Preserving & restoring freshwater ecosystems since 1983.
And bringing new tools to the sector every year.

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FRIENDS,

When you can see a problem, you can solve a problem.

For decades, the restoration and conservation sectors have operated without transparency — tools that identify the best places to work, reporting on returns, and monitoring to guarantee outcomes. Operating blindly has cost invaluable progress, but this status quo won’t define our future.

The Freshwater Trust (TFT) puts coordinated action, analytics, and rapid funding for outcomes to work on behalf of river basins across the West. Our new approach, which has transparency at its heart, was born out of recognizing that the actions taken and the dollars spent haven’t worked. A historically dry land coaxed into production, the West is in a megadrought — the worst in 1,200 years. World-renowned fisheries are at lowest runs ever recorded. A rapidly changing and unforgiving climate exacerbates these consequences. Getting honest about the urgency of this moment has inspired our innovation.

Behind the scenes, our science team puts patented tools to use. They transform silent landscapes into vivid stories that tell us where and how to act. Aggregated data and models provide long-needed direction by revealing the highest priority, lowest cost projects.

And in partnership with local businesses, municipalities, and landowners, we set targets for basin-wide programs. Then, together with our partners, our implementation team breaks ground with outcomes front of mind. Oddly, what is standard for every other sector is unprecedented in ours.

Transparency is at our core because achieving our mission is impossible in its absence. Employing proven solutions from technology, finance, and policy is revolutionizing how effectively we can tackle the most critical water quality and quantity problems. Not only is this report proof of our approach; it is evidence of our commitment to remain transparent with you.

What’s crystal clear to us: We wouldn’t be creating transformational change without your support.

Gratefully,

JOE WHITWORTH
President & CEO
Ahimsa Gardens - Ashland, Oregon

Ahimsa Gardens is an environmentally friendly, full-service landscaping company serving residential and commercial clients in the Rogue Valley. They implement water-wise, fire-safe, pollinator-friendly, and climate-appropriate landscapes. This woman-owned business strives to provide meaningful and inspiring work for its employees, generating hope and benefiting all life on the planet.

“Our work with TFT inspires us to promote native plants in our landscaping projects with a goal of creating more connectivity and wildlife corridors for native birds and insects in our bioregion.”

–Jenny Kuehnle, Owner

M&M Services, LLC - Medford, Oregon

M&M Services is a woman-owned, small-family excavation business. Their team of highly skilled operators can maneuver machines in places you wouldn’t believe.

“Working with TFT to restore streams and streambanks, reviving ecosystems right here in our own valley, is a dream come true. Being in business for more than two decades, our children grew up going to job sites on a regular basis. Now they are restoring the land and learning what it means to be good stewards of the Earth.”

–Sara Marthoski, Co-owner
For 40 years, the “why” driving our work has remained steadfast. Yet our “how” has expanded to ensure the solutions are big and bold enough to match the scale of the problems freshwater ecosystems face today.
The 215-mile river courses through Southwestern Oregon from the Cascades to a dramatic terminus at the Pacific. Visitors covet well-known opportunities — renowned runs of salmon and whitewater. Quietly, it supplies water to hundreds of thousands and supports a vibrant agricultural community. Yet an unforgiving combination of rapid population growth, rampant invasive species, erosion, and the loss of streamside vegetation have taken their toll. An increasingly arid and unpredictable climate promises to continue exacerbating these challenges.

For more than a decade, TFT has holistically tackled the limiting factors in this basin. In partnership with two of the biggest municipalities in the area, Medford and Ashland, we have now achieved 6.25 miles of streamside buffers.

In 2021 and early 2022, many of the projects were implemented on public greenspace on behalf of the City of Ashland. Soon, nearly 10 acres of vegetation along city park property will be restored.

**Target Achieved**

Planting hasn’t been the only restoration action. Working with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), nearly 350 large wood structures have been installed and projects to restore fish passage have been implemented. Additionally, many adjacent to other revegetation projects bolster planting efforts and add habitat complexity.

