

## **Estimated Water Use in Montana in 2005**

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The U.S. Geological Survey has compiled estimates of water use in the United States at 5-year intervals since 1950. Estimated use of water in Montana for 2005 was compiled for seven categories of use—irrigation, public supply, self-supplied domestic, livestock, thermoelectric power, self-supplied industrial, and aquaculture. In 2005, the citizens of Montana withdrew about 10,060 million gallons of water per day (Mgal/d) from Montana's streams and aquifers for these seven categories of use. Withdrawals from surface water totaled about 9,780 Mgal/d (about 97 percent of total) and withdrawals from ground water totaled about 279 Mgal/d (about 3 percent of total).

In 2005, about 2.3 million acres in Montana were irrigated. Irrigation accounted for about 9,670 Mgal/d or about 96 percent of total withdrawals for all uses. Surface water was the source of about 98 percent of irrigation withdrawals and ground water provided slightly less than 2 percent. The 2005 average rate of withdrawal for irrigation was 4.7 acre-feet per acre. Not all water withdrawn for irrigation was consumed by plants; much of the water withdrawn eventually discharged back to streams as irrigation return flow.

Withdrawals for public supply in 2005 were about 142 Mgal/d, self-supplied domestic withdrawals were about 23 Mgal/d, withdrawals for livestock were about 39 Mgal/d, withdrawals for thermoelectric power generation were about 90 Mgal/d, self-supplied industrial withdrawals were about 67 Mgal/d, and withdrawals for aquaculture were about 29 Mgal/d. Ground water was the primary source for self-supplied domestic and self-supplied industrial water uses.