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Water on the Home Front: Water Efficient Landscapes and Homeowners Associations

Houston, Texas

January 23, 2014

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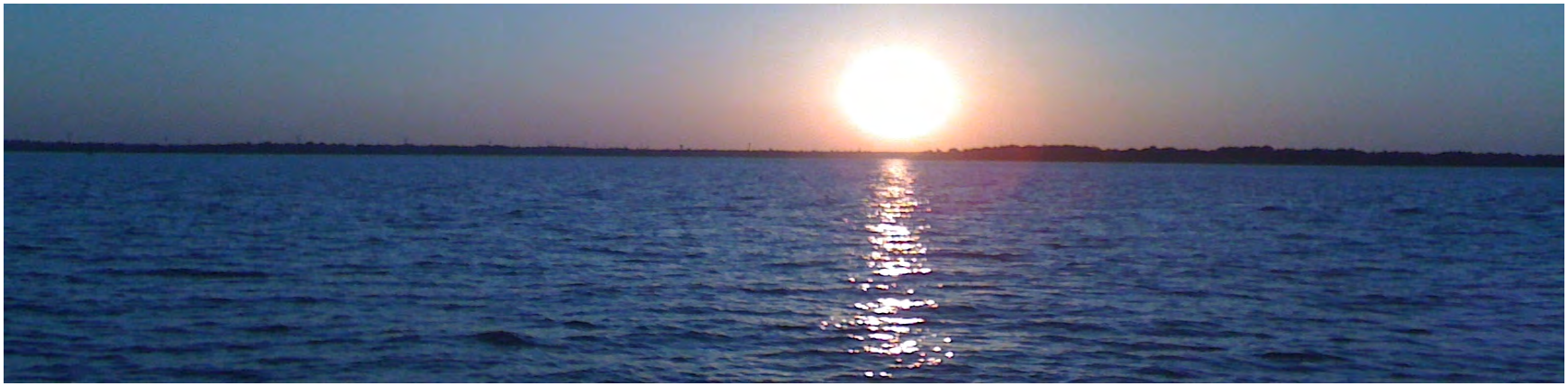
- 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization founded in 1978
- Active in Texas since 1988
- Secure clean, safe and affordable drinking water for present and future generations
- Protect and conserve land and water resources today

"*We All Live Downstream*"



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CWF's Water Conservation Project

Build a culture of water conservation through:

- ❑ Outreach to pubic officials, media and at events
- ❑ Door-to-door outreach / canvassing
- ❑ Presentations to community organizations
- ❑ Research

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“Water on the Home Front” Presentations:

- An overview of Texas' Water Crisis from Clean Water Fund
- Participation from Community Associates Institute, Texas Community Association Advocates, or HOA Managers
- Presentations from Landscaping Experts – e.g., Robert Beyer of CentralTexasGardening.info or Roger Sanderson of Texas Discovery Gardens
- Local water conservation staff and irrigation experts
- An interactive 'vote' for preferred landscapes

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Revision of CCRs is Critical to Achieving Maximum Benefit of SB198

- Alert homeowners to their new right to save water!
- Bring clarity to homeowners on what changes are acceptable
- Bring clarity to HOA boards and committees about what to accept and reject – they may not be landscaping experts or architects
- Bring clarity to management companies on enforcement issues – they may not be landscape experts
- The point of SB198 is to Conserve Water!

