WATER: A MOST PRECIOUS RESOURCE

According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the average American family of four uses 300-400 gallons of fresh water per day, or 110,000-146,000 gallons each year. In Chesterfield, that means our nearly 48,000 residents use about 150 million gallons of fresh water annually. Your water bill shows the average gallons that your household uses per day.

Did you know?

Here are some water use averages calculated by the USGS that are important to our daily lives.

- Brushing your teeth, shaving, or washing your hands/face takes about one gallon each.
- A ten-minute shower uses about 25 gallons and a bath about 36 gallons.
- A toilet flush takes between one and 3.5 gallons and individuals generally flush toilets five times each day.
- Raising a single pound of beef requires about 1,800 gallons of water, which includes water for feed grains, grasses, and meat processing.

Easy Steps to Water Conservation

1. Think about How You Are Using Water

Outdoors, over sprinkling lawns and gardens is bad for plants and your wallet. Water lawns and landscaping in the morning and only when they need it; be sure to avoid watering paved areas. Turn the faucet off while you are brushing your teeth or shaving. Use a bucket of soapy water to wash your car instead of a running hose. Don't run the dishwasher unless it's full.

2. Repair Leaks

Leaks waste enormous amounts of water. One drop per second wastes 2,400 gallons of water annually. Check your water meter to see if you have leaks by shutting off all water uses in your house for an hour and see if your meter continues to move. If it does, you have a leak or two.

Since leaking faucets tend to be obvious, check your toilet for slow leaks from the tank to the bowl.

3. Install Water Saving Devices

Faucet aerators, flow regulators for showerheads and low-flow faucet aerators, and displacement devices for toilets reduce your water consumption. Look for ***WaterSense*** labeled devices in the market place that can achieve at least 20% more efficiency than their less efficient counterparts. Ultra-Low Flush toilets use 1.6 gallons per flush and High Efficiency Toilets only use 1.3 gallons per flush. Thus, replacing low-efficiency toilets with more efficient models will significantly reduce family water consumption and water bills as well as being beneficial for the environment.

4. Avoid Bottled Water
Water remaining in plastic water bottles that are thrown in the trash is removed from the water supply. In addition, according to Harvard University, the entire life cycle of bottled water uses fossil fuels, contributes to global warming, and causes pollution.

5. Reuse Water
Unused or slightly used water may be suitable for other purposes, even without treatment or filtration, such as watering plants etc. Make the most of your water before it goes down the drain. Using rain barrels to recycle and reuse rainwater for gardens and landscaping saves potable water and money. If you run the water until it's hot, capture that water to use later for watering.

Replacing herbaceous perennial borders with native plants will result in less water use and the garden will be more resistant to local pests and diseases.

Things you can do to improve water quality

- Do not put anything down a storm drain that could harm your local stream, river or lake. Hazardous materials should be disposed at appropriate sites.
- Support developers who include rain gardens and storm water retention basins in their plans.
- Support bond issues that build or upgrade local waste water treatment plants and support water infrastructure improvements.
- Learn responsible lawn care when utilizing fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides.
- Plant native species in your yard to enhance beauty, create habitats for wildlife and reduce the need for water, fertilizers and pesticides. Do not litter or throw trash or yard waste in the street.

- Take bottled prescription pills to a local depository, such as the lobby at Chesterfield City Hall. Throwing unused medication down the toilet or the drain contaminates our freshwater systems.