

# Saving Water Partnership

2021 Annual Report



**SAVING WATER PARTNERSHIP**

*Make a difference. Use water wisely.*

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*Students gathering water samples at Rattlesnake Lake for a Cedar River Watershed Education Center field trip program*

*Future generations are counting on us to preserve water resources.*

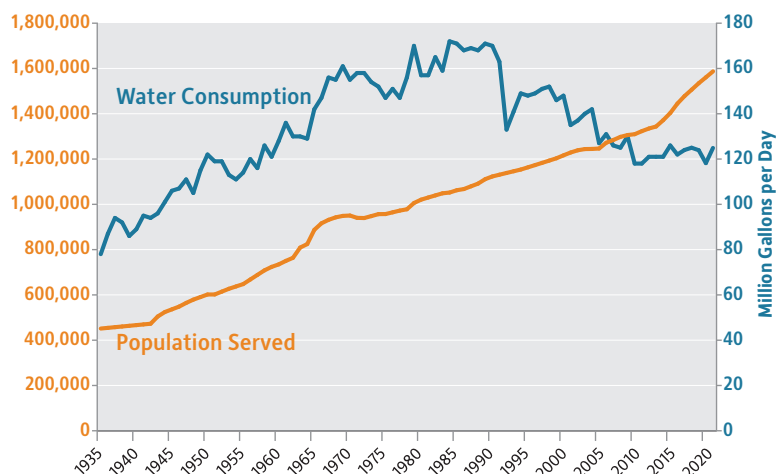
# Program Overview

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

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 a mix of education, technical assistance, and rebates to encourage residents and businesses to take actions that save water. We emphasize youth and community education because we value a conservation ethic. A shared conservation ethic is especially important in the face of significant regional population growth.

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.

## Population and Water Consumption for Seattle Regional Water System



**Our region has reduced its water use dramatically since 1990.**

Note: This graph shows data for the entire Seattle Regional Water System, which includes several wholesale water utilities that are not part of the Saving Water Partnership. Therefore, the SWP numbers are lower.

## Saving Water Partnership 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
- North City Water District
- Northshore Utility District
- Olympic View Water & Sewer District
- Seattle Public Utilities
- Soos Creek Water & Sewer District
- Water District Number 20
- Water District Number 49
- Water District Number 90
- Water District Number 119
- Water District Number 125
- Woodinville Water District

# Water Use Efficiency Goal and 2021 Results

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

**In 2021, with the support of residential and commercial customers, we met the goal, using 95.5 mgd. Implementing our water conservation program cost \$1.3 million in 2021.**

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 each SWP member utility.

## How do We Achieve the Goal?

We achieve the goal by 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 three categories:

**Conservation Program:** Savings that result from our program. With respect to equipment, our program promotes equipment that is more efficient than federal or state codes or standards require, as well as equipment not covered by codes or standards.

**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.

*The toilet rebate program encourages customers to upgrade their toilets, saving water and money.*



*Save water by turning off the tap when washing your hands.*



*Planting the right plants in healthy soil leads to minimal tending and water use.*



# 2021 Program Highlights

## COVID-19 Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to disrupt our lives and our conservation program. We continued to offer virtual options for our programs when possible and were excited for the return of some of our in-person offerings with COVID-19 safety precautions in place. Learn more in the sections below.

## Youth Education

The youth education program continues to be popular with teachers and students. **In 2021 we conducted 447 in-classroom and remote presentations, in 15 member service areas, for nearly 9,900 K-8 grade students.** Despite the pandemic and ongoing disruptions to school schedules, we were able to provide 85% of the planned number of programs. In order to serve schools that were meeting virtually due to COVID-19, we continued to include programs that could be taught remotely. 60% of the classes taught used the virtual format. Topics included water supply, the water cycle, and the salmon life cycle.

*Due to the pandemic, 60% of youth education programs taught used a virtual format.*

“The program was amazing. Filled with facts and engaging activities.”

