



**SAVING WATER
PARTNERSHIP**



2023 Annual Report

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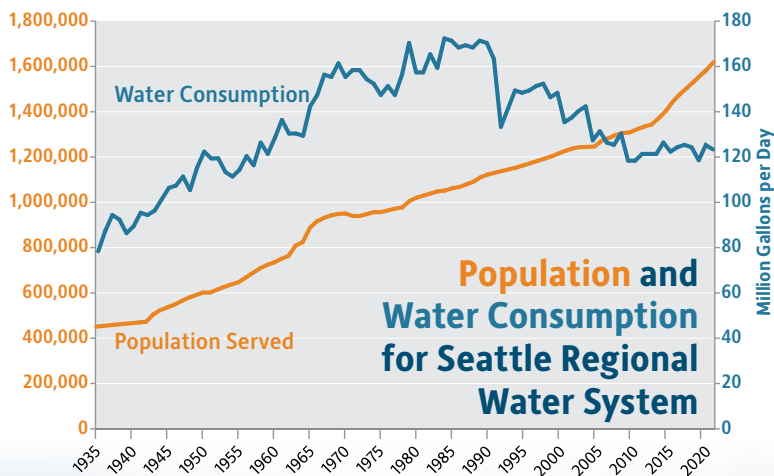
*Water is a precious, shared resource. Make a difference.
Use water wisely.*

Program Overview

The Saving Water Partnership (SWP) is an organization comprised of 19 water utilities in King and Snohomish counties that share a common water supply.

Our water conservation program offers education, technical assistance, and rebates to encourage residents and businesses to take actions to save water. We emphasize youth and community education to grow a regional ethic in which water is valued and conserved. A shared conservation ethic is particularly important as the region's population is growing significantly.

Members of the Saving Water Partnership have been committed to conserving water since the 1980s. The conservation program is a key factor in the steady decline of water consumption since 1990, despite population growth. Other factors in the decline include improving water system operations, setting rate structures that encourage the wise use of water, and adopting building codes and appliance standards that make efficient plumbing fixtures and appliances the norm. The Seattle area now uses about as much water as it did in the late 1950s, when the population was half of what it is today.



Thanks in large part to residents' conservation efforts, the Seattle area uses the same amount of water as it did in the 1950's, despite having more than doubled in population.

Our Service Area



Saving Water Partnership Members

Cedar River Water & Sewer District
City of Bothell
City of Duvall
City of Mercer Island
City of North Bend
City of Renton
Coal Creek Utility District
Highline Water District
King County Water District 20
King County Water District No. 90
North City Water District
Northshore Utility District
Olympic View Water & Sewer District
Seattle Public Utilities
Soos Creek Water & Sewer District
Water District 49
Water District 119
Water District 125
Woodinville Water District

The Saving Water Partnership offers tips, tools, and rebates to help people preserve our region's water for future generations.

Water Use Efficiency Goal and 2023 Results

The Saving Water Partnership adopted a 10-year regional Water Use Efficiency Goal for the period 2019–2028: to keep the total average annual retail water use of SWP members under 110 million gallons a day (mgd) through 2028, despite forecasted population growth, by reducing per capita water use.

In 2023, with the support of residential and commercial customers, we met the goal, using 96.3 mgd. Implementing our water conservation program cost \$1.6 million in 2023.

Water use efficiency goals are required by the State of Washington Municipal Water Law (RCW 70.119A.180) and the resulting Water Use Efficiency Rule (Chapter 246-290-800 WAC). The Saving Water Partnership regional goal is set by the Seattle Regional Water Supply System Operating Board and adopted by Saving Water Partnership members utilities.

How Do We Achieve the Goal?

We achieve the goal through customers choosing to change their behavior and/or install efficient equipment. Customers engage in these efficiency measures for a variety of reasons, including concern for future generations, concern for the environment, desire to save money, and desire to make a difference. Water savings fall into 3 categories:

Conservation Program: Savings that result from our program. Our programs promote fixtures, appliances, and equipment that are more efficient than federal or state codes or standards require, such as the WaterSense labeled sprinkler timers that we rebate. We also educate customers on actions they can take to use less water, such as fixing leaks and running toilets right away.

Codes and Standards: Savings that occur as customers replace older, less-efficient fixtures with new, more-efficient models that meet federal or state codes or standards. These savings are also achieved as new buildings are constructed using efficient code-compliant equipment.

Independent: Savings that result from customers who make efficient choices, independent of our program or codes and standards.

Nature Vision educators tour the Cedar River Watershed. SPU staff provide context and information about the local water system and water conservation to the educators during this tour.



