

Relocalizing Water

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As one item within the vast portfolio of water management techniques, a new approach termed "relocalization" has emerged. Relocalization means re-establishing activities at the local level (re-local-ize), reversing the trend of centralization and larger organizations. For instance, diseconomies of scale, rather than economies of scale, are employed. In the case of water, relocalizing means recognizing that water is limited and must be managed by starting with individual conservation.

Relocalization originated in concerns about "peak oil", the time when the extraction rate of oil—now expanded to all fossil fuels—reaches its maximum, leading to an increasingly restricted supply of fossil fuels used for energy and electricity. Relocalization aims to make services such as food, energy, manufacturing, and water more locally-based so that they will be minimally affected by fossil fuel restrictions and any other sudden or long-term crises.

In August 2005, Boulder Valley Relocalization (BVR) was founded as a local residents' group

to plan for the effects of peak oil and other crises on the Boulder area (<http://www.boulderrelocalization.org>). Eight BVR subgroups were created, each tackling one aspect of relocalization. Aspects of relocalizing water include:

- Use gardens for growing food and for local plants which do not require excessive water. Most lawns use non-native grass, requiring frequent watering to keep it alive.
- Relocalizing disaster risk reduction (<http://www.ilankelman.org/relocalisation.html>) to tackle flood and drought disasters.
- Install low-flush toilets and water-saving shower heads.

Reducing water use reduces the energy needed for treating and transporting water and wastewater. These techniques are already well-known and are promoted, but a fossil fuel restricted society adds impetus to saving energy, reducing resource use, and making our lives and livelihoods more locally-based. Relocalizing water ensures that we all take ownership of and responsibility for our water use.



Keeping non-native grass green can use excessive water. Also visit <http://www.bouldersaveswater.net>