convenient.

With just a few simple strategies, it's easy to save water, save money, and see better results.

Plant Right

Saving water doesn't have to involve the cost and inconvenience of tearing up your yard to install a new irrigation system. It's easy to save water and reduce your utility bills with simple changes to your landscaping and gardening routine.

Landscape to suit your lot. Choose plants that have low water requirements and will thrive in your local climate. Consider your lot's exact features, including sun and shade, dry and damp areas, plant size, and how you plan to use each section of your yard.

Keep soil healthy. Aerating your lawn and around trees at least once a year helps improve water penetration. When planting, turn and cultivate the soil and add compost or fertilizer to improve moisture retention and grow healthier plants that need less water to stay strong.

Mulch well around plants, bushes, and trees. Using 2 to 4 inches of mulch

reduces evaporation, moderates spikes and lows in soil temperatures, improves water penetration, and helps control weeds that compete for water.

"Hydro-zone" your yard. Grouping plants with similar moisture needs in the same area makes it easier to ensure they get the water they need without overwatering. Separate plants from grassy areas, which have different water requirements.

Avoid planting in summer, when hotter temperatures mean plants need more water to become established.

Save grass for functional areas. Plant grass in play zones and other areas where it will be used and enjoyed. Instead of planting grass on steep slopes or other hard-to-water spaces, consider ground cover, perimeter plants, or mulch.

Plant shade trees. The shade they cast creates natural "air-conditioning," lowering air and soil temperatures, and reducing soil moisture loss.

Maintain your yard regularly. A well-maintained yard requires less water, so weed, prune, and mow as needed.

Today's irrigation systems include sophisticated controllers that allow you to easily adjust watering schedules to fit different needs.

Water Wisely

Get in the zone. Schedule each individual zone in your irrigation system to account for the type of sprinkler or drip emitter, sun or shade exposure, and soil in that section. Different zones will almost always need different watering schedules.

Consider soil type. Type of soil determines how quickly water can be absorbed without runoff. Watering more than the soil can absorb causes runoff and waste.

Don't send water down the drain. Set sprinklers and drip emitters to water plants, not your driveway, sidewalk, patio, or buildings.

Water only when needed. Saturate root



zones and let the soil dry. Watering too much and too frequently results in shallow roots, weed growth, disease, and fungus.

Water at the best time. Watering during the heat of the day may cause losses of up to 30 percent due to evaporation. Prevent water loss by watering when the sun is low or down, winds are calm and temperatures are cool – typically between the evening and early morning. **Remember, in Rio Rancho sprinklers are NOT allowed between 11 am and 7 pm.**

Water more often for shorter periods. For example, setting your system to run for three, 5-minute intervals the same day lets soil absorb more water than watering for 15 minutes at one time, reducing runoff.

Adapt watering to the season. Familiarize yourself with the settings on your irrigation controller and adjust the watering schedule regularly based on seasonal weather conditions, or invest in a smart controller so your system can make these changes automatically.

Irrigation systems need regular maintenance to keep them working efficiently year after year. Damage from lawn equipment or improper winterization can cause leaks and other serious problems.

For more irrigation tips visit the Irrigation Association's website: www.irrigation.org



Irrigation can be a source of water waste if not properly installed and maintained.

New "Swamp Cooler" Thermostat Rebate for Rio Rancho Water Customers

RIO RANCHO WATER UTILITY CUSTOMERS are now eligible for a \$30 credit on their water bills when they purchase an eligible "swamp" (evaporative) cooler thermostat.

Similar to furnace thermostats, evaporative cooler thermostats can be set to a temperature that everyone finds comfortable. Eligible thermostats must automatically turn the evaporative cooler on and off to maintain a set temperature, which keeps everyone comfortable without having to constantly get up and adjust the temperature manually.

According to Environmental Programs Manager Marian Wrage, "a large number of evaporative coolers have just an "on" switch, and many residents leave their coolers on for more hours than needed to keep their homes cool. Our goal is to inspire residents and businesses not to leave their evaporative cooler running 24 hours a day, seven days a week, because that is a waste of water." Wrage said installing the swamp cooler thermostat is a very efficient way to keep a home comfortably cool without using more water than necessary.

The City also offers a \$100 credit to customers when they replace an older toilet that uses at least 3.0 gallons per flush with an EPA WaterSense-labeled, high-efficiency toilet (HET) that flushes 1.28 gallons or less. Rebates of \$100 are also available for customers who purchase high-efficiency clothes washers that are on the Consortium for Energy Efficiency's (CEE) Tier 3 list. Clothes-washer rebates are only available one time per customer.

Larry Webb, Utilities Operations Manager for the City, said, "Customers who switch out water-guzzling indoor appliances can make a real difference in their water use and help us better manage

our resources. High-efficiency products contribute to savings in water production and reduce the need to build large treatment facilities. These rebates help our customers afford more water-efficient appliances and help Rio Rancho achieve lower per-person water use."

Both Tier 3 clothes washers and HETs give the largest "water bang for the buck" by conserving the most amount of water of any fixtures on the market.

Rio Rancho Water customers are encouraged to purchase a qualifying thermostat, washer, or toilet and apply for their rebate(s) as soon as possible.

To receive your water bill credit:

1. Check to make sure funds are available.
2. Download an application online at www.RioRebate.org. Forms are also available at the City's Water Conservation Office and at most retail outlets.
3. Purchase the eligible evaporative cooler thermostat, washer, or toilet, and complete the application.
4. E-mail, mail, or fax the appropriate application **AND** a copy of the receipt:



Mail: Attn: Water Conservation Office, Department of Public Works, 3200 Civic Center Circle, N.E., Rio Rancho, NM 87144

E-mail: DPWForms@ci.rio-rancho.nm.us (Please put **Form # and Type of Rebate** in the subject line)

Fax: (505) 891-5201

The completed application form and attached receipt must be received no later than 90 calendar days after the purchase date. Incomplete applications will not be processed. Allow up to 90 business days for your completed application to be processed and receive a credit. **Rebates are available while funding lasts, and funding is limited, so act now to take advantage of the rebate offers.**

For more information on how to qualify for rebates, visit www.RioRebate.org or call 505-896-8715.

Our mission: FIGHT WATER WASTE!

NEW! Earn \$30 WATER BILL CREDIT when you purchase a Swamp Cooler THERMOSTAT

For details on qualifying models call or visit: **896-8715** RioRebate.org

Earn \$100 WATER BILL CREDIT Replace old water-guzzling toilets or washing machines with high-efficiency models ...

City of Rio Rancho Water Conservation Office