Our annual marketing kit promotes water conservation tips and reminders like “A leaky outdoor faucet or spigot can be easy to miss – out of sight, out of mind. But even small leaks add up.”



A social media post for valentine's day encouraging customers to protect our water and environment.

2023 Water Shortage Contingency Plan Activation

On September 21, the City of Seattle asked approximately 1.5 million people in the region including Saving Water Partnership member utilities and their customers (except the City of North Bend), to use less water. SPU activated the voluntary stage of their Water Shortage Contingency Plan after an unusually dry summer. Forecasts calling for a dry fall and winter caused concerns about having sufficient water for people and fish through the end of the year.

During the plan activation, we worked to share information with our customers on how to reduce water use. Including:

- 375 mentions across television, radio, print, and digital media during the first week of activation
- Reaching over a million people through ad buys on major local news outlets and ethnic media organizations
- Engaging over 80 partner organizations to help spread the word

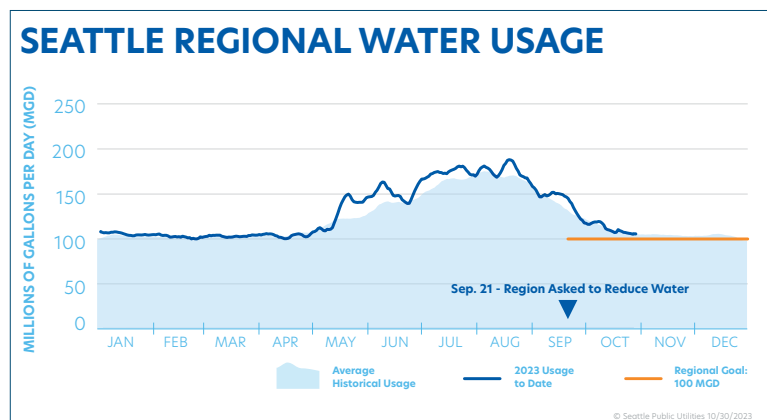
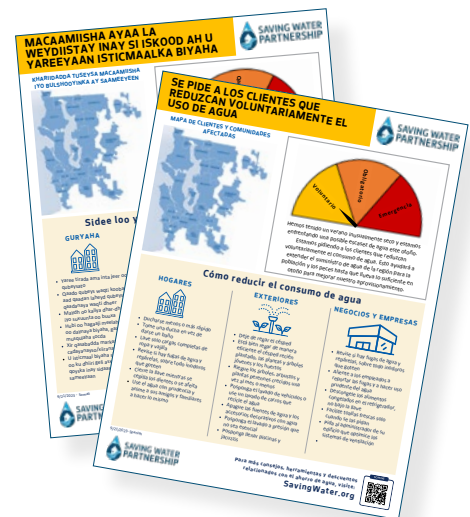
During this 3-month period, the region's residents, businesses, and water utilities did their part to stretch the water supply by reducing their water use while we waited for sustained rains to replenish our reservoirs.

By December 11th, the Cedar and Tolt River reservoir's water storage replenished to normal levels and we were able to exit our Water Shortage Contingency Plan.

SPU Wholesale Water Contracts Manager, Kelly O'Rourke announcing the water shortage to media at the initial press conference in September.



We created flyers with water-saving tips in multiple languages to help customers save water.



Water consumption for the region dropped from 148 mgd on September 18 to 104 mgd on December 4th, just shy of the 100 mgd goal that SPU set for the region.



2023 Program Highlights

Youth Education

The youth education program continues to be popular with teachers and students. **In 2023, we conducted 612 presentations in 18-member service areas, for more than 14,000 K-8 students.** Presentations teach youth the why and how of water conservation through hands-on lessons on topics like the water cycle, soil science, and the salmon life cycle.



Student shows off a salmon puppet during a Salmon Cycle program.



Dear Saving Water Partnership, I would like to thank you for teaching us about salmon and their life cycle. I learnt how to save water and I convinced my family to help too. We should share water with salmon. I will try my best to save water and keep my house clean. Salmon are really interesting. How they start as an egg, change into a saltwater fish and come back to lay eggs. Thank you for teaching so much.

From Adrika J. in Mrs. Penk's class
Maplewood Heights Elementary

Students participating in an interactive lesson during an in-school water conservation program.



“ Since this class, I’ve had students reminding each other to turn off the faucet when washing hands several times! This program was well run and organized. The content was just right for second grade and left students feeling curious and engaged. This has been a highlight of the school year.”

