

WHAT WE SAY ABOUT OURSELVES

As a people, there are certain times that come along when each person just has to step up... and say it. More importantly, each person must do something about it.

The way we waste water is outrageous.

While pedaling as fast as the wheels will turn on the sometimes toxic, mostly exotic landscape treadmill ... we are spending up the rest of the best. The drought has revealed what's behind the curtain. Setting aside agriculture's mother lode of water that is used to feed us; people have long embraced the competitive quest "to keep up with the Jones" ...especially the Jones' front yard.

Frivolously, the people pour Texas' clean drinking water onto the ground. The enameled 'Yard of the Month' sits firmly planted upon the thirsty courthouse lawns.

Every land steward knows that along with rights, comes responsibility. But in town and country, our private property, right of capture culture clings to a pride resting on street corners... residing in the thick green lushness of human mono-cultured sterility afforded by St Augustine Caribbean-carpet grass lawns. Out on the golf-course-green African Bermuda grass, familiar symbols of luxury and wealth, one cannot help but notice the future of becoming native to this place is being swept away in the leaf catcher's bags. Cheap water-soaked lawn clippings make their weekly haul to the municipal sanitary landfill. On the edge of town out of sight and mind, the bags full of spent waters from

Since the summer drought of 1980, our work has focused on water conservation by restoring landscapes to native habitats.

leading state houses, local banks, utility offices, churches, schools and most other official places of community business along with residential lawns get buried before the sun goes down. Together, the exotic lawn clippings go with the day's haul of finely shredded tax documents and soiled disposable diapers. All neatly taped, tied and bound in bundles. All heaped together and compacted by the stompers, which build new modern mountains with always-priced-for-less Chinese packages discarded by the carload trips back and forth to home and big box stores.

101 degrees outside and the wind is blowin'. Crisp, clean clothes are tumblin' in the all-electric dryer. Air conditioner set on max cool, just to make sure. Yes, energy use is directly tied to water use. Selling water to coal burning power plants is big business. The last clean river goes to the highest bidder.

Visual messages silently scream day after day. Old people wonder what the graffiti means on the cement wall down at the drainage ditch. Ask any kid; they get the message about what's being said. About what's been done.

As our graceful social hands of docile patience and the life-giving waters run dry... now is a time to rise up and become a citizen, again. It is entirely up to us to make the change in what we say about ourselves.

Bill Neiman
Drought
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It's completely up to us
if we want this creation to continue -
to be involved in it and enjoying it
and protecting it.

- Oren Lyons

St. Augustine grass on the courthouse lawn
160 inches of water per year

The Llano, last clean river in Texas