

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Will Parks and Recreation be watering the parks this year?**

We will be watering our parks this year, but we'll be reducing our consumption by approximately 20 percent over our typical irrigation levels. This is mandated by our water budget agreement with Denver Water during a Stage II drought declaration.

### **How often will you water the parks?**

Because we are on a water budget program with Denver Water, we are allowed to irrigate regularly, but will still be required to meet an overall reduced water allotment.

### **Why should parks be treated differently than the residents of Denver?**

We are not being treated differently. We are on a restricted irrigation schedule just as residents are, where we differ from residents is the wear-and-tear of our turf fields from team sports and the acreage of your average park in Denver.

Parks are created for the use of all residents and visitors to the City and County of Denver. With approximately 3,000 acres of irrigated parkland in the city alone, it is necessary to keep that land adequately watered to ensure that it remains healthy and available for use. Additionally, there are many families in the City that don't have the benefits of having a yard or owning their own home. Their only options for enjoying the outdoors and staying active is to use one of the many parks in the Denver system. They provide a safe and controlled location for kids to engage in sports, family picnics, exercise and other recreational activities.

### **Will my park be brown this year?**

This is difficult to predict because we do not know what level of natural precipitation we'll see this year. If we have a normal year for rain/precipitation, we believe that moisture, coupled with our irrigation plan, will be enough to keep our parks looking "thirsty, but green." If drought conditions persist, we'll likely see some brown patches here and there depending on a number of factors, including park or field usage, age of irrigation systems and type of water sources used for irrigation.

### **Do you still irrigate even when it rains?**

Rain sensors are part of our standard water conservation equipment and are designed to shut down our irrigation systems after pre-determined levels of natural precipitation are detected. There may be times where our irrigation systems still operate when it is raining, but our sensors should activate during most storms that bring measurable precipitation.

### **Are athletic fields open?**

As of April 1, all of our athletic fields are open. We delayed their opening by up to one month to keep them healthy and protect them from damage.

### **How do I know you won't close your fields in the middle of my kid's soccer season?**

We are hopeful that our fields will remain healthy throughout the season, but we will continually monitor their conditions throughout the spring and summer. If drought conditions persist and natural precipitation is limited, we may have to close our athletic fields early to ensure they remain healthy and playable for the long-term.

We realize that any decision to close our fields will be an inconvenience to the users/permit holders, but we pledge to give them at least a 30-day notice before closing.

### **Why are some parks greener than others?**

This could be due to a number of factors, but the most likely reason is that some of our parks use recycled water in their irrigation systems and others do not. Those parks that are on recycled water are not restricted to a water budget by Denver Water because more water is available in that system during a drought than is available in the potable water system. Recycled water parks will follow all other water waste rules, however, and won't irrigate between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. DPR will evaluate weather and park conditions to determine if/when additional water will be allotted for parks using recycled water systems. This may result in some parks looking "greener" than others.

### **Why are you opening pools if there is a drought?**

Because our pools are open to the public – and free to all school-age kids living in Denver through the My Denver Card program – they provide a place for residents to gather to stay cool and keep active during the summer months. Public pools also allow residents to curb their own water usage by giving them a local option versus filling their own personal pools or using lawn sprinklers to keep cool. Our pools will be operated using best management practices to ensure water waste is minimal.

### **How come fountains aren't running?**

Although they tend to use very little overall water, many of our decorative fountains spray water into the air, which then evaporates and creates waste. In an effort to curb our usage and to stay on our water budget, we've decided to keep all of our decorative fountains off during the 2013 season.

**Why is Denver restricted? Some of the suburbs aren't under any restrictions.**

Many municipalities draw their water from different and various resources. Since Denver Water has declared a Stage II Drought for their service area, we will work with them to ensure our water use is at or below our agreed-upon budget for this year.

**Will you plant flowers this year?**

We will plant flowers this year. Most flower beds are watered on grass irrigation zones, so flower beds will be watered similarly to grass.

**Are you going to issue a fire ban for mountain parks this year?**

It is too early to predict exactly what will happen this season in our mountain parks, but it certainly does look like the extremely dry conditions will continue this summer, increasing the risk for wild fires. We will consult with local and state fire authorities and we will issue any restrictions or bans in accordance with their directives. Safety is our top priority within the entire Denver Parks and Recreation system. We feel it is better to be overly cautious when there is a threat of fire danger.

**Are golf courses being watered? Why?**

Our golf courses will be watered this year and just like our parks, our golf courses will be on a restricted/reduced irrigation plan as well. Just as we feel it is important to keep our parks healthy and available to all users and visitors, we feel that keeping our golf courses open and competitive against other private and municipal courses is important as well. Our golf courses provide a location for enthusiasts to stay active and they also provide a mechanism for youth to stay active by learning the game of golf.

**Will these restrictions have an impact on boating at Sloan's?**

At present, we have no plans to restrict boating permits and use at Sloan's Lake, but we will continually monitor weather conditions and their impact on the lake. If we determine at any time that water levels or the presence of bacteria in the lake threaten the safety of boaters or the wildlife living in that area, we'll likely put a ban in place.

**Some ponds/lakes will probably start to grow algae; can you treat them to prevent it?**

We will treat certain ponds/lakes to help control any weeds or algae that may grow – especially in area where a fountain is shut off. Although many of our fountains are largely decorative, several of them serve a dual purpose by keeping the water moving, which prevents algae from growing. The fountain in City Park will run, per our variance from Denver Water, in an effort to curb algae growth in Ferill Lake.

**What should I do if I see a broken sprinkler head or a water leak?**

If there is a Parks employee in the area, please feel free to point it out to them. If there aren't any personnel around, please dial 311 and give as much detailed information about the location of the issue as possible.

**Are bathrooms going to be open in the parks? Drinking fountains?**

Park bathrooms will be open and operational this year. Our drinking fountains will be turned on this year.

**Will you lift your watering restrictions if there is a higher-than-average amount of rain this year?**

Our water budget and associated watering restrictions will remain in place as long as the Stage II Drought declaration is active. Should Denver Water make a change, we will respond accordingly with our irrigation plans.