— Cedar River Elementary, **Cedar River Water and Sewer District**

“ The students really enjoyed [the presentation] and had SO MANY questions! They became more aware of how their conservation efforts directly contribute to the life of the salmon and our delicate ecosystem.”

— Sunrise Elementary, **City of Woodinville**

“ They were so focused during the lessons. One student said the next day she turned off her water while brushing her teeth! Another one said he didn’t sing in the shower so he could go faster!”

— Dunlap Elementary,
Seattle Public Utilities



Community Education

We partnered with community organization, ECOSS, to implement an in-language leak education outreach project. The goal of this campaign was to inform Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese language communities on how to spot leaks and running toilets, what to do when they find one, and when to consider replacing their toilet. ECOSS staff went to 9 locations, sharing information at summer festivals, Asian supermarkets, and housing communities. Sharing information with 570 engaged customers.

We sponsored and marketed King County/Water Resource Inventory Area 8's Salmon SEEs program. Salmon SEEs helps connect people to our local salmon. These fish make an epic journey from the open ocean, returning to local rivers and streams to spawn. The program promotes locations where the public can view salmon, and actions we can all take to protect salmon, including ways to conserve water.

We provided an annual marketing kit to help Saving Water Partnership members communicate with their customers about water conservation and promote our conservation programs. Content included newsletter articles, bill inserts, and social media posts on topics ranging from rebates to gardening classes.

Saving Water Partnership members attended and promoted water conservation at 32 community festivals and events this year. SWP promoted water conservation to more than 59,000 people at 32 events in 2023, including City of Renton's Neighborhood BBQ and River Days, Northshore Water District's Shoreline Fire Pancake Breakfast/Safety Fair and Kenmore's Music in the Park, City of Woodinville's Celebrate Woodinville, North City's Celebrate Shoreline and Picnic in the Park, Cedar River Water and Sewer's Community Emergency Preparedness Fair, and KC Water District 90's National Night Out.

We offer water conservation materials in many languages to teach communities how to save more water in their homes.



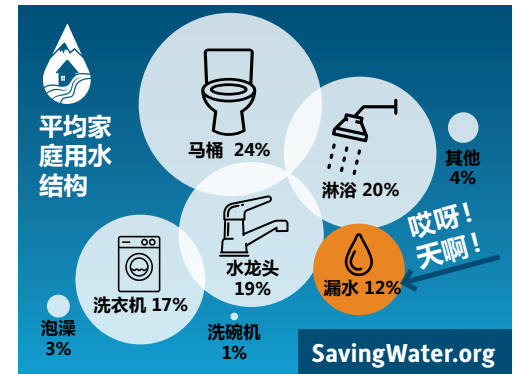
We promote Salmon SEEs in the fall every year. The Salmon SEEs program shares the best locations in King County to view salmon as they return from the ocean in the fall and winter.



ECCOS staff speaks with a customer about finding and fixing water leaks in their home at the Columbia City Farmers Market.



City of Bothell staff talk to residents about how to conserve water and give away SWP swag at their annual Sustainamania event.



Single & Multifamily Indoor Programs

We continued to promote our longstanding toilet replacement program for single family and multifamily residential customers. This program offers \$100 rebates to replace old toilets with 1.1 gallons per flush (gpf) MaP PREMIUM toilets. Rebate-eligible toilets are the most efficient toilets available on the market and use at least 20% less water than WaterSense toilets. 140 toilets were replaced in 107 homes through the single family program. In the multifamily program, 93 toilets were replaced at 2 properties.

To spread the word about the toilet rebate programs, we delivered program information to 75 plumbing companies in the Saving Water Partnership service area. Plumbers often help customers during bathroom remodels and plumbing fixture emergencies. By adding the program information to their toolbox, plumbers can provide customers with money and water-saving options.

Participants appreciate the toilet replacement rebate:

- “ The rebate program informed my decision-making about the best toilet to purchase with the MaP list — very helpful!”
- “ [The rebate] made it much, much easier to make the switch to a low-flow toilet.”
- “ Fantastic program and helpful and responsive staff! Have told friends and family about the program based on our experience.”

