Why Conserve Water in the Hood River Watershed ?

The Hood River Valley has mountain snow, glaciers and spring-fed streams to sustain its water supply, and more rain than our desert neighbors. But still, during summer when water withdrawals are at their peak, parts of the Hood River system experience low streamflows that harm fish habitat. This affects Hood River's bull trout and steelhead, which are listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Landowners, irrigators, government agencies, and tribes are working to help threatened fish by replacing outdated fish screens at diversion dams, taking better care of streamside forests, enforcing fishing laws, controlling farm runoff, and converting orchards to more efficient irrigation systems.

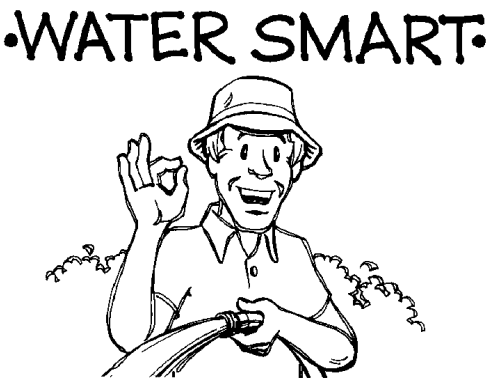
By increasing our own water efficiency and eliminating water waste, each of us can help keep more water in the Hood River and improve conditions for fish and other aquatic life!

10 Things You Can Do To Save Water

1. Water early in the day between 4 and 9 a.m. when evaporation is lowest. The next best time is after 8 p.m. at night. Avoid watering on windy days - wind increases evaporation!
2. Water infrequently but deeply. This promotes growth of deep root systems so plants can withstand longer dry periods and stay healthy.
3. Check for leaky sprinklers, hose, broken sprinker heads, and water lines. Fix them.
4. Never apply water faster than it can be absorbed. Sloped areas are tricky to water effectively. Contour around each plant to create a water well, or use terracing.
5. For new landscapes, choose native drought tolerant plants for water savings and less maintenance.
6. Consider letting your lawn go dormant in summer. It will green up again in the fall.
7. Redirect sprinklers to avoid hitting the pavement. Watering pavement is wasteful.
8. Sweep your driveway or sidewalk instead of hosing it off.
9. Remove weeds regularly and use a weed barrier such as mulch material, bark, or filter fabric. Weeds rob the other plants of water.
10. Mix composted yard trimmings, manure, leaves and other organics into your soil to increase its water retention capacity and nutrients.

Using Mulch in Your Garden and Landscaping ...

- Decreases water loss from the soil
- Keeps soil cooler than if exposed to the sun, which aids moisture retention
- Keeps soil porous, improves aeration, and infiltration
- Provides an effective weed control tool
- Mulch can be rock, bark, grass clippings or yard trimmings



More facts & tips

Did you know that the amount of water lost to evaporation during afternoon watering can be twice that of morning and evening watering?

Over-watering leads to shallow root systems that are susceptible to drought, weeds, and disease. Too much irrigation also increases runoff that carries fertilizer and other pollutants into streams and ground water supplies.

Smart Turf Practices

- Use one of the new drought tolerant grass seed mixes (tall fescue blends are excellent). Fall is the best time to plant.
- Test soil before applying fertilizer to see what it really needs.
- Aerate turf before summer to improve water penetration, especially on slopes.
- Raise mowing heights to 2.5 - 3 inches to improve rooting depth.
- Leave the clippings. "Grasscycling" makes lawns healthier and more drought resistant, and does not cause thatch. Grasscycling can cut fertilizer needs by up to 50%.
- Keep mower blades sharp to avoid tearing and stressing the grass.
- Consider letting your lawn go brown. Grass naturally goes dormant in dry summer conditions. Water dormant lawns deeply once each rainless month to keep roots alive. High traffic areas should be watered more regularly.
- In fall, over-seed thin areas to bring back a lush lawn. Aerate, then top dress with compost, and if needed fertilize with "slow-release" or "natural" fertilizer.

For more information about water conservation, contact:

Hood River Soil & Water
Conservation District 386-4588

OSU Extension Service and Master Gardeners
386-3343

Hood River Watershed Group
386-6063

Or call your local irrigation district:

Farmers Irrigation District
386-3115

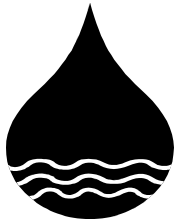
Dee Irrigation District
354-3248

East Fork Irrigation District
354-1185

Mt Hood Irrigation District
490-1627

Middle Fork Irrigation District
352-6468

Or call a local irrigation equipment supplier



Outdoor Water-Saving Tips for Hood River Rural & City Residents, Commercial Landscapes & Parks

Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District
Hood River Watershed Group
Hood River County Extension