



Choose to Reuse, and #DrinkTapPHL

Why We're Battling Disposable Bottles in Philly



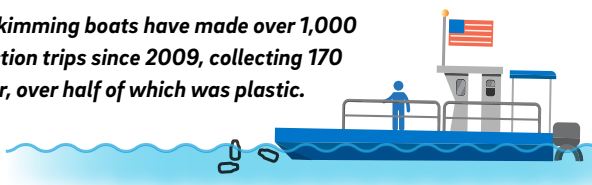
Floating debris at Fairmount Dam

Experts in the bottled beverage industry estimate that bottled water will become the most consumed packaged drink in the United States by 2017, when the average person is expected to drink and discard about 300 single-use bottles per year.¹

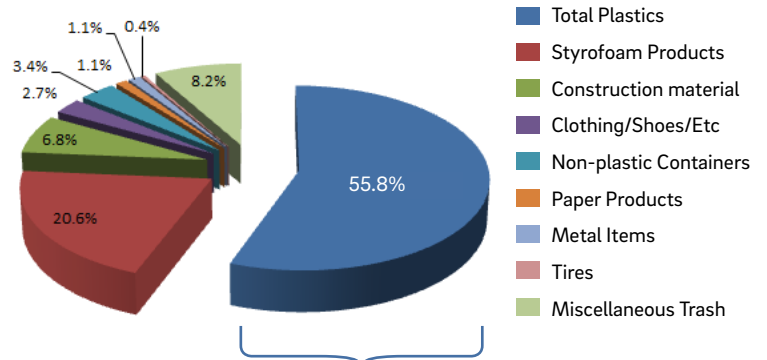
While this trend is driven by a well-meaning desire to make healthy beverage choices, the disposable nature of bottled water results in environmental consequences that include litter in our waterways and parks and a carbon footprint many times that associated with public drinking water.

Recent data collected by Philadelphia Water during the removal of litter from the Schuylkill River shows that more than 55% of the trash was plastic, and the overwhelming majority of that plastic, 77%, was plastic bottles.

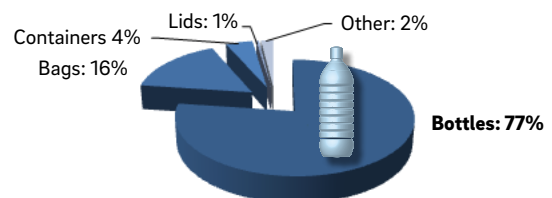
Two litter skimming boats have made over 1,000 trash collection trips since 2009, collecting 170 tons of litter, over half of which was plastic.



Composition of Marine Debris in Nontidal Schuylkill (% by Volume)



Breakdown of Plastics



¹ Source: Washington Post, Aug. 2015

continued on reverse



Plastic Bottles Choking Our Waterways

During an April 2015 cleanup organized by the Schuylkill Navy, volunteers collected over **4,000 plastic bottles (3+ bottles per foot)** in just a ¼ mile stretch of Schuylkill River. In response, the Schuylkill Navy asked all clubs to eliminate single-use water bottles by rowers, and all Boathouse Row Clubs have adopted that policy.

Philadelphia Water sponsored an August 2015 volunteer cleanup that collected **32,831.5 pounds (about 16.5 tons)** of garbage from the Delaware River in just 10 days. Of the 683 bags of trash, 353 (over 50 percent) contained recyclables, the majority of which were plastic bottles.



An August 2015 cleanup removed 16.5 tons of trash in 10 days



Marine debris collected on the Schuylkill

Carbon footprint: Greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change are created during the manufacturing process related to plastic bottles at a rate that far exceeds that of public tap water treatment. Studies cited in the Chicago Sun-Times report that more than 1.5 million barrels of oil are used each year just to make plastic water bottles. Even more harmful air pollution is created during the transportation and refrigeration of single-use water bottles.

Cost to Consumers: Philadelphia Water’s tap water costs customers just seven-tenths (\$0.007) of a cent per gallon, while the average gallon of bottled water costs about \$1.22. That means a family that drinks 3 gallons of water per day can save over \$1,300 per year by choosing tap water.

The Solution: Choose to Reuse, and #DrinkTapPHL

Beyond educating consumers about making smart choices for their wallets and our planet, Philadelphia Water is installing drinking water kiosks and water bottle filling stations that make choosing refillable bottles and tap water just as convenient, if not more so, as buying a disposable water bottle.

Taking the abundance of cheap, safe drinking water for granted is costing families and the environment in serious ways. By valuing the immense investment we’ve made in drinking water infrastructure that allows us to turn on the tap and access the world’s healthiest beverage, we can turn the tide on the harmful bottled water trend.



An estimated 70% of plastic water bottles are never recycled, and end up either in landfills or as unsightly litter that adds costs to drinking water treatment and can harm wildlife.



Choose To Reuse Philly

Share why you’re making the smart choice and ditching disposable with the #DrinkTapPHL hashtag on social media.

