Why is it Important to Save Water?

Fresh groundwater is a finite resource. The Earth holds fresh water beneath its surface, but it is being used faster than it is being replenished. Groundwater is the main source of drinking water, both for public and domestic use, as well as irrigation. As of 2010, New Mexicans were using anywhere between 50 to 250 million gallons of fresh groundwater per day. The repercussions of over-using fresh water are vast: future generations will struggle for water supply, the cost of drilling and pumping water will rise, and ultimately, water quality and availability will decrease over time. Being a responsible water user is more important than ever. The first step to conserving water is to look at daily habits and use of water and make changes that will minimize or eliminate water waste.

What Can You Do to Start Conserving?

There are several major areas on campus that students and staff can begin to monitor their water habits. Fortunately, these areas will also translate to habits off campus as well!

Washing Hands & Brushing Teeth:

The average kitchen faucet uses around 2.5 gallons per minute, while the average bathroom faucet uses about 2.2 gallons per minute. Older faucet models (those without aerators) can use up to 5 or more gallons per minute. One way to minimize water waste is to run water at a trickle or a very low flow when washing hands or turning off the faucet completely until you are ready to rinse. Secondly, when brushing your teeth, turn the faucet off completely until you are ready to rinse. The average person spends 1-4 minutes brushing their teeth, so if the water is flowing while brushing, 2-20 gallons of water could be wasted!

Washing Dishes & Dishwashers:

Many people take a science lab at least once while in college. Washing and rinsing lab equipment is part of the routine, just as washing dishes at home is. The same measures for conserving water can be employed here as with washing hands and brushing teeth. By turning water off until all dishes and/or equipment are washed and ready to be rinsed, you can save hundreds of gallons of water over time. While school labs do not commonly have dishwashing machines, many homes do. The average dishwashing cycle uses 4-6 gallons of water. By waiting until the dishwasher is full and opting out of washing by hand, you can save a lot of water, money, and time. If you do not own a dishwasher, the best way to conserve water is to fill one side of the sink with hot, soapy water and rinse with a very low flow of water once you've washed all your dishes.

Dripping Faucets:

Make sure that dripping faucets are fixed, either by informing maintenance when you notice an issue on campus or maintaining it in your own home. A dripping faucet (1 drop per second) can waste up to 3,000 gallons of water per year! Making sure that dripping faucets are fixed can save a lot of money and a lot of water.

Tap Water & Bottled Water:

Bottled water companies pump groundwater to supply their product which drains the ever-depleting source rapidly. Many people do not recycle their bottles which also negatively impacts the environment. Bottled water companies also drain freshwater resources, like surface springs and other natural water sources. Tap water is safe to drink and goes through many safety regulations before it makes its way out of your faucet.

Purified Water:

Purified water is a major concern to some individuals and so much money can be saved by filtering tap water in your own

home and reusing bottles. Water purifying systems come in different shapes and sizes. Two popular brands are Pur and Brita and both provide purifying pitcher systems that can fit right on your fridge shelves. There are several other brands that provide similar pitcher systems as well. Cost of these systems range anywhere from $10.00 to about $40.00, which is a small price to pay for a long-term supply of purified water. These systems are a great way to have purified water anytime without spending hundreds of dollars on bottled water.

Hydration Stations:

Another great option available right on campus is the CNM Hydration Stations which are located in almost every building. These systems offer cold, purified water on the go. By reusing bottles and filling up at these stations, you can save a lot of money that might otherwise be spent purchasing bottled water from vending machines or at the campus café.

Conclusion

These changes in personal water usage habits will benefit our environment and help ensure future generations have plenty of fresh water to use. Please do your part to minimize water waste and keep one of Earth's most precious resources intact!

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CNM Montoya Campus Water Conservation Guide

Learning How to Minimize Water Waste On and Off Campus