

This presentation premiered at WaterSmart Innovations

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DENVER WATER INEFFICIENT USER SURVEY

*Data from a survey of 520 inefficient water users
conducted October 27 - November 7, 2011.*



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

METHODOLOGY:

- N=520 customers of the 9,516 residential customers in Denver Water's service area with 2010 outdoor water use in the 25-50 gallons per square foot range (The recommended amount for efficient outdoor water use is about 18 gallons per square foot). These customers are referred to as being "inefficient" in outdoor water use.
- All respondents who were invited to participate in the survey had account setup dated newer than August 1, 2010. All had properties greater than 1500 square feet as well.
- Respondents were invited to participate in the survey via post card or email invitation with their tap number necessary to log on and only able to be completed once.
- Interviews were completed October 27-November 7, 2011.
- Respondents reflected the geographic distribution of the sampling provided by Denver Water.
- Questionnaire was approximately 15 minutes in length and administered via Internet.
- A \$10 incentive fee (in the form of an Amazon gift card) was offered for participation to the first 500 to complete the interview.
- Due to the necessity of needing to invite a select group of respondents to participate Denver Water was identified as the survey sponsor.





KEY FINDINGS

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- Denver Water customers who are using the most water on outdoor irrigation purposes generally do not perceive themselves as using more than their neighbors, nor do most believe their water use exceeds Denver Water recommendations.
- Respondents say they are doing lots of things “right” when it comes to water use – almost no one says they water during the day, most indicate watering three days a week or less, and a majority say they adjust their sprinklers throughout the season. In addition, they reject waste in concept; say they have seen Denver Water advertising; and indicate participating in “green” activities.
- Inefficient water users overwhelmingly say that having a green lawn is important to them, but this view is on par with past surveys of all Denver Water customers.

KEY FINDINGS:

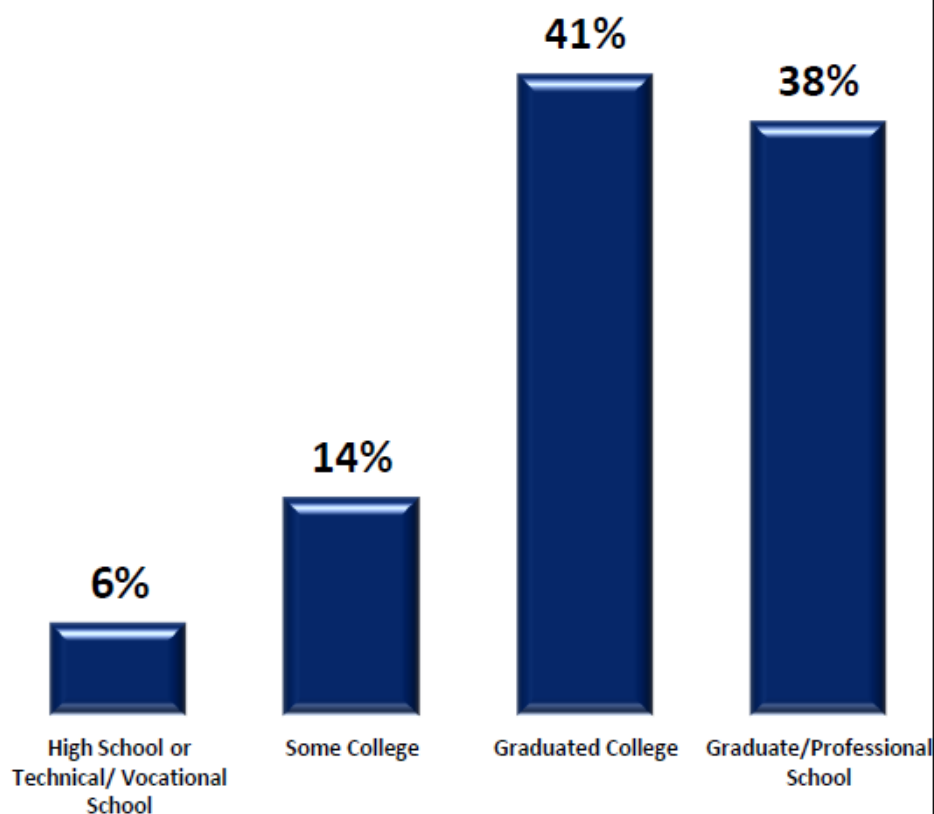
- These inefficient water user respondents are distinct from the general population in that they tend to have significantly higher income levels and years of formal education, and be less ethnically diverse.
- Despite their higher income, respondents are not dismissive of costs. They indicate paying attention to their water bill and do *not* believe those who can afford it should use as much as they want.
- Inefficient water users are open to a range of potential communications and outreach from Denver Water. However, the tone of those communications is important. Respondents dislike anything they view as “shaming” them into lower water use, and respond more positively to statements that are specific, factual, and personalized in tone and content.



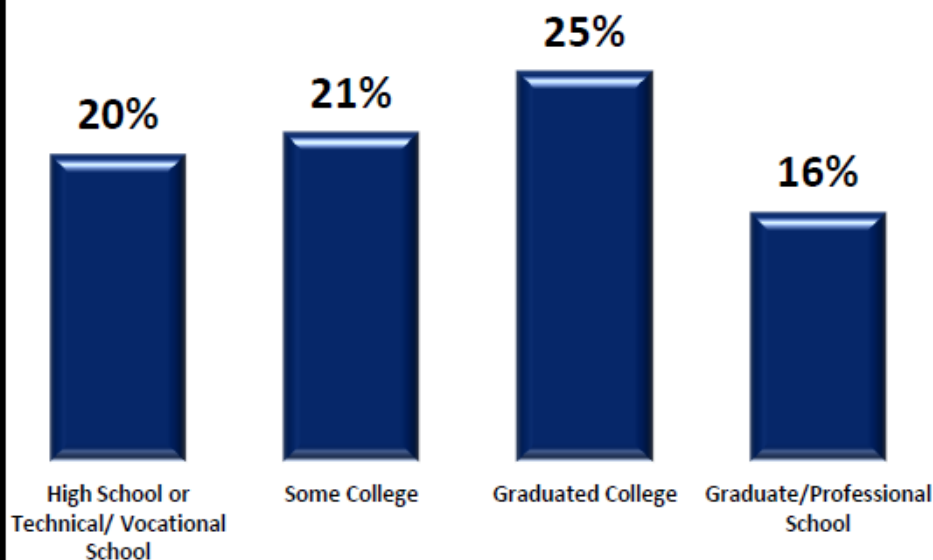
WHO ARE INEFFICIENT WATER USERS?

Respondents are definitely in higher socio-economic strata.

