



The Regional Water Efficiency Program 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW



The Regional Water Authority’s Water Efficiency Program (RWEF) brings together 19 water providers serving 2 million people to promote water efficiency in the Sacramento region. For nearly two decades, RWEF participants have partnered 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 2020, even as the coronavirus pandemic challenged the world like never before, the RWEF and its members continued their essential work, focusing on outdoor water efficiency as stay-at-home orders spurred new interest in gardening and landscaping. They continued to offer regional rebates on water-efficient products; build partnerships with local and state agencies; support trainings for landscape professionals in sustainable practices; conduct new public opinion research; and implement comprehensive outreach, advertising, and school education programs.

ATTRACTING GRANT FUNDING

The RWEF 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 \$14.7 million from highly competitive grant programs, including more than \$5.3 million in grants in just the past three years.

In 2020, the RWEF received \$2.4 million in new grant funding from Proposition 1 (*The Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014*) for several new multi-year programs and incentives. These include programs to help water providers detect and repair leaks in the water system and public opinion research on water efficiency attitudes and behaviors, as well as new rebates to incentive outdoor water efficiency by residential customers and indoor water efficiency by commercial, institutional and industrial customers.

Grant	Projects	Funds Received	Begin Date	End Date	Local Cost Share
Proposition 84 Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Grant	Public Outreach, Capital Radio Garden, and Irrigation Efficiencies	\$1,000,000	1/17/2014	6/30/2020	Yes
Proposition 84 2015 IRWM Grant	Public Outreach, Leak Detection & Repair, Advanced Customer Information Systems, and SMART Irrigation Controllers	\$820,000	8/24/2016	6/30/2021	Yes
Regional San/RWA Annual Water Conservation Program	Rebates for Toilets, Clothes Washers, and Pre-Rinse Spray Valves	\$350,000	6/1/2019	5/1/2020	Yes

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Grant	Projects	Funds Received	Begin Date	End Date	Local Cost Share
2018 Calfed Grant	Sacramento Regional 2018-2020 Residential Water Meter Installation Project	\$750,000	9/21/2018	3/31/2020	Yes
Proposition 1 Round 1 2020	Regional Leak Detection Repair	\$1,000,000	6/26/2020	6/30/2022	Yes
Proposition 1 Round 1 2020	Advancing Water Efficiency in Sacramento	\$1,244,000	6/26/2020	6/30/2022	Yes
Proposition 1 Round 1 2020	Water Efficiency Decision Support	\$200,000	6/26/2020	6/30/2022	Yes

NEW REGIONAL REBATE PROGRAM FOR SMART SPRINKLER CONTROLLERS

More than 1,200 new Rachio 3 weather-based sprinkler controllers were provided to homes throughout the Sacramento region in 2020 through a new regional rebate program offered by the RWEP.

Replacing a standard controller with a WaterSense-labeled smart controller like the Rachio 3 can save an average home about 13,500 gallons of water per year. It's estimated that the regional rebate program will ultimately save 25.7 million gallons of water per year.

The rebate program was funded by a \$200,000 grant from the California Department of Water Resources and was offered in partnership with the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA) and its 26 member agencies for economies-of-scale pricing, coordinated program management, and marketing benefits.

In addition, the RWEP distributed over 1,400 rebates to replace older toilets and clothes washers with high-efficiency models in partnership with Regional San.

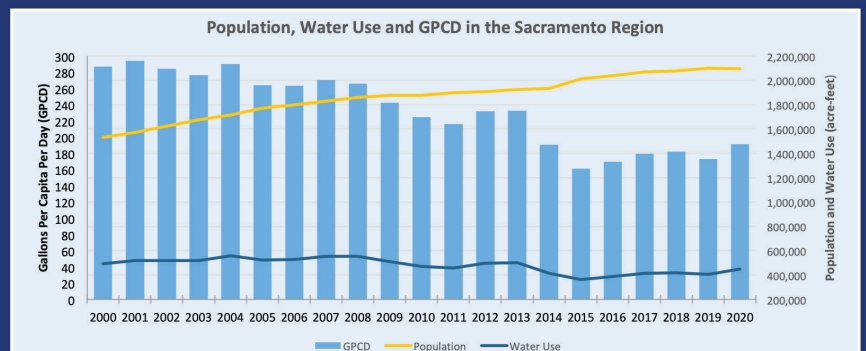


PROVIDING LEADERSHIP

RWEP Program Manager Amy Talbot provided statewide leadership and represented Sacramento-area interests on water efficiency issues as a California Water Efficiency Partnership (CalWEP) Board member, Sacramento Tree Foundation Board member, the California-Nevada AWWA Water Loss Control Committee Chair, and Association for California Water Agencies (ACWA) Water Loss Committee Chair.

