Program Overview

The Saving Water Partnership (SWP) is a collaboration of Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) and 18 water utility partners that purchase water from Seattle. The SWP’s conservation program emphasizes long-term water use efficiency for residential and commercial customers.

Members of the Saving Water Partnership have been committed to conserving water since the 1980’s. The conservation program has been a key factor in the steady decline of water consumption since 1990, despite population growth. The Seattle area now uses about as much water as it did in the late 1950’s, when the population was half of what it is today. The regional water conservation program has been modified over the years to address changing water supply needs and member utility objectives.

In 2019, the SWP embarked on a new phase of the program with an increased emphasis on community and youth education and outreach, while continuing to support customer rebates to retrofit less-efficient fixtures with more-efficient models. The emphasis on education and outreach is a recognition of the importance of maintaining, and growing, a conservation ethic. This is especially important in the face of significant regional population growth, particularly from people moving from other areas of the country or world where the conservation ethic may not be as strong.

Collectively, the SWP is working to achieve the region’s adopted Water Use Efficiency Goal in compliance with the State of Washington Municipal Water Law (RCW 70.19A.180) and the resulting Water Use Efficiency Rule (Chapter 246-290-800 WAC). The SWP regional goal is set by the Seattle Regional Water Supply System Operating Board and adopted by each SWP member utility.

Conservation prepares the region for potential water supply challenges, helps customers use water wisely, and preserves the ethic of stewarding natural resources.
REGIONAL WATER USE EFFICIENCY GOAL AND 2019 RESULTS

The Saving Water Partnership has adopted a new 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 2019, the Saving Water Partnership, with the support of residential and commercial customers, met the goal, using 94.0 mgd. The cost of implementing the SWP program in 2019 was $1.7 million.

Achievement of the goal is accomplished by customers who change their behavior and/or install efficient equipment. Customers engage in these efficiency measures for a variety of reasons including concern for the environment, desire to save money, and choosing new fixtures and appliances that meet higher efficiency codes and standards. Water savings fall into three categories:

■ CONSERVATION PROGRAM:
  Savings that result from the SWP program. With respect to equipment, the SWP program promotes equipment more efficient than federal or state codes or standards, 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 the SWP program or codes and standards.

2019 Program Highlights

Education

■ The youth education program continues to be popular with teachers and students. In 2019 the SWP conducted 525 in-classroom presentations, in all member service areas, for more than 12,500 K-12 grade students. Topics included water conservation, the water cycle, the salmon life cycle, and water-wise gardening. Based on an evaluation conducted the prior year, significant work was completed in 2019 to update and strengthen program offerings and curriculum. Changes included: focusing on elementary and middle school students, simplifying options for teachers, and customizing curriculum to help students connect water conservation to issues in their local communities and watersheds.

■ The Savvy Gardener program grew in attendance, presenting 12 gardening classes hosted by North City Water District, Northshore Utility District, King County Water District 90, and Woodinville Water District, in spring and fall to 455 residential customers. Survey results from class participants show that of the 65 respondents, 52 started 86 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.

■ The SWP held two trainings to educate landscape professionals on irrigation topics. The trainings attracted nearly 30 attendees, including seven who were taught in Spanish.

Community Outreach and Engagement

■ The SWP doubled event outreach in 2019, providing materials to 26 community festivals and events attended by approximately 113,000 customers. These activities took place in Cedar River Water and Sewer District, City of Bothell, City of Duwamish, City of Renton, Coal Creek Utility District, North City Water District, Northshore Utility District, Seattle Public Utilities, Water District 20, and Water District 125. Outreach in 2019 included a collaboration between SWP, ACT Theatre, and The 5th Avenue Theater to bring water conservation education to over 40,000 audience members of the musical Urine-Town, which incorporates water and sewer utilities in its storyline.

■ The regional website, www.savingwater.org, continued to be a key resource for customers to learn ways to reduce their water use.