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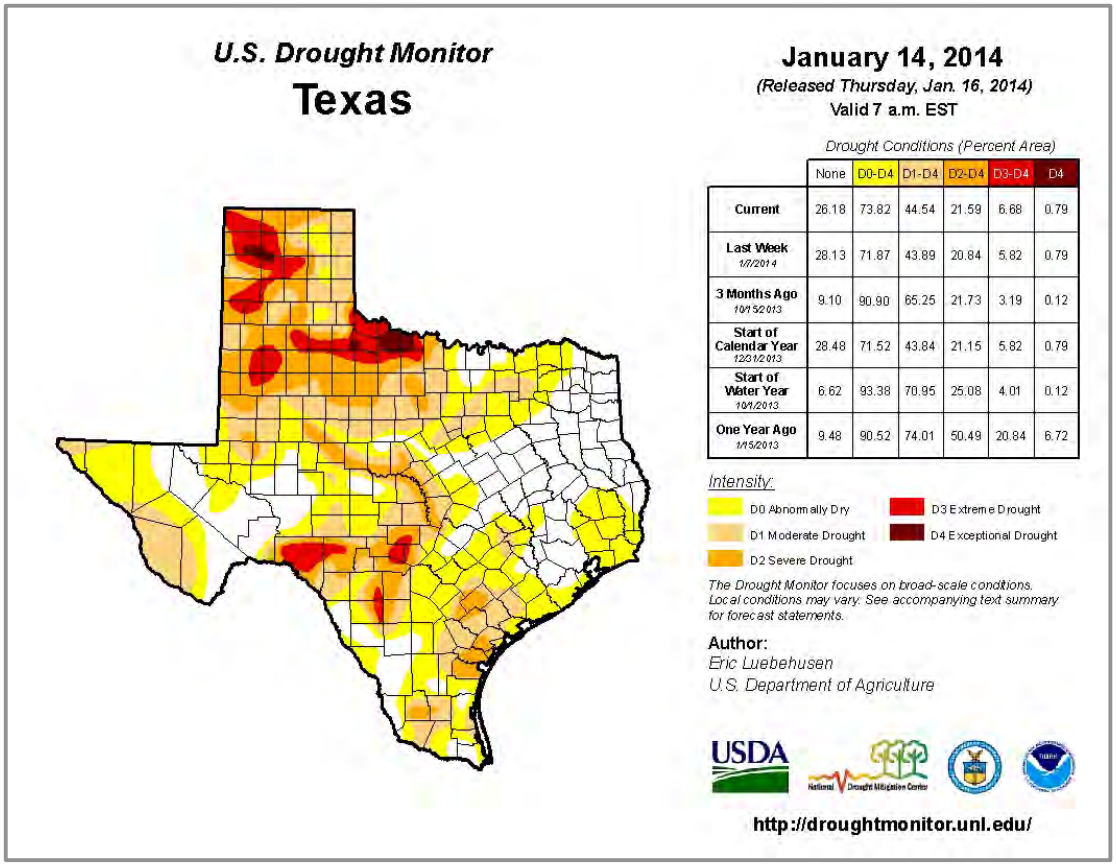
The Water Conservation Imperative: Drought