TRACKING WATER USE

Over the last 20 years, the region's water use has been steady even though the population grew 37 percent from 1.5 million to 2.1 million people.



FROM LEAKS TO LAWNS

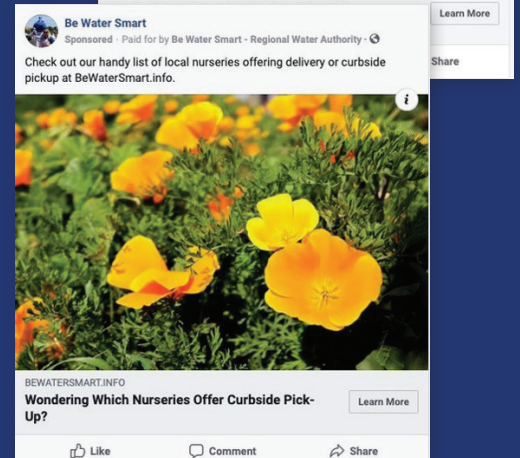
Maximizing a Regional Voice

The RWEF provides an avenue for participants to communicate a consistent message about water efficiency while maximizing advertising and outreach dollars. In 2020, RWA's Water Efficiency Program launched the third year of a multi-year outreach campaign focused on tackling the overwatering problem by encouraging residents to check soil moisture before turning on sprinklers. The program also initiated a new outreach effort to raise awareness about finding and fixing household leaks.



Public Opinion Research

Building upon focus group research and materials developed in 2018, the RWEF conducted another round of focus groups with residential customers in January 2020 to further uncover knowledge, attitudes and behaviors related to landscape watering. This included a deeper dive into high-efficiency rotator sprinklers and a new line of questions about household leaks.



Pivoting During the Coronavirus Emergency

Just as the 2020 outreach program began to ramp up, the coronavirus pandemic intervened. While some outreach activities would have to be shelved, the RWEF pivoted to developing several new items and tools to support local residents as they follow the stay-at-home order. These included, among other things, a Stay-at-Home resources page on BeWaterSmart.info with a list of nurseries and home improvement stores that offer curbside pick-up; information about virtual gardening tours and workshops; lists of gardening blogs and other resources; and suggestions for water-wise home and garden improvement projects.

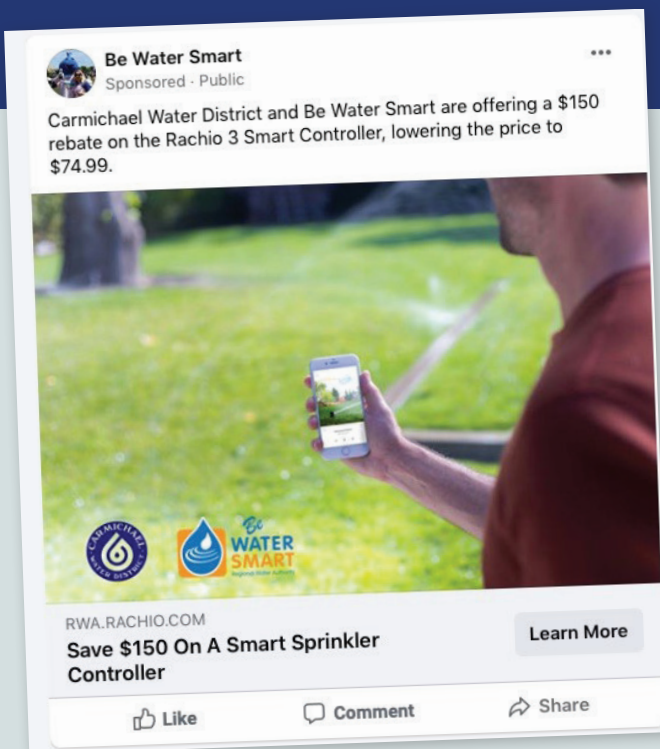


Advertising and Public Service Announcements

The RWEF 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 (*NewsRadio KFBK, Talk 650 KSTE, Soft AC 92.5 "The Breeze" and 93.7 "The River" New Classic Rock*), Spotify, as well as pitched radio public service announcements (PSAs) and television PSAs (*produced from the Water Spots video contest*). Facebook advertising included advertisements for Check and Save and the Rachio Controller Rebate Program in both English and Spanish.



Capital Public Radio Sponsorships	Total Traffic and Weather	Facebook Advertising	Google Display Network	Spotify	Television PSAs	Radio PSAs
276 sponsorships (186 paid and 90 value added)	377 messages (337 paid and 40 value added)	4,944,289 impressions	3,614,411 impressions	35,540 people reached	6 stations broadcast	12 stations broadcast
928,500 impressions	2,135,500 impressions	1,431,325 people reached	6,393 clicks	98,122 impressions	620 times	415 times
158,400 people reached	463,123 people reached	57,253 clicks	4.93 frequency	106 clicks	1,770,000 impressions	950,000 impressions
4.0 frequency	5.6 frequency				\$50,000 value (had RWEF purchased as advertising)	\$28,000 in value (had RWEF purchased as advertising)



Partnership Advertising on Facebook

The RWEF partnered with Carmichael Water District, city of Roseville and Sacramento Suburban Water District to promote the Rachio Controller Rebate Program in Facebook advertising targeted geographically to reach partnering agency customers.