Inefficient Water Users by Education

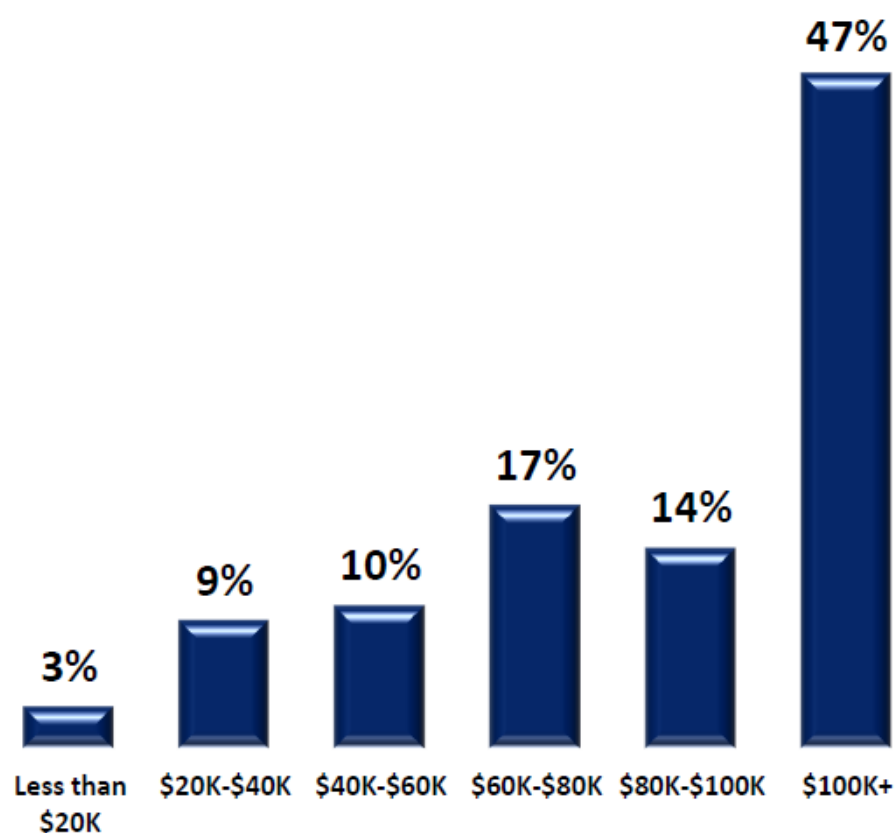


Denver County Census by Education

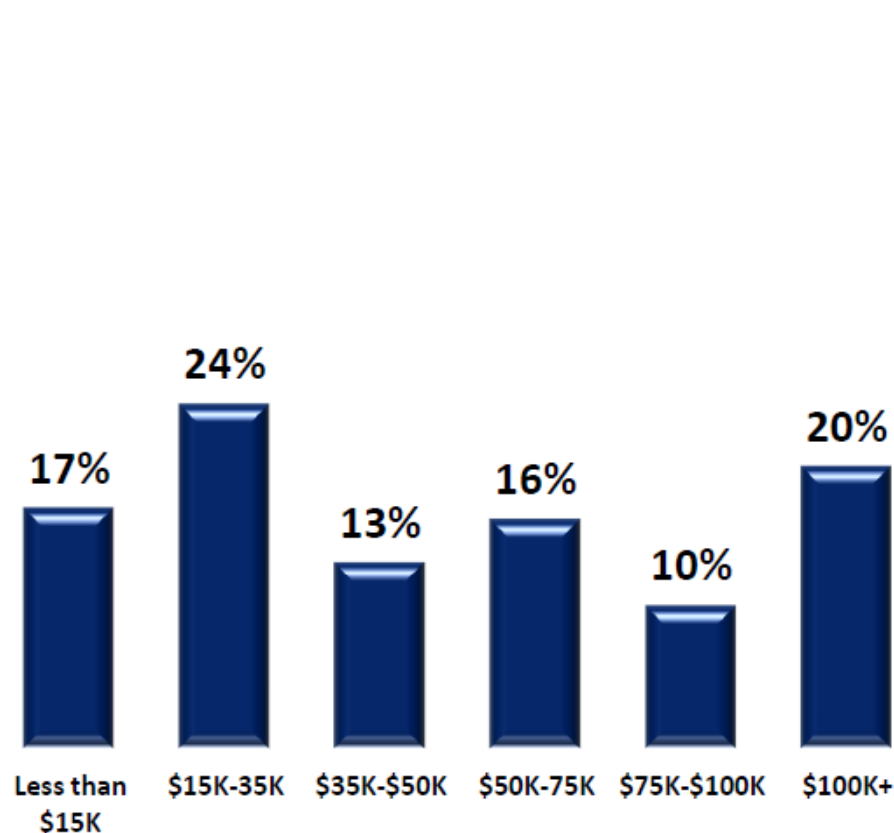


Respondents are definitely in higher socio-economic strata.

Inefficient Water Users by Income

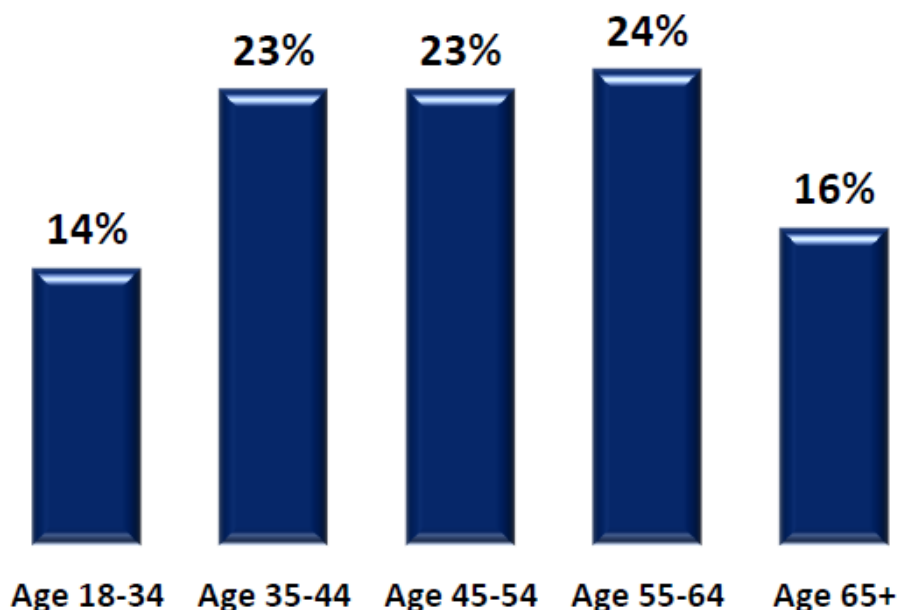


Denver County Census by Income

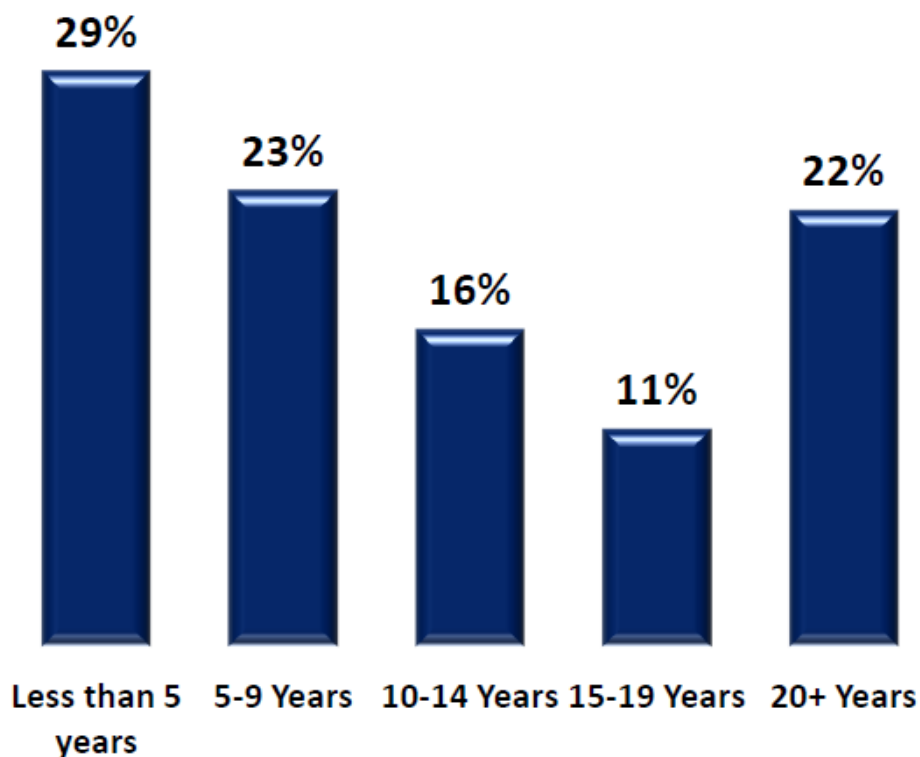


Inefficient water users represent a range of ages and a range of time in their current homes.

