

# Water a scarce, precious resource in Colorado

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*“When drinking water, think of its source.”*  
**Chinese proverb**

Water is a nonnegotiable necessity of life. With water life flourishes. Without water, life perishes.

Long before the recent drought the region has been experiencing, Fort Carson was aware that in this semi-arid part of the country natural water resources were to be used wisely. Fort Carson has proactively managed its water use since the 1970s. One of the major water conserving initiatives on the installation is the Central Vehicle Wash Facility, which was built in 1990 to clean military vehicles. Water used at the CVWF is recycled for reuse, which saves Fort Carson approximately 150,000,000 – 200,000,000 gallons of water annually.

In 2002, Fort Carson included water conservation as one of its 25-year sustainability goals. As part of the sustainability goal to reduce water use, Fort Carson continues to increase water conservation education and the watering policy is written to adhere to Colorado Springs Utilities watering restrictions, which are now entering the fourth year.

Residents and workers have significantly helped reduce water use on the installation since the drought began three years ago. From FY00 (pre-drought) to FY04, Fort Carson reduced water use by 491,322,000 gallons or 44 percent.

New, water saving projects are continually researched. One initiative underway by the Directorate of Public works is including rain sensors on irrigation systems. The irrigation system controllers automatically prevent the sprinkler systems from turning on when there is enough rainfall. The rain sensors have been installed in DPW irrigation systems, but are also being considered for the golf course and housing area irrigation systems.

It is anticipated that the rain sensors will save 20 percent of water use in DPW areas, which is the equivalent of 37 million gallons a year and an installation cost savings of \$80,000.