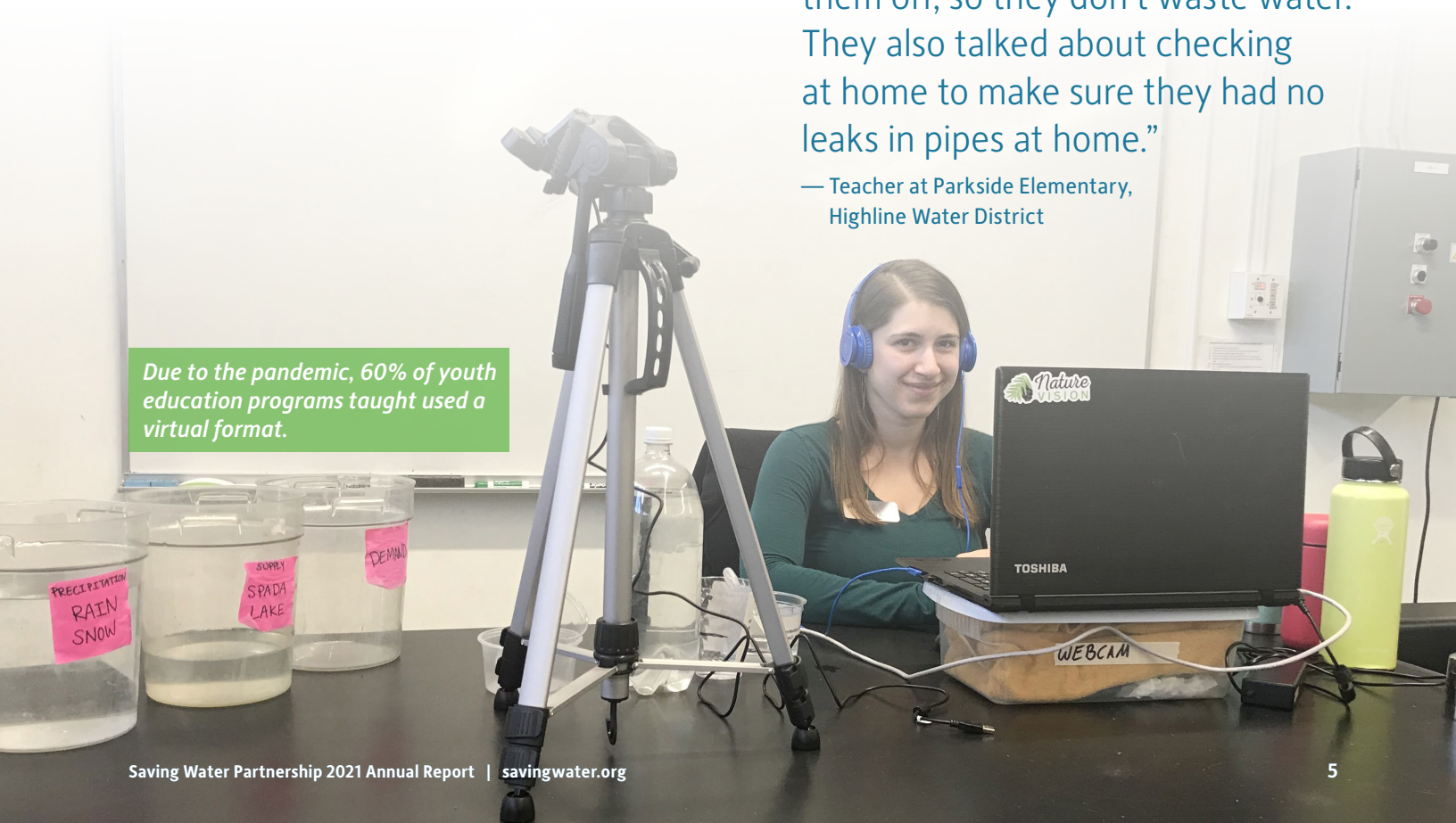
— Teacher at Lockwood Elementary,  
Northshore Utility District

“During parent teacher conferences, all of the parents brought up how much their child enjoyed [the water conservation program] and sharing all that they learned.”