Inefficient Water Users by Age

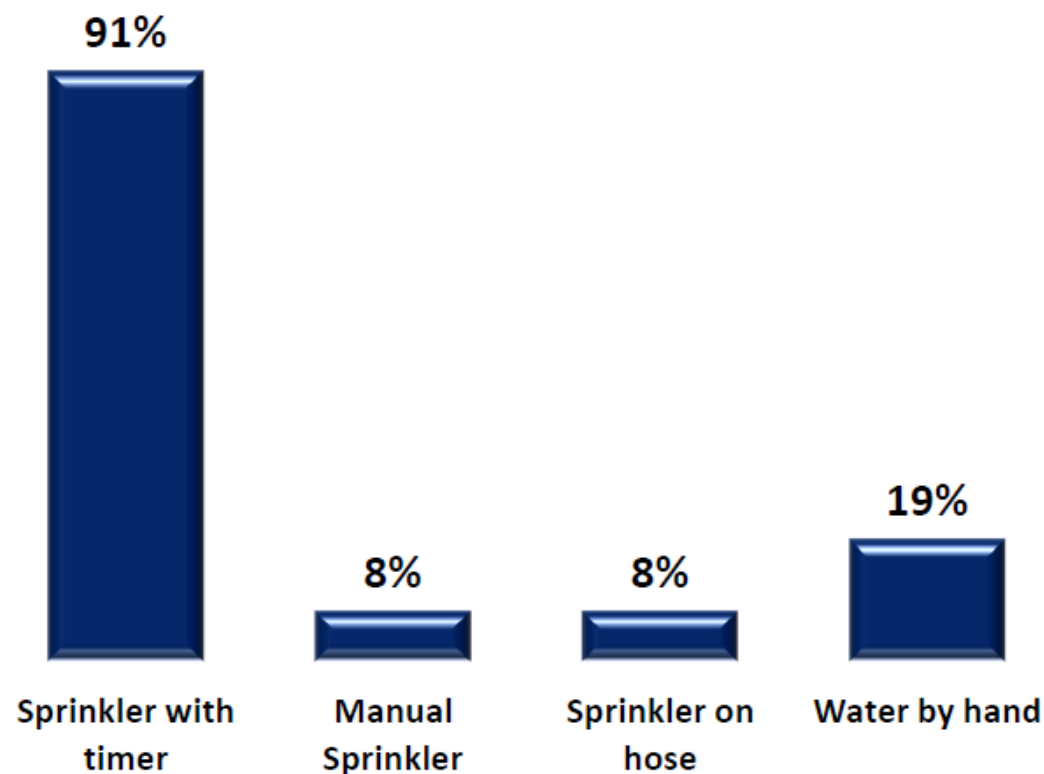


Inefficient Water Users by Current Residence

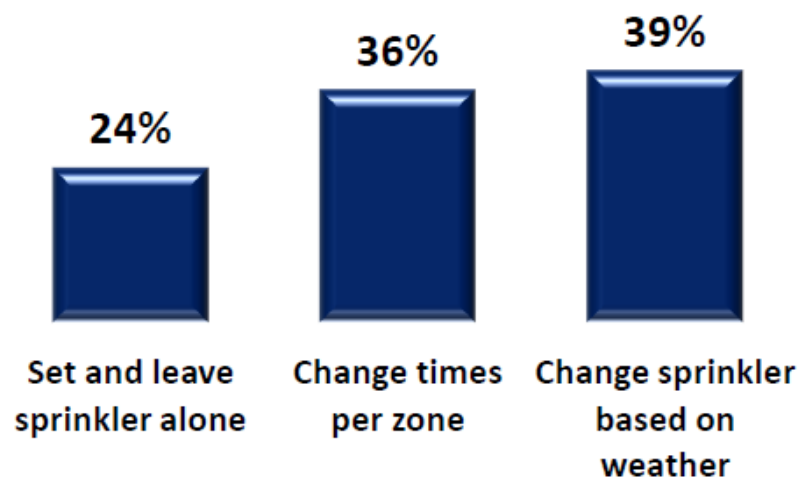


Virtually all of these inefficient water users have automatic sprinkler systems, although they indicate they adjust them.

Irrigation Method

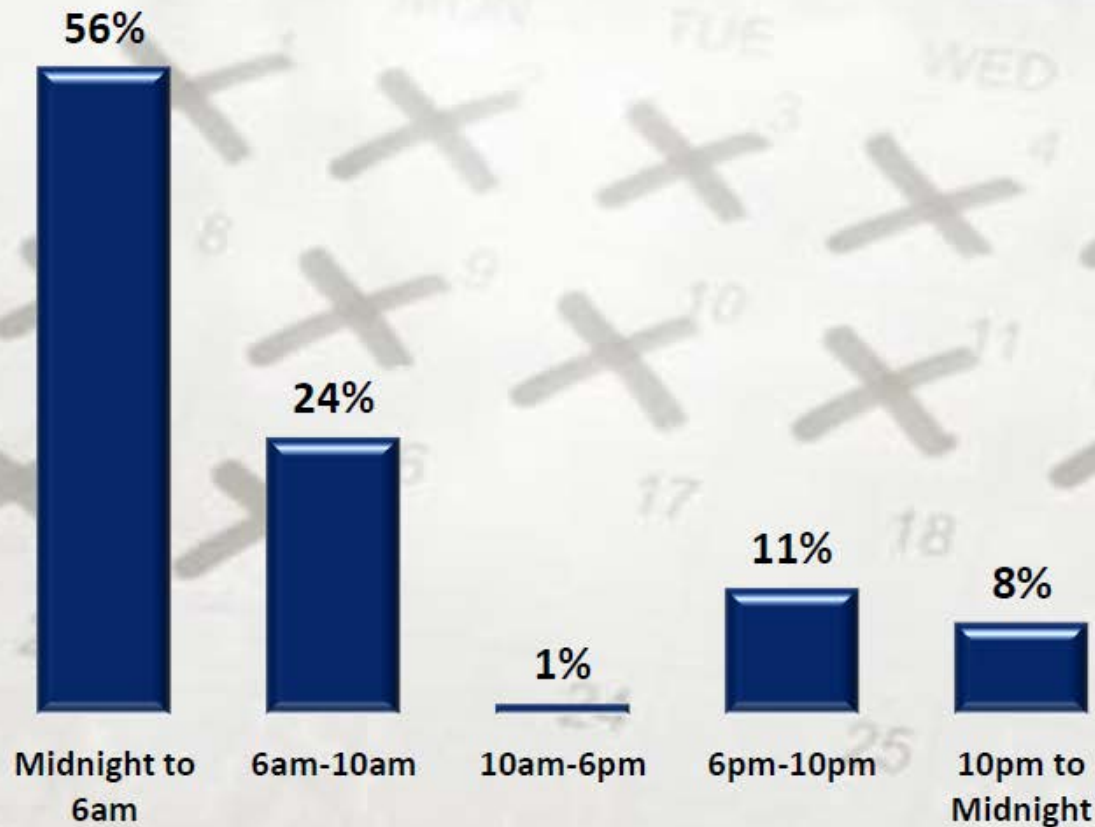


Sprinkler System Use



Very few report watering during the day, and on average they water three days a week.