Our vision is ambitious. Changing systems requires time, fortitude, and collaboration. Yet when critics balk that the trajectory of a basin can’t be altered in years, or that fish response can be nearly immediate when you’re working in the right places, we point them to the Rogue.
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Our solutions are implemented with restoration and resilience in mind.

Solar Load Blocked

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<td>500K</td>
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</table>

Ten years ago, The Freshwater Trust broke ground on its first fish habitat project in the Rogue basin. What was once bare land is now teeming with native trees and shrubs, improving habitat complexity, water quality, and the resilience of the basin at large.

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In fact, after a decade-long partnership with BOR, TFT has now successfully implemented 15 habitat projects designed to meet BOR’s permit obligations. In 2012, the National Marine Fisheries Service issued a Biological Opinion containing requirements for BOR to mitigate for its operations in the Rogue basin to benefit coho salmon in the Little Butte and Bear Creek watersheds. Biological Opinions are well-known for their governance of ongoing dam operations in the Northwest. The team will monitor and steward these 15 projects until 2027 to ensure that their benefits, including clean water and increased fish returns, persist.

“It’s not every day that Reclamation is able to achieve the outcomes set forth in a Biological Opinion,” said Meg Belais, Northwest Programs Director. “Setting a target and working toward it is something we want for this entire sector.”

**Resilience in Mind**

Our solutions are implemented with restoration and resilience in mind. The importance of this has never been so underscored as in the wake of the wildfires that swept through the region in 2020. Restored areas have proven to dramatically slow spreading wildfire, because native plants burn more slowly than invasive ones.

“Watching our previous work on Wagner Creek recover from the impacts of the Almeda fire to an even higher functioning state than it was previously has made it very clear why this work is so important as we prepare for the impacts of climate change in our communities,” said Eugene Wier, Restoration Program Manager.

Several recent replanting projects carried out with the City of Ashland have taken place on scorched portions of the watershed, particularly along the Bear Creek corridor.

Over the last year, we partnered with local contractors, including Lomakatsi Restoration Project, M&M Services, and FireSafe Landscaping, to clear 5.6 additional acres of burnt land and replant them with a diverse selection of native trees and shrubs. This native vegetation will continue to guard against the impacts of future wildfires and protect the watershed and the communities we call home.

Projects underway in 2022 will assist in healing the site where the Almeda fire began and restore the plant community to prevent fire from spreading in the riparian area again in the future.

**A Replicable Model**

Nothing has been ad hoc about our results here. It’s why we often point to it as a model for what we envision elsewhere. Analytics guided us to the projects that will allow us to achieve a tangible target. Diverse funders have been brought together to collaborate toward a common goal. The economic resilience of a rural community has been bolstered by delivering millions in contracts to local businesses. We’ve remained transparent with funders and supporters and reported progress toward goals.

“What we’ve done here is replicable and can put basin after basin on an inevitable path toward resiliency,” said Joe Whitworth, President & CEO.
If landscapes could talk...
If landscapes could talk...

- **Slope**
  - 15%
  - 19%
  - 5%

- **Land Size**
  - 30 ACRES
  - 10 ACRES
  - 130 ACRES

- **Soil Type**
  - HIGH INFILTRATION RATE
  - LOW INFILTRATION RATE

- **Irrigation**
  - PIVOT
  - FLOOD

- **Crop Type**
  - ALFALFA
  - WINTER WHEAT
  - CORN
Well, actually, they do. And the stories they tell can solve the most pressing freshwater issues.

We use analytics to identify the most impactful and cost-effective places to work. By bringing together datasets into one platform, we’re guided to specific places on the landscape. While similar technology exists to increase effectiveness and transparency of other sectors, this is a game-changer for restoration and conservation. Here, you’ll see some of the information we’re able to glean from a landscape to assess potential solutions.

This is example data and not exact to this landscape.
Sacramento-San Joaquin

The Sacramento and San Joaquin River basins extend nearly 500 miles north to south in what resembles a delicate array of arteries. The network acts like a major organ in the body of California. Trillions of gallons of freshwater move through it and are delivered to the rest of the state. Underneath, stores of groundwater continue their rise and fall, influenced by human usage and long-term climate effects.