— Teacher at Olympic View Elementary,  
Seattle Public Utilities

“[After the program,] the class talked about how they are going to be careful with faucets and turning them off, so they don't waste water. They also talked about checking at home to make sure they had no leaks in pipes at home.”

— Teacher at Parkside Elementary,  
Highline Water District



## Community Education

Fourteen Saving Water Partnership members joined in a direct mailing about leaks, reaching over 95,000 single family homes in our service area. The mailer encouraged customers to check for leaks and provided information about SWP tools and rebates. SWP website traffic more than doubled during the campaign, and many customers called to learn more about the toilet rebate program.

“ I just fixed my toilet that had a leaky flapper. I didn’t realize it was so easy and so affordable. It cost less than \$10. Thank you for helping me save water!”

— Rosalee, Highline Water District Customer

Our website, [www.savingwater.org](http://www.savingwater.org), continued to be a key resource for customers to learn ways to reduce their water use. We added a new video titled, “How Much Water Does Your Toilet Use?” to our website, to help customers answer the question.

We sponsored and promoted King County/WRIA 8’s Salmon SEEson program. Salmon SEEson helps connect people to our local salmon that make the amazing journey from the open ocean to return to King County local rivers and streams to spawn. We promoted public viewing locations and actions we can all take to protect salmon, including ways to conserve water. On-site naturalists returned to several viewing sites in 2021.

We provided 5 seasonal marketing kits to help Saving Water Partnership members communicate with their customers about water conservation and market our conservation programs. Content included newsletter articles, bill inserts, and social media posts on topics ranging from rebates to gardening classes.

## Don’t be surprised by a high water bill

Finding and fixing leaks can save you money on your utility bills and prevent water waste.

### Leaks aren’t always obvious.

Look inside for information from your water utility. Learn more at [savingwater.org](http://savingwater.org) or (206) 615-1282.



SWP members worked together to create a co-branded mailer showing customers how to check for water-wasting leaks.

## Salmon SEEson

See salmon safely from August to November in King County watersheds!



[www.kingcounty.gov/salmon](http://www.kingcounty.gov/salmon) - click on Salmon SEEsOn!

Salmon SEEsOn campaign materials were promoted to SWP members during the fall. [www.kingcounty.gov/salmon](http://www.kingcounty.gov/salmon) offers information about salmon throughout the year.



Marketing kits provided to SWP members promoted rebates, classes, and WaterWise tips to help customers conserve water.

## Single & Multifamily Indoor Programs

**We continued to promote 1.1 gallons per flush (gpf) MaP PREMIUM toilets for single family and multifamily residential customers.** The most efficient toilets available on the market, these toilets use at least 20% less water than WaterSense toilets. 277 toilets were replaced in 220 homes through the single family program, and 3 toilets were replaced at 1 property through the multifamily program. Additionally, 3 properties with a total of 267 eligible toilets were authorized to participate.

**We created new materials to promote the single family \$100 PREMIUM toilet rebate program at retailers.** We provided take-away cards with rebate program information for customers, and static clings to indicate eligible toilet models.

**We made the rebate application process easier for customers by improving the online application for single family customers, and adding an online application for multifamily customers.**

**Participation in toilet rebate programs continues a 5-year decline due to a shrinking pool of customers with old toilets, as well as impacts of COVID-19.** The programs still serve an important role, however, helping the customers who participate save water. Participant satisfaction remains high, and utility support for 1.1 gpf (or less) toilets sends a positive message to manufacturers and retailers. Availability of eligible models continues to increase despite pandemic-related supply chain issues.

