Glossary: Greywater Systems

Term	Definition
Biomimicry	The design and production of materials, structures, and systems that are modeled on biological entities and processes.
Blackwater	Wastewater from toilets or wastewater that contains toxic chemicals and/or excrement from other sources.
Clean Water	Water that will not harm you if you come into contact with it, and that is typically safe to drink. This includes water from springs or wells, purified water, city water, and rain water.
Environmental Social Governance (ESG)	A collection of corporate performance evaluation criteria that assess the robustness of a company's governance mechanisms and its ability to effectively manage its environmental and social impacts.
Feedback Loops	In climate change, a feedback loop is something that speeds up or slows down a warming trend. A positive feedback accelerates a temperature rise, whereas a negative feedback slows it down. Scientists have identified several positive feedbacks loops in the climate system.
Gravity	The force by which a planet or other body draws objects toward its center. In the context of water systems, water can be pumped by using the natural energy of falling water.
Greywater	Domestic wastewater generated in households or office buildings from streams without fecal contamination, i.e., all streams except for the wastewater from toilets. Sources of greywater include sinks, showers, baths, washing machines, and dishwashers.
Net Zero	A target of completely negating the amount of greenhouse gases produced by human activity, to be achieved by reducing emissions and implementing methods of absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
Non-potable Water	Water that is not treated to drinking water standards and is not meant for human consumption.
Phosphate	An anion, salt, functional group or ester derived from a phosphoric acid. Water companies treat water by adding phosphate to prevent corrosion and metal leaching from pipes.
Potable Water	Water that is safe to drink. This water comes from surface and ground sources and is treated to levels that meet state and federal standards for consumption.
Pressurization	The application of pressure in a given situation or environment. In the context of water systems, pressurization is used to store water and provide water under pressure when the pump is not running. It builds up a reserve supply of water so the pump starts and stops less often, prolonging the life of the pump. In addition, it provides a reserve supply of water for use during times of high demand.
Pumping	A pressure burst that pushes water out, but is not pressurized.
Recycled or Reclaimed Water	Highly treated wastewater that has been filtered to remove solids and other impurities as well as disinfected by a water treatment plant.
Return on Investment (ROI)	The ratio of net profit over the total cost of the investment.

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Sewage Water	Wastewater from people living in a community. It is the water released from households after use for various purposes like washing dishes, laundry, and flushing the toilet, thus the name wastewater. The used water moves from the houses through pipes installed during plumbing. The sewage water then moves into sewers, either constructed by the house owner, or into a sewer facility set up by the municipality. Mostly, sewage water consists of greywater and blackwater.
Single Liner Use	A one-time use of water, such as through sinks, showers, baths, washing machines, or dishwashers.
Surfactant	A substance such as a detergent that, when added to a liquid, reduces its surface tension, thereby increasing its spreading and wetting properties.
Transpiration	The process of water movement through a plant and its evaporation from aerial parts, such as leaves, stems and flowers.
Treated Greywater	Greywater that has been treated to near drinking quality. Treatment involves the use of special equipment that is rated “NSF 350.”
Untreated Greywater	Greywater in its basic, untreated form. It may be utilized for flushing toilets or for outdoor irrigation, where it is then purified by plant roots and soil life. All the soaps, detergents, and other greywater elements are still present. Large particles, such as hair and lint from clothes, are filtered out.
Water Cycle	The cycle of processes by which water circulates between the earth's oceans, atmosphere, and land, involving precipitation as rain and snow, drainage in streams and rivers, and return to the atmosphere by evaporation and transpiration.
Water Energy Nexus	The nearly inextricable linkage between water and energy. Every step of the water cycle—producing, moving, treating and heating water, then collecting and treating wastewater—consumes energy.

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