

Two more cities declare watering restrictions

~~H0A~~
GTR
H0A

BY JOHN AGUILAR

JAGUILAR@DENVERPOST.COM

Aurora has become the latest large Colorado water provider to impose Stage 1 drought restrictions, limiting outdoor watering to twice per week in the state's third-largest city and prohibiting the installation of thirsty turf lawns.

The new rules, passed by the City Council on Monday night, also include levying a \$2.15 drought surcharge per 1,000 gallons on customers who use more than 110% of their winter quarter average usage. That is based on a household's water use in December, January and February.

Note

Aurora's measures went into effect immediately and assign watering days based on address. No watering is permitted between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., and the filling of private swimming pools is prohibited, although topping off is allowed. The city's water utility serves about 400,000 customers.

"We are asking our Aurora community to come together and help us achieve this 20% (reduction) by taking water restrictions seriously," Marshall Brown, Aurora Water's general manager, said in a news release Tuesday.

Customers can view the weekly watering schedule online at auroragov.org/drought.

Aurora's measure comes a couple of weeks after Denver Water, with 1.5 million customers across the metro area, announced its own Stage 1 drought restrictions. Usage limits on customers of Colorado's largest water provider include twice-a-week watering restrictions on assigned days and requirements that restaurants serve water only upon request.

The last time Denver Water implemented this level of restriction was in 2013. Its board is set to consider drought surcharges for heavier water usage this morning.

Arvada also put in place Stage 1 drought restrictions Monday, with many of the same limits as those being enforced by Denver Water and Aurora Water. They go into effect on April 15.

Note

Colorado is experiencing its worst snowpack levels since record-keeping began in 1941. Statewide snowpack, as of Tuesday, was at 24% of the median — about a quarter of what the state typically has this time of year, according to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Water and Climate Center.

Thornton was the first large water provider in metro Denver to put in place Stage 1 drought restrictions, making its declaration about a month ago.

Last week, Boulder enacted a drought watch, which is a level of caution short of Stage 1. The city said it would reevaluate whether it needs to impose stricter limits by May 1.

~~HOA~~
GTR
HOA

Loveland holds off on water restrictions

BY JOCELYN ROWLEY

REPORTER-HERALD

Despite historically low snowpack and higher-than-average winter temperatures, Loveland Utilities is unlikely to impose mandatory water usage restrictions this summer. Customers, however, are still being asked to think twice before turning on their sprinklers.

The city is in the “voluntary response level” of its drought response plan, which advises residents and businesses to water less frequently, avoid the heat of the day and take advantage of the utility’s many water-wise and efficiency measures.

“We’re seeing an increase in irrigation meter turn-ons, which are ahead of schedule for the year,” said Tasha Stewart, the city’s water efficiency coordinator. “We’re encouraging residents to hold off and do what they can to conserve.”

Under the voluntary response level, customers are encouraged to limit outdoor watering to three days per week, avoid watering between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. and delay turning on irrigation systems until May if possible.

But the emphasis on conservation isn’t just for Loveland residents and businesses. According to Loveland Parks Manager Dan Willadsen, the city uses several water efficiency measures in its parks already, including watering overnight to reduce evaporation and using calibrated irrigation systems to minimize waste.

This year, however, he and his team are weighing additional steps in response to the dry conditions. The department has opted not to move forward with new projects that would require significant amounts of sod and is considering scaling back irrigation in non-sports turf areas while keeping athletic fields safe and playable.

“We’re not just going to cut watering by 25% in every park and call it good,” he said. “We look at the overall conditions and say, ‘How do we provide the services that we are supposed to provide in a safe manner and still meet our reduction goal?’”

Even with those measures in place, the city could still move toward mandatory restrictions if conditions worsen.

Stewart said Loveland Utilities is closely monitoring a range of factors, including snowpack, spring runoff and overall customer demand, to determine whether stricter measures may be needed this year. Loveland also partners with Resource Central on programs such as Garden In A Box, which provides low-water plant kits designed for Colorado’s climate.

For larger water users, including schools, homeowners associations and commercial properties, the city works with Northern Water on efficiency audits that evaluate indoor and outdoor use and recommend upgrades such as high-efficiency fixtures and irrigation improvements.