Based on the results of 2 pilot outreach efforts — one that promoted rebates, and one that promoted leaks education — **we shifted the emphasis to education and outreach to help multifamily building owners, property managers, and condominium owners encourage residents to notice leaks and fix or report leaks.** Over 700 properties were reached, and 63 received tenant leak educational materials. Materials were made available in 13 languages other than English. We published an article and fix-leaks poster in 2 trade publications targeting multifamily building owners and property managers. We developed a campaign plan that will be implemented in 2022 to further refine multifamily outreach strategies and provide tenants with tools to identify and report leaks.

*Rebate-eligible toilets sport these new clings in stores, to help customers know which models qualify for a rebate.*



“The toilet rebate program was a huge incentive. ... Based on my estimate, we could be saving up to \$250/year. Such a big help, and I’m glad I did it.”

“Easy program to use. I love it!”

“Solved several issues and headaches.”



*Posters to encourage multifamily residents to report leaks were translated into 13 languages. Chinese is shown here.*

## Commercial Indoor Programs

**Nine businesses took part in water use assessments, a detailed walk-through of the customer's business and/or building to identify water savings opportunities.** These resulted in rebate projects, and/or operational and maintenance changes.

**In 2021 interest in the Water Smart Technology rebate program increased.** Five businesses completed water efficiency rebate projects, replacing a total of 259 fixtures. Three of these projects were custom rebate projects, and 2 were standard rebates.

**We pre-approved 8 custom rebate projects for specific water-using equipment.** By definition, custom rebates are non-standard and often require specialized knowledge and analysis due to the equipment types such as boilers, cooling towers, and commercial laundry systems.

**We worked with Seattle University to co-design leak reporting signage for all residence hall lavatories.** We also distributed 200 leak detection kits for their facility staff to test all residence hall toilets for leaks.

**We partnered with PCC Community Markets to promote leak reporting during Fix-a-Leak Week in March 2021.** SWP signage helped engage PCC employees, customers, and tenants in reporting leaks. The result was 52 leaks reported across 15 stores, totaling about 200,000 gallons of water per year.

**We continued to develop our partnership with the Northwest Energy Efficiency Council.** This allows us to market our conservation programs to their network of building professionals. This included planning for a webinar for their members in January 2022.

**We contacted 111 breweries and distilleries across 7 Saving Water Partnership utility areas to share water management best practices and to promote our water use assessments to their staff and lead brewers.** We have connected with multiple breweries through this effort, and plan to follow-up in 2022 with more outreach to this sector.

“The leak reporting campaign was a tremendous success! Our store staff reported 52 water leaks across our 15 stores, totaling ~200,000 gallons of water a year. That’s as much as an average PCC store uses in a month and a half. Leaks are never great, but we’re glad we spotted and fixed them!”

— PCC Sustainability Manager



*We promoted use of this leak reporting placard to businesses.*

*Metier Brewing in Woodinville took advantage of an SWP water use assessment.*



## Commercial Indoor Programs (continued)

We continued offering businesses water conservation kits to help find and fix leaks, and leak reporting placards to engage employees, customers, and tenants in reporting leaks. We distributed over 500 kits and signs. We translated the kits into Spanish.

We engaged with many organizations to promote our commercial programs and highlight the importance of water efficiency, including South Seattle College Sustainable Building Science Technology program, Seattle 2030 District, Seattle Good Business Network, American Society of Plumbing Engineers, and the Puget Sound Hotel Engineers Association. We gave presentations on our commercial water conservation programs to South Seattle College Sustainable Building Science Technology Program students, many of whom are employed as building or facility operators. We also gave a presentation to King County Project Managers who oversee building retrofits and management of King County facilities.

## Landscape Programs


The Savvy Gardener program presented 15 gardening classes — all held virtually — hosted by the City of Renton, King County Water District 90, Molbak's Nursery, North City Water District, and Northshore Utility District in spring, summer, and fall. 615 residential customers attended, and 94 of those were new to the Savvy Gardener classes. Survey results from class participants show that of the 29 respondents, 19 started 53 new practices that are expected to reduce water use in the landscape. The classes were designed to inspire, create, and maintain healthy, sustainable, water-efficient landscapes.

