

Town of La Conner Public Meeting May 24, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Water Use Efficiency Goal Setting

Overview

Water is a critical resource with increasing demand coming from all sectors of society. Encouraging efficient use will increase the availability and affordability for all uses.

Background

- Washington State Department of Health (DOH) requires that the water system must set Water Use Efficiency (WUE) goals through a public process at least every 6 years (WAC 246-290).
- Town's last WUE goal was set through a public process and adopted in May, 2016.
- Town is required to set goal(s) through a public process by May, 2022.
- La Conner purchases all of its potable water from the City of Anacortes, which withdraws water from the Skagit River

Previous WUE Goals and Results

Town set 2 goals:

Maintain unaccounted-for water to less than 10%

Result: Success, losses have ranged from 5% to 8%

Reduce gpd/ERU by 2% by 2022

Result: Success, Equivalent Residential Units (average household) have reduced their water consumption from 170 GPD to 140 GPD (-18%). Some of the credit is due to the building codes requiring low flow toilets, showerheads, etc.

Potential Goals – Discussion

Repeat Past Goals

Maintain unaccounted-for water to less than 10%

Good candidate, this is an ongoing effort that requires constant attention.

Reduce gpd/ERU by 2% by 2028

Poor candidate, as most of the code level reductions are already in place and the level of demand is moderately low (140 GPD) compared to a typical value of 150 to 160 GPD

New Goals

Reduce Residential Summer Irrigation by 5% by 2028

Measure by comparing winter vs summer period use.

Promote by encouraging low water / drought tolerant landscaping

May be difficult to anticipate or separate the effects of weather patterns on irrigation.

Otherwise good candidate, easily measured, support through informational bill inserts and planning policies.

Promote by establishing a summer surcharge on water use over winter usage baselines.

Although financial disincentives can be effective, they are often deemed less desirable by the rate payers.

Promote by identifying efficient irrigation measures and equipment (ie. Use of timers or irrigation systems) and informing customers via Town website or billing inserts.

Will require staff time to research and prepare information.

Observe and Inform by notifying homeowners of excessive irrigation overspray or runoff into the public Right-Of-Way.

Will require assignment of duty to operations staff and/or code enforcement staff. Development of a form letter notification may be beneficial.

Recommendation

Goal 1 – Maintain unaccounted-for water to less than 10%

- Continue all current measures.

Goal 2 - Reduce Residential Summer Irrigation by 5% by 2028

- Promote by encouraging low water / drought tolerant landscaping
- Promote by identifying efficient irrigation measures and equipment. Inform ratepayers through 2 (March & June) bill inserts and Town Website
- Review 2 years progress results before considering additional measures.