The diagnosis on the health of these basins is disquieting. Drinking water wells running dry, winter snowpack disappearing, catastrophic flood risk imperiling water infrastructure, and Delta fish populations plummeting towards extinction. Additionally, the stressed basins are struggling to provide critical irrigation water for seven of the top 10 agricultural counties in the nation’s leading farm state. Pretty soon, the system will need life support.

“The ongoing depletion of the groundwater actually disconnects rivers and streams from their flows,” said Ben Wallace, Senior Conservation Project Manager. “The looming challenges are invisible, until the rivers disappear, abruptly drying up.”

In 2021, TFT’s California team continued its work to protect this vital resource. Notably, a new groundwater replenishment program was established in the Cosumnes. A major water district with excess surface water during the winter will apply it to dormant agricultural fields and sell credits to TFT in support of Microsoft and Amazon Web Services “net zero” water sustainability goals.

“We are helping set California on the path to sound implementation of its landmark Sustainable Groundwater Management Act,” said Wallace. “We have to keep gathering diverse interest groups around the same table.”

Other projects continued. Aquifer recharge projects were adopted into a Groundwater Sustainability Plan in the Northern Delta, in both the South American and Solano subbasins. Work with Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District took steps forward to providing local farmers a safe and reliable water supply while also replenishing groundwater resources. First, letters of intent were signed with more than 50 landowners to receive recycled water delivery in late 2024. Second, the EcoPlan began implementation planning and priority analysis in 2021.

“The EcoPlan provides a critical opportunity to support biological diversity in the region for generations to come, while building capacity for sustainable agriculture,” said Wallace.

After the years of careful planning and coordination, what are the expected outcomes? Turning invisible impacts into visible solutions, such as sustainable irrigation for farmers using recycled water rather than pumping a dwindling supply of groundwater; protected drinking water for domestic wells in underserved communities; preserved natural habitat for wildlife and fish; and a regional groundwater supply in balance with multiple uses.

MISSION OF THE BASIN:
Improve regional water supply reliability and protect groundwater-dependent ecosystems

RESTORATION ACTIONS:
Groundwater well monitoring | Surface water diversion reporting | Landowner outreach

PARTNERS:

SPECIES BENEFITED:
Fall-run Chinook Salmon | Sandhill Crane | Swainson’s Hawk | Giant Garter Snake

AREAS WORKED:
Northern portion of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta | Cosumnes River | Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys
Sharing restoration knowledge and collaborating on implementation are characteristics of the decade-long partnership between TFT and Idaho Power Company (IPC). Previously, IPC went through 13 withdrawn Clean Water Act certifications for its hydropower dams in Hells Canyon. Their willingness to see the landscape from a different perspective provided by TFT made certain that the next application was a success. TFT applied its analytics to the water quality challenge, and IPC was able to secure Clean Water Act approval from Idaho and Oregon to enact a $350-million watershed stewardship program.

“The process is more of a marathon than a sprint,” said Monique Leslie, Restoration Project Manager. “We stay focused on the outcomes and work systematically to reach them. Having a great team helps.”

2021 and early 2022 marked a significant milestone. After working for several years with TFT on performance standards, operating procedures, supply chain development, and management systems, IPC staff independently implemented their first island floodplain enhancement project. At 16 acres transformed with 10,000 new trees and shrubs, this large project on Rippee Island in the Middle Snake is a visible symbol of the program’s ambition.

Rippee Island joins five riparian revegetation and instream projects jointly coordinated with the two partners. It also represents the path moving forward for IPC: to boldly own, implement, and manage one of the largest watershed-scale restoration programs in the Western U.S. Targeted outcomes include reshaping the mainstem Snake River to improve flow, restoring riparian vegetation on hundreds of miles of tributaries to reduce high water temperatures, and upgrading irrigation infrastructure to reduce sediment and nutrient loading.

