



When Local Rainfall is Enough: A Research Intervention to Improve Residential Landscape Water Conservation

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Opportunity & Purpose

To improve water conservation by encouraging and educating residents to adjust their irrigation based on local precipitation data.

Introduction

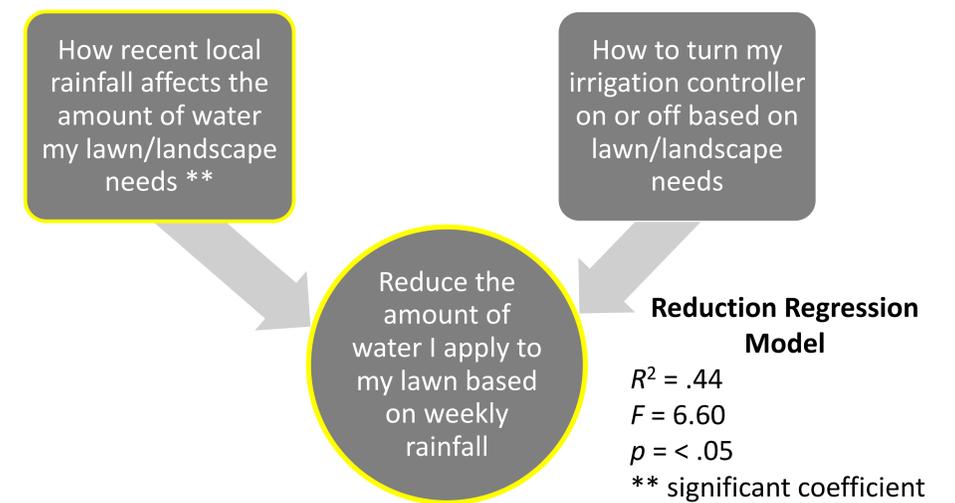
Local precipitation may play a minimal role in influencing residents' landscape irrigation decisions. Residents (especially in HOAs) overwater by not appropriately adjusting irrigation controls based on turf and landscape needs or recent rainfall.

Methods

- 1) Two-year study, with the Southwest Florida Water Management District and Hunter's Green neighborhood, aims to evaluate how education on weekly local rainfall and turf water needs influences residential landscape water use
- 2) The key study intervention involved the installation of highly visible signage displaying weekly rainfall data and the amount of water a lawn needs
- 3) Residents also received educational materials (e.g., postcard explaining intervention and ways to conserve water in the landscape)
- 4) 1,553 households received a baseline survey to assess knowledge, perceptions, and behaviors prior to the sign installation
- 5) Water utility data to be analyzed pre- and post-intervention

Pre-Survey Findings

Residents perceive advantages in adjusting their irrigation based on rainfall and claim to irrigate based on rainfall. However, data also indicate residents are unsure how to monitor local rainfall.



Conclusions

Lack of awareness of methods/sources by residents to determine when rainfall is sufficient and supplemental irrigation not needed. Signage may help residents obtain local rainfall information. Residents' perceived engagement in behavior is an opportunity to promote improved conservation techniques, especially for monitoring.