

WATER CONSERVATION TOOLBOX: RESIDENT FACT SHEET



Where Does the Twin Cities Obtain Its Water?

- 30% is withdrawn from surface water, primarily the Mississippi River
- 70% is withdrawn from groundwater

How Are We Using Our Water?

- The average Twin Cities community uses 125 gallons of water per person each day (2010 data)
 - 19 communities use less than 100 gallons per person per day: Belle Plaine, Circle Pines, Cologne, Dayton, Elko New Market, Hamburg, Hampton, Inver Grove Heights, Jordan, Lake St. Croix Beach, Lakeland, Lakeland Shores, Mayer, Mound, New Trier, Newport, North St Paul, Norwood Young America, and Watertown
 - 16 communities use more than 150 gallons per person per day: Andover, Anoka, Deephaven, Edina, Fridley, Medina, Minnetonka, Minnetonka Beach, Oak Park Heights, Ramsey, Rogers, Shakopee, South St. Paul, St. Francis, Wayzata, and Woodland
- The average Twin Cities community uses nearly 3 times more water in an average summer month than on an average winter month. The overwhelming majority of this water is used on the landscape – lawns and gardens. In the 1990s there was considerably less water used for landscapes, at that time approximately 2 times the winter water consumption rate.
 - According to the US EPA, an average of 50% of outdoor water goes to waste through evaporation and overwatering.

Why are We Concerned About the Sustainability of Our Groundwater?

- Since 1995 the groundwater elevation of the Prairie du Chien aquifer as measured in Withrow has decreased at an average rate of 3.5 inches per year. (DNR Well Data)
- Less than 10% of the annual rainfall in the Twin Cities works its way through the soils to replenish the groundwater. The remaining 90% is used by plants, is lost through evaporation, or runs off and discharges through storm sewers into lakes and streams.
- Increased use of groundwater is contributing to a significant decline in the depth of some Twin Cities lakes, including White Bear Lake.



Updating your irrigation controller could save you hundreds of dollars in water costs.

How can we Change our Water Consumption?

INDOORS ¹

- ☑ Turn off the tap while shaving and brushing teeth
 - SAVE 1 gallon
- ☑ Take a short shower
 - SAVE 7 ½ gallons by reducing from a 10 minute to a 5 minute shower
- ☑ Fill the dishwasher before running, scrape dishes instead of rinsing
 - SAVE up to 16 gallons per load by replacing old dishwasher with WaterSense approved dishwasher
- ☑ Compost kitchen scraps instead of using garbage disposal
 - SAVE ½ to 1 gallon
- ☑ Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running tap for cool water
 - SAVE 1 to 2 gallons
- ☑ Wash only full loads of clothing
 - SAVE up to 20 gallons per load by replacing old top loading machine with WaterSense approved front loading machine
- ☑ Look for and repair leaks

OUTDOORS ¹

- ☑ Sweep sidewalks instead of hosing
 - SAVE 2 gallons per minute
- ☑ Wash car using bucket or use commercial car wash that recycles water
 - SAVE 8 gallons per 5 minutes
- ☑ Cover pools and spas to reduce evaporation
 - SAVE 8 ½ gallons per square foot per season (April through October)
- ☑ Store runoff in rain barrels and use to water gardens between rain storms
 - SAVE 50 gallons per rain barrel
- ☑ Water grass in shady areas less often than grass in sunny areas
- ☑ Keep water off pavement while sprinkling
- ☑ Inspect and repair clogged, broken or missing sprinkler heads
- ☑ Water in the morning to prevent water loss via evaporation
- ☑ Do not water if there has been one inch or more of rain during the previous week
- ☑ Limit lawn watering during dry weeks to one inch per week – check by setting an empty tuna can under the sprinkler
- ☑ Or – let the lawn become dormant
- ☑ Water plants from watering can instead of from hose
- ☑ Mulch gardens to maintain moisture in the soils

- **OUTDOORS:** If the entire Twin Cities worked to reduce summertime water consumption to early 1990s rates, then we will be able to conserve a total of 16.8 billion gallons per year (Metropolitan Council).
- **INDOORS:** A household can conserve up to 30% of water usage by updating with WaterSense approved fixtures and appliances (USEPA).



Use the Toolbox to find more water saving facts and tips.

¹Facts adapted from USGS Water School and USEPA WaterSense