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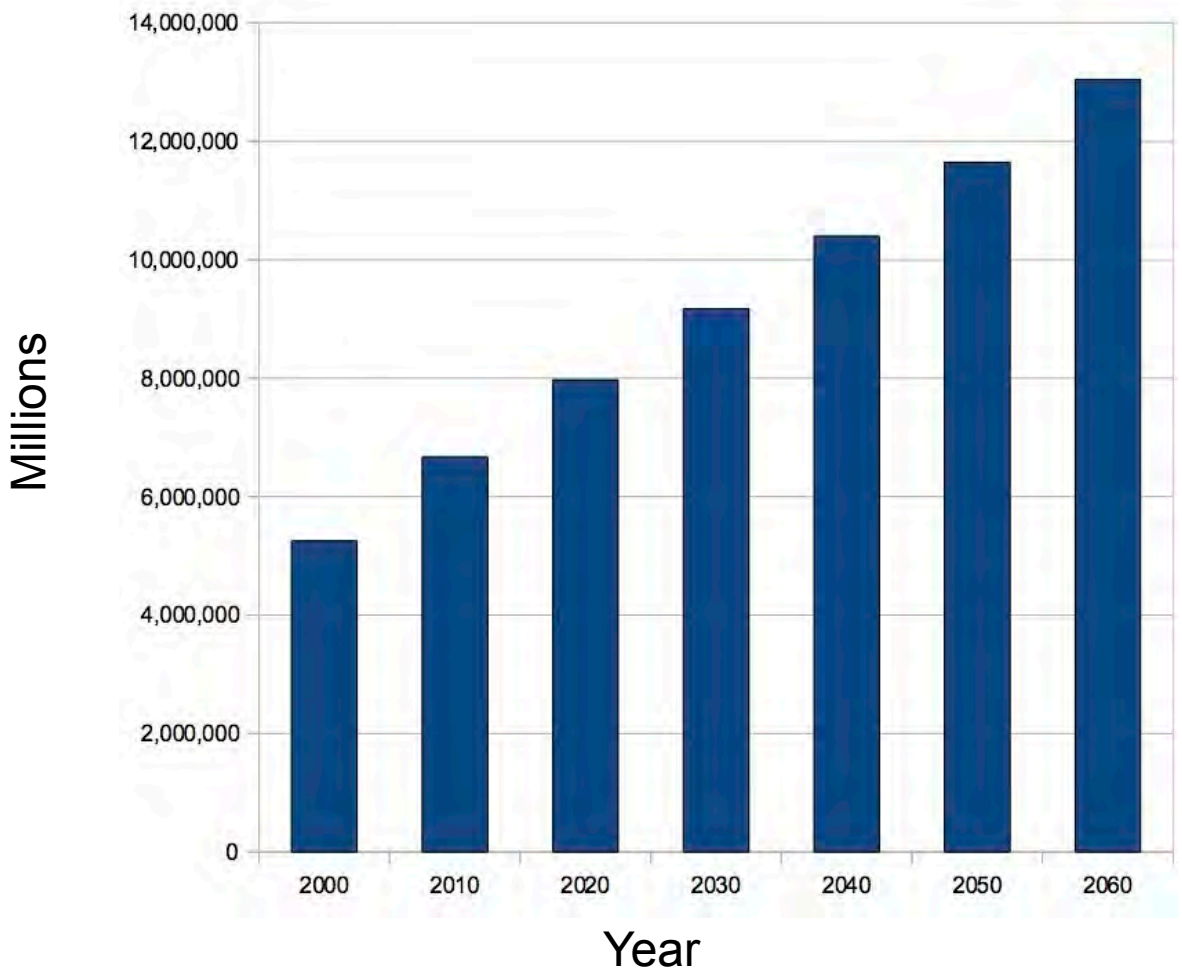
The Water Conservation Imperative: Population Growth



Texas' population is projected to grow by 82% By 2060.

The Metroplex' population is projected to *more than double!!*

Its demand for water – *by 87%!*

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The Water Conservation Imperative: Environmental Flows!

Allowing sufficient water to flow downstream helps preserve the eco-system, including coastal estuaries and wildlife.

“We all live downstream.”

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Saving Water Also Saves Energy!

EPA estimates that as much as 4% of all energy used in the U.S. is for treating and moving water and waste water.

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Conservation Saves Money in the Home

Dallas' Block Rates

Usage Charge per 1,000 gallons*		
Residential	Water	Sewer
Up to 4,000 gallons	$1.80	$4.90
4,001 to 10,000 gallons	3.77	$4.90
10,001 to 15,000 gallons	5.20	$4.90
Above 15,000 gallons	7.09	$4.90

“Water Saved Is Money Earned”