We put our trainings to educate landscape professionals about irrigation topics on hold in 2021 due to the pandemic.

Our irrigation timer rebate program was put on hold while we evaluated the water-saving impact of the program. The evaluation shows sufficient water savings to offer the program in 2022.

### Faucet Aerator Kit

High-efficiency aerators can reduce a faucet's water use by 75%, helping you manage your utility bills without compromising water flow.



#### HOW TO INSTALL

- 1 Make sure the aerator you are planning to install has a lower flow rate than your current faucet.
- 2 Remove your existing aerator (if there is one), use your hands or a wrench if needed.
- 3 Screw on your new aerator, you may need to use one or both washers to get a good seal.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS


The aerator provided in this kit uses .5 gallons of water per minute (GPM) and is designed for bathroom and handwashing sinks. If you aren't sure how much water your current faucet uses, use the provided water flow rate bag (instructions on back).


#### MAINTAINING YOUR NEW AERATOR

Periodically inspect your aerators for scale buildup. Clean and/or replace them as needed.

High-efficiency aerators may not be a good fit for all facilities. If you are unsatisfied with your faucet's performance after installing the aerator, contact us for help troubleshooting.

High-efficiency faucet aerators work by restricting water flow and adding air. The result is often greater pressure, while using less water. If your faucets are used a lot, this can mean big savings on your utility bills.





The Saving Water Partnership is an organization comprised of 19 water utilities in King and Snohomish counties. We offer tips, tools, and rebates to help people preserve our region's water for future generations.

*We provided conservation kits to businesses to help them save water.*

# Attracting bees and butterflies to your garden



Gardening class taught by Ladd Smith

6:30 – 8:00 pm | June 24

To register email: [theresah@northcitywater.org](mailto:theresah@northcitywater.org)



*Ad marketing one of the Savvy Gardener classes.*

# 2021 Program by the Numbers

## Services Provided to Customers

Program	Activity Level
<b>Youth Education</b>	
Classroom Presentations	447 presentations / 9,877 students
<b>Community Outreach</b>	
Festivals and Events	Canceled due to COVID-19
<b>Single &amp; Multifamily Indoor Programs</b>	
Multifamily Premium Toilets	1 building / 3 toilets
Single Family Premium Toilets	220 homes / 277 toilets
<b>Commercial Indoor Programs</b>	
Kitchen Measures	2 projects / 2 fixtures
Custom Projects	3 projects / 257 fixtures
Conservation Supplies Provided	235 leak kits / 265 leak signs / 33 aerator kits / 11 aerators
Water Use Assessments Provided	9 assessments
Technical Assistance Provided	5 consultations
<b>Landscape Programs</b>	
WaterSense Timer Rebates	Program not offered in 2021
Custom Irrigation System Rebates	0 projects
Savvy Gardener Classes	15 classes / 615 attendees / 94 new to the classes

### 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](http://www.savingwater.org).
- Regional hotline 206-684-SAVE.
- Regional Language Line, offering language interpretation by phone.
- Take-home items including toilet leak detection kits and hose washers.

### Supporting Elements for Partner Utilities

- Seasonal marketing kits with social media and print messages for use in utility newsletters and other communications.
- Online Image Bank repository of photos for use in utility newsletters and other communications.
- 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.

*The Cedar River Watershed is one of two mountain watersheds that provide drinking water for 1.5 million people.*



## 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, 2022**



Cover image: ***Pacific Northwest Mask and Baskets***, 2018

Paige Pettibon

Acrylic on Canvas, 16" x 20"

Seattle Public Utilities 1% for Art Portable Works Collection, administered by Seattle Office of Arts & Culture

Photo: Spike Mafford

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