



Healthy wetlands and marsh areas are vital to Whooping cranes and other species that rely on them.



Can you be a water saver?

Background

Our planet is 3/4 water, but 97 percent of that water is salty. Of the remaining 3 percent that is fresh water, about 3/4 is frozen in glaciers and the polar ice caps. As the human population grows, more and more people need fresh, clean water for cooking, drinking, bathing, watering crops, watering farm animals, manufacturing, and more.

- It takes as much as 75 gallons of water to produce a single ear of corn.
- It takes six gallons of water to produce every gallon of gasoline.
- We need 65 gallons of water to manufacture enough steel to make a bicycle

The amount of water on Planet Earth is the same as when the dinosaurs roamed. The exact same water that *Tyrannosaurus Rex* drank has been endlessly recycled into the water we use today! We will never be able to create more water, but the demands of growing population are putting a strain on our fresh water supplies. We need to take care of the water we've got so there's enough for humans and for wildlife and plants that keep our earth healthy and beautiful and balanced. This activity explores how much water we use and how we can cut down our individual water use.

Activity

1. Look at the chart below. Use it to keep a journal of how much water you use in a day and in a week. (Remember that you're also using water when you use anything that required water for its production process.)

Activity	Average Amount of Water Used
Getting a drink of water	1/4 gallon
Flushing the toilet	5 gallons
Showering (2-3 minutes, full force)	20 gallons
Bathing in a full tub	30 gallons
Brushing teeth	1/4 gallon
Washing hands	2 gallons
Washing laundry in automatic washer, large load*	49 gallons
Washing dishes for one meal by hand*	8 gallons
Washing dishes in automatic dishwasher*	12 gallons

* When someone in your family does this, what's your share of the water used? To figure this out, divide the amount of water used by the number of people in your family.

2. Think of ways you can cut down on the amount of water you use without cutting down on what you really need. (For example, the force of the water flow makes a big difference in how much water you use. How could you test this?)

Distribution made possible through the Wild Birds Unlimited Pathways To Nature® Conservation Fund.



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