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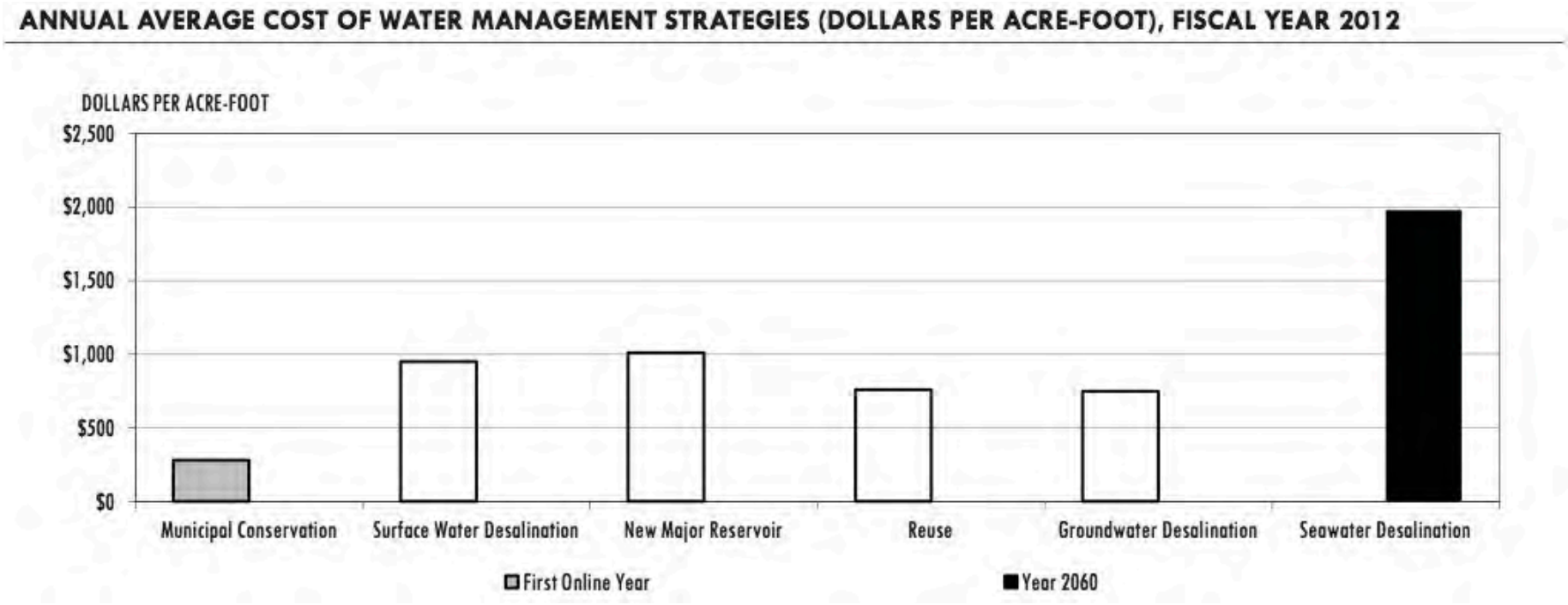
Conservation Save Money for the Community!



Source: Legislative Budget Board, 2012

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CWF's Primary Focus: Municipal Use

Texas Water Development Board's *2012 Water for Texas:*

- Overall water demand to increase by 22%
- Municipal demand to increase faster than other sectors
- Municipal demand 27% of total today, 38% by 2060
- $53 billion to meet needs – $27 billion for municipal use alone!

