

Abstract

Introduction
Water use in Washington has evolved over the past 150 years from meager domestic and stock water needs to the present complex requirements of large irrigation projects, municipalities, industrial plants, and power generation facilities. Advances have been made in the ability to control, divert, and develop water. With the ever-increasing competition for water (especially during periods of drought), accurate water-use information is of considerable value in determining water availability and making sound resource management decisions.

The USGS compiles water-use data from numerous sources for all parts of the country, and since 1959 has published a series of reports on the estimated use of water in the United States at 5-year intervals. These reports contain state-level estimates of the amount of public- and self-supplied water used for commercial, domestic, industrial, irrigation, livestock, mining, power generation, and other purposes. The water-use data collected and compiled in Washington are an integral part of the nationwide assessment of water supply and demand (https://wa.water.usgs.gov/data/wuse/).

The future health and welfare of the Nation’s population is dependent upon a continuing supply of uncontaminated fresh water. Increasing withdrawals and increasing demands for instream flows will limit the water available for additional future uses. More comprehensive water-use data and analysis of water-use information are needed to quantify the stress on existing supplies and to better model and evaluate possible water-supply management options to supplement traditional water-supply approaches.