

Make a difference in our neighborhood by reading this annual water conservation newsletter – and save money conserving!



January 2020

Cherry Creek III

Special water conservation edition!

For owners and residents of the
Third Cherry Creek Townhouse Corporation
www.cherrycreek3.com or call (303) 834-0311

Water conservation expert talks about Cherry Creek 3

Liz Gardener (pictured) has kudos for our neighborhood and talks about the importance of water conservation. See page 3.



Water efficiency rebate rewards

Get more \$\$\$ in 2020 for replacing old toilets, washing machines

See Page 4 for story, details.

State, local leaders hear about Cherry Creek 3's water efforts

See Page 5 for story.



Congratulations: The 20.41 million gallons of water used in the Association last year is a record low! A little more than 10 years ago, Cherry Creek 3 used 36.7 million gallons of water per year. The successful effort from all residents to save water has earned the community significant praise and several awards throughout Colorado. Let's beat that record in 2020!

Water is important in CC3 for many reasons!

How we manage our water can impact us today and tomorrow, financially and otherwise

(Editor's note: We publish and distribute this annual water conservation and sustainability issue to every Cherry Creek 3 owner and resident. We hope you will read the various stories and take action!)

The three-month period of January, February and March 2020 is extremely important for all neighborhood owners and residents. The reason: Denver Water determines the average amount of water used in the neighborhood during that period. That figure becomes the key factor for Denver Water to set a monthly indoor water consumption "budget" for us for the rest of the year. The three-month average from January through March also determines the amount Denver Wastewater will charge the Association for sewage each month for the remainder of 2020. The more water we use, the higher the sewage bills. (In addition, Denver Water's rates will increase by 3 percent in January 2020 and Denver Wastewater's prices will go up about 4 percent.)

Last year, Cherry Creek 3's average winter (indoor) monthly consumption was determined to be 1.461 million gallons, according to Denver Water.

Simply put: The less water we use during January through March, the less we pay. Using more water will increase costs, which will likely cause a hike in the monthly maintenance dues in 2021.

Yes, you *can* influence water use by you and by those living with you. Perhaps take shorter showers or run the dishwasher or clothes washer only with full loads. Maybe you can turn off water running in the sink if you're walking away for a few moments. Every gallon counts! Most importantly: repair running toilets and leaking faucets as quickly as possible! **(Continued, Page 2)**

(Continued from Page 1)

The importance of water and how it impacts everyone in Cherry Creek 3

It's easy to take the path of not changing our water-use habits: That is, until the larger water and sewage bills arrive and the Board is forced to levy a monthly dues increase to cover costs. (Water and sewage charges are the largest single annual expenditure of the Association's budget.) However, the Board has chosen a wiser path by stressing the importance of water efficiency and conservation to every adult and child living here. When we collectively use less water, we spend less (rate hikes excepted).

From November to May, Cherry Creek 3 pays a little more than \$2.40 for 1,000 gallons of water. During the period from April through October, the Association pays nearly double that amount, \$4.25 per 1,000 gallons (plus addition fees and charges).

For the current fiscal year, which began on Oct. 1 and ends on Sept. 30, 2020, Cherry Creek 3's budget includes \$147,800 for water and sewage (\$67,000 for water and \$80,800 for sewage.)

This chart should provide a little insight:

Fiscal Year	Water used (million gallons)	Water costs	Sewage costs	Total costs
2018-19	20.41	\$65,512	\$78,495	\$141,007
2017-18	22.47	\$64,836	\$74,656	\$139,494
2008-09	36.7	\$85,774	\$72,931	\$158,705

So, despite residents using less water, the combined bills were higher because of rate hikes from Denver Water and Denver Wastewater. (The chart shows how sewage charges are higher than water costs the past two years.)

According to Denver Water, the average water-conscious resident should use about 40 gallons of water a day to flush toilets, cook, wash clothes and dishes, etc. That 40-gallon figure doesn't include outdoor spring and summer usage, when the Association's irrigation system is on three times a week and the 109,000-gallon swimming pool is filled. So, if the average home in Cherry Creek 3 uses 223 gallons of water a day year-round, what can you do to reduce your usage?

