

FY2013/2014

# Annual Report



## About the Partnership

The Sonoma-Marín Saving Water Partnership (Partnership) represents 10 water utilities in Sonoma and Marin counties that have joined together to provide regional solutions for water use efficiency.

The utilities include the Cities of Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Petaluma, Sonoma, Cotati; North Marin, Valley of the Moon and Marin Municipal Water Districts; Town of Windsor and Sonoma County Water Agency (Partners). Each of the Partners have water conservation programs that can assist customers in reducing their water use.

The Partnership was formed to identify and recommend implementation of water use efficiency projects, and maximize the cost-effectiveness of water use efficiency programs in our region.

The Partners are committed to remain members in good standing of the California Urban Water Conservation Council (CUWCC) and implement the Best Management Practices (BMPs) for water conservation.



## Our Service Area

More than 600,000 residents in Sonoma and Marin counties rely on the water delivered from the Russian River by the Sonoma County Water Agency (Water Agency) to the nine cities and districts in the Partnership. Supplementing the water provided by the Water Agency are local supplies including recycled water, groundwater from underground aquifers and surface water reservoirs.

Recreation, agriculture and wildlife, including threatened and endangered steelhead and coho and Chinook salmon also rely on these same natural resources in order to thrive.

Realizing the importance of protecting and preserving water resources for future generations, the members of the Partnership have taken a proactive role in helping fund, maintain and implement an array of water supply, water use efficiency and fishery recovery programs.



## *There's a Drought On! Turn the Water Off!*

This year the California drought took center stage and Governor Jerry Brown declared a State of Emergency on January 17, 2014. Our region experienced historically dry weather and low reservoir water storage levels. The Sonoma-Marin Water Saving Partnership implemented an unusual winter water conservation public outreach effort with a simple message: *"There's a Drought On. Turn the Water Off."* In addition, the Partnership joined together to create a one day "Drought Drive-Up" event at 10 different locations throughout the region and handed out over 5,000 drought tool kits to community members. The area retail water providers stepped up their water conservation efforts and the Partnership website was enhanced by adding a Water Savings Calculator tool, an online form for reporting water waste, and providing online access to water conservation tips.

The Partnership received a 2014 WaterSense "Partner of the Year" award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a professional certifying organization for promoting water efficient irrigation practices through implementation of the Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper Program (QWEL). QWEL educates landscape professionals and their customers on the benefits of sound landscape design, management and irrigation practices. The award was one of only nine issued by the EPA nationally.

The Partnership was formed in late 2010 and recognizes that establishing common regional water conservation projects may cost effectively conserve more water than would otherwise be conserved by individual agencies. This regional approach is based on meeting water conservation regulatory requirements by offering financial incentives to conserve and by educating water users about where drinking water comes from and how to use it most efficiently. The Partnership, through its many water efficiency programs, educational seminars and outreach campaigns, is working every day of the year to educate our communities about the importance of conserving water resources and curbing water-wasting behaviors.

Regional water use during Fiscal Year 2013/2014 remains down significantly from prior years as mandatory outdoor water use restriction were in effect. The Partnership continues to offer educational resources, programs and incentives to aid our communities in meeting water use efficiency requirements in the future as we work together in response to variable water year conditions and maintain supplies for beneficial use and instream needs.

Sincerely,



Dennis J. Rodoni, Chair  
Water Advisory Committee  
President  
North Marin Water District



Susan Gorin, Chair  
Sonoma County Water Agency  
Supervisor, County of Sonoma



# Partnership Achievements by the Numbers

**5,355,996** gallons of water per year are being saved by local businesses through **sustained reduction** programs where rebates are provided for implementing process changes and equipment upgrades resulting in measurable water use efficiencies.

**507,222** square feet of lawn were removed through **turf conversion** programs — enough to cover nearly nine professional football fields.

**23,061** students in 823 different classrooms received curriculum materials provided by the **Water Education Program**.

**10,496** students experienced “The Musical Watershed” performed by the **ZunZun** performing arts group in 37 shows at 25 different elementary schools.

