

RPU Plugged In



RPU's Annual Water Edition

- Water Conservation Made Easy
 - Water Storage "By the Numbers"
 - Importance of Fixing a Leak
 - Electric Distribution System River Crossing
 - National Drinking Water Week
 - Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about RPU Drinking Water
- And much more!

Water Conservation Made Easy

Urbanization increases the extent of impervious surfaces and decreases the amount of storm water infiltration. Saving water helps offset this lost groundwater recharge. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), efficient water use has economic, health, and environmental benefits. Here are recommendations from the EPA you can use to increase your water conservation efforts.

In-House Water Conservation

- Turn off the tap while shaving or brushing teeth.
- Take short showers instead of tub baths. Turn off the water while soaping or shampooing.
- If you must use a tub, close the drain before turning on the water and fill the tub only half full.
- Never use your toilet as a waste basket.
- Refrigerate drinking water instead of running water until it is cool.
- Use a basin instead of tap water to wash fruits and vegetables.
- Scrape, rather than rinse, your dishes before loading into the dishwasher; wash only full loads.
- Add food waste to your compost pile – not your garbage disposal.
- Wash only full loads of laundry or use the appropriate water level or load size selection.

Equipment

- Install high-efficiency toilets.* Or, if it doesn't interfere with flushing, place a water-filled, plastic container in your toilet tank. Install low-flow faucet aerators and showerheads. Install a high-efficiency washing machine.
- Repair all leaks. A leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons per day. To detect leaks in the toilet, add food coloring to the tank water. If the colored water appears in the bowl, the toilet is leaking.

Landscape Irrigation

- Use a rain barrel* to water plants and trees.
- Water the lawn or garden during the calmest and coolest part of the day (early morning is best).
- Never overwater your lawn or gardens; use a rain gauge to measure correct amounts of water.
- Water trees and shrubs, which have deep root systems, longer and less frequently than shallow-rooted plants; use soaker hoses or trickle irrigation systems for trees and shrubs.
- Use mulch around shrubs and garden plants to reduce evaporation from the soil surface.
- Remove thatch and aerate turf to encourage movement of water to the root zone.
- Raise your lawn mower cutting height – longer grass blades help shade each other to reduce evaporation.
- Minimize or eliminate fertilizing, which promotes new growth needing additional watering.
- Set sprinklers to water the lawn or garden only – DON'T water the street or sidewalk.
- Detect and repair all irrigation system leaks and install moisture sensors on sprinkler systems.

Other Outdoor Uses

- Sweep driveways, sidewalks, and steps rather than cleaning them with water.
 - Consider using a commercial car wash that recycles water.
- If washing the car at home, use water from a bucket or control the flow of the hose with an automatic shut-off nozzle.
- Do not install or use ornamental water features unless they recycle the water.
 - Consider purchasing a new water-saving swimming pool filter.
 - Use a pool cover to reduce evaporation when pool is not being used.

* Rebates available for qualifying equipment purchases. Refer to the RPU website (www.rpu.org) for full details.



Water Storage “By the Numbers”

Rose Harbor Tower – 108 feet

→ **Capacity – 500,000 gallons**

Apache Tower – 167 feet

→ **Capacity – 500,000 gallons**

St. Bridget Tower – 111 feet (planned size)