Watering Times During the Day



Mean Watering Days Per Week

3

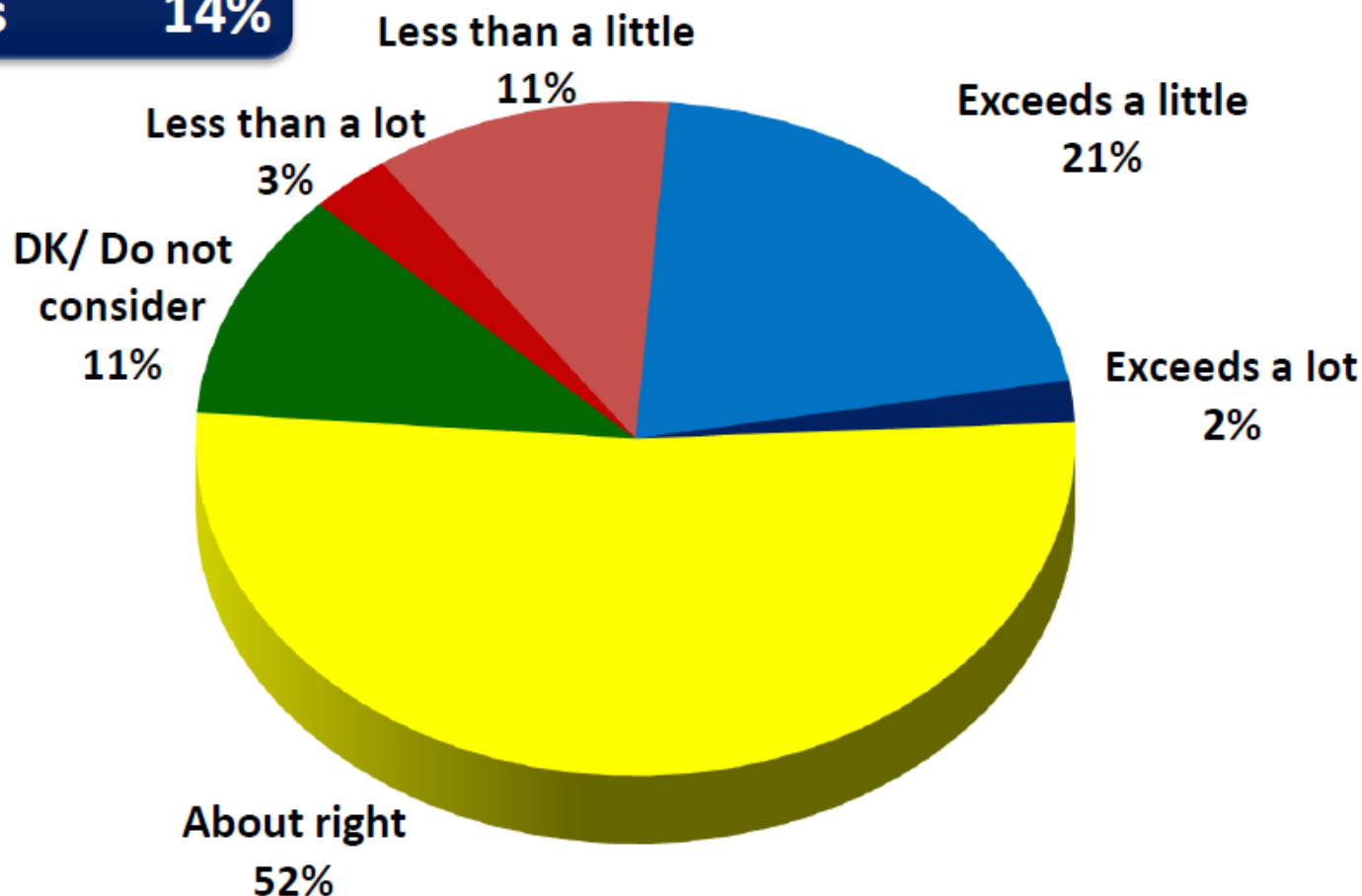


WHAT DO THEY THINK ABOUT WATER?

Only 23% say that they are exceeding what Denver Water recommends for outdoor watering.

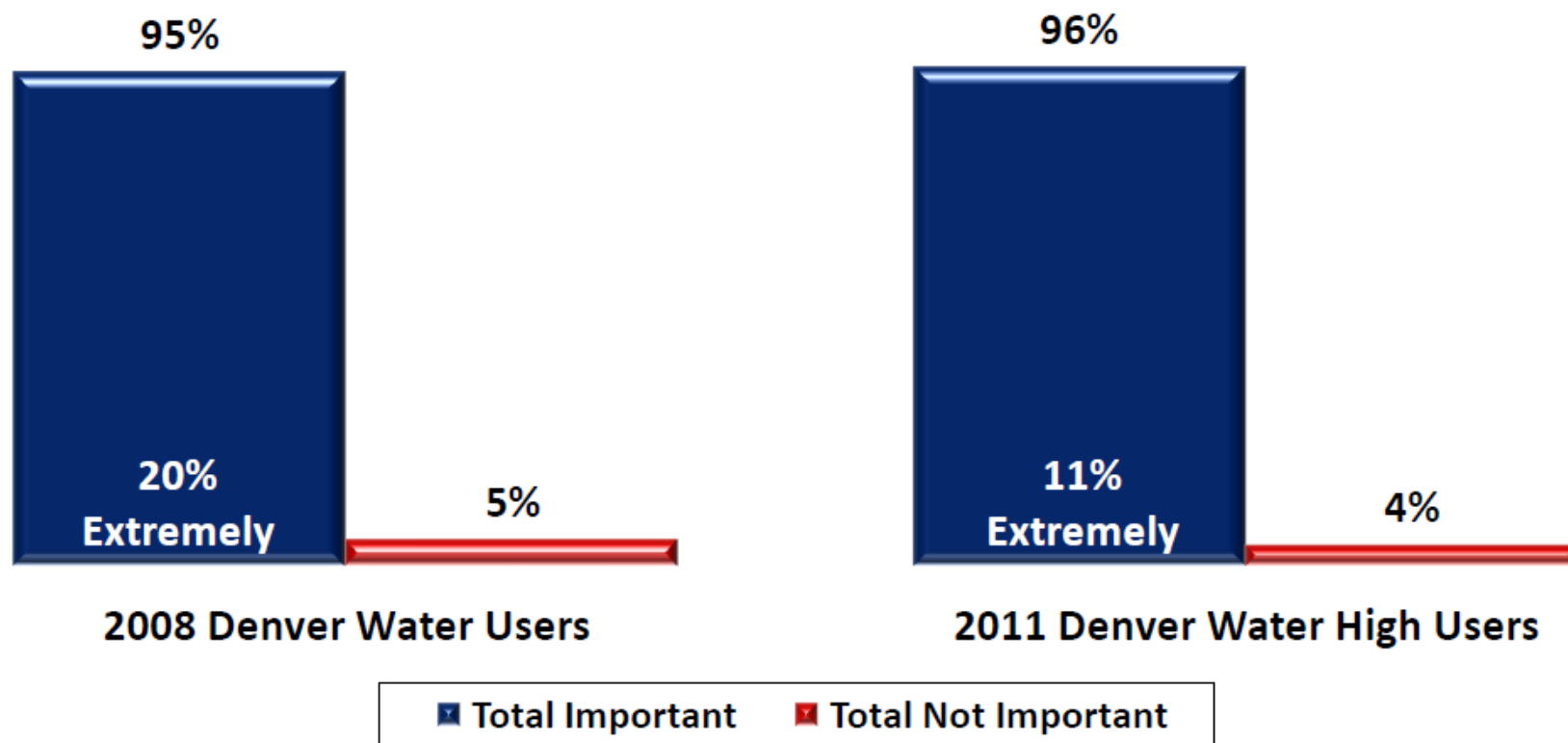
"And would you say that your outdoor watering..."

Total Exceeds 23%
Total Less 14%



Notably, these inefficient users are NOT more likely to say a green lawn is important than a broader spectrum of Denver Water customers surveyed in the past.

"How important is it for you to have a green lawn?"



**2008 Data from BRC Survey*

Among those who view a green lawn as important, there is a sense of personal pride associated with that look.

"It improves the exterior appearance of my home and shows personal pride in my neighborhood."

– Male/Age 35-44/Denver

"It adds curb appeal, makes the house look more attractive."

– Female/Age 35-44/Denver

"It increases the value of my home and neighborhood."

– Female/Age 45-54/Littleton

Curb Appeal **HOA Requirement**
Homes looks better **Family enjoys it**
Shows I care
Quality of life **Pride** **Home value**
Better than brown grass **Cooler temperature** **Improves neighborhood**
Avoid lawn replacement

These inefficient water users report very positive feelings regarding their outdoor landscaping and yard.

"Please check as many of the following words and phrases which describe how you feel about your outdoor landscaping and yard."



SATISFIED

65%



HAPPY

52%



PROUD

48%



RESPECTED

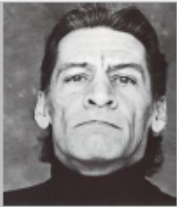
26%

Very few indicate negative feelings toward their yard.

"Please check as many of the following words and phrases which describe how you feel about your outdoor landscaping and yard."



