

# The Regional Water Efficiency Program 2018 YEAR IN REVIEW

The Regional Water Authority's Regional Water Efficiency Program (WEP) includes 20 water providers working in partnership to promote water efficiency in the Sacramento region. Since 2001, the program has provided a forum for participants to:

- Engage in a regional strategy to preserve local water resources
- Network and share best practices
- Leverage dollars with other regional utilities and partners
- Build economies of scale for attracting grants
- Maximize advertising dollars for broad and consistent customer outreach
- Provide a regional school education program

In 2018, the WEP continued these activities and more. The program conducted new public opinion research on landscape water use, developed new tools and resources for members to communicate about water efficiency and the new water conservation laws, educated young water consumers about using water efficiently, and maximized the collective voice of water providers.



## ATTRACTING GRANT FUNDING

Grant	Projects	Funds Received	Begin Date	End Date	Local Cost Share
<b>Proposition 84 Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Grant</b>	Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) Retrofits, Irrigation Efficiencies, Residential Agriculture Efficiencies, and Landscape Water Budgets	\$988,000	8/16/11	6/30/19	No
<b>Proposition 84 IRWM Grant</b>	Public Outreach, Capital Radio Garden, and Irrigation Efficiencies	\$1,000,000	1/17/14	6/30/20	Yes
<b>Water Energy Grant</b>	DAC Direct Installs, DAC Fixture Give-Aways, and Commercial and Institutional Rebates	\$2,500,000	12/22/15	5/31/18	No
<b>Proposition 84 IRWM Grant</b>	Public Outreach, Leak Detection & Repair, and Advanced Customer Information Systems	\$820,000	8/24/16	12/31/19	Yes
<b>Regional San/RWA Annual Water Conservation Program</b>	Rebates for Toilets, Clothes Washers, and Pre-Rinse Spray Valves	\$350,000	6/1/18	5/1/19	Yes
<b>2018 Calfed Grant</b>	Sacramento Regional 2018-2020 Residential Water Meter Installation Project	\$750,000	9/21/18	3/31/20	Yes

The WEP allows members to leverage their investments in water efficiency and take advantage of grant funding available now and in coming years. Since 2003, the program has secured nearly \$12 million from highly competitive grant programs, including more than \$6 million in grants in just the past three years. Through grant funding, water providers have been able to help disadvantaged communities install high-efficiency fixtures, enhance the efficiency of irrigation systems, and provide rebate programs for toilets, clothes washers, and irrigation equipment upgrades.

# CREATING A CONDUIT FOR PROGRAMS



The WEP provides an avenue for water providers to partner with local and state agencies on rebate programs and services that would otherwise be impractical or impossible. WEP manages these programs for water providers and serves as a conduit for funding and reimbursement.



## 119,558 Square Feet of Turf Replaced

In partnership with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), WEP provided rebates to residential and commercial customers that replaced turf with a low-water landscape and installed efficient sprinklers and drip irrigation. In 2018, the program conducted 941 landscape water surveys, replaced 119,588 square feet of turf and installed:



**1,707**  
sprinkler heads  
or nozzles



**1,246**  
pipe and  
pipe fittings



**762**  
irrigation  
controllers



**132**  
pressure  
regulators



## 3,159 Fixtures

In partnership with DWR, the Direct Install Program installed high-efficiency fixtures in residential and commercial properties located in disadvantaged communities throughout the region. In 2018, the program installed:

- 1,620 toilets
- 841 showerheads
- 485 aerators (bath and kitchen)
- 73 urinals



## 453 Clothes Washers

In partnership with SMUD and Regional San, WEP provided rebates for replacing older clothes washers with high-efficiency models.



## 2,255 Toilets

In partnership with Regional San, WEP provided rebates for replacing older toilets with high-efficiency models.

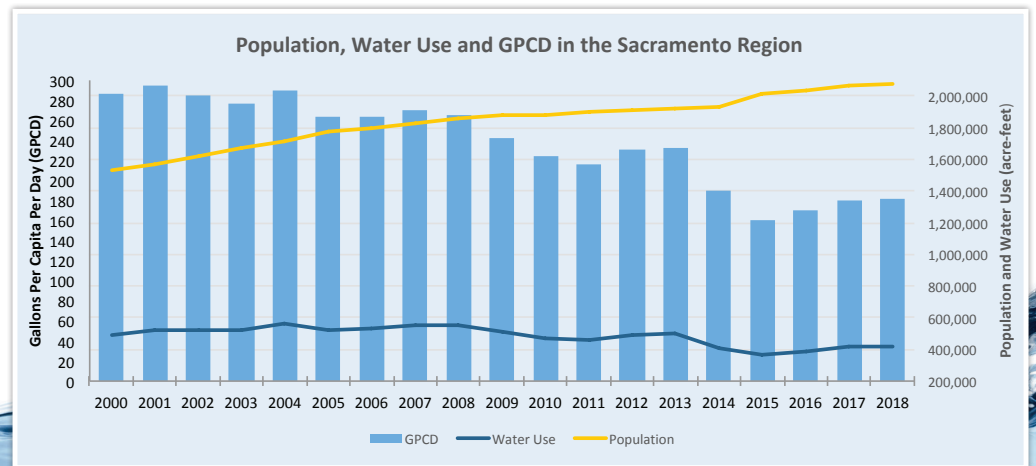
## SHARING INSIGHTS WITH A NATIONAL AUDIENCE

