



# Quarterly E-News

## Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership Newsletter Winter | 2025

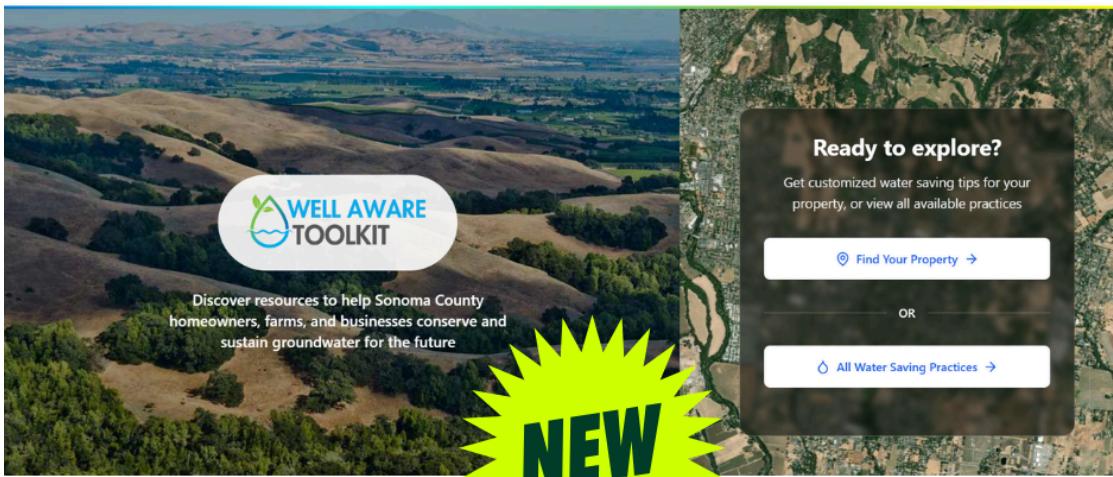
### **The Well Aware Toolkit is here. Start saving groundwater now!**

The Sonoma County Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) are pleased to announce the launch of the [Well Aware Toolkit](#)! This new interactive resource provides personalized water savings tips, programs, and rebates for groundwater users. The resource has guidance for all property types including residential, commercial, vineyards, golf courses, specialty crops, and pasture.

Users can input their own address, and find specific solutions for their property including:

- Customized water-saving strategies for your property
- Financial assistance programs to support water conservation
- Guidance from trusted local experts who understand our region's needs

Groundwater is a critical resource in Sonoma County, supporting families, farms, and ecosystems. About 43,000 people within the groundwater sustainability boundaries and many local jobs in Sonoma County solely rely on groundwater supplies. Preserving this resource is critical to the long-term health of our region. Together, we can protect Sonoma County's groundwater and build a sustainable future.




[Click here to start using the Toolkit today!](#)

**It's winter! Time to turn off your irrigation:**

As we enter the rainy season, it's important that you remember to ensure your irrigation controller is turned off.

Not only is it important that you stop irrigation to protect your plants' health and save water, but it could also save you money.



If your sewer service provider calculates charges based on volumetric rates, then your winter water usage can dictate your sewer bill for the entire year. If your irrigation is left on during this period, you'll be stuck with high rates all year. That's just another reason to turn your irrigation off for the winter!

***Need help preparing for winter? See if your water provider offers free water use consultations!***

If you need help programming your irrigation controller or checking for leaks, consider making a free appointment through your water provider to have a technician assist you.

The following providers offer free, in-person consultations:

- [Town of Windsor](#)
- [City of Santa Rosa](#)
- [City of Cotati](#)
- [North Marin Water District](#)
- [Marin Water](#)

[Click here to learn what programs your provider offers](#)

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**Schedule released for upcoming Watershed Approach to Landscaping classes at the College of Marin:**

Registration will open next month for the Winter/Spring Watershed Approach to Landscaping course series, but you can get a sneak peek at the schedule for this popular College of Marin course right now.

Designed around Marin Water's Watershed Approach to Landscaping Handbook, these in-person courses walk you through each step of creating a mini watershed at home by harnessing the power of Marin County's varied climate and ecosystem. Learn how to retain rainwater, choose climate-appropriate native plants and build soils with healthy biomes. Go beyond water-wise and sustainable practices by enrolling in one or all of the courses in the series!