OVERWHELMED **10%**



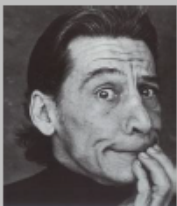
IRRITATED **7%**



INDIFFERENT **7%**



EMBARRASSED **5%**



ASHAMED **3%**



DENVER WATER

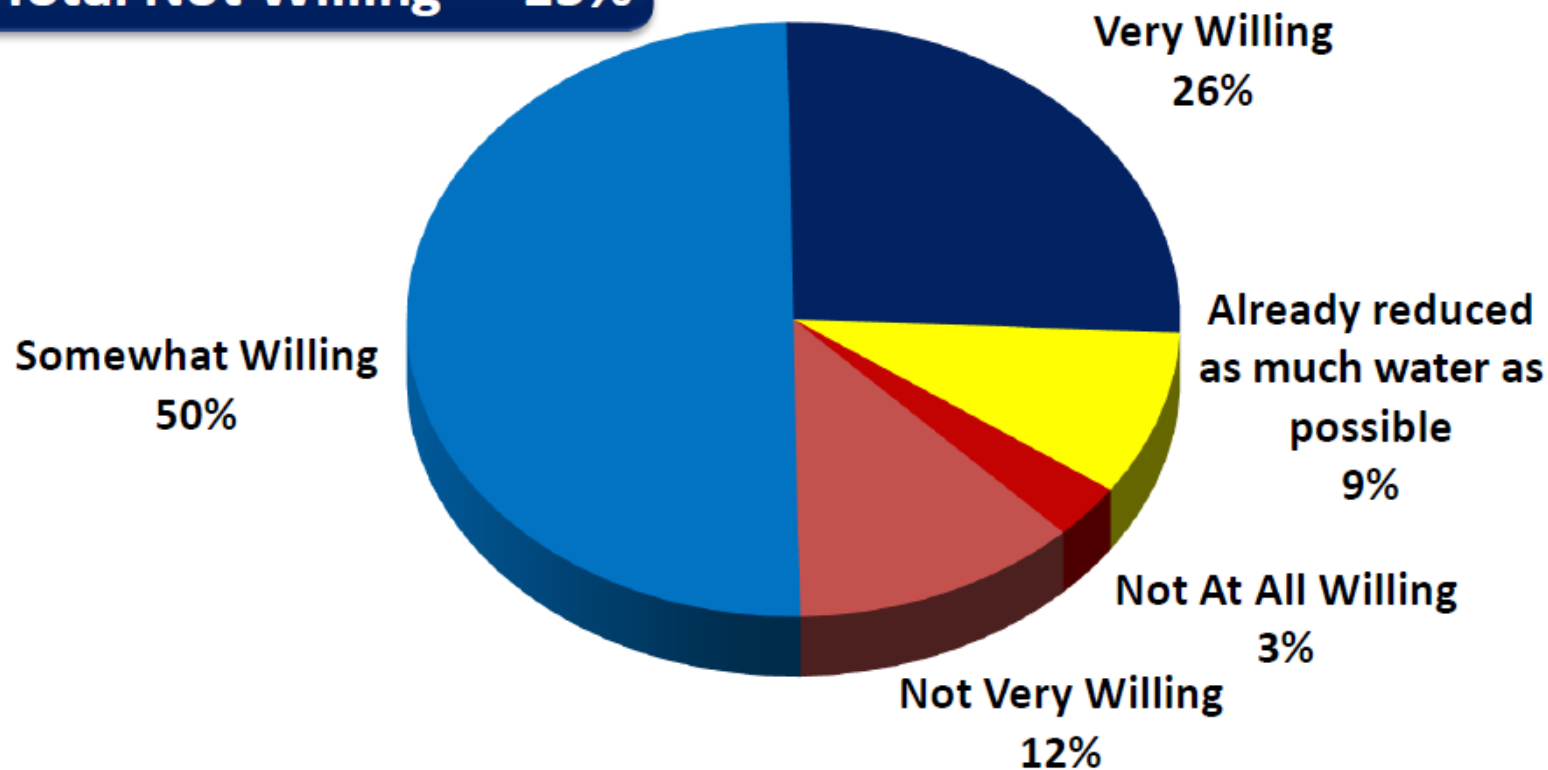


HOW WILLING ARE THEY TO REDUCE WATER USE?

Three-quarters are at least somewhat willing to make changes to reduce their outdoor water usage, with one-in-four “very willing.”

“How willing would you be to make changes to reduce your outdoor water use by 20 percent?”

Total Willing 76%
Total Not Willing 15%



In a separate question, one-third say they are doing all they can to save water.

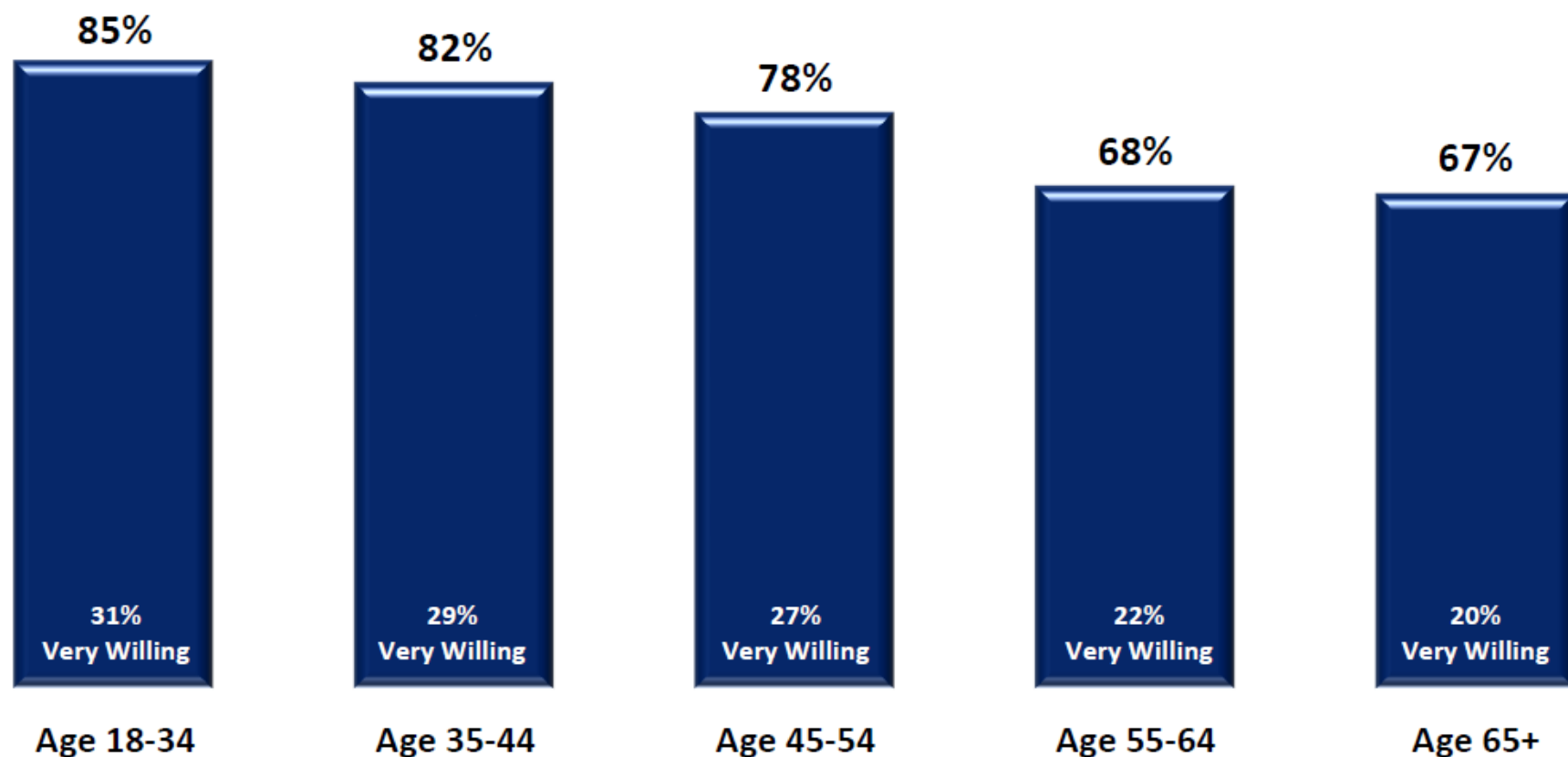
Ranked by %8-10

32%

**“I am doing all I can to
save water.”**

Willingness to reduce water use bears the strongest relationship to age.

Willingness By Age



Among those “very” willing to reduce their water use, saving money is often cited in connection with other reasons.

“Saving money while keeping our lawn green is a win-win situation.”

– Female/Age 45-54/Littleton

“I think the price of water is exceptionally high but there is not a lot I can do about it. I have already done what I can to reduce water use without spending too much money.”