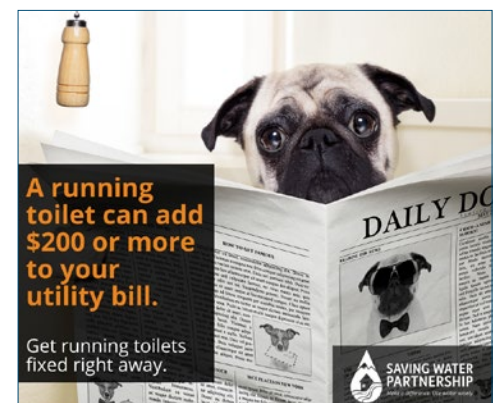
We now offer Resident Leak Sweeps in multifamily buildings throughout the service area. The program uses strategic messaging on door hangers and social norming to educate residents on the how-to of detecting leaking toilets and the importance of communicating the issue to property managers. Residents continue to surprise us by not only reporting toilet leaks but also the water efficiency issues for other fixtures in their homes. We remain focused on inclusive outreach by providing door hangers in 13 languages and being agile in our program delivery. 3 buildings and a total of 425 units participated in the program in 2023.



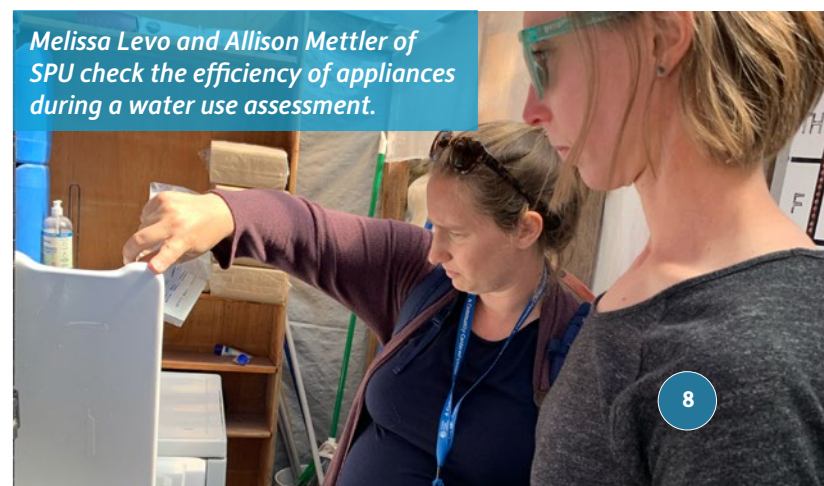
Three multifamily properties distributed door hangers to 425 households to encourage residents to find and report leaks.



A letter to local plumbers in the SWP service area describing our toilet replacement rebate program.



A social media post in our SWP annual marketing kit to encourage customers to fix their running toilets.



Melissa Levo and Allison Mettler of SPU check the efficiency of appliances during a water use assessment.

Commercial Indoor Programs

We provided 9 commercial customers with in-depth water use assessments, which are detailed walk-throughs of the customer's buildings to identify water savings opportunities.

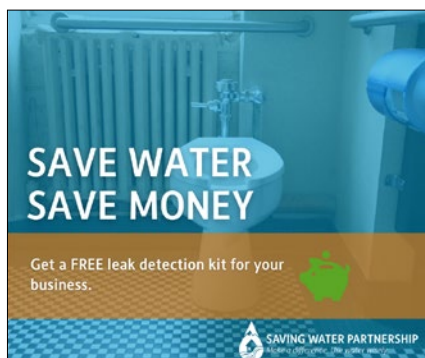
These customers include Westland Distillery, the Space Needle, Chihuly Garden & Glass, and others. These assessments identified over 2 million gallons of potential annual water savings and resulted in 1 custom rebate that was completed in 2023.

Another 125 unique businesses received “lighter touch” water conservation assistance. We conducted focused outreach to new food service businesses, EnviroStars member site visits, and priority communities (LatinX communities in particular) in Seattle. Some of this outreach was conducted in Spanish and Chinese.

Five commercial customers completed water efficiency rebate projects. Projects at North and South Seattle Colleges involved reducing the flow rates of faucets via pressure compensating flow control devices. We provided 3 custom rebates to other commercial customers to upgrade compressors or coolers with air-cooled or hybrid models. Altogether, these 5 projects are estimated to conserve over 4 million gallons of water annually.

We continued offering water conservation kits to businesses to help them install more efficient faucet aerators and find and fix leaks. Leak kits included leak reporting placards, available in multiple languages, to help businesses engage their employees, customers, and tenants in reporting leaks. In total, 98 faucet aerator kits and 73 leak detection kits were provided in 2023.

We created social media posts for our annual marketing kit to encourage commercial customers to request leak detection kits.



SPU staff and commercial water conservation expert, Michael Laurie, meets with Darigold's project team to pre-inspect a water conservation project at their Rainier site.



We developed an overview document that covers all our commercial resources. It was made in collaboration with the Smart Building Center, which lends tools free of charge to customers in SWP service areas.