Water Spots Video Premieres for Drive-in Audience

RWA adopted the WaterSense theme, Be a Leak Detective, for the 2020 Water Spots Video Contest, which challenges middle and high school students to create compelling 30-second public service announcement videos.

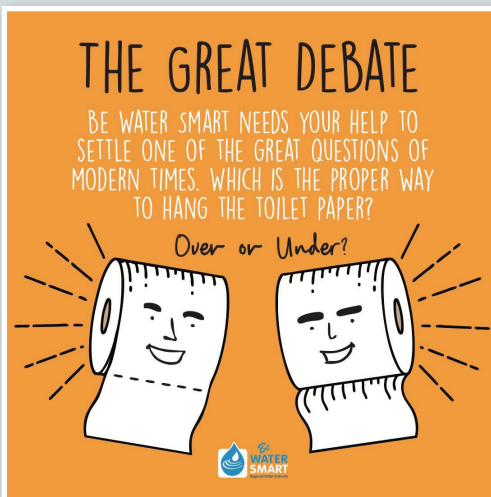
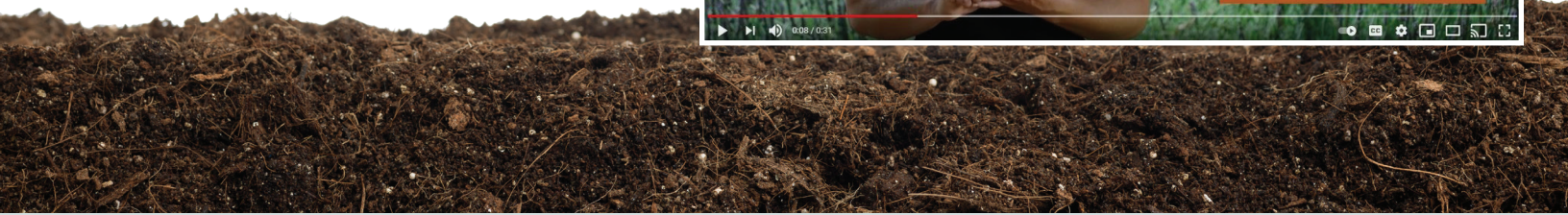
Students from seven Sacramento-area schools submitted a total of 90 videos, which ranged from high-tech to humorous with special effects and animation mixed with practical leak-finding tips and data on water wasted by leaks.

The Water Spots grand prize includes a premiere on the “big screen” at local movie theaters. With indoor movie theaters closed because of the coronavirus pandemic, the RWEF moved to showing the winning spot at the West Wind Sacramento 6 drive-in theater. Over an eight-week period an estimated 140,000 people viewed the spot.



New Videos Promote Rotators and Mulch

With video production shut down due to the coronavirus pandemic, the RWEF got creative in producing two new videos to promote water efficiency. These included an “Ask the Expert” video on the benefits of mulch by Marlene Simon “The Plant Lady” using footage filmed in 2019. In addition, RWA produced a new video (“What’s the Smartest Sprinkler for Your Yard?”) on rotator sprinklers, using existing footage and guidance from focus group research.



Engaging Audiences in Fixing Household Leaks

In late October 2020, the RWEF launched a new winter outreach campaign to raise awareness about toilet leaks, which waste more water inside homes than any other kind of household leak. The approach: Capture the public’s attention and inject a bit of fun while also raising awareness about the need to fix toilet leaks quickly by posing the provocative question, “Which is the Proper Way to Hang Toilet Paper, Under or Over?” The vehicle: a Facebook quiz and sweepstakes, launched as “The Great Debate” just in time for the presidential election.

As participants entered the poll, they learned about toilet leaks and how to check for them using the toilet dye test. The campaign attracted hundreds of entries and comments, which ranged from historical (“The patent application shows it over the top”) to confessional (“Under, and when I stay at hotels I switch it”).

HONORED FOR EXCELLENCE

RWA's Check the Soil and Save outreach program was honored for excellence in 2020 by the Public Relations Society of America California Capitol Chapter and CAPIO, a statewide association of communications professionals.



PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

The success of the Regional Water Efficiency Program depends upon the RWA members who financially contribute to the program. **Thank you to 2020 RWEF 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
Sacramento County Water Agency
Sacramento Suburban Water District
San Juan Water District

RWA ASSOCIATES:

Regional San
SMUD



LEARN MORE

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