

# Michael Mucha: Imagine a day without water

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What would life be like if you could not brush your teeth, take a shower, flush your toilet, or run your business because of a shortage of water?

In Dane County, we're blessed with abundant water resources.

Our lakes, rivers and streams hold diverse aquatic life and offer countless opportunities for recreation. Meanwhile, the reliable, affordable services provided by our wastewater, stormwater and drinking water utilities place them among the best in the nation.

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These things come at a price. Other regions of our country have learned the hard way that ignoring the reinvestment needed to maintain sound water infrastructure carries great peril.

To emphasize the importance of our nation's water infrastructure, on Oct. 12 communities across the nation will participate in the [U.S. Water Alliance's](#) campaign, [Imagine a Day Without Water](#). Here in Dane County, many organizations are working together to highlight the value of clean water to our quality of life, the environment and economy.

Without healthy wetlands and waterways, urban flooding occurs. Without sustainable groundwater resources, businesses, farms, schools and households can't function. Without affordable access to safe drinking water and effective wastewater management, public health suffers, economic productivity declines and

environmental quality diminishes.

An economic study released by the national alliance's [Value of Water Campaign](#) earlier this year found that a single nationwide day without water service would put \$43.5 billion of economic activity at risk. Unfortunately, investing in water infrastructure has not been a national priority for decades. The federal government's investment has declined, leaving states, local governments and water utilities to make up the difference.

Here in Dane County, we believe we are up to the challenge of sustainably managing our water resources while providing accessible, reliable and affordable water services. In addition to investments by area farms and municipal governments aimed at keeping our surface waters clean, Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District and the Madison Water Utility anticipate infrastructure investments valued at more than \$30 million during the coming year alone.

No community can thrive without water and all of us deserve a safe, reliable, accessible water supply. While the Imagine a Day Without Water campaign is designed to help citizens nationwide gain a greater appreciation for value of water, Dane County community leaders, governments, water utilities, businesses, farmers and other stakeholders are committed to ensuring residents here never experience the reality of a day without this precious resource.

— *Mucha is chief engineer and director of Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District.*