Notice a leak? Report it!
¿Nota una fuga? ¡Reportalo!

Please report all leaks immediately to:
Favor de reportar todas las fugas inmediatamente a:



We translated our commercial Report Leaks Placard into a bilingual Spanish/English version to encourage employees to report leaks to the appropriate person.

Landscape Programs

The Savvy Gardener program presented 24 in-person and virtual gardening classes hosted by the Water District 90, North City Water District, Molbak's Nursery, and Water District 20. 519 residential customers attended, and 157 of those were new to the Savvy Gardener classes. The classes are designed to inspire customers to create and maintain healthy, sustainable, water-efficient landscapes.

Through our sprinkler timer rebate program 98 inefficient sprinkler timers were upgraded to smart, WaterSense-labeled models. The program offers a \$10 rebate per zone, up to a \$100 total. 67% of the participants live in the Saving Water Partnership service areas outside of Seattle.

We streamlined processing of the sprinkler timer rebate by moving to a new online rebate tracking system in 2023. Participants now receive automated emails notifying them of the status of their application, and staff can easily track program data and communication with applicants.

We conducted 3 landscape water use assessments. These assessments may lead to custom rebate projects in 2024.

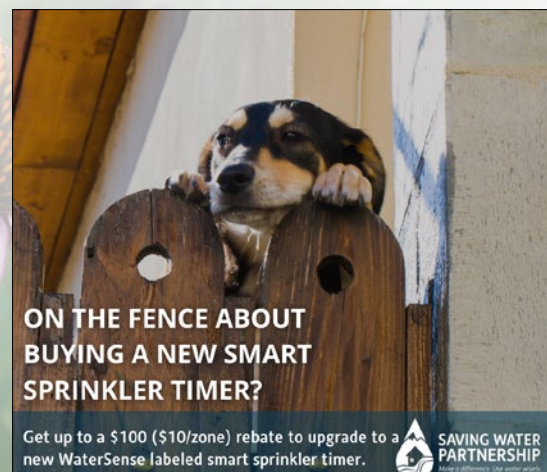
We presented 2 training courses to educate landscape professionals about irrigation efficiency topics. 46 landscape professionals attended the trainings, 40 attended the training in English and 6 attended the training in Spanish.



Mark Guthrie of SPU discusses ways to improve outside water use with customers during a landscape water use assessment at a multifamily building.



Soil Scientist Ea Murphy teaches a Down and Dirty Savvy Gardener class to customers at the North City Water District.



A social media post for our annual marketing kit for Saving Water Partnership members to encourage their customers to apply for a smart sprinkler timer rebate.

2023 Program by the Numbers

Services Provided to Customers

Program	Activity Level
Youth Education	
Classroom Presentations	612 presentations / 14,210 students
Community Outreach	
Festivals and Events	32 festivals and events / 59,781 attendees
Single & Multifamily Indoor Programs	
Multifamily Premium Toilets Rebated	2 buildings / 93 toilets
Single Family Premium Toilets	107 households / 140 toilets
Resident Leak Sweeps	3 buildings / 425 units
Commercial Indoor Programs	
Custom Rebate Projects	5 projects
Conservation Supplies Provided	171 kits
In-Depth Water Use Assessments Provided	9 assessments
Business Site Visits	125 visits
Landscape Programs	
WaterSense Timer Rebates	98 timers
Water Use Assessments Provided	3 assessments
Savvy Gardener Classes	24 classes / 519 attendees / 157 new to the classes
Landscape Professional Training	2 trainings / 46 attendees
Weekly Lawn Watering Advice Videos	14 videos produced / 21,998 impressions

Supporting Elements for Customers

- Technical assistance to residential and commercial customers on irrigation efficiency issues.
- Technical assistance to commercial customers on indoor water use efficiency issues.
- Regional website www.savingwater.org.
- Regional message line 206-684-SAVE.
- Regional Language Line, offering language interpretation by phone.
- Take-home items including toilet leak dye strips, seed packets, faucet aerators, and more.

Supporting Elements for Partner Utilities

- Annual marketing kits with social media and print messages for use in utility newsletters and other communications.
- Online Image Bank repository of photos, and online graphic design tool to customize conservation messages.
- Support for Water Use Efficiency Rule reporting.
- Saving Water Partnership annual report.
- Messaging on water conservation benefits for salmon, in fulfillment of resource agency and tribal agreements.



SAVING WATER PARTNERSHIP

Make a difference. Use water wisely.

This information can be made available on request to accommodate people with disabilities and those who need language assistance.

April, 2024



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