

Route to Drought

by **Michaela Owens**, michaellaowens, michaella.owens@yotes.collegeofidaho.edu

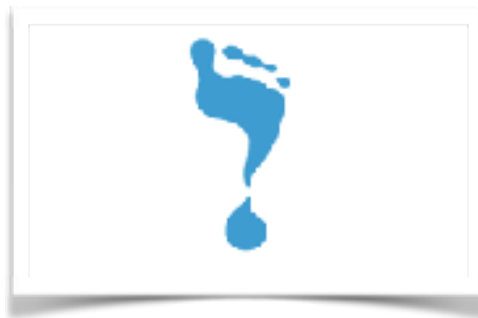
(How Not to) Waste Water

I use over 1,000 gallons a day of water at the Eco House.

How much do you use?

As a sustainably-minded person, I try not to waste water. I turn off the faucet when I brush my teeth, I fill the sink with water to do my dishes, recycle all my plastic and try not to buy more food or drink than I need. Still, I found out I use more than 1,000 gallons of water a day! Nope, I'm not guzzling water bottles like I have anti-rabies. There is such a thing as "virtual water," the water that goes into manufacturing the products you use every day! To see how much water

I used, I calculated my water footprint using [Grace's Footprint Calculator](#) and found my astounding footprint which is somehow still less than the national average of over 2,000 gallons a day! So I dug into which products were causing me to use the most water and what I could do to reduce my footprint.



Cotton Tee

It takes about 660 gallons of water to make just one t-shirt, even one with a slogan as sustainable as this!



Rubber Tire

It takes 2074 gallons of water to create the rubber tires on my car. Walking is now a better option for two reasons!

BEEF

Making two pounds of beef requires 4068 gallons of water. Feed for the livestock accounts for 99 percent of that massive footprint. Feed for the livestock accounts for 99 percent of that massive footprint.



COFFEE

My morning cup of coffee (8 fluid ounces) requires 37 gallons of virtual water to produce. This includes the water that goes into growing the beans.



CAT FOOD

I'm not eating it (thankfully) but my cat is- two pounds of wet cat food requires 3667 gallons of water!



Water You Doing?

What are some water-saving alternatives to my water-intensive consumption?

Fifteen hundred gallons is too many for one person to be consuming in one day. Two thousand is atrocious! My investigation led to me try to find some more sustainable solutions.



For breakfast (or earlier if you are a caffeine addict like me), I can have tea instead of coffee. It only uses about 9 gallons instead of 37. My cat can have dry food or my leftovers,

which will use much less water and reduce food waste. For dinner, instead of beef, I could have chicken which uses half the water. I can wear polyester instead of cotton because it only requires 92.5 gallons to a cotton shirt's 660. Lastly, I can walk to school, work or the local coffee shop instead of driving. It saves the rubber on my tires and reduces the use of fossil fuels!

“Not every item has a less water-intensive alternative.”



Not every item has alternative. For smartphones use water to is no smart phone. type this on quite a bit of nothing I can replace it. Therefore, I am going to have to change my behavior to make a real impact on my water consumption.

a less water intensive instance, 240 gallons of produce but there alternative to a The laptop I likely also uses water but there's use that would