The Association is constantly trying to curb its water consumption: We use Denver Water recommendations on how to regulate sprinkler times, have installed water-saving urinals and toilets in the club house and try to replace broken sprinkler heads as quickly as possible. Cherry Creek 3 also follows the philosophy that irrigation systems should not be used until late May (because the lawn is using damp soil – caused by melting snow or spring rains – for water). Cherry Creek 3 has changed sections of its landscaping during the past decade and has installed low-water plants recommended by Plant Select. These changes during the past decade have cost money but have, as the result of the investment, helped save tens of millions of gallons of water. Adding more trees and the landscape efforts has contributed to higher home values, a more-friendly environment for pollinators and lower water bills (than if nothing occurred).

It is the hope of the Board of Directors that Cherry Creek 3 owners and residents continue their water-efficient ways in 2020. Be sure to visit the "water-conservation," "changed landscapes" and "awards and honors" pages of our website, www.cherrycreek3.com, during the coming year to learn more!

- By Don Ireland, President, Cherry Creek 3 HOA (cc3president@gmail.com)

Trees and landscaping benefits water conservation

There are nearly 200 trees in Cherry Creek 3, including about 30 planted the past 5 years. Newer trees planted have lower water needs and can survive Denver's sometimes-tumultuous weather. (*You know: it can be 70 degrees here one day and 10 degrees the next morning.*)

Trees can improve curb appeal and increase property values. The Park People, a non-profit organization, provided and planted more than a dozen trees at no charge to Cherry Creek 3 along East Nassau Avenue, South Boston Street and East Oxford Drive during the past few years through its Denver Digs Trees project. The Park People planted more than 60,000 free and low-cost trees during the past 35 years in Denver.

Shade trees help prevent water evaporation from soil during warm months. That means irrigated lawns in shady areas tend to evaporate slower than in non-tree areas. This also explains why non-tree areas have more brown grass during July and August (Denver's hottest months).

Trees have other benefits. Studies show they help reduce CO2 from the air, reduce climate change, intercept airborne particles, reduce heat-island effect in cities and help people feel better.

Q&A Feature: A chat with Liz Gardener

Editor's note: As part of this year's special water conservation newsletter, we talked with Liz Gardener, one of Colorado's leading experts on water conservation and efficiency. Liz, a first-generation Coloradoan, was Denver Water's Conservation Manager from 1986 to 2007. She was part of the group that coined the phrase "xeriscape" (low-water landscaping). Among her many accomplishments was helping to create the "Use only what you need" campaign to save water. As a tribute to her leadership, the Colorado WaterWise organization named its annual conservation award the "Gardener Award" after her. Cherry Creek 3 received the 2015 Colorado WaterWise Gardener Award. Liz, a Denver resident, loves to grow flowers and vegetables at her home. She lives only a few miles from Cherry Creek 3, has visited our neighborhood several times and has donated several small trees and other plants that have new homes here.

Q: When you presented the Colorado WaterWise award to Cherry Creek 3 leaders, you said one of the reasons the community received the award was because the xeriscape program here "didn't look like Tucson, AZ." Could you please explain that comment?

A: Some people have the mistaken impression that using less water means replacing grass and flowers with cactus and rocks. That's fine for a true desert place, but the Front Range of Colorado is semi-arid, not arid. Original trees and plants here are mostly green, especially along river banks. Xeriscape was created to show people alternative grasses, plants and trees that look beautiful and thrive in this region. Cherry Creek 3 exemplifies that beauty, water savings, and money-saving! Very cool!

Q: It's been well-documented that efforts by residents and the Board of Directors here has helped reduce water consumption by more than 15 million gallons of water annually when compared to our HOA's consumption in the era prior to 2010. Are other HOAs taking similar steps?

A: Since I've been retired for 7 years, I'm not personally aware of other Denver Metro area HOAs that have followed in the footsteps of Cherry Creek 3. However, I absolutely believe that all other HOAs that haven't already implemented both indoor and outdoor water conservation strategies should do so! The sooner, the better.

Q: Cherry Creek 3 offers additional "efficiency rewards," an HOA-funded rebate program that is in addition to what Denver Water offers. Do you think this is a good idea and should other HOAs offer similar incentives?

A: Many people are motivated by incentives, whether a financial incentive or a moral one (It's the right thing to do.) Some folks are motivated by peer pressure of their neighbors. Whatever, the reason(s) I believe it would be terrific if more HOAs offered incentives for water conservation and efficiency. Maybe a photo or plaque on the wall of the community building naming the efficiency heroes of the month/year, maybe a financial rebate, discount, etc. And this is NOT just a one-time thing. As owners come and go, the education part of any water conservation program needs to continue. Maybe there could be small water conservation gifts for first-time owners who come to an evening seminar where they learn a brief history and the perspective of the future of water use at Cherry Creek 3. Perhaps other ideas would work better, and probably the Cherry Creek 3 owners who implemented the previous phases could offer better ideas. We all learn better by having done something once; I certainly did!

