

DRAFT

Water Conservation

Reduce Demand and Maintain High Quality System

Target(s):

Reduce 4 year average demand to 110 gallons per capita per year by 2015. Keep all "Unaccounted for Water" in system less than 5%.

Create customer service charges at levels sufficient to continue to operate, maintain, replace, and build high quality water system infrastructure by 2015.

Lincoln Now:

Every person in Lincoln used an average of 120 gallons of water every day in 2010 compared to 128 gallons per day in 2009. The most recent 4 year average water use by LWS customers was 15% less than the previous 7 years. Since 2006, there has been almost a 25% decrease. This trend has been occurring since the early 1980s due to a variety of factors: conservation efforts (including rates which promote conservation), minimal rate increases, and due to cooler, wetter summers than in the early 2000s. All this combines to reduce water use and revenues from water use fees. While the City of Lincoln has greatly increased in population during that time, the actual water use, due to this trend, has remained fairly constant. **More than half of the water Lincoln residents use in the summer goes to outdoor use for gardens, shrubs and lawns.**

LWS is obligated to provide water to the entire city, and the City of Lincoln now covers an area of more than 90 square miles. LWS maintains 1,243 miles of water mains, 10,685 fire hydrants and 24,947 valves, 139 broken mains were repaired in 2010. The replacement cost for all of the Lincoln Water System's existing infrastructure assets totals nearly \$1.5 billion dollars. About two thirds of that replacement cost is the network of water distribution mains used to deliver water to customer's homes and businesses.

Water "leakage" occurs in any water system, but the City of Lincoln has consistently held its "Unaccounted for Water" (UFW) under 5% of total water use, far below national averages. If the UFW goes up, it suggests failures in the water main system. Replacement of the water mains and other infrastructure is paid for by all LWS customers through either user fees or revenue bonds (which are paid back over time with user fees). In addition, new water mains, pump stations, and reservoirs are needed to serve a growing community like Lincoln. Less water use results in less funding available for maintenance and replacement infrastructure projects.