

WATER USE

Water is critical for life and economic activity. It is our source of drinking water, critical for fish and wildlife, unique resources such as springs, and central to many of the economic activities of our state. Chapter 281 of the Wisconsin Statutes requires annual reporting to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources of monthly withdrawals from all wells and surface water withdrawal systems capable of supplying water at a rate of 100,000 gallons per day or more. This includes water uses such as public supply systems, energy production, paper manufacturing and agricultural irrigation. The reported water use data is spatially located, which allows for DNR to provide customized water use information to specific locations, withdrawal types and water uses. These annual water use reports improve our understanding of spatial and temporal trends in water withdrawals.

The [Wisconsin Water Use StoryMap](#) showed that the largest category of groundwater withdrawals was municipal public water supplies¹. The second largest category of groundwater withdrawal in the state was agricultural irrigation. Agricultural irrigation water use varies from year to year depending on the timing of rainfall during the growing season.

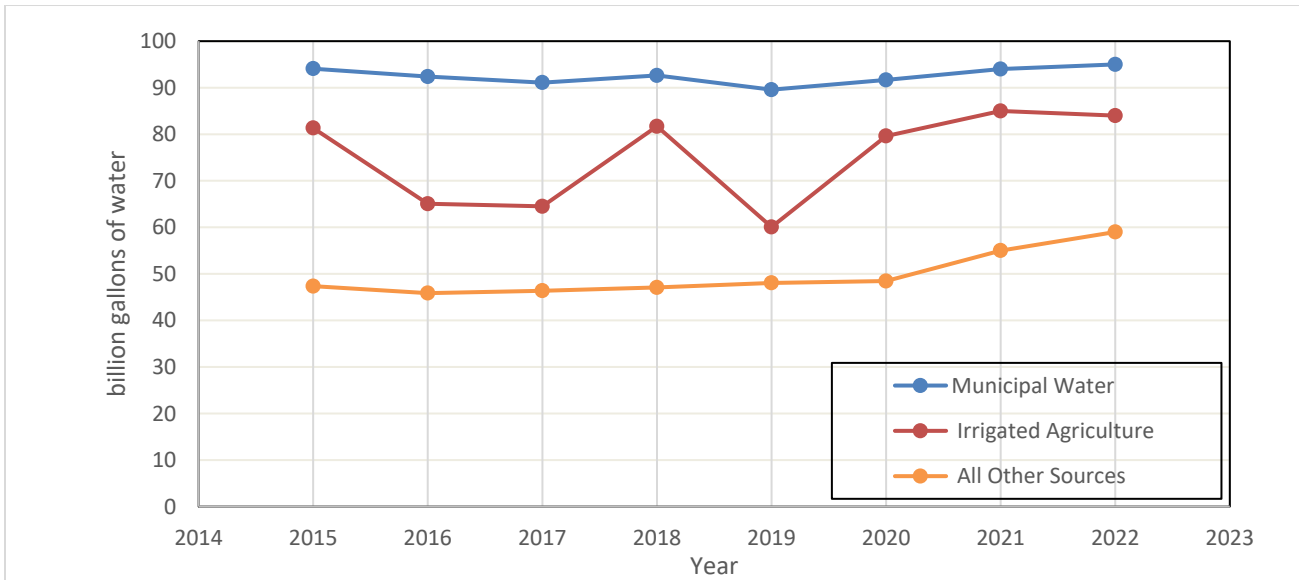


Figure 1. Wisconsin annual groundwater withdrawals, 2015 – 2022. (DNR)

Tools are available to view water use data spatially and to search and aggregate water use data at <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/WaterUse/data.html>. This webpage also include links to annual report on water use in Wisconsin.

Reference:

1. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. 2023. Wisconsin Water Use – 2022 Reported Withdrawals. Technical Memo. 9p. Available at: dnr.wi.gov/sites/default/files/topic/WaterUse/WithdrawalReport/2022.pdf.