

# MiSustainable Holland

## About this series

The MiSustainable Holland column is a collection of community voices sharing updates about local sustainability initiatives.

## This Week's Sustainability Framework Theme:

**Environmental Awareness/Action:** Environmental education and integrating environmental practices into our planning will change negative outcomes of the past and improve our future.

## Holland Water Treatment Plant embraces water efficiency

By Oliver A. Harmsen  
Holland BPW

The Holland Board of Public Works Water Treatment Plant has served Holland with safe drinking water for decades. The Water Treatment Plant pulls in and treats water from Lake Michigan to serve its customers, but the plant can only manage so much demand for water.

Superintendent Nate Johnson emphasized that the plant is the perfect size to serve the community of Holland. However, overuse of water can be costly to both the plant and its customers.

“It’s easy to think that since we are so close to a big water source, conserving water doesn’t pertain to us, but the fact that we are so close to Lake Michigan should make customers even more aware,” Johnson explained. It is beneficial to the plant, community, and Lake Michigan to practice conserving water as much as possible.

“A little can go a long way when it comes to changing your everyday choices to conserve water,” he said when asked about how the community can help.

So, what changes can the community make to conserve water and support our plant?

Lawn sprinkling will continue to go up and that is the biggest strain on the water, he said. The issue with lawn sprinkling is how inefficient it can be. “We aren’t here to tell people to stop using sprinkling systems,” said Johnson, “but there are more efficient ways to go about watering your lawn.”

Some ways to improve the process of watering a lawn include setting up a smart system that can recognize if a breakage occurs, account for rainfall or detect leaks. Being mindful of what time of day you water your lawn can also improve efficiency. Sprinkling your lawn in the early morning or late afternoon will reduce evaporation.

Holland BPW’s Water Treatment Plant has also found ways to use water more wisely.

One water conservation initiative the plant has taken was switching parts of the lawn from grass to native plantings. With this change it greatly reduces how much water the plant uses to maintain the grounds.

Holland BPW engineers have also made the water treatment process as efficient as possible. Johnson explained that they monitor the processes continuously to stay on track of how efficient it is. These initiatives have helped the treatment plant serve its customers with integrity.

Using these tips in your own life can increase the amount of water you conserve, helping the community and the Water Treatment Plant.

“It simply comes down to using water wisely,” Johnson said. Water conservation may seem simple but taking small steps to use water wisely will impact our community in big ways.

■ *Oliver A. Harmsen is a communications intern at Holland Board of Public Works.*