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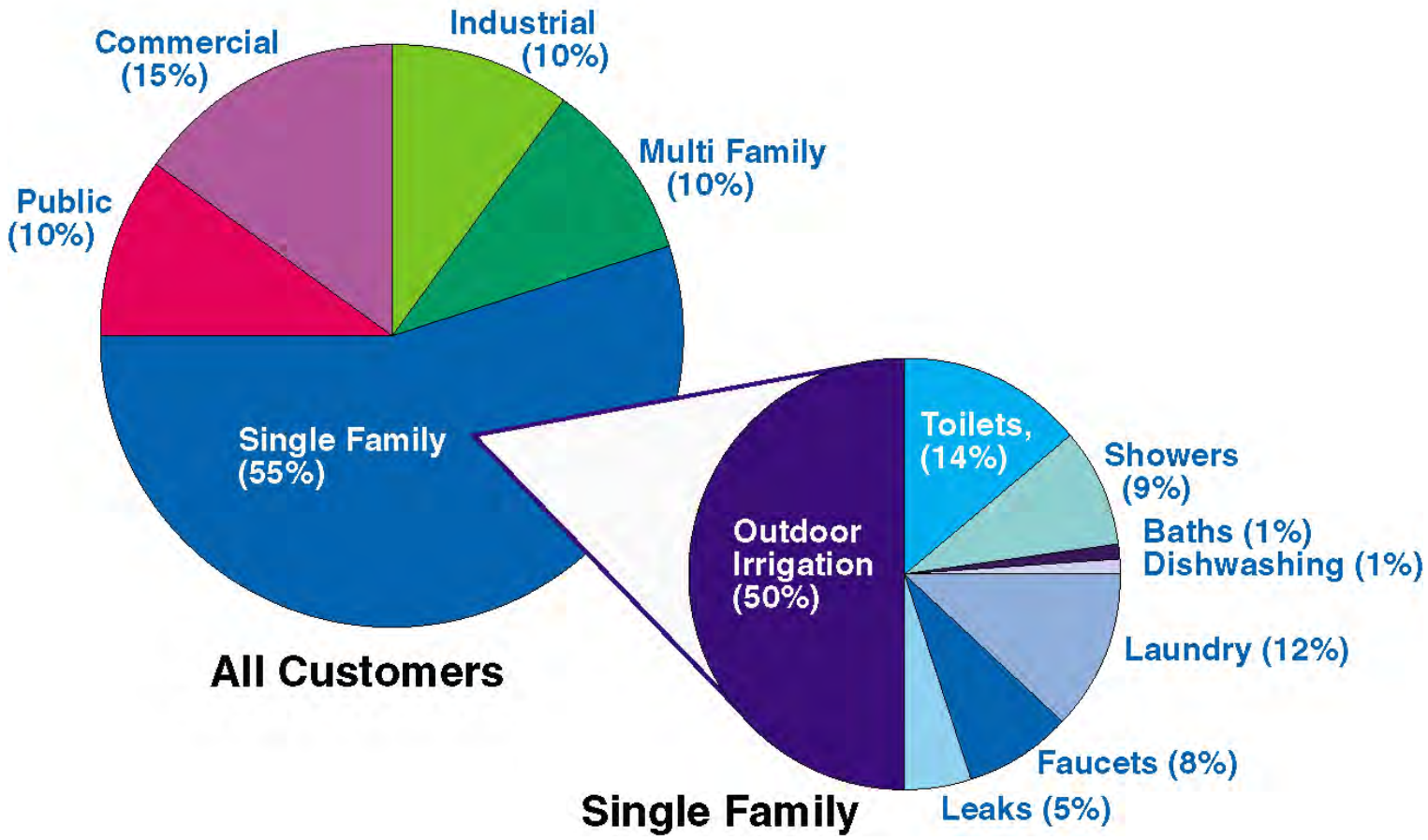
Outdoor Irrigation Driving Municipal Demand



Source: Alliance for Water Efficiency

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Conserving Water Outdoors is Key

Outdoor uses can account for 50 to 80 percent of home water use.
Studies show that half or more of such watering is wasteful.

