waterrings

What's Your Water Footprint?

You might have heard about your "carbon footprint" in the news. But have you heard about your "water footprint?" A person's water footprint is defined as the total volume of fresh water that is used to produce all the goods and services they consume.

Water is a precious commodity. We cannot live without water. Not only do we drink and use water in and around our homes, but water is used in the growing and manufacturing of every product we use.

Foods We Consume

Yes, the food you eat has a big effect on water usage. The more processed foods we eat, the more water we consume. To make a cup of coffee it takes about 37 gallons of water (including growing and processing of the beans). The water footprint of a pound of beef is 1,500 gallons, including the water used to clean the cow and grow its feed. Because producing meat and other animal products is so water-intensive, the average American diet takes a surprising 1,052 gallons of water EACH DAY to produce!

Products We Use

Did you know that the water footprint of one pound of plastic is 24 gallons? It takes about 1.5 gallons to make the average plastic bottle. That means your bottled water or soda or juice uses three to five times as much water being made than it actually contains!

It takes about 32,000 gallons of water to produce the steel that goes into the average car. And the water footprint of a pound of cotton is 101 gallons. The average American uses over 10 gallons a day as a result of the clothes, sheets, towels and blankets we buy.

How Do We Compare?

How does our water use in the United States compare with others around the world? The water footprint of the U.S. is almost four times that of China's and twice the size of Japan's. Americans have the largest water footprint followed by Italy, Thailand and Canada.

What Can We Do?

If we're going to be serious about conserving water, that means we need to conserve everything! Reducing our water footprint means more than conserving water in our homes. That's a great start, but we can do more by saving energy, shopping less, reusing what we already have and recycling what we can't reuse. By making small changes in our lifestyles, we can each play a big role in reducing not only our own, but America's water footprint.

Getting into the habit of faithfully recycling can have a big effect on reducing your water footprint. You can save over 3.5 gallons of water just by recycling a single newspaper. In 2005 Americans threw out 94.8 million tons of paper and 26.7 million tons of plastic, both of which are water-intensive materials and can be re-used and recycled. This means that for every piece of paper and plastic container that gets tossed in the trash, we're sending drops of water down the drain.

Visit www.h20conserve.org and use their handy calculator to see what your family's water footprint is.

Email us at wizard@nwwater.com and share what you're doing to reduce your water footprint. We'd love to share your successes with others!

This Issue

North Wales Borough Service Improvements

Over the next few months we will be making numerous service improvements throughout the Borough of North Wales. The Borough is one of the oldest parts of our system and many of the water and sewer mains and sewer laterals will be replaced as part of our system-wide infrastructure renewal program.

If you live on one of the affected streets, you will receive a letter from us containing more detailed information prior to the beginning of construction. Please note that the start and completion dates below are projections and that actual start and end dates may vary somewhat.

Streets Affected	Start Date	Completion Date
100 and 200 blocks of 3rd Street	9/5/2008	9/25/2008
100 and 200 blocks of 2nd Street	9/10/2008	10/9/2008
610, 620 and 700 E. Walnut Street	9/15/2008	9/22/2008
200 and 300 blocks and 400, 402 and 404 E. Montgomery Ave.	9/25/2008	10/15/2008
100 block of S. 5th Street and 425 and 500 E. Montgomery Ave.	10/9/2008	10/22/2008
100, 101, 102, and 103 S. 7th St.	10/22/2008	11/6/2008
300 and 400 blocks of S. 9th St. and 814 and 902 E. Prospect Ave.	9/22/2008	12/30/2008
200, 300 and 400 blocks of 10th St.	10/15/2008	11/20/2008
912 and 1000 E. Prospect Ave.	10/15/2008	11/20/2008
400, 500, 600, 700, 800 and 900 blocks of E. Walnut St.	11/6/2008	1/14/2009

Q&A

Q: *We would like to reduce our water bills, but we don't like the idea of water-flow restrictors. Can you provide us with any advice?*

A: Low-flow showerheads and aerators can save a considerable amount of money, both in water use and in energy needed to heat water. Newer components can cut water consumption for showering by 30% while still providing a strong spray. Aerators on faucets also can save you money without noticeably reducing water pressure or flow.

If you have an older showerhead, it is probably delivering five or six gallons of water, or more, per minute. Current models are designed to meet new government water conservation standards of less than half that amount. Keeping this in mind, it would also be beneficial for you to replace older toilets with newer, low-flush models for additional savings.

Buying a low-flow showerhead will give you both energy and water savings that can pay back their cost in about three or four months. Pass up lower-quality, cheaper model showerheads to avoid the weak spray that you are afraid of and won't be satisfied with.

The biggest water savings can be from stopping even the smallest leak in your plumbing system. If any of your fixtures, appliances or toilets are leaking, fix them immediately. The smallest drips can add up to big water waste, compounded by wasted energy if hot water is leaking.