



The Elite Insider

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Outdoor Water Conservation Tips

Even though we use water every day, it's easy to take it for granted. Just imagine how you would function without clean water. It's everyone's responsibility to conserve and protect water resources. The decisions and actions you make today truly affect our water resources for the future. The following suggestions will help you get in the habit of saving water in the great outdoors:

- Get a rain gauge to measure rainfall. One inch of rain per week is generally sufficient for lawns and gardens. Supplement only when rainfall is inadequate.
- Use mulch around land-

scape plantings. Mulch will help eliminate weeds and hold moisture in the soil.

- Select hardy plants that don't need much water. Native plants that are well adapted to your climate and soils will survive well without supplemental watering.
- Water during the cool part of the day to avoid rapid evaporation.
- Raise the mowing heights on your lawn mower. This promotes healthier grass that can better survive dry periods.
- When watering is necessary, water slowly and thoroughly. If you notice puddles or runoff, turn



water off and wait for water to soak in. Also be sure your sprinkler puts water where you need it—not on driveways or sidewalks.

- Wash cars efficiently. First give the car a quick rinse, and then turn the water off. Wash one section of the car at a time and rinse that section quickly. Turn the water off each time.

Visit www.auduboninternational.org for more conservation tips.

2012 Spring Fling Success

We want to thank everyone that was able to attend the 2012 Spring Fling. The speakers were fantastic. We wanted to share several of the comments from board members attending.

"Last evening the Spring Fling held at Elite Management was very informative, and our Board was well-

represented. One of the features was an HOA workshop with an attorney who specializes in legal matters relating to HOAs...Thanks to Elite for providing this forum and the delicious array of food."

"The meeting was really good and only surpassed by

the food and the company."

"Thanks for an informative evening. The food was delicious! I felt bad that we both won prizes. However, thank you. After listening to the lawyer (who was outstanding), it makes you wonder if we need to be (more) insured!"

Major Project Management— by Bryan Phillips



As communities mature of time, they become more and more likely to take on a major project, such as a major renovation, replacement of an existing amenity, or adding a new amenity for the community to enjoy. These projects can be great improvements to your community but careful planning and consideration should be put in the project in order for it to be a success.

Begin planning for the project by doing some initial research. Research the community covenants and other records and perhaps complete a reserve study to ensure the community can take on the financial commitment required by the project. Develop a clear, defined scope and overall purpose for the project. Boards should consider, and discuss, the benefits and drawbacks of any project. Request input from residents on what they want to see from the project by posting surveys on the community website and in newsletters. Dedicate time for committee meetings and Board meetings to discuss the

project and get input from attendees.

Once a scope is defined, create a budget and start talking with the needed vendors and contractors. Engaging with a specialist involved early in the process will help determine if your goal is in line with your budget. When selecting contractors, conduct thorough research to ensure they are the right company for the job. Check their company websites for past projects and if you know another community that has recently taken on a similar project; find out who they worked with. A contractor should have experience with projects similar to the one you are looking to complete. You can also invite contractors to attend your meetings so they hear firsthand what the community expects from the project.

Send out the invitations to bid to qualified contractors with similar backgrounds. This will

ensure that you are receiving comparable quotes back from each contractor.

For example, if you are looking for a general contractor for a renovation, select contractors that specialize in renovations. Contractors that generally do new construction might not be able anticipate any surprises commonly found with renovations. Examine each bid carefully to determine if each contractor included costs for permitting, inspections and an allowance. Lastly, check references for contractors before signing any contracts. Ask questions about past projects that relate to your project. The best price doesn't always come from the best contractor. Also, consider what warranty is offered by your contractor. Most contractors offer a year warranty on labor and workmanship; however

Association Website Corner

If your community is like most, there are several lists and areas where information regarding homeowners contact information is filed. There are the usually out-look contacts that each board member, committee member and management staff member keeps. There is the typical excel list that is updated by hand when you get around to it.

Elite Management Profes-

sionals is consolidated all of this information into one easy to use source. The websites link directly to the management software. This means that when one owner moves out the directory on your website will not show the past owner any longer and the new owner information will be in its place.

We promote to all owners

to update the "Profile" section of the website. The information placed there also syncs to our management software. If all owners and board members use the websites, over time, communication efforts will be simplified, more cost efficient and extremely accurate.

Join in the effort to publicize your website with each homeowner communication.

Go to www.elite-mgmt.com for updates, newsletters, access to your community website and a calendar of future events.

(Cont.) Major Project Management— by Bryan Phillips

that may vary depending on the type of project.

After a contractor is selected, communicate with them to ensure all necessary permits have been acquired. You should obtain a certificate of insurance from the contractor listing the association as an additionally insured. You may also need to check with your insurance company to be sure additional coverage is not needed during the project.

Once project is started, it is important to closely monitor the progress. Following the progress will help keep the project on schedule and working towards the goals previously set by the Board and committees. Staying involved with the project can also make sure the contractor doesn't miss anything. It can be helpful to complete a weekly update and send out to committee members and residents so everyone is informed of the project status. Meet with your contractor on

a regular basis to discuss the project status, any issues that have come up and keep up with costs.

With any project, there may be some unexpected costs or changes that occur. Plan for the unexpected by including a contingency in your budget. Your contractor should notify you immediately of any such changes and how they impact the overall project. Surprises can be hidden behind walls, under roofs and even under dirt. Discuss any issues that come up with the contractor to find solutions how to deal with them. The item may be the cause of your project going over budget, but don't be afraid to ask your contractor to reduce a price. A general contractor may be able to go back to the sub-contractors and find possible reductions in the original charges that can help keep the project close to the original budget.

Once a project is nearing completion, perform a thor-

ough inspection with the contractor and create a punch list of any corrections that need to be made. Most contractors will perform their own punch list inspection before completing a punch list with you with hopes your list will be relatively small. The final payment or retainage should not be released until all items on the list have been addressed and corrected to your satisfaction. Be sure your contractor provides you copies of any change orders, final drawings or plans and any warranty information with the products they used.

While major projects are a major commitment, they can also make a major improvement to your community by keeping it vibrant and relevant to current and new home owners. If you have any questions about starting a major project, your community manager can help you get started in the best way.

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2012 Calendar of Events

Monday, May 28, **Memorial Day—**

All Elite Offices are closed in observance of Memorial Day!



Sunday June 17— **Father's Day**

Tuesday, June 26 **Board Education Seminar**

Come join us to review the important role of serving on the Board, how to review the financial statements, govern-

ing documents and review your community website. Please contact Dawn Hatcher to register.

Wednesday, July 4 **Independence Day**

All Elite Offices are closed in observance of Independence Day.

