



**South Suburban
PARKS AND RECREATION**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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South Suburban Parks and Recreation Increases Water Conservation Efforts

For years, South Suburban Park and Recreation District has been touted by Denver Water as a prime example of an organization that exceeds water conservation requirements. Recently, South Suburban joined Denver Water and other organizations to discuss new water conservation restrictions for 2013. Although South Suburban already adheres to stricter water guidelines than are recommended by the Denver Water Board, due to the drought, Denver Water is asking South Suburban to do even more to conserve.

New this year, South Suburban will convert seven very low use areas of turf to natural open space in these locations: Powers Park lower bowl area; South Suburban Ice Arena, south side of building; Wildcat Ridge, hillside off Quebec; Palos Verdes, southeast of Greenwood Gulch; Cherry Knolls, two areas west of Big Dry Creek; Little Dry Creek North triangle; and Centennial Ridge lower field/detention area. In the fall these areas will be seeded with native grasses.

In addition, the District will not be filling and running Gallup Gardens water feature this year, a savings of 10,500 gallons of water to fill the fountain, and another 1,000 gallons of water per week to combat evaporation. The small water feature at Air-Life-Memorial Park will not be filled and maintained, saving an estimated 500 gallons of water per month.

Other water saving measures being implemented throughout the District include reduced hours for the sprayground at Cornerstone Park which will shut off at 6 pm, two hours earlier than in previous years. The District plans to fulfill tree plantings that were approved prior to April 2013, including those identified for the Matching Gifts Program, plantings by volunteer groups and plantings that are part of budgeted capital projects. The District will not plant any additional new trees.

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Common conservation efforts practiced by the District include non-potable well water at many golf courses and park sites; use of Xeriscape design principles in tree, shrub and perennial beds and the use of native or site-adapted plant selections and non-irrigated natural grass areas within parks and along trails. Most District facilities include low flow toilets and shower heads and motion activated faucets in restrooms.

A substantial water savings is enjoyed at South Suburban's David A. Lorenz Regional Park. The complex features five synthetic turf multi-purpose fields, and one baseball/softball synthetic turf field, none of the fields require water.

The District's computerized irrigation systems at other parks concentrate water in higher-traffic use areas, like athletic fields so they will remain safe and playable, or where grass can become stressed due to heavy use. Adequate water, along with customary management practices, provides turf with a better chance for survival during heavy play. It's a balancing act to maintain parks and conserve water at the same time. Residents have come to love their green parks; however, District parks may not be as green this year. Continued drought conditions, high temperatures and wind, all contribute to the browning and drying of grass. South Suburban is doing its best to do what it can to manage the parks and keep them looking as good as possible.

South Suburban will initiate a public awareness campaign about the District's efforts to conserve water. It will ask patrons to conserve water wherever possible at its recreation centers. Patrons will be reminded of what they can do to help, like taking shorter showers or bring their own towels from home for their post workout shower, to help reduce high-volume daily laundering of towels at recreation centers. Restaurants at the District's golf courses will continue to provide water only upon customer request.

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