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FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

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Good Morning FM Team,

A frequently asked question is why do we water if it's going to rain? Have you ever wondered this yourself? This is an opportunity for me to share the expertise of our Irrigation crew and more specifics about what they are responsible for at CSU. Jason Watson, FM employee of 4 years, recently stepped in to lead the Irrigation crew, a part of Grounds within Outdoor Services under FM Operations. About this question he says, "We adjust the schedule based on actual moisture and not on forecast. We all know how the weather forecast can be a bit off sometimes, so we wait until the storm ends and adjust the schedule based on the current water needs." He further explained that irrigation is mainly based on a water window to try and keep people and events dry, but with the expansion of campus—both in larger population and in the complexity of irrigation from the revitalization of building sites, this is getting increasingly difficult to do. More irrigation zones mean more time needed to water a given area. The Irrigation crew has the water schedule set in two series to cover parts of main, south, and foothills campuses. When they run a normal schedule, each series waters three nights per week. They adjust according to the weather, including consideration of temperature, rain, wind, sun, etc.

The crew has a very large and complex irrigation system that they manage, which has been in place for many decades. As Jason alluded to, the system continues to grow every year. We pump water 4 miles from College Lake on foothills campus to main campus. FM runs three different pump stations to irrigate over 250 acres, as well as multiple domestic water taps throughout our outlying properties. There are over 2,500 remote control valves, more than 150 controllers, and 40,000 sprinkler heads.

When fully staffed the Irrigation crew is made up of four classified employees and one to three seasonal hourlies, but currently they are working as a team of two full-time state classified employees and two seasonal hourlies. Jon Vasquez is in his first year with FM and is getting to know his way around this large campus through the many repairs he has made. Freddie Haberecht is a dedicated student hourly who has been with FM for four seasons now. Calvin Bly is a state classified hourly who brings years of immense knowledge and skill. In fact, Calvin served 22 years with FM Grounds! Then a few years after retirement, he joined the Irrigation crew; this will be his eleventh summer. It is understated to say that his experience is respected by the crew and FM greatly benefits from his expertise!

If you have questions about aspects of FM like the question above about why we water when rain is forecasted, most likely others are wondering about these things too. Please feel free to email your questions to fac_news@mail.colostate.edu.

Thanks,



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