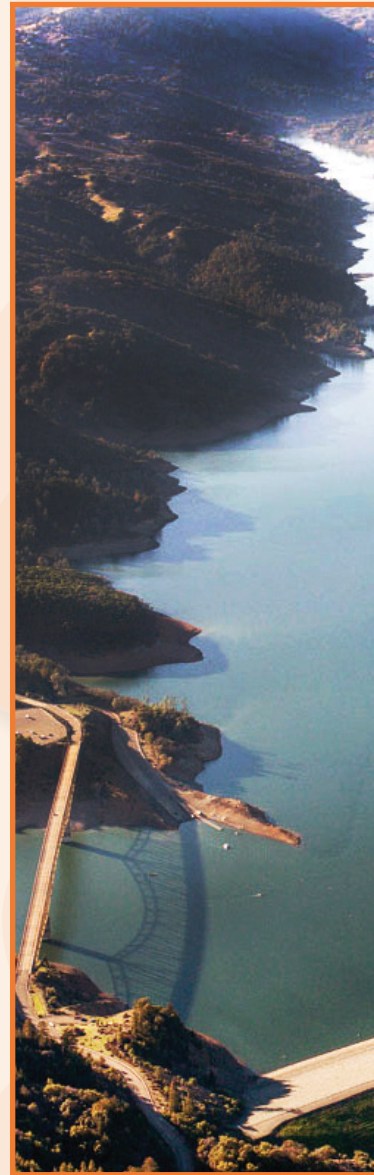
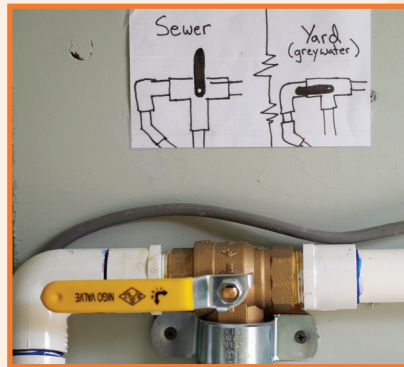
**7,058** actions were inspired by the **Community Resilience Challenge**.

**8,037** students received **direct instruction** by Water Education Program staff in the classroom, on technical tours and during field study sessions.

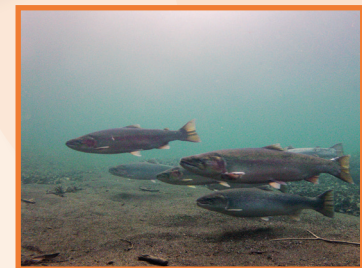
**5,148** drought kits were distributed during the **Drought Drive-Up Event** held at 10 locations throughout Sonoma and Marin counties on April 23, 2014. The kits included showerheads, bath and kitchen faucet aerators, dye tabs, shower timer, and bucket for saving water while waiting for hot water.

**4,410** **Water Smart Home** evaluations were performed. These in-home water efficiency assessments are performed by trained technicians to find opportunities for improvements, identify leaks, and inform homeowners about their indoor and outdoor water use.

**3,540** rebates were issued to **residents** for replacing their old, inefficient toilets with new, EPA WaterSense labeled **high-efficiency toilets** that flush at 1.28 gallons per flush or less.







**2,379** high-efficiency clothes washer rebates were issued. These EPA EnergyStar rated clothes washers use 40 to 60% less water than older, top loading models and they save energy from heating less water and wringing out more water before the clothes go into the dryer.

**2,284** students participated in the Field Study Program where the 5th grade students performed water related experiments along the banks of the Russian River and learned about the riparian ecosystem.

**2,210** high school students learned about the water system and explored career opportunities in the field of water.

**941** rebates were issued to businesses for installing high-efficiency toilets and urinals.

**720** guests visited the nine gardens that participated in the Third Annual Eco Friendly Garden Tour.

**356** parents volunteered to chaperone their child's class during their field study visit to the Water Agency's Russian River Field Study Site near Forestville. The parents participated along with the students allowing the Field Study Program to reach adults as well as children.

**215** landscapes were upgraded through our rebate programs.

**185** students graduated from the Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) and Spanish QWEL programs.

**166** in-garden visits were conducted by the Master Gardeners through the Garden Sense program to educate customers on low water use landscapes.