In 2021, our task was to create an automated reporting function in our StreamBank® Administrative tool that would allow IPC and others to more easily generate status reports for regulators, verifiers, and stakeholders. StreamBank® had collected reams of data for Snake River projects; now it was time to transform that data into summaries of success.

“We were thrilled and humbled to collaborate with IPC,” said Leslie. “We are excited to see them bring it over the finish line.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Puget Sound</td>
<td>TFT is working with King County to assess the feasibility of a collaborative, multi-party program to improve the water quality of Puget Sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snake River</td>
<td>TFT is working with Idaho Power Company to develop strategies for cost-effective, targeted actions to reduce nutrient and sediment loads in the Middle Snake River.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crooked River</td>
<td>TFT is partnering with the Deschutes River Conservancy in the Crooked River Subbasin to assess where improved irrigation practices can conserve water and reduce nutrient runoff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Boise River</td>
<td>TFT is developing a water quality trading plan that will give the City of Nampa flexibility to pursue a range of credit-generating actions to remove nutrients in the watershed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogue River</td>
<td>TFT is working with the City of Medford to expand and complement its water quality trading program by assessing new floodplain and instream actions to generate temperature credits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solano Basin</td>
<td>TFT has created an interactive planning tool for Solano County Water Agency and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service detailing agricultural scenarios to conserve groundwater.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento Basin</td>
<td>To reverse the impacts of groundwater depletion, TFT is part of the regional utility’s program to reuse clean wastewater to replace groundwater in irrigated agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yampa River</td>
<td>TFT is analyzing natural infrastructure options, such as planting projects, for the City of Steamboat Springs to offset its thermal load to the Yampa River.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cache la Poudre</td>
<td>TFT is analyzing temperature and nutrient credit supplies and engaging wastewater utilities and state regulators on compliance approaches.</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Behind the Scenes

To fix every river, we cannot pick up every shovel. Instead, our tools are used to reveal blueprints for other partners. We also advocate for policies that will guarantee change and widespread impact for our sector. This is a selection of our work behind the scenes and across the nation.

Washington, D.C.:

TFT is driving Federal policy change to make it easier and faster to combine and deliver public funds to the most cost-effective and high-impact conservation projects identified by analytics. TFT worked closely with Sen. Ron Wyden to develop the Watershed Results Act to pilot this approach. We are also working to replicate it in watersheds nationwide through upcoming Farm Bill changes, an Environmental Protection Agency outcomes bank workgroup, and through new conservation funds authorized by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act. TFT is also pursuing a similar approach in California.
THE POWER OF ANALYTICS
CASE STUDY: CROOKED SUBBASIN
We built a tool to rank all 4,000 agricultural fields in the Crooked Subbasin based on where conservation actions, such as irrigation upgrades, would be most cost-effective and beneficial to water quality. Through this process, we concluded that most nitrogen runoff comes from a small number of fields, which are then prioritized for further action.

This is the power of analytics.
Most experience the Crooked from one of a few perspectives — when its cold current is pressing against their legs as they cast, or when they’re looking down upon it stretching through Smith Rock State Park.

What’s visible for far fewer however is how the river supports a $140-million agriculture sector — and has been since the early 19th century. Wear appears on anything that’s been in demand for that long. For the Crooked, the wear shows in the form of low flows, high water temperatures, algal blooms, and more. These conditions have challenged the native trout and steelhead populations in both the Crooked and the acclaimed Deschutes and the water supply for farmers throughout Central Oregon.

“The analysis illustrates that adjustments are going to need to be made if it is going to continue to support fish and farmers in this region,” said David Primozich, Vice President of Water.

Modernizing irrigation would make a massive impact on water quality and quantity not only in the Crooked but for the greater Deschutes basin. TFT has been working with partners to use analytics to inform how to make the biggest difference for instream flow, water quality, and ultimately, agricultural resilience.

“This is a primary tactic to support fish populations and freshwater ecosystems in the face of severe drought,” said Nick Osman, Conservation Programs Manager.

