SDC 1100 Task Group Meeting Minutes July 22nd, 2025 3-4 PM EST

Call to Order at 3:05 PM EST

**Roll Call**

PRESENT: Philip Fairey, Jonah Schein, Dave Walls, Ed Osann, Holly Cannon, Michael Matthews, Paul Kinter, Paulette McGhie, Rebecca Santiago, Ryan Meres, Andrew Morris, Clara Bennett

**Unfinished Yards: Interpretation or Standard Change?**

Ryan shared a background document containing questions or criteria to be considered in a standard change around this topic, namely any requirements that specify plant types, irrigation specifications, inspection timing and requirements, and more. Ryan suggested discussion begin with cases with a completely unfinished yard as some builders practice that. Philip suggested treating the unfinished exterior like the reference home. If the Rater goes back after the yard is finished then that would supersede the reference home data.

To allow a completely unfinished yard a standard change is required.

Jonah shared that depending on the size of the yard, that missing Rating data could be half or more than half of the total Rated home data. Classifying the front yard as a percentage of the reference home could better define which cases can utilize this option in the proposed standard change. The group all generally agreed that separating front and back yard is problematic.

Ed inquired about the potential of a landscape project after moving in to perform less well than the reference home. Jonah agreed this is an important point, though the reference home generally provides a safe baseline. Ryan felt that as it relates to HERS Ratings, default values used don’t come near 50% of the rated home’s water use.

Paulette is familiar with the builder in Utah who is known to not be finishing yards prior to Ratings and confirmed there is still consistency in how they practice this because of Utah’s waterwise programs. Ryan concluded discussion on this item and will share the full background document after the meeting.

Waterwise programs in Utah:

Utah, facing increasing water scarcity, has implemented several waterwise programs to encourage water conservation, especially in landscaping.

Statewide programs

* Utah Water Savers: This initiative offers rebates for residents who adopt water-efficient practices, including:
  + Landscape incentive program: Earn up to $3 per square foot by removing grass and replacing it with water-efficient landscaping.
  + Smart controller program: Get up to $100 back when you purchase and install a WaterSense-labeled smart irrigation controller.
  + Toilet replacement program: Receive up to $150 for replacing old toilets (manufactured before 1994) with WaterSense-labeled models.
* WaterSense: A national program under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that certifies water-efficient products and provides guidelines for indoor and outdoor water conservation, making them eligible for Utah's rebate programs.
* Localscapes: A landscaping approach specifically designed for Utah's climate. It promotes using plants adapted to local conditions, efficient irrigation, and other water-saving practices.

Local initiatives in Saratoga Springs

* Water-wise landscaping professionals: Several local businesses offer water-wise landscaping design, installation, and maintenance services, including

Benefits of water-wise programs

* Conserves water resources: Essential in arid regions like Utah, especially during drought conditions.
* Reduces water bills: Lower water usage directly translates to lower utility costs.
* Supports healthy ecosystems: Incorporating native plants in water-wise landscapes can attract and benefit birds, butterflies, bees, and other wildlife.
* Increases resilience to climate change: Helps communities adapt to changing climate patterns and ensure long-term water availability.

Implementing water-wise practices

* Choose drought-resistant plants: Select native plants suited to the local climate.
* Improve soil health: Amend soil with organic matter to enhance water retention.
* Use mulch: Apply mulch around plants to reduce evaporation and regulate soil temperature.
* Irrigate efficiently: Install smart irrigation systems, use drip irrigation, and water deeply and infrequently during cooler parts of the day.
* Group plants by water needs: Create distinct zones based on the water requirements of different plants.

By utilizing these programs and implementing water-wise practices, residents can contribute to conserving Utah's precious water resources and create beautiful, sustainable landscapes.

[Waterwise Sprinkler Services LLC](https://www.google.com/viewer/place?mid=%2Fg%2F11fkn4xtwm)

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[Water Wise Designs LLC](https://www.google.com/viewer/place?mid=%2Fg%2F11fklfy3b0)

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[Waterwise Landscaping & Construction LLC](https://www.google.com/viewer/place?mid=%2Fg%2F11j8rj948q)

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[Saratoga Springs Public Works](https://www.google.com/viewer/place?mid=%2Fg%2F1tgc07jt)

* : Provides information and resources on water conservation, including links to the Utah Division of Water Resources Conservation Program, Central Utah Water Conservancy District, and Utah Water Savers, [according to their website](https://www.saratogasprings-ut.gov/369/Water-Conservation).

**Draft H20 Calc Spreadsheet**

Ryan shared information on how this is performing in the standard and invited any thoughts on how to revise the calculations based on this data. The case offered is a multi-family project in Texas, each unit is assumed to be a three bedroom two bath. The home received a 69 based on the current RICI protocol. Jonah and Ryan agreed that simplifying the inputs for irrigated area could improve the calculations, and a professional irrigation audit.

Jonah inquired about how this performs in other climate zones, Ryan stated this is an upcoming testing project he’ll perform and report back. Philip shared that with clothes washers and dishwashers where the water use is dependent on the number of occupants, the Rated home data varies in these cases depending on the climate zone of the home. The difference is slight.

Meeting adjourned 3:51 PM ET.