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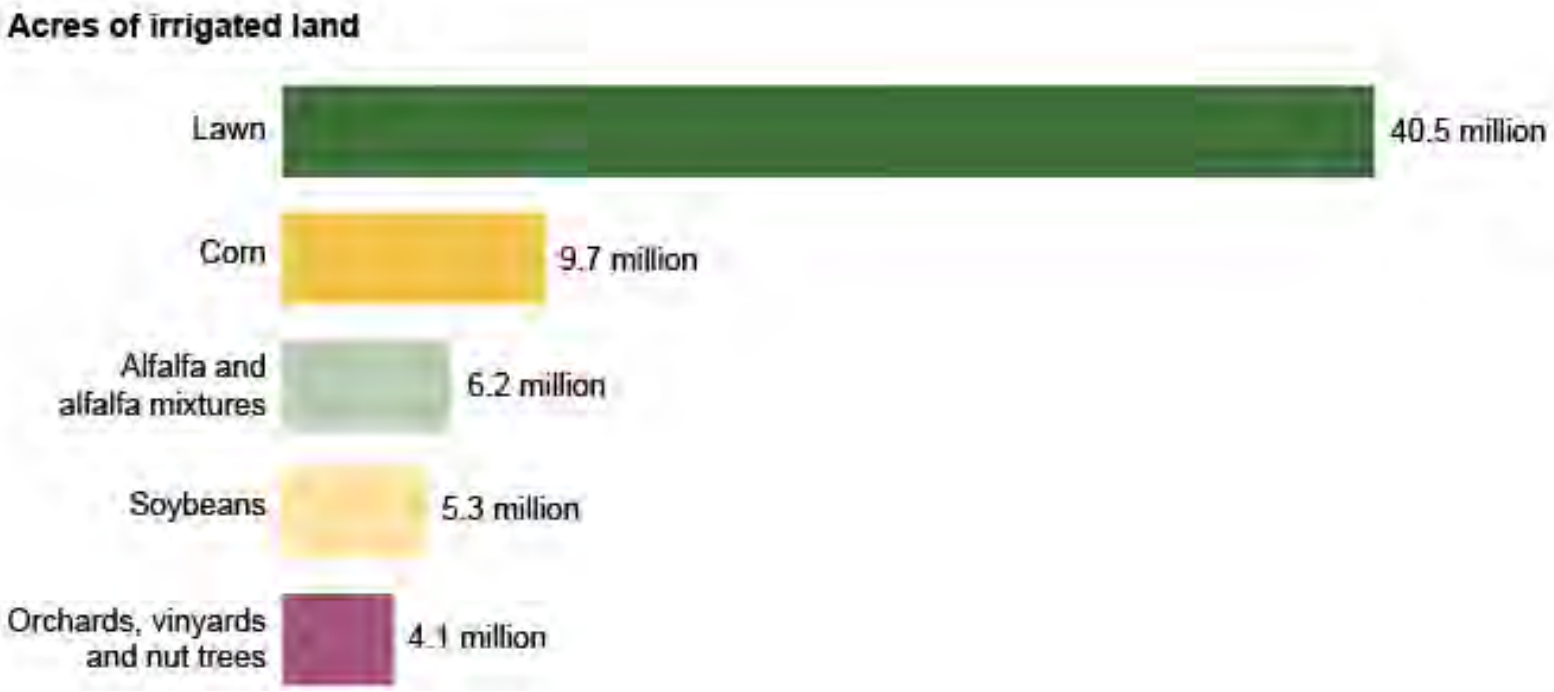
America's Love of Lawns



Cristina Milesi, a scientist for NASA's Ames Research Center: about 1.9% of all land in the lower 48 states is given over to turf!

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- Turf grass is the number one valued agricultural crop in Texas.
- $6 billion to the state's economy.
- Approx. 2 million acres residential turf grass.
- Total acreage of turf grass in Texas: 3.41 million acres.

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“Water on the Home Front:
An Analysis of Landscaping Restrictions of Austin Area HOAs”