→ **Capacity – 500,000 gallons**

50th Avenue Hydropillar – 119.5 feet

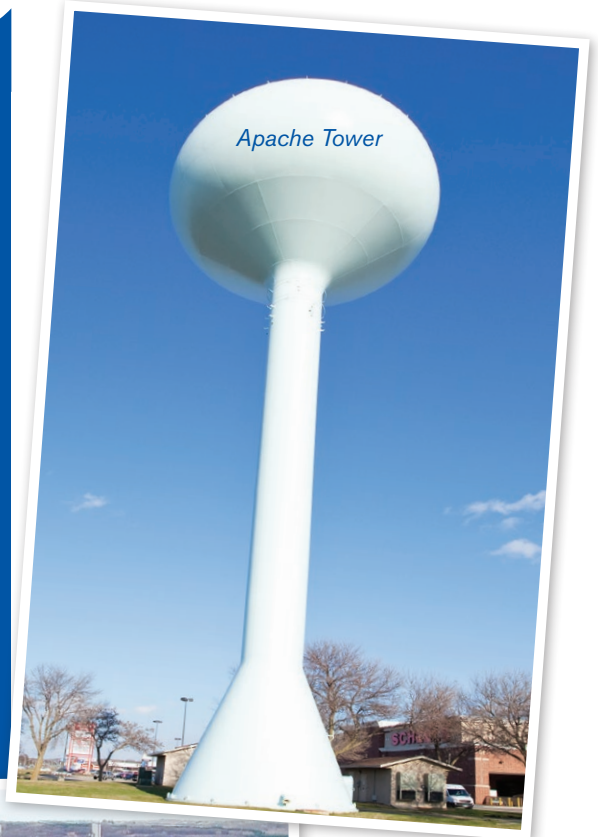
→ **Capacity – 2 million gallons**

Bandel Reservoir – 42.5 feet

→ **Capacity – 2.25 million gallons**

St. Mary's Reservoir – 62 feet

→ **Capacity – 3.3 million gallons**





Importance of Fixing a Leak



Being handy around the house doesn't have to be difficult. Common types of leaks found in the home are worn toilet flappers, dripping faucets, and other leaking valves. These types of leaks are often easily correctable, requiring only a few tools and hardware that can pay for themselves in water savings.

Checking for Leaks

To check for leaks in your home, you first need to determine whether you're wasting water and then identify the source of the leak.

- Take a look at your water usage during a colder month, such as January or February. If a family of four exceeds 12,000 gallons (equal to 16.04 units of water) per month, there may be serious leaks.
- Check your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter changes at all, you probably have a leak.
- Identify toilet leaks by placing a drop of food coloring in the toilet tank. If any color shows up in the bowl after 15 minutes, you have a leak. (Be sure to flush immediately after the experiment to avoid staining the tank.)
- Examine faucet gaskets and pipe fittings for any water on the outside of the pipe to check for surface leaks.

Toilets

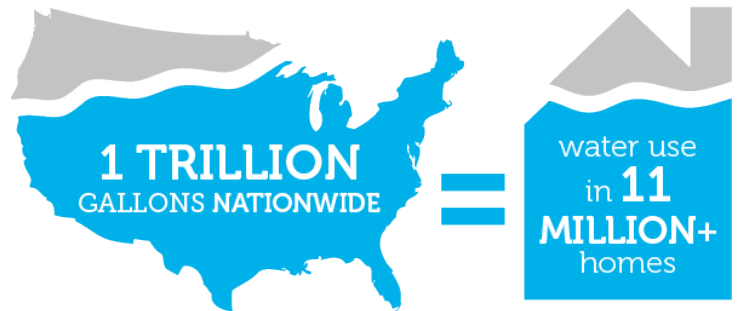
A common reason why toilets leak is an old or worn-out toilet flapper (e.g., valve seal). Flappers are inexpensive rubber parts that can build up minerals or decay over time. Replacing them can be a quick and easy fix for your water woes. To fix this leak, consult your local hardware store, home improvement retailer, or licensed plumber.

TIP: Bring the old flapper to the hardware store for comparison to make sure you buy a new flapper that fits your toilet model. You can also check the owner's manual, if you have it, or the manufacturer's website for the appropriate replacement part number for the flapper.

Showerheads

Some leaky showerheads can be fixed by making sure there is a tight connection between the showerhead and the pipe stem and by using pipe tape to secure it. Pipe tape, also called Teflon tape, is available at most hardware stores, is easy to apply, and can help tame unruly leaks. For more complicated valve leaks in showers that drip when not in use, contact an experienced handyperson or licensed plumber.

TIP: It's also a good idea to check and, if needed, replace the washer or "o" ring inside the showerhead while making this repair.



Outdoors

If you have an in-ground irrigation system, check it each spring before use to make sure it wasn't damaged by frost or freezing. Or hire an irrigation professional certified by a WaterSense® labeled program to inspect it for you. These professionals have passed a certification program focused on water efficiency. They will not only help you detect and correct leaks in the system, but also maximize its efficiency.

Finally, check your garden hose for leaks at its connection to the spigot. If it leaks while you run your hose, replace the nylon or rubber hose washer and ensure a tight connection to the spigot using pipe tape and a wrench.

Leaks Still Flowing Overboard?

Have you done all that you can to try to eliminate leaks from your home, but still can't nip that drip in the bud?

If you've already determined you have leaks and you find these step-by-step solutions aren't enough to stop them, it might be time to replace your leaking fixtures. If you consult with a plumbing professional, and look for the WaterSense® label when considering a new toilet, faucet, or showerhead, you could increase your home's water efficiency.*

- Additional water conservation tips and ideas can be found in RPU's Water Usage Brochure, available at the RPU Service Center.
- * Rebates available for qualifying equipment purchases. Refer to the RPU website (www.rpu.org) for full details.
- Information used courtesy of the American Water Works Association.