“Our goal is to make different combinations of improvement projects visible to those making decisions,” said Primozich. “Users will be able to see the costs and benefits of a range of alternatives and build consensus on project priorities to achieve the best outcome for the river and people.”

TFT has significant experience building these types of decision-support tools, including on behalf of stakeholders in Idaho’s Snake River basin and California’s Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

“Being able to see different scenarios clearly has yielded transformational results for river basins,” said Osman.

“We’re thrilled at the prospect of bringing our analytical capabilities back to the same basin where TFT founders thought up this organization. It’s a real full-circle project.”

“Better information leads to better action, and we want to deliver that in the form of a tool for stakeholders making decisions here.”

TFT will aggregate new data into its BasinScout® tool from other models to create a full view of water movement in the subbasin and assess infrastructure improvement actions for efficiency and cost. Then, we will build a dashboard that enables users to assess a portfolio of options for improvements.
The Sandy features Pacific Northwest classics. Low-hanging clouds clinging to evergreens. Thick leaves that amplify rainfall. Wet moss and ferns cover the forest floor. And underwater are the greatest regional icons of them all — salmon and trout. Their presence here is due in part to the work of The Freshwater Trust and its partners.

Every year, by building large wood structures and occasionally adding spawning-sized gravel, TFT has reintroduced critical habitat complexity once lost in the 1960s. With precision, helicopters place logs along the small creeks and tributaries. The wood scours pools, expands water onto the floodplain, and opens side channels.

2021 efforts were not dissimilar to the work of previous years. Nearly a mile of new side channels were built. More than 1,200 pieces of large wood were placed. We also implemented a floodplain-shaping project on one of the most heavily channelized sections of the Zigzag. Prior to restoration, there were no side channels or spawning gravels in this reach. After completing construction, spring Chinook immediately moved into the project area, and we documented multiple redds in the new side channels that Fall.

All of this builds on more than a decade of progress where the ultimate goal is to create basin-wide, self-sustaining habitat that can form a stronghold for runs of anadromous fish in the Lower Columbia.

Today, the Salmon River is estimated to produce 30% of the steelhead in the Sandy basin and 49% of the coho. According to Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife data, there has been a more than 320% increase in adult coho between 2010 and 2021.

“What we’ve done in the Sandy is exactly the type of coordinated restoration action that endangered fish need to recover from decades of habitat degradation, and to survive the years ahead,” said Daniel Baldwin, Restoration Project Manager. “This work will only get more important.”
There could be a crayon named after the color of the McKenzie. The rich turquoise travels from the Cascades, through valleys and wilderness and under lava beds, until it meets the Willamette just north of Eugene. On its 90-mile journey, it courses past six acres of streamside that are newly thriving with native plants, thanks to The Freshwater Trust and its partnership with the McKenzie Watershed Council.

In 2013, TFT entered an agreement with the Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission (MWMC) to identify a selection of projects where planting could deliver quantifiable impacts to the river. These pilots were executed with the aid of the local watershed council and contractors with the shared goal of laying the groundwork for the same type of water quality trading programs in operation with Medford and Ashland. After nine years, their benefits had proven themselves, and as this report was in development, the new, full-scale program was on its way to launching.

“The projects did what they were supposed to and thrived incredibly,” said Olivia Duren, Restoration Program Manager.

“Natural infrastructure programs like the one we are building are still relatively new. Being able to see how they work and witness their impacts in real time has been important proof of their resilience and potential.”

In early spring of 2021, the fifth pilot project was planted on land that had been burned in the 2020 Holiday Farm fire. The project will recover native species diversity and habitat while supressing weeds that often take over after disturbance.

Once implementation is complete in 2027, this program will be the largest water quality trading program TFT has ever executed, with an estimated 22 projects. It will operate slightly differently. In this basin, there’s already a wealth of restoration knowledge. TFT will serve as a manager of the credits the program generates that keeps MWMC in compliance, but implementation will be handed to the watershed councils and other local contractors.