Q: The average person and household in the Denver area use less water now than 20 years ago. Could we do better and how?

A: When I was presenting water conservation programs in elementary schools, kids had great ideas for saving even more water. "Wear paper clothes so we don't have to wash them." "Put 'footals' instead of handles on sinks so people can just shut off the water with a foot instead of touching the faucet with their hands." "Dads can grow a beard so they don't have to shave." And the funniest one from a very serious, short 5th grade intellectual: "Just shrink people so they don't need as much food or water!" But on a realistic note, yes, almost all of us can use less water than in previous years. Technology offers some fabulous devices for saving water indoors and outdoors. But the biggest water savings come from using our brains to be mindful, to make smarter choices on how we use every drop. We don't have to pre-rinse every dish in clean water before placing it in the dishwasher. We can use those buckets we received from Denver Water in 2003 to catch shower water, and use the saved water to flush liquids down the toilet. We can use a broom to clean the front porch instead of hosing it off. We can decide NOT to wash the car every week! Even though some car washes recycle their water, not all do, and a clean car, especially in a drought, is a sign of someone who doesn't care about neighbors, his/her children, or the future. Many water uses are nice but not necessary. We need to think more seriously about what we choose as necessary. **(Continued on Page 5)**



Want cash back? Consider getting increased “Efficiency Reward Incentives” for installing new water-efficient items in your Cherry Creek 3 home in 2020!

Cherry Creek 3 is offering incentives to owners who purchase and install qualified high-efficiency toilets, front-loading washing machines and water-saving dishwashers in 2020. (If you are thinking about replacing one or more toilets, you also may get rebate money from Denver Water if you meet their qualifications!)

This is the 4th year the HOA is offering efficiency rewards. We are among the first HOAs in the state to offer such a rebate program. **By installing a high-efficiency device, you are helping Cherry Creek 3 reduce its water and sewage bills. The HOA is offering \$125 for new toilets that use 1.1 gallons (or less) per flush, \$75 for toilets that use between 1.2 and 1.6 gallons per flush, \$100 for front-loading washing machines and \$50 for new dishwashers that meet the requirements below:**

1. This offer begins Jan. 1, 2020 and ends Aug. 31, 2020. Only water devices that will be installed permanently in Cherry Creek 3 are eligible.
2. Owners seeking water efficiency rewards must furnish ALL of the following information:
 - A. Brand name and model of the eligible device, along with a copy of the purchase receipt that must be dated during the eligibility period. This information will be used to independently verify that the toilets, washing machines or dishwashers are water-saving devices. (Note: Most devices will bear an EPA “WaterSense” logo on the box. Sorry, an “Energy Star” sticker is not an indication of water efficiency.) A photo (can be a phone’s camera photo) of the new device must be included as proof of installation in Cherry Creek 3. As an alternative, you can have a Cherry Creek 3 representative stop by your home to verify the installation.
3. Cherry Creek 3 doesn’t recommend brands or models. However, if you are installing a High-Efficiency Toilet and want to apply for a Denver Water rebate in addition to the HOA reward, you can go to Denver Water’s web site for a list of toilets eligible for their rebate. (Sorry, the HOA will not submit a rebate on your behalf to Denver Water. We will, however, be happy to answer questions you may have before submitting your rebate request for Denver Water’s offer.)

Qualifying high-efficiency water devices and rebate amount offered by Cherry Creek 3:

- High-Efficiency Toilets (HETs) using no more than 1.1 gallons per flush - **\$125 rebate. Toilets that use 1.2-1.6 gallons per flush are eligible for a \$75 rebate. If you qualify for both the Denver Water and Cherry Creek 3 rebate rewards, you’ll get a total of \$225!** (Limit 2 toilets per home from Denver Water, maximum of 4 toilets from Cherry Creek 3.)
- New dishwashers must use 6 or fewer gallons per load. **\$50 rebate**
- New front-loading washing machines must use no more than 25 gallons per load. **\$100 rebate.**

Please submit ALL requested information and photos to:

Cherry Creek 3 Water Efficiency Rewards Program
9084 E. Nassau Ave.,
Denver, CO 80237

Have questions?

