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PLEA TO REDUCE WATER USE

State water managers are asking residents to reduce their use of water as the state is currently in a drought.

But Calusa Waterkeeper John Cassani says, "...asking urban water users to conserve water during the current rainfall deficit seemed biased without broadening the ask to other sectors that use water, especially the biggest user of water in the planning area, agriculture."

Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee counties, use 700 million gallons per day, or about 25% of South Florida Water Management District's 16-county area (there are 67 counties in Florida). Over 75% of the district's water use is for agriculture.

Bob Verrastro, with the District said, "Alternative water supply, such as treating brackish water, will be needed more in the future to supply a growing area."

These solutions are available now. Hydrogeologists at WSP, a firm that helps communities find solutions for future resource issues, is working with other counties in Florida to develop alternative water supplies, including surface water and brackish groundwater desalination options, and a groundbreaking aquifer storage and recovery system that both provides the needed disposal capacity and increases the reliability of their reclaimed water supply.

Naples Area Board of REALTORS®

Water Quality Advisory



As the voice of REALTORS® in the Naples area, NABOR® has and will always advocate for action to reduce or eliminate any man-made or environmental threats to home ownership, property values and the living standards in Florida.

EVERGLADES RESTORATION GETS A BIPARTISAN BOOST

As part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has earmarked \$1.098 billion in 2022 to invest in Florida Everglades Restoration projects.

The Biden Administration is making the largest single investment in the Everglades in U.S. history. The iconic American landscape provides drinking water supply for over 8 million Floridians, supports the state's \$90 billion tourism economy, and is home to dozens of endangered or threatened species. However, rising sea levels and other climate change impacts are endangering this vital ecosystem and the people, businesses, and habitats it supports. Through President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Army Corps will invest \$1.098 billion to restore, protect, and preserve the South Florida ecosystem and increase its resilience to the impacts of climate change. These funds will support improvements to the Everglades by capturing and storing excess surface water runoff, reducing excess water releases to water conservation areas, and minimizing seepage losses during dry periods.

At the state level, Florida legislators on both sides of the aisle agreed on a state budget that includes \$885.9 million to be earmarked for Everglades restoration, \$782.4 million for water quality improvements, and \$125 million for a wastewater grant program. Also, \$300 million will go to the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program to expand state wildlife corridors and \$75 million will go to efforts to protect natural springs. Another \$20 million will go toward helping manage manatees in state waters and \$3.2 million will be used to help restore the oyster population in Apalachicola Bay.

SIMPLE WAYS RESIDENTS CAN REDUCE WATER USE

Here are some tips from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Agency that you can share with new homeowners on ways they can help to reduce their water use:

Inside the Home:

- Check faucets and pipes for leaks. A small drip from a worn faucet washer can waste 20 gallons of water per day; larger leaks can waste hundreds of gallons.
- Use your dishwasher and washing machine only for full loads. When possible, avoid washing during heavy downpours.
- Minimize use of kitchen sink garbage disposal units. The units require a lot of water to operate properly and also add to the volume of solids in a septic tank, which can lead to maintenance problems. Instead of using a garbage disposal, compost kitchen scraps and use the nutrient-rich compost to enhance yard or garden soil.

Outside the Home:

- Add mulch to reduce evaporation. Mulching reduces water needed in a garden by as much as 50 percent. It also has the added benefit of preventing weed growth, deterring pests, stabilizing soil temperature, and, as it decomposes, providing nutrients to the soil.
- Harvest rain to water flower beds, herb gardens and potted plants. Rain is free, and it's beneficial for plants because rain does not contain hard minerals.
- Choose native plants that are adapted to the area and need less water.
- Check hose and sprinkler connections for leaks – a drop wasted each second can add up to a couple of gallons each day.
- On slopes, plant native species that will retain water and help reduce runoff.
- Irrigate your lawn with reclaimed water. To find out if reclaimed water is available in your neighborhood, contact your utility company.
- Do not water the lawn in rainy weather.



WEEDKILLING ROBOTS

A Seattle-based startup could be the answer to reducing herbicide runoff in Florida waters.

Carbon Robotics makes a robot that kills weeds with lasers. Its machines use artificial intelligence, deep learning and computer vision to distinguish between weeds and crops. The weed-killing robot can replace herbicides and other chemicals that farmers currently use to manage weeds. It kills 100,000 weeds per hour, and covers between 15 and 20 acres per day.

This is good news as the robot could help reduce glyphosate use, the world's most-used pesticide (found in Round-Up) in Florida. Researchers from the University of Florida found glyphosate in the plasma of 55.8% of creatures it studied, and that concentrations of it in their plasma went up in the decade between 2009 and 2019.

RESOURCES

[Calusa WaterKeeper](#)

[Clean Water Tips Flyer](#)

[Captains for Clean Water](#)

[Collier County WaterKeeper](#)

[Daily Red Tide Reports](#)

[protectingfloridatogether.gov](#)