“This approach to restoration, involving innovation and collaboration, is gaining traction,” said Duren. “It’s exactly what’s needed now in more watersheds nationwide.”
Board Member Scott Demorest made his first gift to Oregon Trout, TFT’s predecessor, when he was just a teenager. Thirty years later, continued support from Scott and his wife Rebecca is playing a pivotal role in TFT’s ability to scale to new geographies, refine analytical tools, and change how all conservation and restoration is paid for and implemented.

What are your professional backgrounds?
Scott: Our careers have largely been in consulting. Rebecca started in finance at General Electric and moved on to consulting with Arthur Andersen and PointB. I started consulting after graduate school, working for a large multinational company, and then co-founded Acme Business Consulting. After successfully transitioning the sale of Acme in 2015, I have consulted with early-stage startups. We have both served on nonprofit boards, most recently TFT and Pacific Northwest College of Art.

How did you both get involved with TFT?
Rebecca: Scott’s first involvement with TFT was when he was a teenager and began donating to Oregon Trout. Much later, he met Joe Whitworth on a Rogue River expedition and they talked about the future of conservation and freshwater ecosystems. He joined the board shortly after that trip. I also jumped in, supporting TFT with my time and consulting as the organization has transformed over the last 10 years.

What stands out to you both about TFT and what excites you about its future?
Scott: The current water crisis is dire and will only get more severe with our changing climate. There is a real possibility that salmon will be unable to return to spawn within the next 10 years. TFT is the only organization we’re aware of that has the technology and expertise to prevent that from happening and to ensure our existing freshwater resources can and will continue to support life on this planet.

Rebecca: We have an affinity for supporting organizations that challenge the status quo and have the ability to vastly improve systems. It’s evident we need better approaches to conservation. TFT’s use of analytics to identify high-impact conservation actions provides a unique approach that will enable us to fix rivers with a better return on investment. The potential for large-scale use of this approach is very exciting as the need is clearly there.

What is the most frustrating thing to you about the water problems in this country? Conservation in general?
Scott: Historically, the allocation of conservation resources has been measured by action and not outcomes. The national budget for conservation is more than enough, but it’s being spent inefficiently. TFT’s analytics show what needs to be done, where it needs to be done, when, and the most cost-effective way of doing it.

If you had to say in one sentence why someone should give to TFT, what would it be?
Scott and Rebecca: TFT has the opportunity to radically improve the way conservation is done nationally. They can urgently, fundamentally, and efficiently save our freshwater ecosystems.
Financial Snapshot

Revenue

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<td>4%</td>
<td>In-Kind Donations</td>
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Total Revenue: $12,776,021

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<td>6%</td>
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Total Expense: $9,745,290

Honor Roll of supporters for 2021 can be found now at thefreshwatertrust.org.

StreamBank® and BasinScout® are registered trademarks of The Freshwater Trust. StreamBank® is a patent-protected invention (U.S. Patent No. 8,036,909).

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Uplift 2021 27
ENVIROCALCULATOR
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AUDIT REPORT

THE FRESHWATER TRUST SAVED THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES BY SELECTING NEENAH CONSERVATION 100% PC PAPER WITH 100% POST-CONSUMER CONTENT. QUANTITY: 733 LBS.

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<tr>
<th>RESOURCE</th>
<th>ESTIMATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TREES</td>
<td>1.46 tons of fresh (green) wood, which is equivalent to 8.78 trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATER</td>
<td>700.0 gallons, which is enough water for 0.50 clothes washers operated/year</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENERGY</td>
<td>3.69 million BTUs, which is enough energy to power 4.37 residential refrigerators/year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLID WASTE</td>
<td>30.0 pounds of solid waste, which would fill 0.0011 garbage trucks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREENHOUSE GAS</td>
<td>3800.0 pounds of CO2, which is equivalent to 0.345 cars/year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ESTIMATES WERE MADE USING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PAPER NETWORK PAPERCALCULATOR VERSION 4.0. FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.PAPERCALCULATOR.ORG.