

## **Drought Officially Over-Conservation is still a Must!**

Georgia is officially declared the end of the drought and the reinstatement of “Non-Drought” Outdoor Water guidelines June 10, 2009. However, it is important for homeowner associations as well as individual homeowners to verify local and regional water guidelines that may differ from State guidelines. The Metro Atlanta Landscape & Turf Association (MALTA) outlines the Non-Drought Rules currently in effect for Georgia on their website [www.maltalandscape.com](http://www.maltalandscape.com). Check your local county’s website for local water management guidelines.

Although the drought has officially ended, Georgians continue to have an obligation to conserve natural resources. Given the current economy, this eco-friendly alternative is also a cost effective measure. Below are few suggestions for conserving this valuable resource:

- Investing in faucets with aerators
- Reduce unnecessary evaporation by setting sprinkler systems to water in the early morning hours and add drip systems to no turf areas
- Install electric hand dryers to reduce which not only reduces water usage but waste
- Lawns require approximately one inch of water per week and it is healthier for the lawn if it is watered once a week for a longer period of time rather than more frequently to encourage deeper root growth
- Using an irrigation system, isolate zones used for seasonal flower beds from zones for existing mature plantings in order to individualize the water requirements for each area
- Update sprinkler heads and nozzles with more efficient models and install rain sensors to automatically shut off the system when there is sufficient precipitation
- Consider xeriscaping when replacing or installing new plants to minimize the need for supplemental irrigation, also consider using native plants where possible which tend to not only require less irrigation but are also more disease resistant, the Georgia Native Plant Society ([www.gnps.org](http://www.gnps.org)) is a good resource for information on native plants
- Using 3” of mulch around plantings will conserve moisture

As property managers we have an obligation to conserve our natural resources and assist and advise communities on methods of accomplishing this. The above suggestions represent several avenues for reducing water consumption and saving money. Additional resources to aid in this effort are as follows:

[www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense)

[www.georgiawatercouncil.org](http://www.georgiawatercouncil.org)

[www.conservewatergeorgia.net](http://www.conservewatergeorgia.net)

[www.uga.edu/aboutUGA/water\\_tips](http://www.uga.edu/aboutUGA/water_tips)

