

California water wasters beware: #DroughtShaming on the rise

June 11 2015, by Gillian Flaccus And John Rogers



In this Friday, June 5, 2015, photo, Tony Corcoran records sprinklers watering the lawn in front of a house in Beverly Hills, Calif. Corcoran is one of several people who spend their spare time these days canvassing the tony communities of Beverly Hills, West Hollywood and elsewhere, looking for people wasting water during the worst California drought in recent memory. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

Pssst. Ready to water that beautiful lush lawn of yours? The one that's

the envy of the entire neighborhood.

If you live in Southern California you'd better wait until after midnight. Preferably on a cloudy, new-moon night during a power outage when it's so dark even night-vision goggles won't give away your position. Otherwise you could wind up the star of the latest drought-shaming video posted on YouTube or Twitter.

"Yeah, I put your address out there. The world is watching a lot more," says Tony Corcoran, one of several people who spend their spare time these days canvassing the tony communities of Beverly Hills, West Hollywood and elsewhere, looking for people wasting [water](#) during the worst California drought in recent memory. Corcoran alone estimates he's put more than 100 videos of water-wasters, complete with their addresses, up on YouTube.

Others tweet out addresses and photos of water scofflaws on Twitter, using hashtags such as #DroughtShaming. Still others are snapping smartphone photos of them and sending them directly to authorities.

Not everyone is happy about it.

One woman, quickly tiring of Corcoran's lecture on conservation while she watered her plants, turned her hose on him.

In Beverly Hills, where he was showing a reporter and photographer water running down the street in front of a mansion, the angry resident called police. Two patrol cars quickly responded but the officers took no action.



In this Friday, June 5, 2015, photo, Tony Corcoran drives through the neighborhoods of Beverly Hills, Calif. Corcoran is one of several people who spend their spare time these days canvassing the tony communities of Beverly Hills, West Hollywood and elsewhere, looking for people wasting water during the worst California drought in recent memory. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

In Hollywood, Sam Bakman, who manages a condominium complex, said his building was recently shamed wrongly by somebody on Twitter over a broken sprinkler head that was quickly repaired. He showed a reporter the city-issued restrictions on watering and pointed out his sprinkler timers fall well within the guidelines.

"If they thought we were doing something wrong, why not come knock on my door?" he asked.

Corcoran, a restaurant group administrator who kept his New York attitude when he came to laid-back Los Angeles awhile ago, is

unrepentant.

"The whole point is to get people to change, not to shame," he said.

With California in the fourth year of a drought with no end in sight, the governor has ordered everyone to use 25 percent less water, and drought shamers say the easiest way to accomplish that is to quit watering your yard. Or at least be careful about it and not let water spill into the street.

"I was a passenger in a car driving by, and first I noticed water down the street. And when we drove up I saw the broken sprinkler head," said Patricia Perez of Eagle Rock who quickly tweeted out a picture of the mess. She also emailed it to the local water agency.



In this Friday, June 5, 2015, photo, Tony Corcoran surveys water coming out of a drain in Beverly Hills, Calif. Corcoran is one of several people who spend their spare time these days canvassing the tony communities of Beverly Hills, West

Hollywood and elsewhere, looking for people wasting water during the worst California drought in recent memory. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

"When you're trying to do your best personally, and you're trying to conserve water, it's very irritating," she said of one of the reasons behind drought shaming.

Dan Estes, a Los Angeles real estate broker, has gone so far as to build his own free app, DroughtShame, that records the time and place where people see waste.

Unlike some other drought shamers, he doesn't believe in getting in peoples' faces or outing them to the world. Instead, people who use his app send the information and a photograph to him, and he forwards it to the appropriate water agency.



In this Friday, June 5, 2015 photo, Dan Estes, a Los Angeles real estate broker, pauses for photos with his smartphone showing the app that he built to record the time and place where he sees waste in Los Angeles. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

"I drought shamed the preschool next to my apartment," he said. "Timer was off on their sprinklers. Those things were on for five hours and the sidewalk was a river. I was non-confrontational but at the same time public."

Twenty minutes after he reported it, he said, the sprinklers were shut off.



In this Friday, June 5, 2015, photo, Dan Estes, a Los Angeles real estate broker, pauses for photos with a water hose in Los Angeles. Estes has gone so far as to build his own water-shaming app that records the time and place where he sees waste. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)



In this Thursday, June 4, 2015, photo, Sam Bakman, a condominium complex manager, shows the city-issued restrictions on watering in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles. Bakman said his building was recently shamed wrongly by somebody on twitter over a broken sprinkler head that was quickly repaired. (AP Photo/Gillian Flaccus)



In this Thursday, June 4, 2015, photo, Patricia Perez shows the picture of a broken sprinkler head she photographed in her office in Los Angeles. She emailed the photo to the local water agency. With California in the fourth year of a drought with no end in sight, the governor has ordered everyone to use 25 percent less water. (AP Photo/Gillian Flaccus)



In this Friday, June 5, 2015, photo, Tony Corcoran looks at the map on his smartphone while driving through the neighborhoods of Beverly Hills, Calif. Corcoran is one of several people who spend their spare time these days canvassing the tony communities of Beverly Hills, West Hollywood and elsewhere, looking for people wasting water during the worst California drought in recent memory. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

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Citation: California water wasters beware: #DroughtShaming on the rise (2015, June 11) retrieved 13 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-06-california-wasters-beware-droughtshaming.html>

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