



Rivendell - Let's Reduce Our Water Usage Save Water. Save Money. Protect the Bay & Our Ponds.

By the Ponds & Preserves Committee

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Did You Know: 56% of homes in Rivendell use more water than the average county home? In fact, many of us use more than twice the county average. More than half of water usage is outdoor for irrigation and pools. Overwatering can lead to nutrient leaching that can adversely affect our bays and marine life, as well as our own ponds and preserves.

At the September HOA Board meeting, **Dr. Abbey Tyrna** and **Jackie Leboutitz**, (Water Resources team, UF/IFAS Extension & Sustainability) informed us that Rivendell is in the top 25% of potable (drinking) water users in the county (by contrast, Palmer Ranch communities use less potable water because they use reclaimed water for irrigation). Abbey and her team produced three live webinars in October, exclusively for the Rivendell community, to discuss conservation, irrigation, and general landscape issues - we hope you attended. They also created a postcard to educate Rivendell residents about water use and conservation.

To quote Abbey: *"Your community was selected after data showed over half of Rivendell residents use more water than the average county home. We're excited to work with your community because of your ongoing commitment to responsible water management. Just by following a few simple tips, your homeowners can reduce their water usage and help protect our bays."*

What Can We Do? Rivendell can become a leader in water conservation and responsible water management. Awareness of your water usage is the first step. A good first step is to reduce your water use by 30 gallons a day. Abbey offered these helpful tips:

- Follow **Sarasota County guidelines** for responsible fertilizer and irrigation. ([Click here.](#))
- St Augustine grass only requires $\frac{3}{4}$ inch of water per week. Check your sprinkler calibration. Only water on your irrigation day. Let grasses grow longer in dry weather. Longer leaf blades create deeper roots that hold water better and absorb nutrient runoff.
- Sweep pool decks, sidewalks, driveways and hardscapes first. Reduce frequent power-washing.



Abbey (above, planting) reminds us to reduce our water and fertilizer usage to help protect our ponds & preserves & the bays.

Great Resources to Help:

- Here's a free online **Water Conservation** course with important irrigation and water-saving tips. Check out <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/sarasotaco/2020/08/28/free-online-water-conservation-course/>
- Learn about water usage from common household devices with this **Water-Savings Chart**: http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/sarasotaco/files/2020/04/Water_efficient_devices_Chart.png
- Want to calculate your family's water usage? Check out SWFWMD's **Water Use Calculator**: <https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/conservation/water-use-calculator>



We thank Abbey and her team for their time and expertise. Rivendell can lead the way in responsible water conservation. Reducing your water use and limiting fertilizer will improve water quality in our ponds and preserves, protect our bays, and keep sea grasses and marine life healthy. If we all do a little, we can truly make a big difference.

Dr. Abbey Tyrna, Water Resources Agent for UF/IFAS Extension & Sustainability, Sarasota County. She earned her Ph.D. in Geography from Penn State.