

WATER CONSUMPTION and WATER CONSERVATION

Water– in Bellingham, we seem to be surrounded by it– it makes up Bellingham Bay to the West, our water supply to the East as Lake Whatcom, from the South it melts down from the Deming Glacier and flows into the Nooksack River. And for almost 7 seven months out of the year, it falls continuously from the sky. *So why should I conserve water?* Although we see a lot of water around us, it is a misconception that much of it is available for human consumption. In fact, **of all the water on earth, only 1% is available for human use.** Add this fact to the climate change that is taking place and our continuing population growth– water is something that should not be wasted nor taken for granted. One definition of water clearly states its importance:

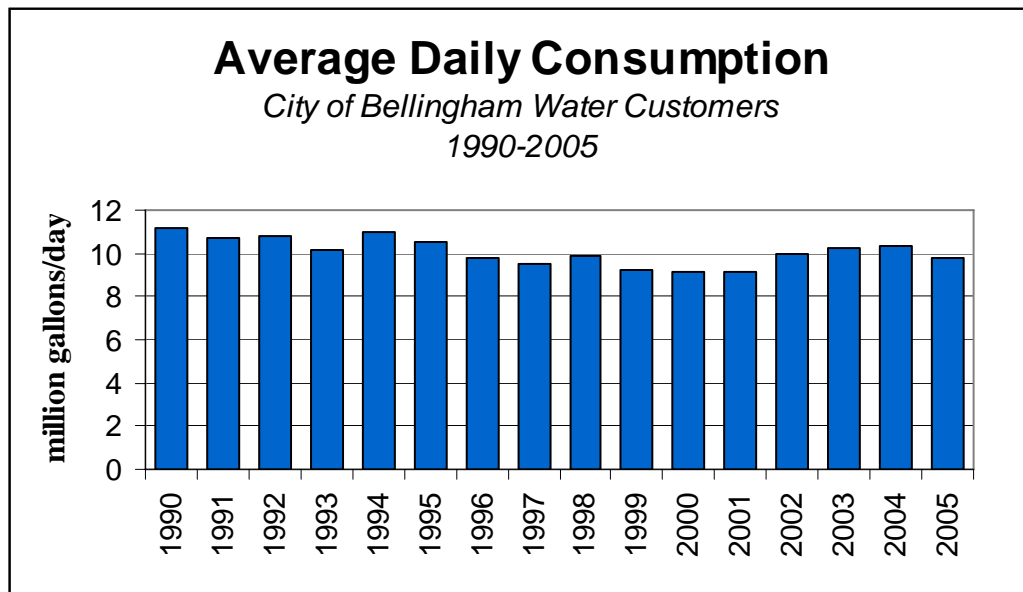
wa-ter, noun

a fluid necessary for the life of most animals and plants, including humans

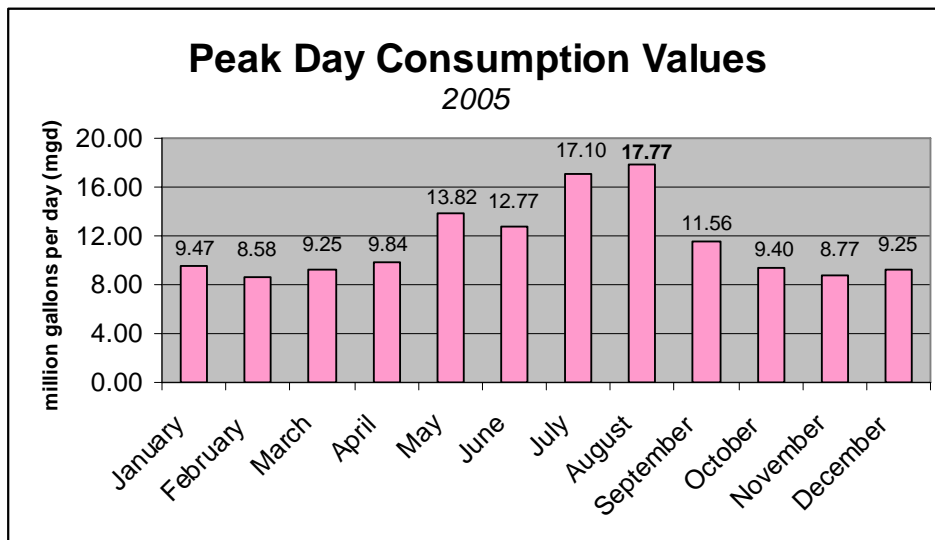
If these are not enough reasons to start taking a more conservative approach to your water use, imagine if in the future water is priced like oil, at a cost of \$3.00 per gallon?

How much water do I use?