Water Efficiency Program Manager Amy Talbot was selected to present RWA's 2018 outreach campaign and focus group results at the national WaterSmart Innovations (WSI) conference. WSI is the largest urban water-efficiency conference in the world. Conferences typically draw more than 1,000 participants from 39 states and 21 nations.



# TRACKING WATER USE

The WEP has been a leader in tracking the Sacramento region’s water use over time, and especially during the drought. In 2017 and 2018, the region’s per-capita water use remained stable, recovering slightly compared to the past several drought-impacted years (*as expected*). Overall water use remains steady even as the area’s population is increasing.



## MAXIMIZING A REGIONAL VOICE

The WEP provides an avenue for participants to communicate a consistent message about water efficiency while maximizing advertising dollars. Under the Be Water Smart brand, WEP participants conduct advertising campaigns, support initiatives such as Mulch Mayhem, represent water providers at events, and provide comprehensive water efficiency information through its website [BeWaterSmart.info](http://BeWaterSmart.info).

### Tackling the Overwatering Problem

In 2018, the WEP launched a new two-year outreach campaign focused on stopping lawn overwatering and encouraging residents to check soil moisture before ramping up sprinklers. Messaging

encouraged people to “Check the Soil and Save”—check soil moisture with a meter or screwdriver before turning on sprinklers. RWA offered an online toolkit for program participants that included key messages, template newsletter text, supporting photos and images, bill insert template, and more.



### A SOLID FOUNDATION IN RESEARCH

To make sure that customers were open and willing to check soil moisture and to test potential advertising concepts, the WEP conducted two focus groups with residential water customers from throughout the Sacramento region. Focus groups explored:

- Problems and frustrations with landscape care and how water providers can help
- How people decide when and how much to water their yard
- How people know when they are watering too much
- What people consider to be a waste of water



## Advertising and Public Service Announcements

The WEP purchased radio and digital advertising on Capital Public Radio stations KXJZ-FM (*News*) and KXPR-FM (*Classical/Jazz*), Facebook and the Google Display Network, commercial radio via the Total Traffic and Weather Network, as well as pitched radio public service announcements (PSAs) and television PSAs (*produced from the Water Spots video contest*).



### Capital Public Radio Sponsorships

**384**

sponsorships (264 paid,  
120 provided at no cost)

**1,704,000**

impressions

**275,000**

people reached

**6.2**

frequency



### Total Traffic and Weather

**225**

messages

**1,674,000**

impressions

**316,267**

people reached

**5.3**

frequency



### Facebook Advertising

**1,403,415**

impressions

**759,845**

people reached

**29,577**

clicks



### Google Display Network

**2,316,822**

impressions

**7,155**

clicks



### Television PSAs

**3**

outlets broadcast

**810**

times

**792,000**

impressions

**\$40,500**

in value (had WEP  
purchased as advertising)



### Radio PSAs

**21**

stations broadcast

**765**

times

**2,700,000**

impressions

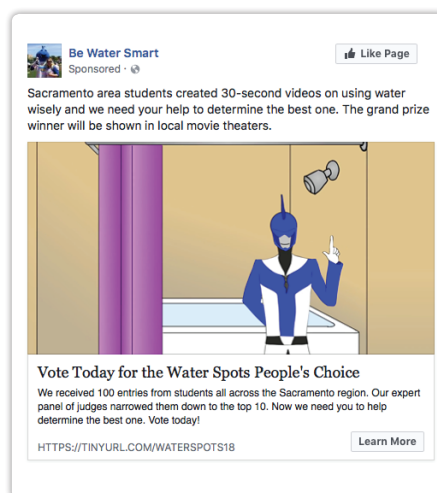
**\$53,550**

in value (had WEP  
purchased as advertising)

## New Water Spots Grand Prize: Movie Theater Advertising

For the past seven years, the Water Spots Video Contest has challenged middle school and high school students to create a 30-second public service announcement video focused on a water efficiency theme. In 2018, 100 videos were submitted on the theme *H2O Hero* from 13 different schools.