■ The SWP actively sponsored and promoted King County/WRIA 8’s Salmon SEEson program. Salmon SEEson helps the public see salmon return to local streams to spawn, and provides steps to protect salmon, including ways to conserve water.

■ In 2019 SWP worked with a research consultant to better understand how to educate and motivate residential customers to value water conservation, improve toilet leak detection and resolution, irrigate efficiently, and choose efficient fixtures. Through this process, SWP collected feedback and insights from 340 homeowners, renters, and property managers from across the SWP service area. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The information collected will inform program improvements that will be implemented starting in 2020.
### 2019 PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

#### PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festivals and Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Landscape Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savvy Gardener Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Hotline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Yard Care Guides and Fact Sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Toilets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multifamily Premium Toilets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Family Premium Toilets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Equipment Rebates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen Measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restroom Measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundry Measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WaterSense Timers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Irrigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Professionals Trainings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### SUPPORTING ELEMENTS

**FOR CUSTOMERS**
- Technical assistance to residential and commercial customers on irrigation efficiency issues.
- Technical assistance to commercial customers on indoor 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.

**FOR PARTNER UTILITIES**
- Bi-monthly 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.

---

### Rebates

- The SWP irrigation timer rebate program upgraded 167 inefficient timers to WaterSense-labeled timers. 67% of the participants lived in SWP service areas outside of Seattle. The program model tightened from a fixed $100 rebate to offering $10 per zone, up to a $100 total rebate, in order to better align the rebate amount with the customer’s water use and potential for water savings. The program surveyed 2018 participants and found that 99% of the 75 respondents were satisfied with the timer they chose. 65% reported a decrease in water use.

- The SWP continued to promote 1.1 gallons per flush (gpf) Premium toilets for customers. The most efficient toilets available on the market, these toilets use at least 20% less water than WaterSense toilets. 523 toilets were upgraded in 406 homes. Premium toilets have become more available in stores. In response to customer feedback, staff simplified the list of eligible toilets and added more detailed information on how to purchase qualifying models.

- The Multifamily program increased participation significantly compared to 2018. Ten apartment and condominium buildings upgraded 2,455 toilets to Premium models. Large apartment complexes in the City of Bothell and City of Renton service areas participated, contributing most of the fixtures replaced this year. Staff modified the program to allow properties to replace a portion of their toilets, rather than requiring all fixtures in the building be replaced at once. This change is intended to enable buildings with limited cash flow, and those who want to try out the new toilets, to participate.

### Business Outreach

- 2019 was a transition year for the commercial program. Longtime staff retired, and a new staff person came on board. Water efficiency rebate projects were completed at five businesses. The outreach consultant for the program provided assistance to 135 businesses, identifying significant water savings opportunities that companies could implement. Nine new inquiries for custom rebate projects were received towards the end of 2019 and it is likely many of these will result in projects in 2020. Staff continue to collaborate with local electric utilities and business associations to recruit customers to help them reduce their water use.

---

Saving Water Partnership 2019 Annual Report
Contact us at www.savingwater.org or call (206) 684-SAVE
Schools in every SWP member service area took advantage of popular water conservation classes.

Quarterly seasonal marketing kits were created to help SWP members communicate with their customers about water conservation and SWP programs. 2019 topics included: fixing leaks, gardening classes, saving water helps salmon, #WaterWise tips, and toilet rebates.

Saving Water Partnership: Cedar River Water & Sewer District City of Bothell City of Duvall City of Mercer Island 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 45 Water District Number 49 Water District Number 90 Water District Number 119 Water District Number 125 Woodinville Water District

Saving Water Partnership Administered by Seattle Public Utilities For more information contact: Seattle Public Utilities Seattle Municipal Tower 700 5th Avenue P.O. Box 34018 Seattle, WA 98124-4018 Email: Mialee.jose@seattle.gov © 2020 Seattle Public Utilities This information can be made available on request to accommodate people with disabilities and those who need language assistance.

Cover art: “Journey North” by Thomas Stream; 2018, Limited Edition Giclee, 22” x 30”