



**Editor's Note: By Kathy Nguyen, Chair-elect of the Georgia Water Wise Council, Conservation Coordinator for Cobb County Water System and Conservation Consultant for waterSmart.**

### **What is the True Value of Tap Water?**

.... for most people in North Georgia, the answer is less than a penny a gallon – and on average, one-half of a monthly cable bill. What a bargain for a basic life need.

Georgia's recent drought and the challenges associated with a shrinking water supply is keeping water on our mind. But few of us stop to think about the value of tap water in terms of financial cost – especially in comparison to other products we use on a daily basis.

For example:

One Gallon of Bottled Water	up to \$9.00
One Gallon of Orange Juice:	\$5.15
One Gallon of Gas:	\$4.00
Monthly Generic Prescription:	\$4.00
24 bottles of 19.9 oz. water, @ 3 gal.	\$3.99
One Gallon of Milk:	\$3.50
One Latte:	\$2.50
One Gallon of Coke™:	\$2.50
<b>One Gallon of Tap Water:</b>	<b>less than 1 cent</b>

When economic times are tight, we start to look at our purchases in terms of what we can get for our money – and nothing quite compares to tap water -- especially when you consider the process of delivering tap water, which can be as complicated as developing a new medical treatment.

Water must be pumped from the source to the treatment plant, purified through at least five treatment steps, tested continually and pumped again through the distribution system to the consumer. The price of water also includes operations and maintenance of the treatment facility, pumping stations, pipelines, construction, renewal of infrastructure, and the salaries of the professionals who operate the system.

And take a look at what you get delivered straight to your tap: safe drinking water. Not to mention fire protection, recreation, sanitation, environmental benefits ... the list goes on.

The current drought has brought visibility to the water industry, and more importantly, has demonstrated that water is not a limitless resource. A safe, reliable water supply has a financial cost associated with it – but this cost is minimal, while the value is immeasurable.

So, the next time you turn on your faucet ... remember the benefits of tap water. And, when you get your water bill – remember – it's still one of the best values in these tough economic times.



**About Kathy Nguyen**

Kathy Nguyen graduated from Berry College with a BA in Speech/Communications. She is a member of: American Water Works Association, Georgia Association of Water Professionals, Technical Coordinating Committee for Metro North Georgia Water Planning District, Clean Water Campaign, Department of Community Affairs WaterFirst Adjudication Team, Technical Advisory Committee for both the State-wide Water Plan and the State-wide Water Conservation Plan. She is also the Chair-Elect of Georgia Water Wise Council. She has been with Cobb County Water System for seven years. In 2004 she became the Water Efficiency Program Manager, where she developed, implemented and manages the Water Efficiency Program. She has been a Conservation Consultant for waterSmart since 2000 and has been pivotal in a waterSmart community programs.

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