The WEP created a new online voting system and offered a new grand prize in the 2018 Water Spots Video Contest—the chance for the winning video to run at two movie theaters for one month. The new voting system (*attracting a record 4,700 votes from 2,600 voters*) and grand prize yielded dividends not only for the contest and winner but extended RWA's water efficiency message to additional audiences and advertising venues.



### The Grand Prize winner premiered and ran at:

#### Studio Movie Grill (Rocklin)

**Up to 40,000**

average monthly attendance

#### Century Arden 14 (Sacramento)

**1,850**

ads seen on screen

**93,929**

average monthly attendance

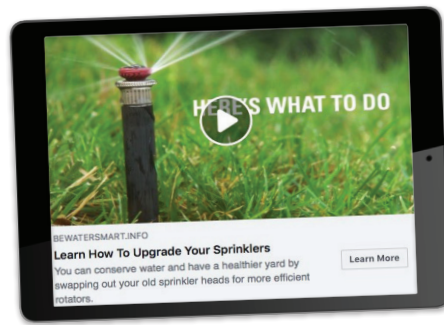
**1,054**

added value on lobby video monitors

## "How To" Video Series

RWA produced a series of "how to" videos focused on solving problems while promoting key messages and calls to action that were used in social media advertising. Topics explored:

- **How to know if your landscape needs water** (*check the soil and save*)
- **How to water your mature trees during the dry months** (*soaker hose, drip irrigation and mulch*)
- **How to have a healthy lawn with 30 percent less water** (*replace older sprinklers with rotators*)



## Be Water Smart Events Team

The Be Water Smart events team represented local water providers at three regional community events during the year, including the American River Half Marathon, popular Harvest Day Festival in Fair Oaks and huge Farm to Fork Festival in Sacramento. The team engaged visitors by inviting them to take a pledge to conserve water in exchange for a prize to help them reduce water use.



## Mulch Mayhem

Residents lined up in droves to get free water-conserving mulch for their yards during Mulch Mayhem events in May. The WEP supported five water providers in hosting Mulch Mayhem events by developing shared promotional materials, conducting outreach to regional media, and advertising events on Facebook and Google.



## NURTURING PARTNERSHIPS

The WEP was established with the idea that water providers could maximize resources and customer services through collaboration. The program has expanded this principle to public, private, and non-profit partners, who are working with WEP to help preserve our region's natural resources.



### Sacramento River Cats

The WEP has had a long-standing partnership with the Sacramento River Cats to promote water efficiency tips to the more than 557,700 people attending games and other events at Raley Field each year. In 2018, outreach messaging appeared in restroom signage, advertising in the "Inside Pitch" program, during games with "Lucky Row" giveaways of moisture meters, and on River Cats social media sites.



### Sacramento Tree Foundation

In 2018, the WEP expanded its relationship with the Sacramento Tree Foundation to collaborate on a new "how to" video about properly watering mature trees and to co-promote mulch as an important tool for keeping trees cool and conserving water.



## PROVIDING LEADERSHIP, PROTECTING OUR INTERESTS

WEP Program Manager Amy Talbot provided statewide leadership and represented Sacramento-area interests on water efficiency issues as Chair of the California Water Efficiency Partnership (*CalWEP*) and a member of the California Water Loss Collaborative.

In addition, the WEP developed tools and resources to help members communicate and comply with new water conservation legislation passed in 2018 (*Senate Bill 606* and *Assembly Bill 1668*). These included a fact sheet and list of

frequently asked questions to help members address customer questions and dispel myths about the new water conservation laws. The WEP also partnered with the Sacramento Area Council of Governments to purchase 900 square miles of aerial imagery for local water providers to use for a variety of planning purposes, including analysis of the long-term water conservation targets associated with the new water conservation legislation.



## PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

The success of the Regional Water Efficiency Program depends upon the RWA members and associate members, who financially contribute to the program. ***Thank you to 2018 WEP participants:***

### RWA MEMBERS:

California American Water  
Carmichael Water District  
Citrus Heights Water District  
City of Folsom  
City of Lincoln  
City of Roseville  
City of Sacramento  
City of West Sacramento

Del Paso Manor Water District  
El Dorado Irrigation District  
Elk Grove Water District  
Fair Oaks Water District  
Golden State Water Company  
Orange Vale Water Company  
Placer County Water Agency  
Rancho Murieta Community Services District  
Rio Linda/Elverta Community Water District

Sacramento County Water Agency  
Sacramento Suburban Water District  
San Juan Water District

### RWA ASSOCIATES:

Regional San  
SMUD

## LEARN MORE

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