**151** businesses participated in our water use survey programs.

**87** people attended Rainwater Harvesting classes.

**47** videos were submitted for the high school video contest themed "There's a Drought On! Turn the Water Off!"

**22** businesses were certified through the Sonoma County Green Business Program sponsored by the Water Agency.

**11** permitted graywater systems were installed in homes to reuse water from bathroom sinks, showers, tubs and laundry for irrigating landscapes.

## ANNUAL MULTI-MEDIA PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Following the 20-Gallon Challenge Campaign, the Partnership launched a new campaign to continue to increase awareness of the dry weather and serious drought conditions. The Partnership implemented a new regional multi-media effort throughout the North Bay region with a simple message: **There's a drought. Turn the water off.** The campaign's goal is to educate the public about outdoor and indoor water conservation by promoting creative and humorous tips for saving water.

The Partnership also joined forces to hand out over 5,000 drought tool kits during a one day, 10 location event called the "Drought Drive-Up." Partnership staff and elected officials handed out tool kits that included toilet dye-tests, water efficient shower

heads, spray nozzles, shower buckets and more. The community's response was overwhelming as many drive-up locations ran out of supplies before the end of the day.



## Partnership Highlights

### PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

Partners have pledged to fund water use efficiency programs. The baseline funding is established in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and is based on historic water deliveries through the Water Agency's water transmission system, ensuring that programs will always be available to help residents use our water resources efficiently.

Minimum funding levels are presented in the orange bar in the table below along with Fiscal Year 13/14 expenditures.

For the Town of Windsor, additional required funding paid through a direct diversion water conservation sub-charge is not included with their MOU minimum. These additional funds are designated for the Town's water use efficiency programs and are included in their annual program expenditures.

The Water Agency's Water Use Efficiency Program is funded by the water contractors through the Water Conservation Sub-Charge as part of the Water Agency wholesale water rates. The amount of money deposited into the fund is calculated based on an estimate of the total costs for all regional Water Conservation Projects for each fiscal year.

The Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership does not specify a minimum amount that should be utilized for regional programs.

Program Expenditures (in thousands of dollars)

	City of Cotati	Marin Municipal Water District	North Marin Water District	City of Petaluma	City of Rohnert Park	City of Santa Rosa	City of Sonoma	Valley of the Moon Water District	Town of Windsor	Sonoma County Water Agency	Regional Total
FY 13-14	\$ 84	\$1,947	\$429	\$660	\$ 14	\$1,127	\$129	\$245	\$259	\$1,630	\$6,526
Minimum	\$25	\$177	\$241	\$242	\$120	\$557	\$55	\$72	\$10	NA	\$1,500

## 2014 TEMPORARY URGENCY CHANGE PETITION

As a result of the driest calendar year on record in Ukiah, the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) issued an order on December 31, 2013 that allowed the Sonoma County Water Agency to preserve Lake Mendocino's dwindling water storage in response to a Temporary Urgency Change Petition that was filed on December 20, 2013 by the Water Agency.

Beginning January 1, 2014 the order allowed lower minimum flows in the upper Russian River and more operational flexibility for water managers working to preserve every drop of water in Lake Mendocino. Due to the lack of rainfall in early 2014, the order was amended on March 7, 2014 adding terms to reduce water demand throughout the Russian River watershed. The reduced water releases saved over 15,000 acre-feet in Lake Mendocino; the equivalent of the reservoir's total storage in Fall 2014. The Water Agency worked closely with natural resource agencies to maintain river flows at levels supporting migrating endangered coho salmon and threatened Chinook salmon and steelhead.