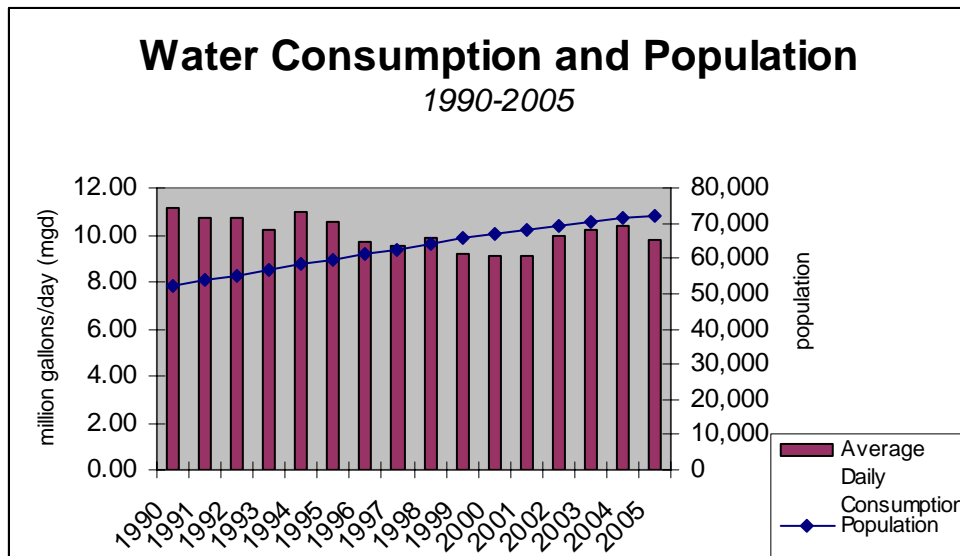
Average water consumption in the US is approximately 101 gallons per capita (person) per day (gpcd), for both indoor and outdoor water use in a single-family residence. In multi-family dwellings, consumption varies between 45 to 70 gpcd, as these households typically use little or no water outdoors and often have fewer fixtures and appliances. In Bellingham, average water use for a single-family residence is slightly below the national average, at approximately 98 gpcd, which includes both indoor and outdoor water use. City-wide, consumption averages approximately 10 million gallons per day (mgd) for all customer class water uses (single-family and multi-family residences, industrial, and commercial uses).



In the warmer months however, consumption can get as high as 19 mgd (known as Peak Day Consumption). This is usually due to the increase in outdoor watering and recreational uses of water.



Data shows that City of Bellingham water customers continue to use less water now than in the 1990s, despite the increase in population.



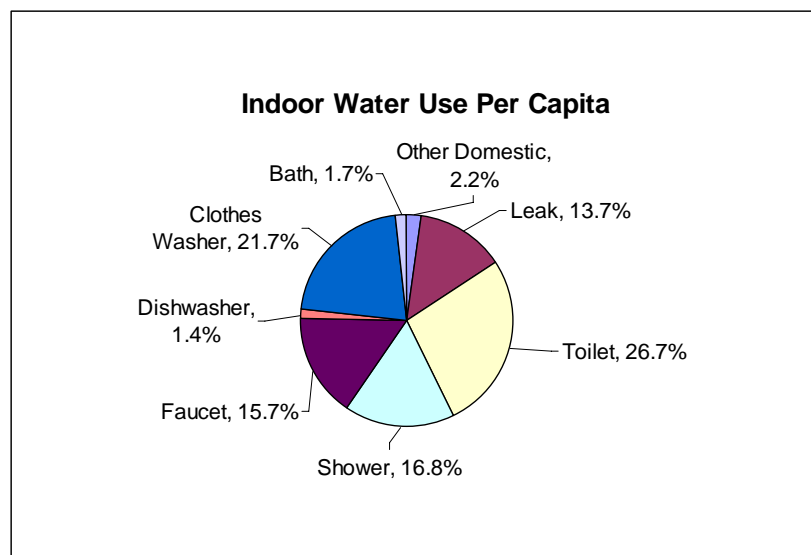
How much water do I need?

The establishment of utilities and infrastructure has made access to drinking water easy and readily available to us; as such, we tend to forget how limited and finite the resource is. This oftentimes leads to overuse and wasting of water. How much water one person actually *needs* is very different than how much water a person *uses*. Lifestyles and values towards our natural resources have a direct impact on your water usage. When you pay attention to your water use and practice conservation, you are helping to ensure a viable water supply, now and in the future.

What fixtures use the most water in my home?

Toilet flushing, using the faucet, and washing laundry are all things we do around the home that use water. Some of these fixtures require differing amounts of water to operate effectively. If your home or apartment was constructed before 1993, you likely have fixtures installed that sometimes can use **twice** as much water as homes or apartments that were built after 1993.

Fixture Type	Pre-1993	Low-Flow
Toilets (gallons per flush- gpf)	3.5	1.6
Urinals (gallons per flush- gpf)	3.0	1.0
Faucets (gallons per minute- gpm)	3.0	2.5
Showerhead (gallons per minute- gpm)	3.0	2.5
Washing Machines (gallons per load- gpl)	40.0	25.0



Source: American Water Works Association

What is the best way to lower my water use?

The simplest and least expensive ways to lower your water use is by paying attention to it! Doing any of the following can have a significant impact on water consumption:

- ✦ Turn-off water when brushing your teeth
- ✦ Wash only full loads of laundry
- ✦ Let your lawn go dormant

Taking water conservation a step further than this would be upgrading your existing, standard fixtures to the newer low-flow options on the market. Considerable research and development has gone in to low-flow technology in recent years, resulting in high-quality low water use fixtures. The City of Bellingham offers FREE water conservation kits that contain low-flow showerheads, faucet aerators for kitchen and bathroom, a water displacement bag for the toilet, and water conservation tips. You can pick these up at the Finance Dept. in City Hall or call 676-6850 for other locations. For more information on low-flow washing machines and toilets, please visit the following links:

[Maximum Performance \(MaP\) Testing of Popular Toilet Models](#)

[Consumer Reports Greener Choices– Household Appliances](#)