



# STRIKING THE BALANCE

IRRIGATION AS THE KEY TO WATER CONSERVATION AND LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION.



Water conservation is a crucial responsibility that many of us recognize, considering water's essential role and the significant use by various industries. With frequent reports on water shortages, droughts, restrictive legislation, and emerging technologies aimed at water conservation, it is evident that the need to preserve water resources is gaining attention. However, if we approach conservation without a clear plan, we risk having someone else dictate the methods to us. This becomes evident when municipal water companies restrict water use during high-demand periods, prioritizing conservation over the maintenance of valuable landscapes. Consequently, it is crucial to find a balance between conserving water and preserving our landscape investments.

## IRRIGATION EFFICIENCY

To achieve the dual goals of water conservation and landscape preservation, it is essential to prioritize irrigation efficiency. Irrigation efficiency refers to the relationship between the amount of water applied to a landscape and the actual moisture or water required by the plants. While attaining 100% efficiency in irrigation systems is impossible, we should strive to approach this ideal as closely as possible.

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Surprisingly, many newly installed irrigation systems are operating at less than 50% efficiency, resulting in excess water application beyond the landscape's needs. Several factors contribute to this inefficiency, including irresponsible scheduling in the controller, inadequate equipment, and improper sprinkler installation, such as low or crooked head placements and mismatched nozzles affecting uniformity. All these issues undermine efficiency and hinder water conservation efforts.

## HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY FOR IMPROVED EFFICIENCY

Fortunately, a range of new technologies has emerged that can significantly enhance irrigation efficiency. Innovations such as spray heads with pressure regulation, high-efficiency nozzles, and weather-responsive controllers offer promising solutions. By embracing and implementing these technologies effectively, we can drastically reduce water waste, leading to remarkable water conservation outcomes.

## INDUSTRY RESPONSIBILITY & ACTION

While it may seem extreme, a call to action for the irrigation industry is to reevaluate and improve its practices before external forces, such as municipalities or legislators, define conservation on their terms. Taking proactive measures to build and maintain efficient irrigation systems will enable the industry to be recognized as a vital part of the solution rather than a cause of the problem. Simple steps, such as adjusting controller run times based on careful consideration rather than arbitrary reductions, can contribute to more effective water conservation practices.



The significance of water conservation cannot be overstated, particularly in the context of sustaining landscapes. By prioritizing irrigation efficiency and embracing innovative technologies, we can achieve a delicate balance between conserving water and maintaining our landscape investments. It is essential for the industry to take responsibility, improve practices, and ensure that it is recognized as an active contributor to the solution. Through these collective efforts, we can create a sustainable future where water conservation and landscape preservation go hand in hand.