'Yard of the Month', Feb 2011

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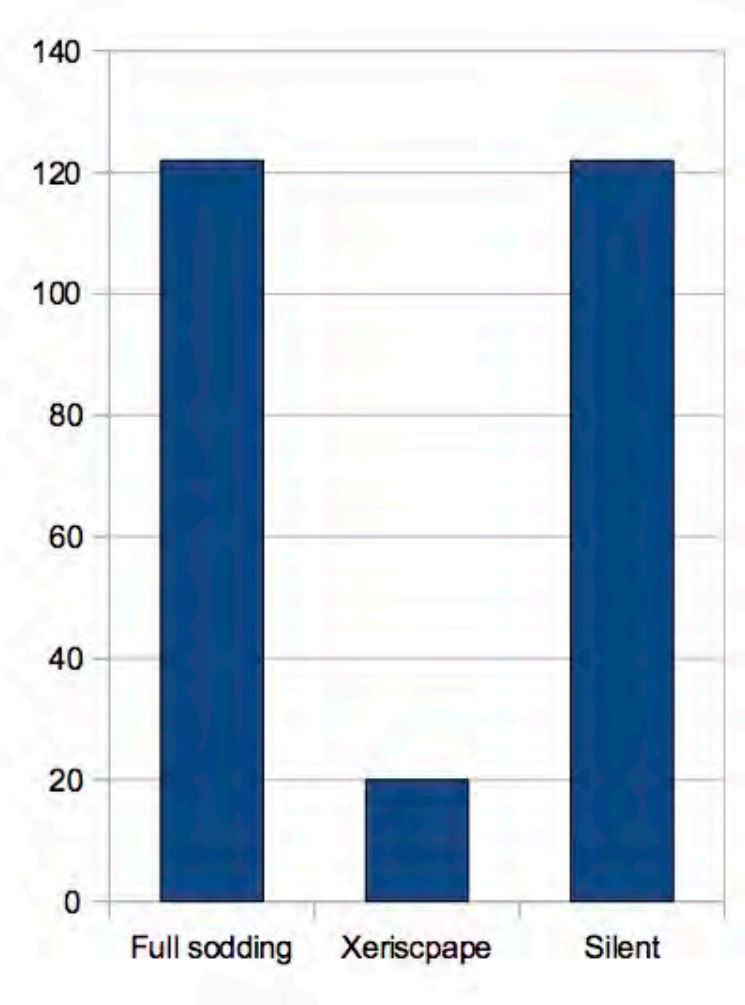

- Survey of Codes, Covenants, and Restrictions of 264 HOAs in Central Texas
- “All front and side yards visible from the public roadway must be fully sodded” – frequent refrain!
- Must maintain landscape or face fines.
- Rules can be tough to change
- All changes to landscaping must go to architectural control committee
- Only 20 allow xeriscaping!

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"Yard of the Month" Awards

Feb 2011

July 2011

July 2013

Aug 2013

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Senate Bill 198
What it Means for HOAs:

- HOAs no longer allowed ban drought-tolerant landscapes
- HOAS can still set guidelines for landscapes and require prior approval to ensure, “to the extent practicable, maximum aesthetic compatibility with other landscaping in the subdivision”
- BUT: May not “unreasonably deny or withhold approval of a proposed installation of drought-resistant landscaping or water-conserving natural turf”
- OR: “unreasonably determine that the proposes installation is aesthetically incompatible with other landscaping in the subdivision”

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But water conservation is ugly, right?

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No! This is What a Water Conscious Yard Can Look Like.

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And THIS is What a Water Conscious Yard Can Look Like.

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Avery Ranch HOA

- Rules Required 100% of Front and Side Yard 'Visible From Street" to be Turf Grass
- HOA Chose to Amend Guidelines in 2009
- Now Only 25% of front and side required to be Turf Grass

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Bob Beyer's Home,
Avery Ranch

BEFORE

AFTER

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Circle C HOA

- Feb 2012 revisions to CCRs allow xeriscaping
- Up to 50% of yard can now be unsodded
- Choose plants from Austin's “Grow Green” Guide

Landscaping Options to Encourage and Avoid

8812
Yard
of the
Month

Yard
of the
Month

None of
these
landscaping options

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Thank you!

To schedule a presentation for your organization, contact David Foster Daniel at 512-474-2046

or dfoster@cleanwater.org.

www.CleanWaterFund.org/tx