



TOWN OF GRAND LAKE

STAFF REPORT

TO
Mayor & Trustees

FROM
Steve Kudron, Town Manager

DATE
June 8, 2026

ACTION TYPE: Action Requested Information Only

RE: Justification for Enactment of Municipal Water Conservation Measures

BACKGROUND

The Board of Trustees is asked to formally enact water conservation measures for the Town of Grand Lake. As the community situated at the headwaters of the Colorado River — a system sustaining communities, ecosystems, and agriculture across seven states and into Mexico — Grand Lake carries both a unique opportunity and a profound responsibility to lead by example. Shadow Mountain Reservoir and Grand Lake are integral components of the Colorado-Big Thompson Project, one of the West’s most significant water diversion systems. Water here is a finite shared resource under increasing strain from population growth, prolonged drought, and the long-term effects of climate change on Colorado’s snowpack and river flows.

Colorado River Basin — Key Facts

- Serves over 40 million people in 7 states and Mexico
- \$1.4 trillion in annual economic activity
- River flows have declined ~20% since 2000
- Grand Lake feeds the Colorado-Big Thompson Project, serving 1M+ Front Range residents
- Lake Powell and Lake Mead near historic lows

Why Grand Lake Must Lead

- Headwaters community — our actions set the tone for the Colorado River Basin
- Rocky Mountain National Park relies on well-managed water systems
- Aligns with Town’s existing sustainability commitments
- Formal policy strengthens grant eligibility
- Proactive measures prevent mandatory drought restrictions

STEWARDSHIP, LEADERSHIP, AND LONG-TERM RESILIENCE

Grand Lake is surrounded by Rocky Mountain National Park, Arapaho National Recreation Area, and Roosevelt National Forest. The Town’s identity is inseparable from these landscapes, and the health of these ecosystems is directly tied to the availability and quality of water within them. A formal water conservation ordinance or resolution demonstrates that Grand Lake’s commitment to the land around us extends to the water within us.

The Board’s recent MOU with the Grand Resource & Recycle Coalition reflects a community that takes sustainability seriously as a matter of civic character. Municipalities across Colorado are increasingly adopting tiered water rates, irrigation restrictions, and efficiency standards. Grand Lake — as a headwaters community and gateway to protected public lands — is well-positioned to model responsible resource management for mountain communities. A formal conservation framework also positions the Town favorably for state and federal grant programs and reduces exposure to mandatory emergency cutbacks during drought conditions.

PROPOSED CONSERVATION MEASURE FRAMEWORK

Staff recommends the Board adopt a resolution establishing a Water Conservation Policy for the Town of Grand Lake, to include the elements below. Specific implementation details, rate structures, and enforcement mechanisms would be developed by staff and returned to the Board for subsequent action.

Conservation Element	Purpose / Description
Voluntary Conservation Stage	Public education and outreach encouraging efficient water use year-round
Outdoor Irrigation Restrictions	Designated watering days/hours during peak summer to reduce system demand
Leak Detection & Infrastructure Review	Annual review of Town water system for losses and efficiency opportunities
New Development Efficiency Standards	Water-efficient fixtures and landscaping required in new construction
Drought Response Stages	Mandatory reduction triggers aligned with state drought monitor designations
Public Reporting	Annual water use summary presented to the Board and posted publicly

FISCAL NOTE

Adoption of a Water Conservation Policy has no direct fiscal impact at this time. Staff will return to the Board with any proposed rate structure changes, program costs, or enforcement mechanisms as part of subsequent implementation actions. The Town may become eligible for state and federal grant funding upon formal adoption of a conservation policy, which could offset future implementation costs.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board of Trustees adopt the accompanying Resolution establishing a Water Conservation Policy for the Town of Grand Lake. This action affirms the Town's identity as a headwaters community, honors our collective commitment to stewardship of the parks and forests that define Grand Lake, and positions the Town as a proactive conservation leader in the Colorado River Basin. Staff is available to answer any questions prior to or at the June 8, 2026 Board meeting.

SUGGESTED MOTION

"I move to adopt the Resolution establishing a Water Conservation Policy for the Town of Grand Lake, and to direct Town staff to develop and return to the Board with specific implementation details, including rate structures, enforcement mechanisms, and any associated ordinance amendments necessary to effectuate the policy."