– Male/Age 25-34/Denver

Environmental impact

Conserve water

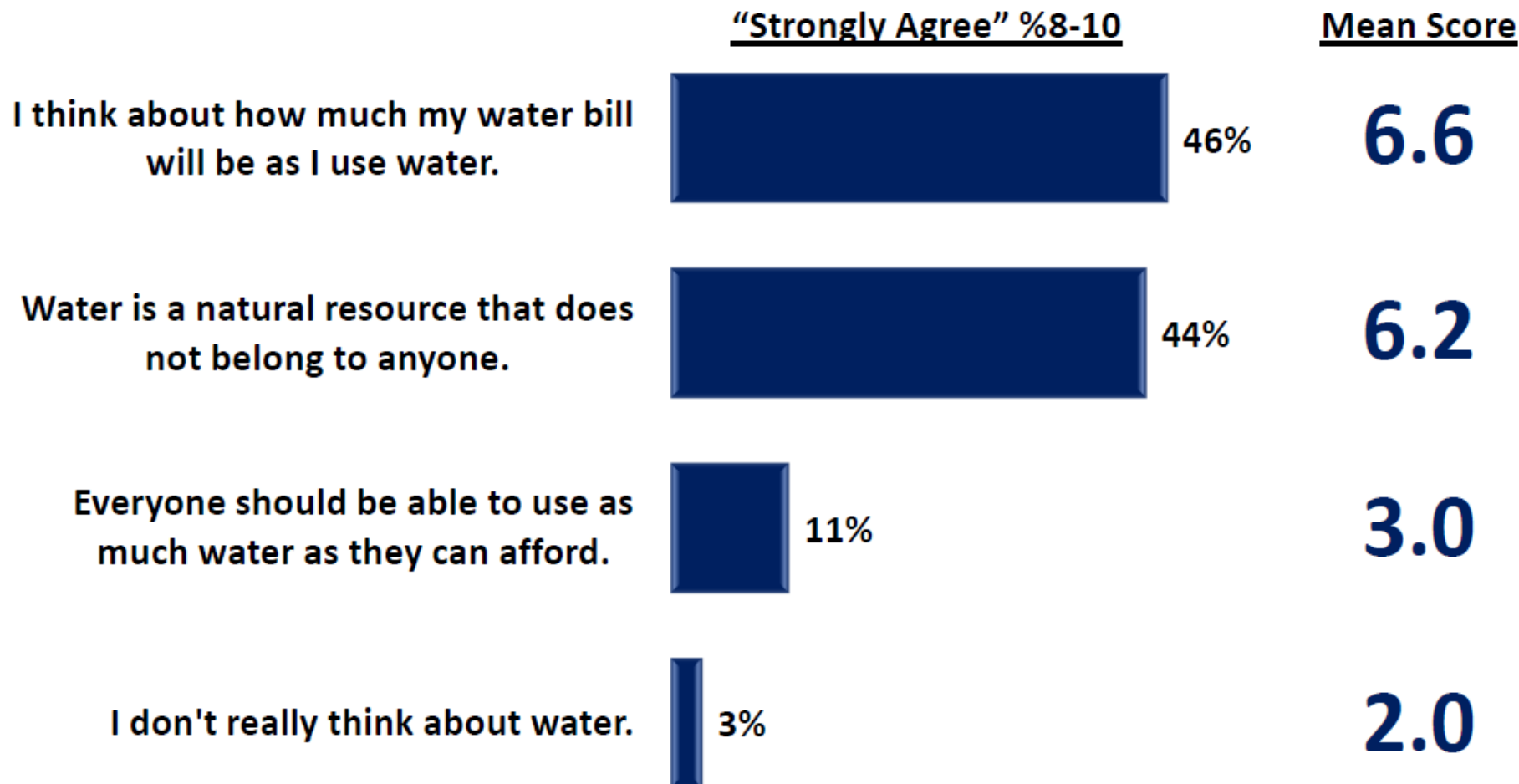
Save money

Right thing to do

Water is important

There does appear to be a proclaimed water “ethic” among these inefficient water users.

Thinking about water broadly - For each of the following statements, please check the one that comes closest to how much you agree with that statement - anywhere from 10, strongly agree, to 0, strongly disagree.



Even more broadly, these respondents overwhelmingly support the idea of “reducing waste.”

“Now let's switch topics and think about a range of subjects that sometimes tell us more about the people who are our customers. For each of the following statements, please check the one that comes closest to how much you agree with that statement - anywhere from 10, strongly agree, to 0, strongly disagree.”

**Reducing
waste makes
a lot of sense
to me.**

“Strongly Agree” %8-10

79%

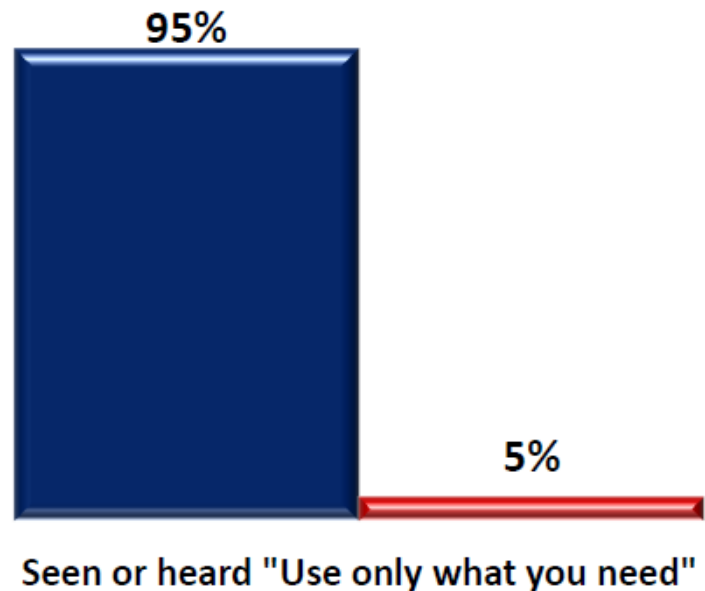
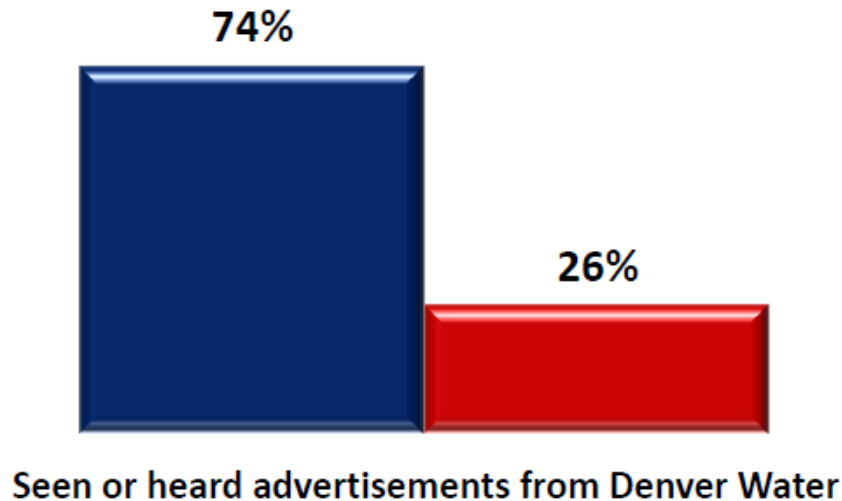
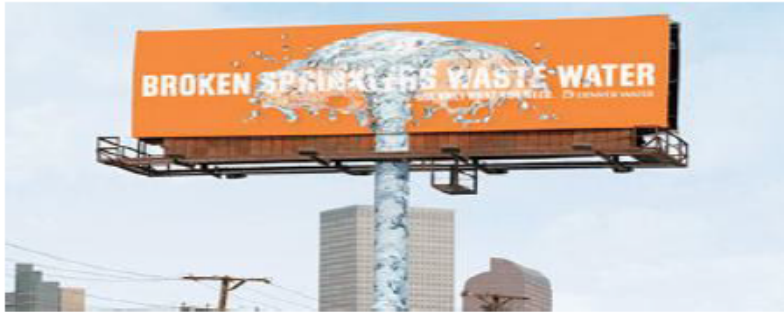


DENVER WATER



WHAT POTENTIAL ACTIONS IMPACT THIS AUDIENCE?

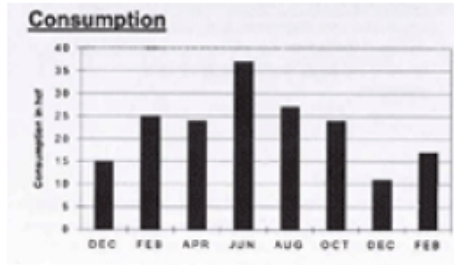
It is important to note that this highly educated and engaged audience indicates strong awareness of DW advertising and “use only what you need.”



