

## Saving Water: A Precious Resource

### Why we care

In the Portland area, peak water use occurs during the late summer when river flows are lowest. When we conserve water, we allow it to be released from the dams to keep rivers cool for fish. We also reduce chemicals to purify it, power to pump it, and energy to treat the sewage.

### Simple, positive change

- Watering lawns consumes more water than any other home use. Stop watering. Your grass will turn green again when it rains.
- Replace grass with native and edible plants or ground cover. See <http://watoxics.org/files/plant-selection.pdf/view>.
- Use soaker hoses for shrubs and vegetable gardens. For isolated plants, use a hand-held hose, or poke a hole in a milk jug filled with water and let it drain slowly.
- Mulch heavily to keep moisture in the soil.
- Toilets are the biggest water consumers inside the house. Try:
  - A displacement device. The Portland Water Bureau supplies free toilet tank bags.
  - A behavior change. If it's yellow, let it mellow; if it's brown, flush it down.
  - A low-flush toilet, or dual-flush toilet that saves even more.
- Check for leaks. Turn off all faucets and look at your meter. If there is a leak, check the toilet by putting food coloring in the tank and waiting ten minutes. You have a leak if color appears in the bowl. A medium leak can waste 150 gallons per day.
- New legislation may soon allow use of grey water for irrigating outdoor plants (currently it's illegal).

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