

Water Consumption and Conservation

Why it matters

There is increasing pressure on Saskatchewan's water resources. Our population is growing. People are moving from rural to urban areas. Economic growth and climate change are also adding to the strain.

A process to coordinate surface water withdrawals is a key management tool for the ministry. This process ensures that current and future withdrawals are sustainable. In Saskatchewan, approval is required if a surface water withdrawal amounts to more than 13,700 litres per day. That's equal to five million litres per year.

Conserving our water makes economic sense. If water conservation can keep demand within the capacity of existing systems, expensive investments in new reservoirs and pipelines can be reduced or avoided. Pumping and treating water also consumes energy. Reducing the use of treated water cuts energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

- **60 to 65 per cent of the water used in your family's home is used in the bathroom.** Each year, about \$220 is flushed down the drain, and about \$260 is used in the bath and shower.
- **70 per cent of the earth's surface is covered with water**, but only one per cent is useable fresh water.
- According to Environment and Climate Change Canada, the average Canadian uses **329 litres of water per day**. Compare that to the average person living in a third world country, who only uses eight litres of water per day.
- **1,000 litres of tap water costs about \$2.** The same amount of bottled water costs about \$1,500.

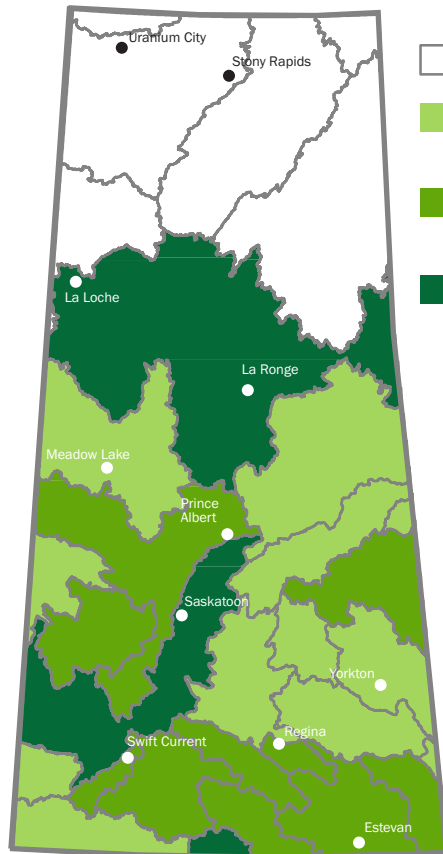
What is happening

To compare five-year average water use, 23 of the 29 watersheds in the province had communities that reported their water consumption every year between 2006 and 2015. The average annual municipal water use per capita for both five-year averages was less than 381 litres per person per day (L/person/day) for nine watersheds, between 381 and 479 L/person/day for six watersheds, and greater than 479 L/person/day for one watershed.

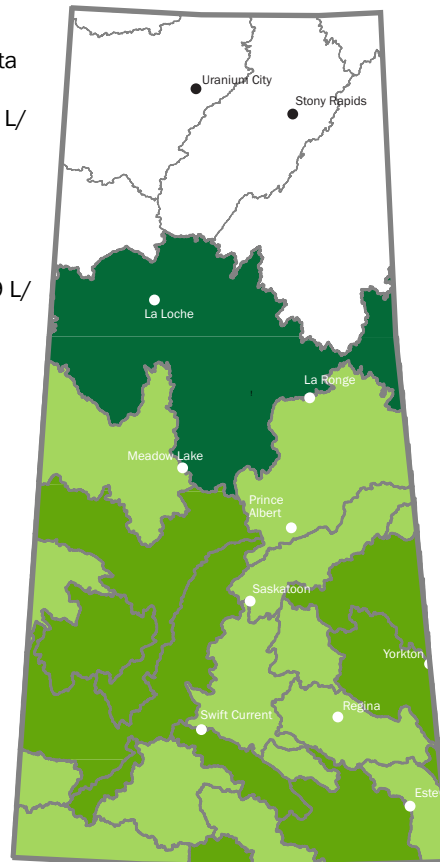
Caution is required when comparing municipal water use per capita between watersheds because:

- communities have differing proportions of residential use to industrial, commercial and public service demands;
- several large municipalities are located outside of the watershed from which they source water (e.g., Regina, Moose Jaw); and
- many communities rely on groundwater that may not be confined to the watershed boundaries.