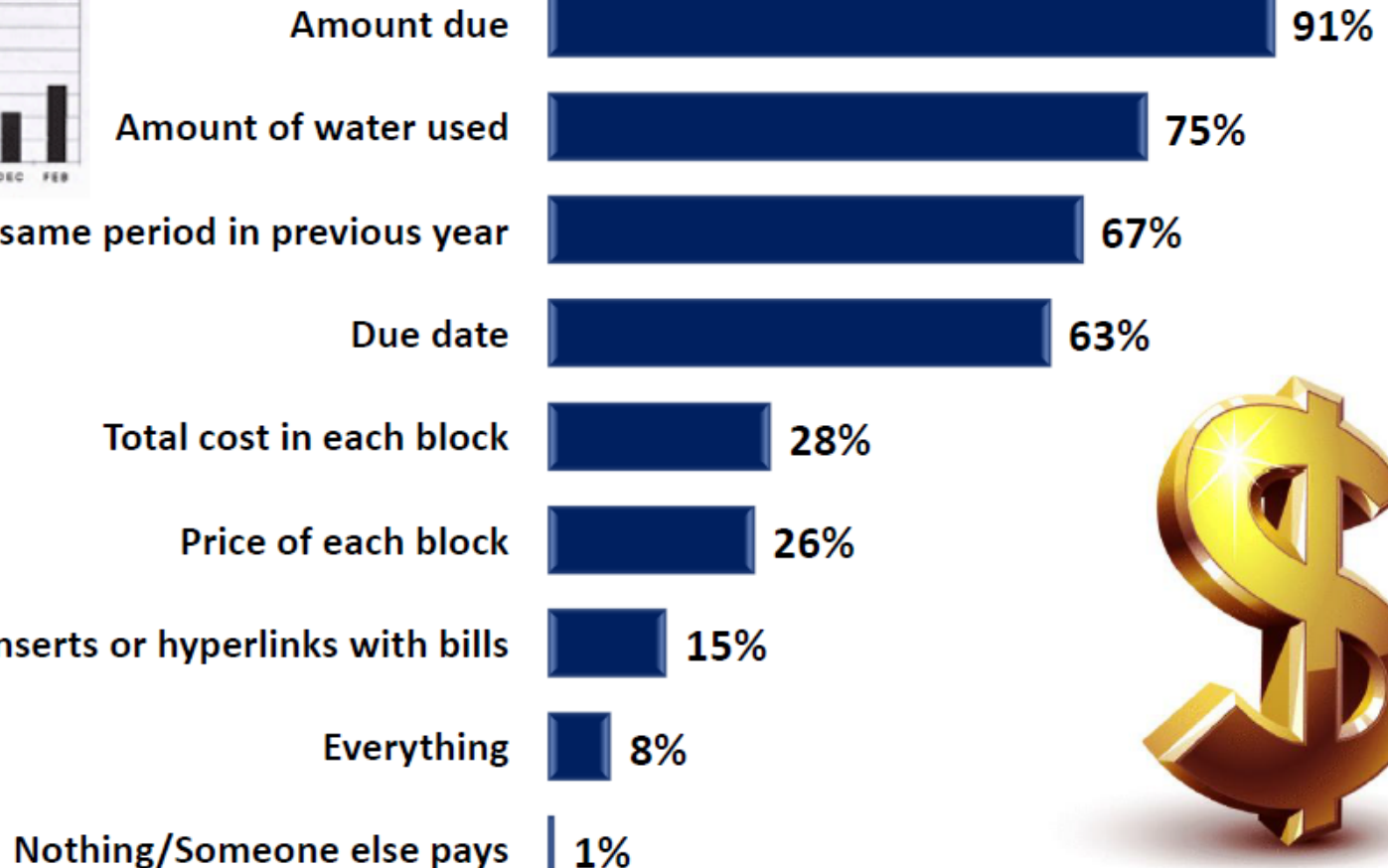
■ % Yes ■ % No

These respondents say they look at most of the information provided on the current bill already.

"What information on your water bill do you typically review? Please select all that apply."

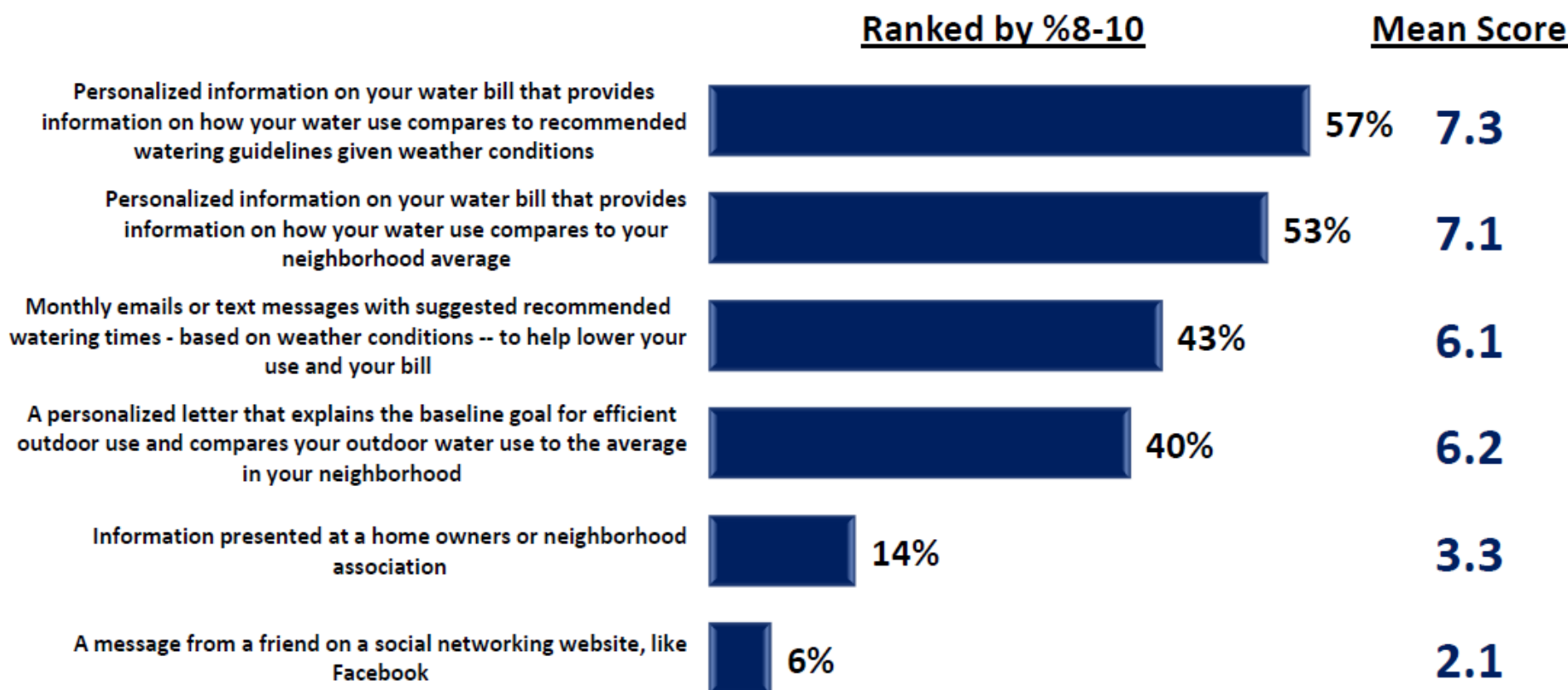


Consumption of same period in previous year



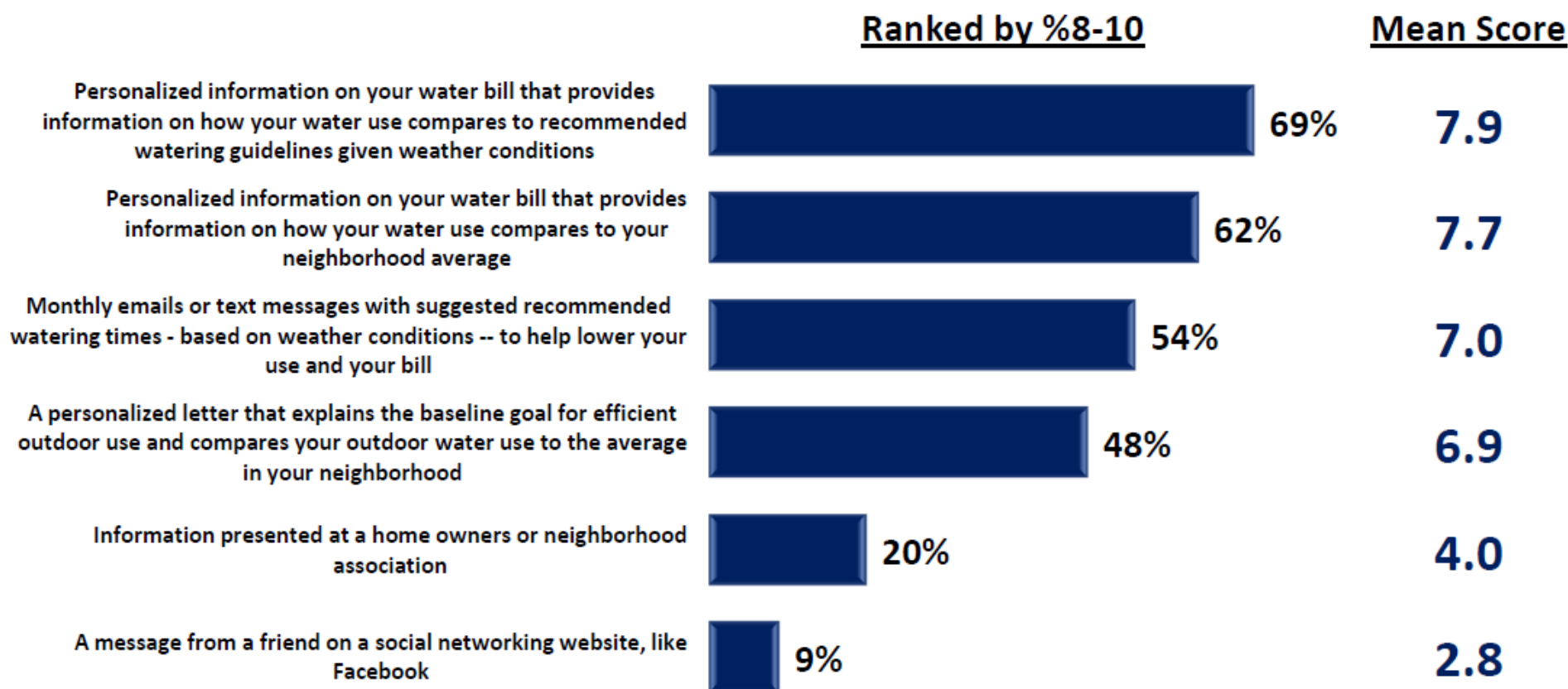
Personalized information on a water bill is something to which these respondents say they would be more likely to pay attention.

