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World Water Day is March 22 Have You Hugged Your Tap Today?

March 22nd is [World Water Day](#) and all around the globe, people are holding events, making declarations and shaking their heads in disbelief that more than a billion people in the world lack access to clean water. By 2050, that number is expected to reach five billion.

Fortunately, fresh water is not a problem in Michigan...at least for now.

Our lakes and rivers are a bountiful source of fresh water that is used to support our multi-million dollar agricultural state, to fuel our factories and businesses, and to quench our thirsts. We turn on the tap and outflows a resource that helps us stay free of germs and cleans our cars on a sunny day. But we've all been around long enough to know that nothing lasts forever. Just ask the folks in Georgia, Wyoming and Southern California whose reservoirs are drying up. They're worried about how to grow food and livestock for the rest of us.

I was in Haiti right before the earthquake hit to talk to government officials about building solar distillation systems to desalinate ocean water and convert it into drinking water. A country just one-and-a-half hours away from Miami, Florida has a terrible shortage of good, quality water to drink. So, amid all of its other problems, Haiti is wrestling with satisfying its citizens' needs and its agricultural needs for fresh water.

[World Water Day](#) was created to put an exclamation point on the worldwide water crisis. This is especially important today because of the relationship between water, food, and the international economy. In parts of Africa and Asia, drought conditions are so severe that women walk almost four miles per day, carrying huge jugs of water just for cooking and basic sanitary needs. According to the World Health Organization, 6,000 people die each day as a result of diarrhea and other water related illnesses; most of them are children under the age of five. No water to drink also means no water for crops. And some people are predicting that border wars will erupt as nations struggle to hold onto and replenish their supplies of "blue gold."

Here in Michigan, we have lots of fresh, cheap water, but it could change if we don't take precautions now, for the future. It is up to all of us to think about the water footprint we are leaving for our children and grandchildren. Solutions to help solve worldwide water shortages are here. We just need the will to turn them into reality.

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