Municipal Water Consumption, 2006 - 2010



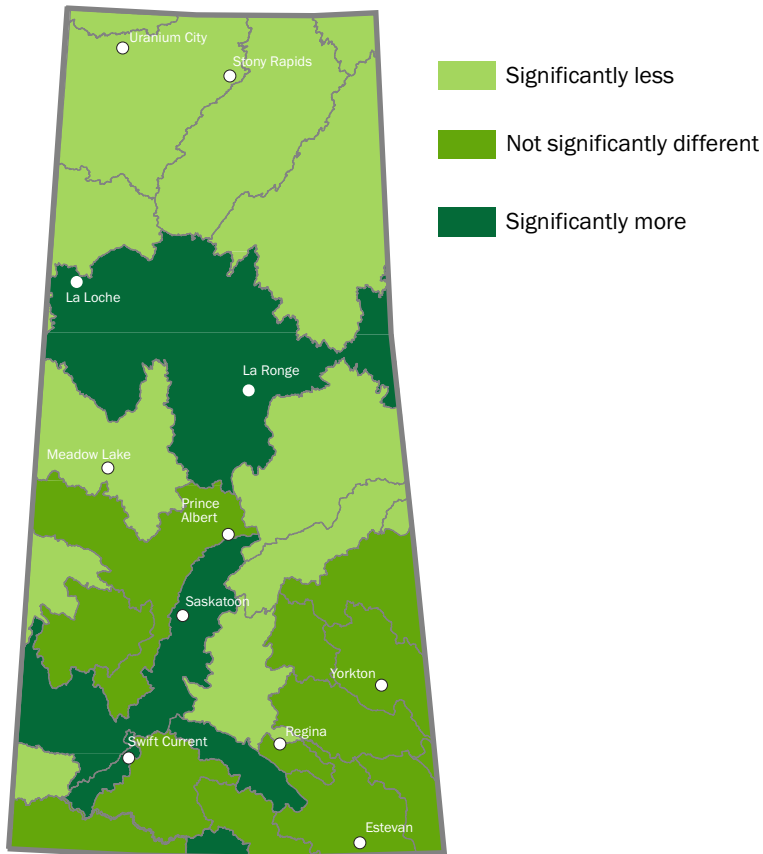
Municipal Water Consumption, 2011 - 2015



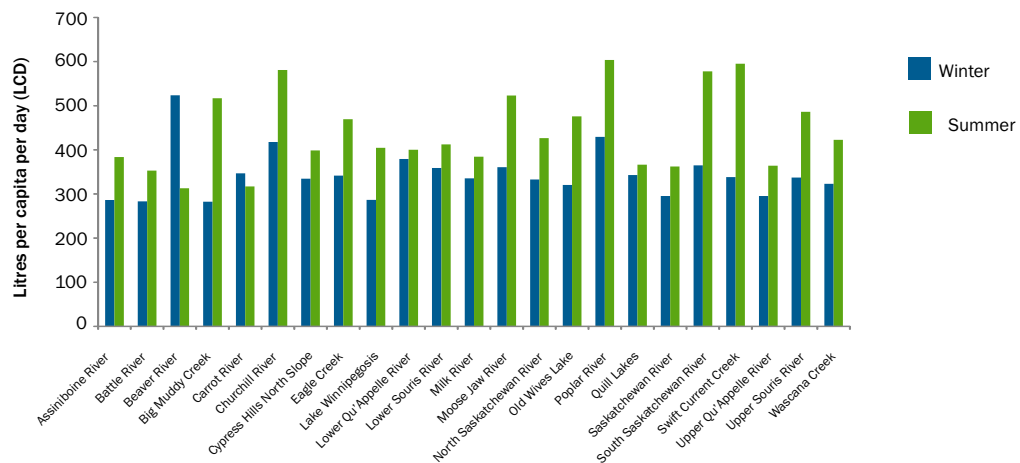
Across all watersheds, there was on average a 10 per cent decline in per capita water consumption between 2006 and 2010 and between 2011 and 2015. Eight watersheds moved from a higher water consumption rating in 2006-2010 to a lower water consumption rating in 2011-2015. The only watershed that increased its water consumption in 2011-2015 compared to 2006-2010 was the Assiniboine River Watershed.

Watersheds with a rating of high intensity in both the Surface Water Allocation indicator and high municipal water consumption value in the Water Use and Conservation indicator help to identify areas that will benefit from targeted water conservation programming.

10-Year Average Water Consumption, 2006 - 2015



10-year Average Municipal Per Capita Water Use, 2006 - 2015



On average, water used in summer is 19 per cent higher than over winter. The Beaver River Watershed was the only watershed that used on average 67 per cent more water in the winter than in the summer. The reason for this variation is because many communities need to keep their systems pumping water continuously in the winter to keep the pipes from freezing.