

No Water No Life®

Facts about Fresh Water Resources

GLOBAL FACTS

There's a word for water in every language. – American Museum of Natural History [Hereafter, AMNH]

The shortage of fresh, clean water is the greatest danger to which mankind has ever been exposed.
-- Human Rights Commission

All Earth's lakes and rivers constitute less than 1/50th of 1% of the water on the planet. – AMNH

The human population is now 6.7 billion, projected to grow by 1/2 billion by 2015, and to rise to 9 billion by 2040. The UN Population Fund predicts global consumption of water doubling every 20 years --twice as fast as the world's population is expanding. -- Wall Street Journal, March 29-30, 2008, page B-1. [Hereafter WSJ.]

Global water use has tripled since 1950. -- BBC/Cosmos Magazine. [Hereafter BBC.]

On a global scale, we only use 20% of available freshwater, but in many arid regions, 95% of available water is used. --Africa Geographic, June 2005, p 47.

Once a year in Stigomta, Sweden, citizens observe "Pee Outside Day" during which they save 50% of the municipal water used on a typical day. -- Troubled Water: Saints, Sinners, Truth And Lies About The Global Water Crisis. [Hereafter, Troubled Water]

The three largest water corporations will control 70 percent of the water in Europe and North America by the end of the decade. -- Troubled Water

AFRICAN FACTS

Women in sub-Sahara Africa walk 15-17 hrs /week getting water and up to 6 miles per day. – AMNH.

The average person in the US uses 100-175 gallons of water every day at home. In Africa, the average family uses 5 gallons a day. --Blue Planet Run, 2007.

Currently 300 million people in Africa do not have access to safe water supply and adequate sanitation: that's about the population of the US. – "Water of Life 2007-2015" by Diageo (UK corporation)

The weight of water that women in Africa carry on their heads is commonly 20 kg, the average UK airport luggage allowance. – "Water of Life 2007-2015" by Diageo, UK. [Hereafter "Water of Life."]

AMERICAN FACTS

More than 450,000 miles of US rivers are under mercury advisories. nearly 40% of America's freshwater fish are threatened with extinction. www.oceansalert.org

Pine park beetle infestation, begun in 1996, has thus far infected 1.5 million acres in British Columbia – an area the size of Louisiana. Since 2004 close to 300,000 acres of Colorado aspen have died.

40% of fresh water in the U.S. is consumed in industrial applications. -- WSJ

NATURAL RESOURCE FACTS

The amount of living matter in a wetland may be 10 to 1,000 times that of dry land nearby
The volume of groundwater ranges from 30 to 100 times more than is in all Earth's rivers, lakes and streams.
One gallon (3.8 liters) of gas can contaminate 1,000,000 gallons of groundwater (3,700,00 liters). – AMNH
One ton of paper consumes 17 trees, 3 cu yds of landfill space and pollutes 20,000 gallons of water

WATER-RELATED HEALTH ISSUES

More than one in six people lack access to safe drinking water, according to the World Water Council. – WSJ.
90% of wastewater in developing countries is discharged into rivers and streams without any treatment. --
UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, and the World Resources Institute, "World Resources 2000-2001," pg. 25-26.

Over 1 billion people worldwide must walk at least 30 minutes to get clean water. -- Troubled Water

Every 15 seconds a child dies from a water-related disease. Two million children die a year from lack of water and proper sanitation. -- Blue Planet Run, 2007.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Emissions of greenhouse gases have risen 70 percent since 1970 and could nearly double from current levels by 2030 if nothing is done. -- "The Warming Challenge," New York Times, Editorial, May 5, 2007.

Science magazine reported in March [2007] that Antarctica and Greenland are both losing ice overall, about 125 billion metric tons a year between the two of them – and the amount has accelerated over the last decade. --
"The Big Melt" By Nicholas D. Kristof, New York Times, August 16, 2007 [Hereafter, "Big Melt"]

Per a May '07 article by five scientists who analyzed the extent of Arctic sea ice each summer since 1953:
Computer models anticipated a loss of 2.5 percent of ice per decade, but the actual loss was 7.8 percent per decade – three times greater. The article notes that the extent of summer ice melting is 30 years ahead of where the models predict. – "Big Melt"

DAMS IMPACT

More than 60 percent of the world's rivers have been dammed or diverted. Over the last 50 years, humans have built more than 47,000 large dams around the world. Today, dams generate 20 percent of the world's electric power, and provide needed water to cities and for irrigation. – AMNH.

The profusion of dams worldwide has changed the shape of the Earth's gravitational field. -- Troubled Water

AGRICULTURE FACTS

Agriculture consumes 70% of Earth's fresh water use. –AMNH.
Drip irrigation uses 30 to 70% less water than traditional methods – National Geographic March 2009

It takes over 700 gallons of water to produce one medium-sized cotton t-shirt. – AMNH
It takes 260 gallons of water to produce 2.2 pounds of wheat and 3,380 gallons of water to produce 2.2 pounds of beef, according to the World Water Council. – WSJ

WATER DELIVERY

The United States and Canada have enough water pipes to circle the earth 40 times. (Making Water Clean, Rebecca Olien. MN: Capstone Press, 2005))