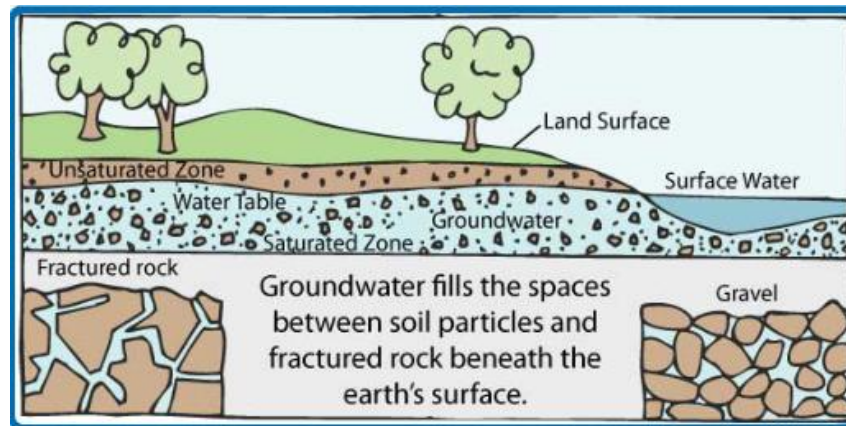


National Groundwater Awareness Week March 8-14, 2015

The Tygarts Valley Conservation District will be participating in National Groundwater Awareness Week, which runs from March 8th through 14th. To help bring awareness to this valuable natural resource, the district will be sharing water saving tips and groundwater information to their Facebook page, 'TygartsValleyCD.' For more information on the importance of groundwater and ways you can help conserve it, please read below or call 304-457-3026.

All the water of the Earth including the atmosphere, oceans, surface water, and groundwater participates in the natural system we call the hydrologic cycle. Groundwater is the water that soaks into the soil from rain or other precipitation and moves downward to fill cracks and other openings in beds of rocks and sand. Of all the freshwater in the world, excluding polar ice caps, 95 percent is groundwater. Surface water, lakes and rivers, only make up three percent of our freshwater.



At least one-fourth of the world's population gets its water from underground aquifers. Renewable freshwater aquifers rely on precipitation for refilling and are vulnerable to changes in the quantity and quality of recharge water. Aquifers are replenished slowly by rainfall and have an average recharge rate of less than three percent per year. While it is a renewable resource, about three-fourths of underground water is considered to be nonrenewable due to having a renewal period of a century or more.

In the US, groundwater provides approximately 46% of the water used by all households. The 'water footprint' of a person is defined as the total volume of water used to produce the commodities, goods and services consumed by that person. The average 'water footprint' of Americans is 40-53 gallons of water a day. There are many ways that a person can protect and conserve groundwater so as to reduce their water consumption and footprint.

Ways to Protect and Conserve Groundwater

- 1. Use native plants in your landscaping** - They don't need much water or fertilizer. Also choose grass varieties for your lawn that are adapted for your region's climate, reducing the need for extensive watering or chemical applications.
- 2. Reduce Chemical Use** - Use fewer chemicals around your home and yard, and make sure to dispose of them properly - don't dump them on the ground!
- 3. Manage Waste** - Properly dispose of potentially toxic substances like unused chemicals, pharmaceuticals, paint, motor oil, and other substances. Many communities hold household hazardous waste collections or sites - contact your local health department to find one near you.
- 4. Don't Let It Run** - Shut off the water when you brush your teeth or shave, and don't let it run while waiting for it to get cold. Keep a pitcher of cold water in the fridge instead. Letting the garden hose run faster or longer than necessary is a careless and wasteful habit. A ½ inch garden hose under normal water pressure pours out more than 600 gallons of water per hour and a ¾ inch hose delivers almost 1,900 gallons in the same length of time.
- 5. Fix the Drip** - Check all the faucets, fixtures, toilets, and taps in your home for leaks and fix them right away, or install water conserving models. There is no such thing as a little drip. A leaky faucet can waste 10 gallons of water per day, and a leaky toilet can average a leak of 60 gallons per day! Replace worn sink washers or valve seals to get rid of the drip, and check for leaks in a toilet's tank or replace old toilets with low-flush units.
- 6. Wash Smarter** - Limit yourself to just a five minute shower, and challenge your family members to do the same. Also, make sure to only run full loads in the dish and clothes washer.
- 7. Water Wisely** - Water the lawn and plants during the coolest parts of the day (early morning or late evening) and only when they truly need it. Make sure you, your family, and your neighbors obey any watering restrictions during dry periods. Check with your local extension agent or garden center for recommendations for your area's climate.
- 8. Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle** - Reduce the amount of materials you use and reuse what you can. Recycle paper, plastic, cardboard, glass, aluminum and other materials.
- 9. Nature's Best** - Use all natural/nontoxic household cleaners whenever possible. Materials such as lemon juice, baking soda, and vinegar make great cleaning products, are inexpensive, and environmentally-friendly.
- 10. Learn and Do More** - Learn more about groundwater and share your knowledge with others. As you conserve water at home and in your community, you will help ensure that the water available now continues to meet the growing water needs of the future.

If you take little steps each day to reduce the amount of water you use, by the end of the month it will become second nature.