



# PSC Water Currents

The water conservation and efficiency newsletter of the  
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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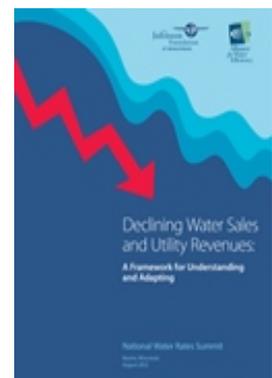
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## PSC Updates Table of Benchmark Retirement Costs

The PSC recently updated the Table of Benchmark Retirement Costs used for recording plant retirements by adding data for years 2000 to 2009. The additional data was developed using information Wisconsin utilities reported in the annual reports they filed with the PSC. The Table of Benchmark Retirement Costs is intended for use by small utilities that are not required to maintain continuing property records. You can also find the table on the PSC website under "Resources, Reports & Tariffs" - "Accounting." It is incorporated into the [Water Utility Reference Manual](#). For more information on plant retirement costs, contact Anne Waymouth at [Anne.Waymouth@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Anne.Waymouth@Wisconsin.gov).

## Free Rates Webinar: "Our Current Revenue Loss Dilemma: Is Consumer Conservation Really the Culprit?"

In times of drought when supplies are short, utilities ask customers to conserve water through watering restrictions and other forms of demand reduction measures. Conversely, in times of water abundance, when it has rained a lot, and consumer outdoor water use is down, utilities may dream of higher water sales in order to meet fixed system costs. Water efficiency programs may be cut when utility revenues decline, because the desire to sell more water is paramount. On June 18, the Alliance for Water Efficiency will



sponsor a webinar on what is commonly referred to as the "conservation conundrum." The session will discuss the true causes of water utility revenue losses and provide guidance on how to consider conservation a financial asset to a utility rather than a detriment. It will draw from discussions at a special rates summit held in August, 2012 at the Johnson Foundation at Wingspread. [Register today](#) on AWE's website. While you're visiting the AWE website, check out their [2013 AWE Business Guide](#). This publication lists manufacturers and distributors of water-efficient products, technical assistance providers for conservation and efficiency program design and development, and other professional services offered by AWE's Business and Industry members.

## **Improving Efficiency Through Focus on Energy**

There is no question that water and energy are inextricably linked. Production and distribution of water are very energy-intensive endeavors, and the amount of fresh water consumed for world energy production is on track to double within the next 25 years according to the International Energy Agency. In Wisconsin alone, water utilities used 355 million kilowatt-hours in producing and distributing their product in 2011.

Focus on Energy (FOE) helps Wisconsin businesses, including those in the energy-intensive water and wastewater industry, control energy demand, which helps lower operating costs, protect the environment and promote in-state economic development. As local communities and municipal utilities prepare their budgets for next year, they should remember to look to FOE as a potential source of funding for projects that improve efficiency. FOE provides incentives of up to \$200,000 per project and \$400,000 per customer for purchase and installation of energy efficient equipment and processes that can also help save water. To help streamline utilities' outside funding efforts and maximize the sustainability potential of their projects, DNR's Safe Drinking Water Loan program is currently investigating integration of FOE's energy efficiency incentives into its loan/principal forgiveness award process. For more information on FOE incentive programs, check the [Focus on Energy website](#), or call them at 800-762-7077.

## **DNR Undertakes Water Audit Pilot Project at Peninsula State Park**

If your summer vacation plans include a trip to Door County, you may have an opportunity to visit a state park that has cut its water use by half in recent years and plans to do even more to save water. At [Peninsula State Park](#), one of the three most visited parks in the state, the Wisconsin DNR is currently checking toilets, pipes, and other plumbing for leaks and determining the plumbing's water efficiency. This [water audit](#), funded through a grant from the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program, is part of a pilot project aimed at developing recommendations for measures that can reduce water use and associated costs at this park and others throughout the state system. "We've reduced the amount of water pumped from the ground by nearly 47 percent in the last five years while our park attendance remained above one million annual visitors," says Chuck Smrz, the park's utilities specialist. "The reduction in water use represents a significant financial savings and is good for the park's natural resources, too. I think we can do even better, and the water audit can help us do that."

According to Shaili Pfeiffer, a DNR water specialist, "We're asking municipalities, industrial facilities and farms to all evaluate their water use for efficiency, so it only makes sense that the state do this as

well." Once the contractor conducting the water audit has filed his report, DNR staff will decide which improvements to make immediately at the park and which to add to the long-term facilities plan. The project includes a follow up audit in May 2014 to verify the water savings, Pfeiffer says. The DNR will use the experience gained at Peninsula State Park to help reduce water use at other state parks. For more information on this project, contact Shaili Pfeiffer (608-267-7630) with the DNR. You may also contact Kelli Bruns (920- 868-3258) at Peninsula State Park.

## **Waukesha Water Utility Contracts With H2Oscore**

The Waukesha Water Commission recently approved a \$4,000, one year contract with Milwaukee water industry startup H2Oscore. The contract allows Waukesha's 17,209 water customers to use H2Oscore's online dashboard to track their household water consumption, compare it with their neighbors' usage, and earn credits for conserving water. Credits can then be redeemed for discounts at area restaurants and other businesses. H2Oscore also works with its business partners to help them achieve water savings.

In spring 2001, Marquette University professor McGee Young and students in his water policy and environmental ethics course developed H2Oscore as a way to engage communities in conserving water by providing incentives. With respect to Waukesha, Young said, "What H2Oscore is trying to do is to change the way that people interact with their government to solve public policy problems. Here's a community that's willing to conserve differently through voluntary, engaged and empowered water conservation." After rolling out its software through pilot programs in Milwaukee and Whitewater, the deal with Waukesha represents H2Oscore's first contract. The dashboards for Waukesha should be ready for use in the near future. For more information on this innovative, made-in-Wisconsin software, check out the [H2Oscore website](#).

### **About this newsletter**

Water Currents is published by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to provide information about water conservation-related news and events in Wisconsin. The newsletter is compiled and edited by Denise Schmidt, PSC Water Conservation Coordinator, (608) 266-1282.



To submit information for consideration in future newsletters, send an email to [Denise Schmidt](#). Include your name, organization, and contact information in the body of the message.

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