

Water Conservation Fact Sheet



In the past several years, New Jersey has experienced various levels of drought conditions making water conservation and quality an important topic. In June 2003, Atlantic County Executive Dennis Levinson designated the Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA) as the lead agency responsible for monitoring ground water issues in the county. That year the Atlantic County Groundwater Advisory Committee (ACGWAC) was formed. The ACGWAC is comprised of local leaders who engage in water supply issues in the private, commercial, and non-profit sectors. The committee was instrumental in advising the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to conduct a thorough study of the state (amount and quality) of groundwater in the southeastern region of New Jersey.

In 2005, the ACUA undertook a campaign with the goal to reduce water usage by 10% in this county. ACUA adopted the nationally known Water-Use It Wisely campaign. The campaign was funded through a grant from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The water conservation program was designed to educate residents and visitors of Atlantic County, NJ about the importance of water conservation. The Authority became a vehicle for promoting the use of low flow/low volume water conserving devices to help lower the amount of water used per household in Atlantic County. Specific tactics included creating public relations material that addressed water shortage issues and water saving techniques, hosting seminars that focused on applied water conservation techniques, distributing water-saving devices, using media outlets to spread water conservation messages, and sponsoring pilot projects.



Visitors at a local home improvement store learn more about water conservation at a workshop sponsored by the Atlantic County Utilities Authority.

The ACUA campaign addressed the following water supply issues:



- Water used for every day activities depletes the amount of water stored underground, and without replenishment overuse poses a threat to groundwater contamination.
- Depletion of groundwater reduces stream flow which is necessary for wildlife and recreation, and a low stream flow can increase the concentration of contaminants in surface water.
- Water-saving strategies are simple to incorporate into daily activities in the home, at work, and while on vacation.
- Water conservation helps to increase water supply, as well as lower water use costs directly for the user. Additionally, regional water conservation will help to prevent future rate increases from water suppliers by lessening the need for infrastructure expansion.

To be effective in reaching the different groups of water users in Atlantic County, the ACUA has created a campaign with distinct strategies for each audience.

The Water Conservation Education Campaign

The following projects were successfully implemented during the campaign year and continue to function on a more limited basis:

- A media campaign that included press releases, bus billboards, plane banner flights over Absecon Island beaches and road billboards featuring Water - Use It Wisely material.
- Workshops conducted at Lowes and Home Depot home improvement centers on outdoor water conservation topics.
- “Every Drop Counts” program conducted at Galloway, Egg Harbor and Hamilton Township schools. The program taught fourth and fifth grade students about the importance of water conservation and pollution control to preserve our groundwater supply.
- Implementation of a Project Planet program at local hotels. This program informs guests to conserve water by reusing towels and bedroom linens along with promoting other sound environmental practices.
- A series of senior center water conservation workshops were held throughout Atlantic County.
- An Eagle Scout project that involved the installation of indoor water conservation kits by a local scout troop at a subsidized senior high-rise building in Atlantic City.



TOP TEN WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

1. Water your lawn only when needed. Step on your grass. If it springs back when you lift your foot, it doesn't need watering. So set your sprinklers to increase days between watering. This helps save 750 to 1,500 gallons per month. Better yet, especially during drought conditions, water with a hose.
2. Fix leaky faucets and plumbing joints. This helps save 20 gallons per day for every stopped leak.
3. Don't run the hose while washing your car. Use a bucket of water and a quick hose rinse at the end. This saves 150 gallons each time. For a two-car family that's up to 1,200 gallons a month.
4. Install water-saving shower heads or flow restrictors and save 500 to 800 gallons of water per month.
5. Wash only full loads in the washing machine and dishwasher. This saves 300 to 800 gallons per month.
6. Shorten your showers. Even a one or two-minute reduction can save up to 700 gallons per month.
7. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways and sidewalks. This saves 150 gallons or more each time. Done once a week, the savings can equal more than 600 gallons a month.
8. Don't use your toilet as an ashtray or wastebasket. This saves 400 to 600 gallons per month.
9. Capture tap water. While you wait for hot water, catch the flow in a watering can to use later on house plants or your garden. You could save 200 to 300 gallons per month.
10. Don't water the sidewalks, driveway or gutter. Adjust your sprinklers so that water lands on your lawn or garden where it belongs - and only there. This can save an estimated 500 gallons per month.

Additional resources:

www.njdrought.org/ideas.html

www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/watersheds/index.html

www.rce.rutgers.edu/pubs/

www.awwa.org/waterwiser/

www.epa.gov/watersense/

www.drinktap.org/