General questions: Jim Robson, CAM, Property Manager, Realty One Property Management:
jrobson@ropmco.com

Specific questions about devices and efficiency: Don Ireland, HOA President: cc3president@gmail.com

Cherry Creek 3 reserves the right to modify or discontinue this program at any time. Please allow up to 4 weeks for a check to be issued.

Have an old basement toilet that you’ve been thinking about replacing?

Is your old laundry machine slowly failing or not cleaning properly?

If so, make the move to a more efficient energy & water model in 2020 and get \$\$\$ back!

Our neighborhood is recognized statewide for water conservation/efficiency leadership

When you compare Cherry Creek 3 to many of the other 9,800 HOAs in Colorado and the 2.81 million people who live in them, we're relatively small at 251 condo-home units and several hundred residents. However, because of the efforts of residents and the Board combined to conserve water the past decade, Cherry Creek 3 is considered a leader for its role in trying to keep the topic of water efficiency ongoing. The fact that our neighborhood has cut its water consumption by more than 15 million gallons a year is considered a feat by water leaders across the state.

HOA Board President Don Ireland gave a slideshow about Cherry Creek 3's journey to reducing water consumption to about 90 professionals at the Colorado WaterWise organization's annual summit in November 2019. Representatives from water authorities, water districts, engineering firms, equipment companies and others learned how the neighborhood has undertaken indoor and outdoor programs to achieve the savings at a time when many HOAs statewide are struggling to pay water bills and are uncertain on how to enact conservation efforts. Don has also spoken to dozens of HOA leaders and groups across the Front Range on the subject during recent years and, in November, talked about Cherry Creek 3's ongoing efforts when he spoke at a conference on HOA sustainability in the Denver Tech Center. The Audubon Rockies and Plant Select organizations also have had the CC3 leader speak to their groups in recent years. Denver Botanic Gardens and the Colorado Native Plant Society organized several tours to Cherry Creek 3 during the past three years to showcase the community's low-water and pollinator-friendly plants.

Cherry Creek 3 also has been featured in two environmental documentaries since 2015. One of them can be viewed on the link at the Association's web site in the "Water and conservation" section.

The journey of a drop of water

How water reaches the faucet in your Cherry Creek 3 home is no easy feat

The water used in making your morning coffee or taking your daily shower has traveled more than 200 miles before it arrives in your home.

Melting snow pack on Colorado's western slope is collected in a series of dams and reservoirs by Denver Water, which also operates many treatment and storage facilities along the way in that water's journey to Denver. About 80 percent of all Colorado water originates on the western slope and is transported to the Front Range, which has roughly 80 percent of the state's 5.7 million citizens. Denver Water, which has 1.4 million customers, has 3,000 miles of pipes that transport water throughout its service area. Denver Water also complies with federal regulations and tests the water to assure purity and make sure there is no lead or potentially toxic chemicals.

Once that water supplied by Denver Water reaches Cherry Creek 3, it passes through pipes owned and maintained by the HOA. Each home has a private water line that is connected from the HOA's main underground lines into each home. Those underground lines are not made of lead and do not contain lead welds. Hallcraft, the developer and builder of Cherry Creek 3, designed the complex so that each home has a private service line that enters through the front basement room of the home, in the corner opposite the front door. The plumbing in each home, starting from and including the water shutoff valve inside the basement, is the responsibility of each owner.

By comparison, Denver has some of the least expensive and best-tasting water in the United States. (Bottled water is far more expensive per gallon and federal rules do not require bottlers to test their products for toxic chemicals.) So, when you sip your next freshly-made cup of coffee in Cherry Creek 3, enjoy the taste as you consider the long journey that water has taken to get to your cup.

Protecting and maintaining your sewer is every homeowner's responsibility

Most sewer issues and back-ups are caused by two things: (1) putting the wrong things down them and (2) failure to have your sewer line serviced and cleaned every 3-4 years. You (not the HOA) are responsible for sewer maintenance in your home and outside to the main line. (The HOA will repair broken water and sewer lines outside your home.) Many unknowledgeable sewer cleaners incorrectly tell residents that the HOA's line is the culprit when a sewer backs up into a basement. (*This is rarely the case.*)

To help prevent a sewer line clog, never put grease, fibrous fruits and vegetables (example: celery), potato peels, rice or pasta, baby wipes (even ones that claim to be disposable), cloth or fabric items, coffee grounds and egg shells into your sewer.

