



## Poster Contest Fact Sheet

2026 Theme

### Water: Our Story

*You can be part of this important cause by designing a poster to educate, inspire, or motivate people about drinking water and our water resources!*

#### STORIES OF WATER

- Many cultures around the world have traditional stories about water. Here are a few examples:
  - [Nebi Abenaki Ways of Knowing Water \(video\)](#)
  - [Canadian Indigenous Stories \(website with videos\)](#)
  - [Water stories from around the world \(PDF\)](#)
- Around the world today, people experience water in different ways.
  - In many cultures, water is important for recreation, religious ceremonies, and scenic beauty, as well as for drinking and growing food. Water can also be a cause of conflict and wars.
  - A girl in Africa spends 8 hours each day walking to collect water for her family. [Read her story here.](#)
  - Think about how you use water each day, and how water is special to you and your traditions. Do you have a story to tell about how drinking water is important to you?



#### WATER AND EARTH

- The earth contains about 326 million trillion gallons (326,000,000,000,000,000) of water.
- Less than 1% of all the earth's water is accessible for humans to use. The remaining 99% is either salt water in the oceans, fresh water frozen in the polar ice caps, or groundwater in underground aquifers.
- Water is constantly moving on the earth's surface, through living creatures, and in the atmosphere through the water cycle.
- Climate change is affecting precipitation patterns, leading to more droughts and floods across the world.
- During the last ice age, Vermont was covered by glaciers, which are made of ice (frozen water). After this, part of Vermont was under an ocean (salt water) called the Champlain Sea.

## PEOPLE & WATER

- Humans need to consume about 8 glasses (two liters) of water per day. A person can only survive without water for about 3 days.
- Our bodies lose water when we breathe, sweat, cry, and go to the bathroom.
- Each American uses about 80-100 gallons of water per day.
- The largest household use of water is to flush the toilet. The second largest water use is showering and bathing.

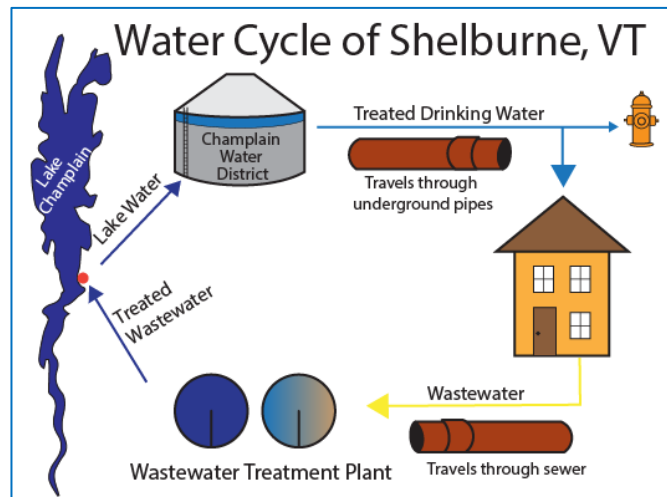
## DRINKING WATER

- Drinking water can come from surface water (a river, lake, or reservoir) or groundwater (a well or spring).
- About one-third of homes in Vermont get their water from a private well or spring. The other two-thirds get their water from a public water system. There are 413 community water systems in Vermont.
- Approximately 785 million people around the world don't have safe drinking water.

## WATER TREATMENT

 The steps of water treatment are:

1. **Pump** the water from a well, lake, reservoir, or river to the treatment plant.
2. **Treat** the water to remove bacteria and other pathogens, naturally occurring contaminants, and/or man-made pollutants if necessary.
3. **Store** the water in storage tanks until it is needed.
4. **Use** the water for drinking, cooking, or cleaning.
5. **Flush** used water down the drain.
6. **Treat** the used water at a wastewater treatment facility.
7. **Return** the clean water to a lake or river.
8. **Repeat** the cycle!



## PROTECT & CONSERVE WATER



- Fill reusable water bottles. Tap water is cheaper and better for the planet than bottled water.
- Encourage your family to switch to water-saving showerheads and toilets.
- Fix leaking pipes, sinks, and toilets.
- Become a drinking water operator or wastewater operator when you grow up!