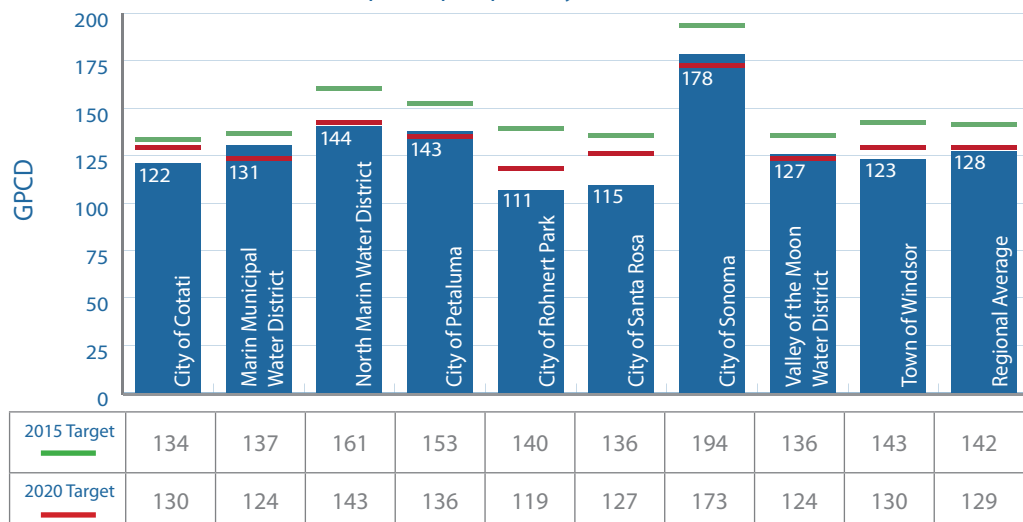
## 20 x 2020 GOALS

In 2009, SBx7-7 established a statewide goal, known as 20 x 2020, to reduce per capita water use 20% by the year 2020 with an interim goal of a 10% reduction by 2015. The chart below displays 2013 per capita water use in each Partner service area and the region as a whole. The 2015 and 2020 goals are indicated by the green and red lines, respectively.

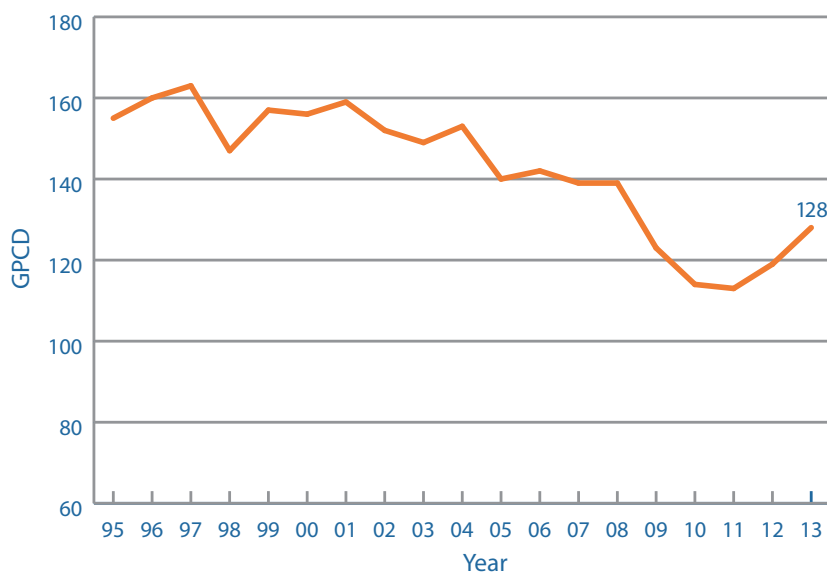
While the chart shows that many Partners are currently meeting the 2020 targets, we recognize that water use efficiency must continue. Many factors can affect water use patterns as seen in recent years. The rebound in the economy is one key factor that has caused an increase in water use. The overall longterm trend shows water demands have dropped as a result of many factors including the California drought, economy, changes in weather conditions, and active water conservation programs.

It is important to continue the work on water use efficiency to maintain the savings already achieved and make sure the region captures all the benefits of future water savings.

2013 Gallons per Capita per Day (GPCD) and 20 x 2020 Goals



Regional Average GPCD Usage



## PARTNERSHIP RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

The Partnership was recognized with a 2013 WaterSense Excellence Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for promoting water efficient irrigation practices through implementation of the Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) program. The Partnership was honored for its groundbreaking regional approach towards cost-effective incentive and educational based water use efficiency programs.

From its early development through a collaborative effort between Partnership agencies (before the Partnership was formed) and the landscape industry, QWEL's mission has been to educate landscape professionals and their customers on the benefits of sound landscape design, management, and irrigation practices. Since the QWEL program became WaterSense labeled in 2007, QWEL has issued over 700 certifications and is offered by 10 organizations throughout the US.





[www.savingwaterpartnership.org](http://www.savingwaterpartnership.org)



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City of Santa Rosa  
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