Per HOA regulations, it is each owner's responsibility to get their sewer line cleaned periodically. Plumbing inside each home is the owner's responsibility. However, the governing documents states owners are responsible for any water or sewer damages inside their home – regardless of the cause of the sewer or waterline problem. It is strongly recommended that each owner has insurance to cover any such damage in their personal home policy.

If you are in your basement and hear a loud "roaring" noise or sound of rushing water that sounds like it is outside, please report it immediately to the property manager at (303) 834-0311.

Cherry Creek 3 offers free items related to water efficiency! Need some?

Want to play a role in helping the neighborhood become more water efficient? Here are three things the HOA will deliver to your back patio, upon request:

- **Toilet leak test kit.** The kit is fast and easy to use. You'll know quickly if your toilet is leaking, potentially losing thousands of gallons of water per year.
- **Free energy-efficient shower head.** Just unscrew your old shower head and install this new one.
- **Faucet aerators.** It installs in a minute when you unscrew the old one from a kitchen or bathroom faucet. (May not work on all models of faucets.)

If you would like to participate, please send an e-mail to: jrobson@ropmco.com. Delivery could take a few days. The Association does not install water-saving devices nor test your toilet for potential leaks.

A chat with Liz Gardener (continued from Page 3)

Q: What do you think will make people more thoughtful about water efficiency and conservation?

A: Every person has a different motivation for changing behavior. We talked about incentives before, but I learned in 2002 from a psychologist that some people are only motivated by penalties. So, to ensure everyone complies with the need for using less water, I believe we need a combined program of rules and penalties, incentives and rewards, and an education program of "It's the right thing to do." The specifics of these three aspects will change over the years, but the essence most likely will not change.

Q: What should children be taught about water conservation?

A: When I was presenting to kids in grades 4-12, I learned from the kids that they care a great deal about what's going to happen when they are adults and have children of their own. So, a sense of the future, both supply and limits is really important. Kids need to learn that "supply and demand" is an outmoded phrase! Nobody is DEMANDING 40 gallons of hot water for their morning shower. Most people just want a good shower with clean water that is the right temperature for their personal needs. Those new bathrooms that have four or five showerheads are nice looking and luxurious, but incredibly wasteful. Kids need to learn (again) about "Waste Not, Want Not." There is a network of fine environmental educators in Colorado seeking to teach kids, parents, visitors and others about the most effective ways to live in Colorado. There are already several curricula written about wise water use; the challenge is for teachers to fit in the information with all they are currently required to teach. I think parents, babysitters, day-care folks and neighbors need to align themselves to teach everybody in Colorado how to live here mindfully in both wet times and dry times. The current predictions certainly show more dry times than we expected in my career. We thought of droughts every 20-22 years. Now, that timeframe is either shortening or becoming erratic. Climate change is real and it impacts all of us. We need to know effective ways to cope with it.

Q: Our last Denver area drought occurred in 2002. For newcomers, what should they know if they've never been through a drought before?

A: Speaking of droughts, our computer models of when future droughts will come have been based on lots of assumptions of the past. But we have learned that the past is not the precise indicator of the future! Things are changing, often and dramatically. All that is to say that the experts at Denver Water, at the Colorado Conservation Board, the State Demographer's Office and others are comparing computer models, striving to keep up with changes. However, the somewhat depressing answer to your question is that nobody knows exactly. That's a real problem for people like me because I'd like to grow more food instead of flowers. The water needs of veggies are just different than for grass and flowers. The agricultural growers (turf, flowers, trees, etc.) are really impacted by this uncertainty. Since they don't know more than a few months in advance what water requirements or restrictions will exist, they don't know what to plant for sale each Spring. Growing many things outdoors in Colorado is a risk anyway, from early/late freezes, hail, wind, or drought. Those of us who love gardening and landscaping are big risk takers. Every year is a bit different. We have to be flexible as much as possible, including our hopes of a big tomato harvest for example.

What we can expect in the future is that there absolutely will be droughts, there will be wet years and there will be population growth. In the long term, that means less water for more people. It's a fact of life here in the semi-arid West. We just have to accept the facts and deal with them.

Q: Any other thoughts?

A: I salute the owners at Cherry Creek 3 AGAIN for all the work you've done so far. There might be more grass that can be changed to xeriscape flowers, shrubs and trees. There might be more bathrooms that can be updated with newer, more efficient technology. And there will definitely be opportunities to educate your new residents and be role models for other HOAs. **Congratulations and best wishes for keeping up the good work!**