A crew of eight line workers completed the project.

Foremen:

Todd Keach
Bjorn Olson

Line workers:

Matt Tupper
Mitch DenBoer
Steve Laugen
Jared Quandt
Lee Timmerman
Tanner Winter

Electric Distribution System River Crossing

A large electric distribution project, crossing the Zumbro River near Mayowood, was just recently completed. The 13.8kV (kilovolt) line was reinforced with new structures to better ensure reliability over the estimated 470-foot span across the river. This line had been washed out three times in the past due to storm conditions.



Drinking Water Week
MAY 3–9, 2015
What do you know about **H₂O?**



NATIONAL DRINKING WATER WEEK – MAY 3-9, 2015



For more than 35 years, RPU, along with the American Water Works Association, has celebrated National Drinking Water Week.

This year, we want to give you a behind-the-scenes look at the RPU water system and what goes into maintaining and delivering great tasting, quality tap water to our customers each day.

.....
 Visit Rochester Public Utilities on Facebook to view a new daily video during Drinking Water Week.
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Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about RPU Drinking Water

Municipal water utilities, including RPU, are highly tested and scrutinized for safety and quality. In accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), the testing results over the past year are compiled and made available for the public. Each May, RPU releases the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) publicly.

This year, we are pleased to announce that water provided by RPU again met all state and federal drinking water standards.

Hard copy versions of the CCR will not be mailed out individually as in past years, but a complete version can be found on RPU's web page located at: www.rpu.org/environment/water-quality/. Questions and requests for a hard copy version of the 2014 Water Quality Report can be directed to Todd Osweiler at **507.280.1589**.

Rochester Public Utilities **Water Quality Report** 2014



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*must meet minimum efficiency requirements as specified in the Water Efficiency Rebate Application



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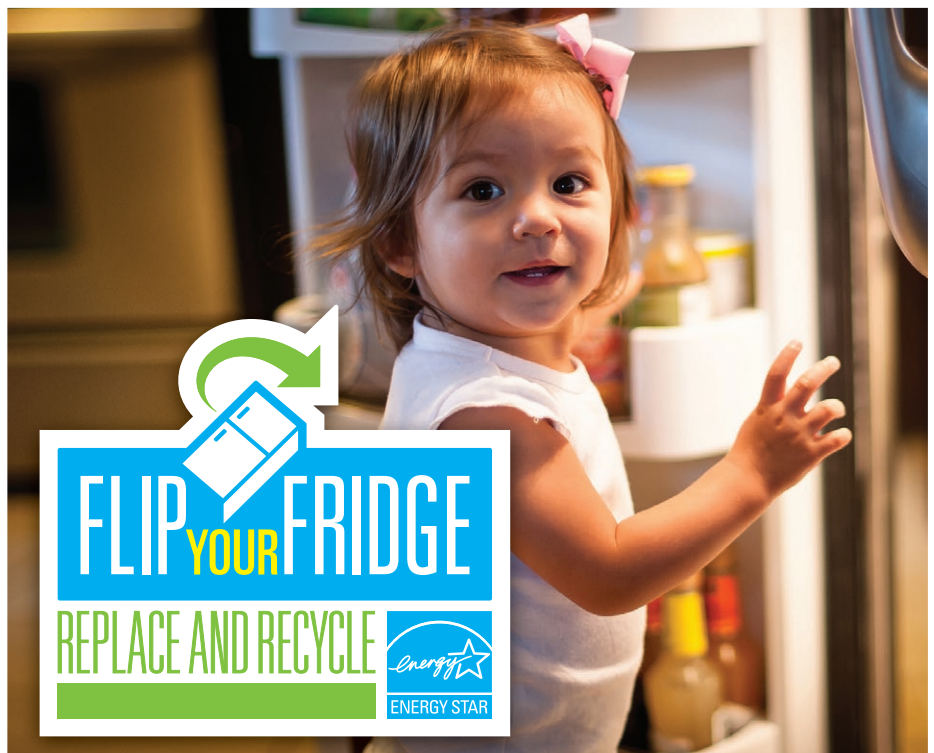
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RPU SERVICE CENTER Holiday Hours

The RPU Service Center
will be closed on:
Monday, May 25, in
observance of Memorial Day

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Public Utilities



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