In Pursuit of Perfection? How About Perspective?

As I write this, we are one week away from Drinking Water Week and three weeks removed from Kitsap’s Annual Water Festival for county third and fourth graders. Both of these are meant to bring awareness to the importance of water in our lives. At the Water Festival, I typically present a display called “Rainfall to Tap” that illustrates Kitsap’s hydrologic cycle. As you know, Kitsap gets all of it’s water supply from rainfall. This rainfall tricks down and recharges our aquifers which is where we get all of our drinking water. As the kids come by I endeavor to get two points across: one, we live right above our water supply. So be careful what you put on the ground because you might end up drinking it one day. The other, and perhaps more important point is: we get (on average) around 50 inches of rainfall a year. We have lots of good, clean water. We are fortunate. Lots of people don’t have it so good. Some people have to walk miles each day to fill pots from dirty streams. We have it on demand, hot and cold, 24/7. We should be grateful. And how do we show gratitude for the good water we have? In two ways: by not wasting it (out of respect for those in this world who do not have it) and by taking care of it (so that it is here for your kids. And their kids. And so on.). Drinking Water Week is meant to focus attention on the importance of water in our lives. But we should not limit that to one week a year. We should take moments every day to consider our good fortune, be grateful and reaffirm our commitment to responsibility and stewardship. When you fill your coffee pot in the morning. When you take a shower. When you pour your kid a glass of water to drink. With our natural resources, our infrastructure and our regulatory oversight (Safe Drinking Water Act) we, generally, have it pretty good. Many in this world do not.

A Couple Examples

Over the past year, Cape Town, South Africa has nervously eyed a so-called “Day Zero”, the day on which the city is projected to run out of water. Due to a years long drought in the region, the city’s reservoirs of water have run dangerously low. Residents have been restricted to just over 13 gallons per person per day (by contrast, we each use around 60). While these restrictions have pushed Day Zero out a bit, the city remains in a desperate position. How desperate? This week I read of a plan being pitched to tow an iceberg up from Antarctica in order to keep the city in water.

The country of Jordan, in the middle east, has a similar problem. The country of 10 million is having a difficult time providing safe water to its people. Jordan’s problems; however, go beyond drought and lack of natural resources. Water service has been disrupted by war, strained by an influx of refugees and limited by failing infrastructure, namely leaks. The BBC reports that, in some areas, as much as 76% of water leaks out before it reaches a tap. To help with the crisis, Jordan—for the first time—is training women to be plumbers. In 2011, Jordan’s Ministry of Water and Irrigation launched the Water Wise Women program. To date over 300 women have been trained as plumbers. It is estimated that, by fixing the nation’s leaky infrastructure they can meet the needs of over 2 million people. It beats towing icebergs.

Now is a Good Time to Help

Its always a good time to help. But we are entering an especially good time: summer.

For many households, water use more than doubles during the summer months. The primary reason for this is outdoor water usage, namely lawn watering.

I like a nice lawn as much as the next guy so far be it from me to tell people not to water their grass. I will, though, remind you that summer is when our streams and wells are at their most vulnerable and this increased demand can be a stress. I will also ask that, if you irrigate, you do so responsibly.

Visit the EPA’s Water Sense webpage at https://www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoors for tips on how to save water even as you maintain a beautiful landscape.
And now back to our regularly scheduled programming...

What are you waiting for? Over 1,500 of your fellow PUD customers have signed up for autopay. They are saving themselves the time and expense of mailing in a paper payment every couple months. With their saved time they are pursuing new hobbies, travelling, spending more time with family. OK, maybe they’re not saving that much time. But they are saving themselves the hassle. And you should, too. On our website, customers can set up an online account with a VISA or Master Card. Or download (or call to request) a form to set up auto withdrawals from a checking account. At this time, we can only take autopay setups from the owner of the property being served. If that’s you, save yourself some time and hassle and set up your account today. It only takes a minute. Who knows what you will do with all the time you save.

Consumer Confidence Reports

Each year, Group A public water systems—those that serve over 15 connections—are required to post results of the previous year’s water quality sampling. These reports are called Consumer Confidence Reports and report the levels of any regulated compounds detected in the previous year. The reports, as well as the sampling, is required under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Customers of our Group A water systems can view their system’s report online at http://www.kpud.org/consumerConfidence.php. Reports will be online by the end of June.

Marty Sebren Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

Every year for Drinking Water Week, Washington State Department of Health presents awards to individuals and agencies that have done exemplary jobs of helping provide safe drinking water to their communities. This year they presented Marty Sebren, KPUD’s just retired Hydrogeologist, with their Lifetime Achievement Award for his career spent keeping Kitsap communities in water. Pictured left to right are: Mike Means (Washington Department of Health), Lloyd Berg (KPUD Commissioner), Debra Lester (KPUD Commissioner), Marty Sebren, Jim Civilla (KPUD Commissioner) and Bob Hunter (KPUD General Manager). The award was presented on May 8th.

*100 cubic feet equals 748 gallons