

Water is life.
At home, at school, everywhere, it is needed.
To keep it around, we need to keep it clean.
Even those nasty sewers.
Reading a book won't keep it clean.
Conserving it and purifying it, will keep it around.
Only the people can conserve it.
Never give up. If we try, we will succeed.
So give it a try. Keep it alive!
Everyone needs water.
Rely on it. Yes, but not for long.
Various amounts are cleaned.
Any way or any how, we need to keep it around.
Together we can try to conserve our water.
In any landmark, water is there.
Only if we care.
Night or day. We will conserve life.

-Tandy James

This 5th grader knows the value of our precious water. Tandy speaks of water as a living thing, something that can be saved only by conservation. At times, we, as adults can learn much from our children.

In order to have a healthy planet, we all depend on water. The environment is a delicate balance and when that balance is upset, bad things begin to happen. Initially, there was plenty of water to supply all the needs of the plants, animals and humans that reside on this planet. Rain, melting ice and snow, water bodies, and springs provided all the fresh water necessary to replenish the surface water along with the aquifer. Swamps, marshes, estuaries and forests filtered the water keeping it pure and healthy.

Mankind has been altering this delicate balance for thousands of years. These alterations have affected the plants and animals that are dependant on that balance. Unfortunately, many of these life forms have not been able to adjust or adapt to mankind's interruptions and they have become extinct. Natural areas continue to be degraded and the cycle continues.

Every year, 14 billions pounds of sewage, sludge, and garbage are dumped into the world's oceans; 19 trillion gallons of waste also enter the water annually. Although water pollution is a huge concern, keeping the waters clean is only part of the solution to a monumental problem.

The most cost-effective and environmentally sound way to reduce our demand for water is conservation. Saving water also saves energy by reducing the need for pumping and treating it. There are steps that each one of us can take to conserve and protect our water.

- If you wash dishes by hand--and that's the best way--don't leave the water running for rinsing. If you have two sinks, fill one with rinse water. If you only have one sink, use a spray device or short blasts instead of letting the water run. Saves 200 to 500 gallons a month.
- When washing dishes by hand, use the least amount of detergent possible. This minimizes rinse water needed. Saves 50 to 150 gallons a month.
- Use the garbage disposal less and the garbage more (even better--compost!). Saves 50 to 150 gallons a month.
- Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants. Chunks of bark, peat moss or gravel slows down evaporation. Saves 750 to 1,500 gallons a month.
- Don't water the lawn on windy days. There's too much evaporation. Can waste up to 300 gallons in one watering.
- Set lawn mower blades one notch higher. Longer grass means less evaporation. Saves 500 to 1,500 gallons each month.
- Dispose of hazardous materials properly! One quart of oil can contaminate over 1 million gallons of water, effectively eliminating that much water from our water supply.

These suggestions are just a few of the ways that water can be saved. Each person can and will make a difference. By cutting down on water usage and keeping the water we do have clean, we are making a better world for future generations to live in.