"Please consider some potential ways in which Denver Water may seek to communicate with its customers about their water consumption and other issues. Please rate how likely you would be to pay attention if information about water use was provided to you in this manner. A 10 means you would definitely pay attention and a 0 means you would definitely not pay attention."



Those most willing to reduce their use respond similarly to the potential outreach options.

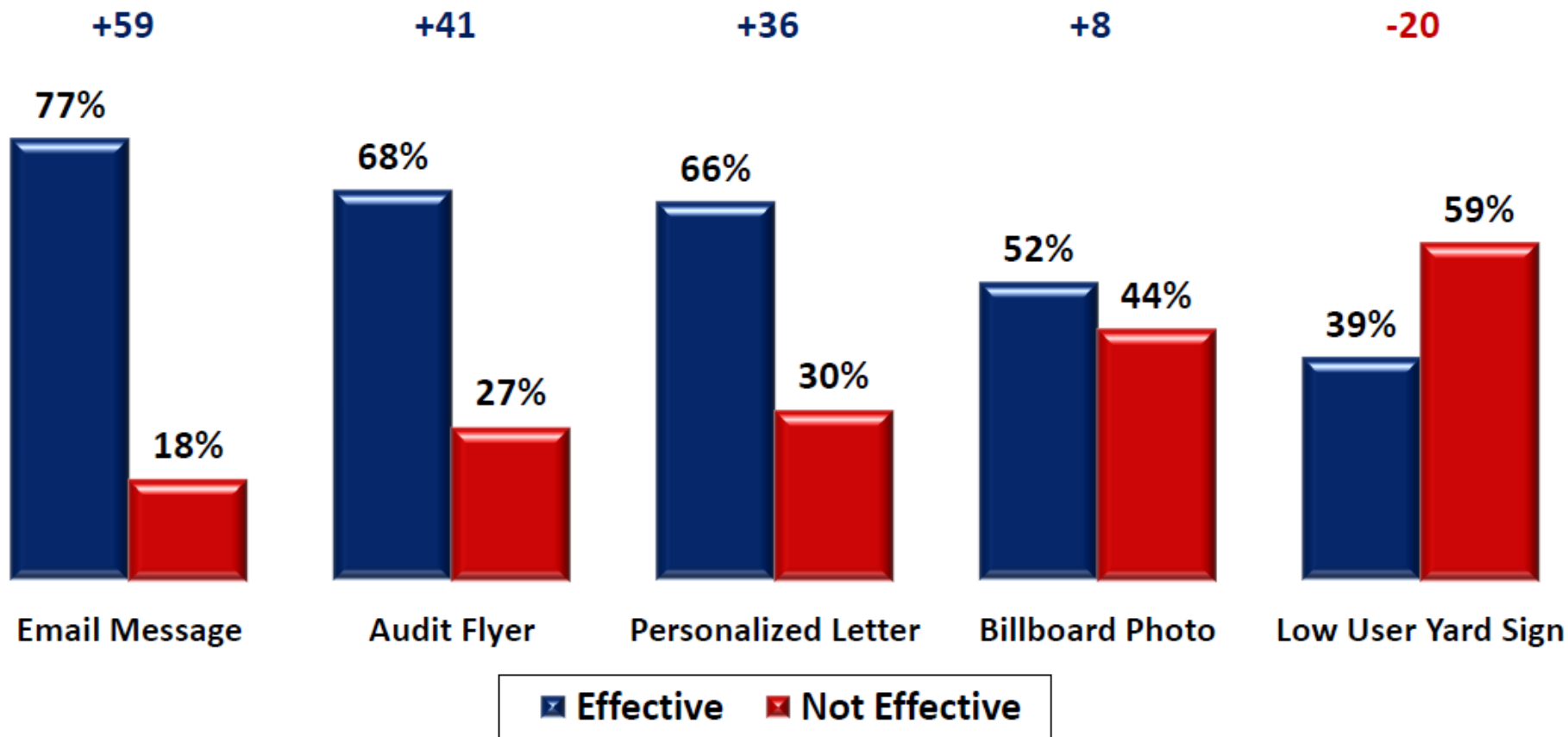
By Very Willing to Reduce Usage



With the exception of the “low user” yard sign, majorities rate each outreach tool as at least somewhat effective in motivating them to reduce their outdoor water use.

“How effective would this be in motivating you to reduce your outdoor water use?”

Communication Effectiveness



A significant number of respondents view the “low user” yard signs as derogatory or critical in nature.

“First of all the sign on the lawn is obnoxious, and I don't care if someone else is a low water user as it will not affect my decisions in any way. I am not a follower nor do I keep up with the Jones.”

– Female/Age 55-64/Lone Tree

“It is a waste of time and money. Reminds me of “My kid's an honors student.” Who cares?”

– Male/Age 45-54/Denver

“Denver Water should butt out on trying to govern how our lawns should look and how we should think. Price it accordingly and avoid trying to shame people by trying to peer pressure those people with the ugly signs in the yards.”

– Male/Age 35-44/Denver

“It's trying to make me feel guilty about wanting to keep my yard looking nice. Sorry I'm not a liberal, granola eating tree hugger.”

– Female/Age 25-34/Denver

CONCLUSION:

- Inefficient water users generally do not know they are using too much water.
- One in four of these users – generally younger users who recognize the area's long-term water shortage – are most inclined to reduce their use. They may be the “easiest pickings” as they are more likely to say they are already making changes.
- There are clearly some customers who will be resistant to overtures from Denver Water. About one-quarter to one-third of inefficient water users tend to reject potential outreach efforts.
- Outreach tools that are more positively received tend to be specific, fact-filled and more neutral in tone. The potential for saving money also appeals to those most open to making changes.

Email message



Mean Thermal Score

73%

% Effective

77%

Audit Flyer

Our records indicate your outdoor water use is much higher than needed for a lawn. Denver Water can help you save water and money! Schedule your **FREE** irrigation system audit performed by a certified Denver Water technician.

Only a limited number of free audits are available to your neighborhood. Don't miss this opportunity to receive the following free services valued at more than \$200:

- Free leak-by-zone audit of your sprinkler system
- Free wireless rain sensor installed by certified technician
- Custom watering schedule and moisture programming your controller - also free!

An outdoor audit report will be mailed to you after the home visit. Identifying problem areas to be corrected. You'll also receive a cost savings analysis detailing exactly how much money you could save if you become more efficient.

Denver Water's rebate also can help you save water and money - visit denverwater.org/ConservationRebate. Also, call today for your free indoor plumbing audit.

Schedule your **FREE** irrigation consultation today by calling the Conservation hot line at 303-426-6343.

Are you ready to cut your water bill? Call today to schedule your free irrigation audit and receive a free rain sensor.



USE ONLY WHAT YOU NEED.

DENVER WATER
CONSERVATION

Mean Thermal Score

64%

% Effective

68%

Personalized Letter



Mean Thermal Score

64%

% Effective

66%

Billboard Photo



Mean Thermal Score

61%

% Effective

52%

Yard Sign



Mean Thermal Score

48%

% Effective

39%