[Click here to review the course list](#)

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**Calling all landscape professionals! Free QWEL Certification Course in Marin:**

Take your landscaping skills to the next level and obtain your Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) certification! QWEL classes provide instruction for landscaping professionals regarding sustainable landscaping and efficient irrigation practices.

The Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership is proud to sponsor a QWEL Training Course hosted by Marin Water in March of 2026.

**This free class is available to professionals conducting work in Sonoma County, Marin County, and the Bay Area.**



***Class schedule (In-person, English):***

- Wednesday, March 4: 7:30am - 2:00pm
- Wednesday, March 11: 7:30am - 2:00pm
- Wednesday, March 18: 7:30am - 2:00pm
- **Exam on Wednesday, March 25: 7:30am - 11:00am**

There will be a 30 minute lunch break. Lunch will be provided by Marin Water. Registration is **free** and closes February 20, 2026 or when the class is full.

***Wednesdays from 7:30am to 2:00pm at the Marin Art and Garden Center***

**[Click here to register](#)**

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**Calling all landscape professionals! Free QWEL Rainwater Catchment Course in Santa Rosa:**



Rainwater is a valuable resource that when collected and stored, can be used as an alternative water source helping offset the demand on existing water systems, such as wells, and municipal water.

Water is a precious resource in California and rainwater catchment is one strategy that can help protect this resource.

The purpose of this training, sponsored by the Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership, is to introduce landscape installers and other water system professionals to the basics of rainwater catchment system design and installation.

**This class is limited to professionals in Sonoma, Marin, and Mendocino counties.**

***Class schedule (In-person, English):***

- **Class** on Tuesday, April 21: 8:00am - 4:00pm
- **Class and exam** on Wednesday, April 22: 8:00am - 4:00pm
- **Installation and networking** on Thursday, April 23: 10:00am-4:00pm

Registration is **free** and closes April 14, 2026.

**Tuesday, April 21 – Thursday, April 23rd at Sonoma Water in Santa Rosa**

[Click here to register](#)

### **Find and Fix Leaks With the DIY Toolkit:**

Borrow a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Toolkit from the Sonoma County Libraries to help you conserve water and energy in your home. The Toolkit contains returnable tools like flow rate bags, hot water thermometers, infrared laser thermometers, and others. It also has fixtures you can install for free, including showerheads, faucet aerators, and lightbulbs. The Toolkit even provides the tools necessary for installation!



The DIY Toolkit guides you to find inefficiencies in your water and energy usage and provides instant solutions to many common household problems. Check out a Toolkit today from the [Sonoma County Library](#)!

[Click here to learn more](#)

### **City of Petaluma Launches Pilot Income Qualified Direct Install Program:**

The City of Petaluma is offering free installation for a limited time of ultra-high-efficiency toilets, showerheads, and faucet aerators for qualified residential water customers. A licensed plumber will install these water saving fixtures *for free*:

- 0.8 gallon per flush toilet (2 toilets maximum per household)
- 1.5 gallon per minute showerhead(s)
- 0.5 gallon per minute bathroom sink aerator(s)
- 1.5 gallon per minute kitchen sink aerator



You may be eligible if you:

1. Are a City of Petaluma water customer. Non-property owners must provide written consent from the property owner to be eligible.

2. Have a toilet with a flush rate of 1.6 gallons per flush or higher. The plumber will assess on site if you need upgraded aerators and/or showerheads.
3. Have a household income at or below the moderate income level for Sonoma County.

Have questions about the program? Call Water Conservation at [\(707\) 778-4507](tel:(707)778-4507) or email [conservation@cityofpetaluma.org](mailto:conservation@cityofpetaluma.org).

[Click here to learn more](#)

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**Marin Water video contest encourages the next generation of water stewards:**



Marin Water is excited to introduce a new High School Video Contest, part of the District's ongoing effort to support local youth education. This year's theme, "Your Water's Journey," invites students to create short videos that highlight how our water's journey isn't distant or abstract – but happening all around us; originating in our own backyard: the Mount Tamalpais Watershed!

Know a student or teacher who may be interested? Share the article linked below with all of the contest details they'll need to be successful!

[Click here for full contest details](#)

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**Learn how water supply is managed at free tours of Lake Sonoma:**

Join Sonoma Water and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a free public tour of Lake Sonoma.

**When:** Every Monday (and some Saturday dates starting in 2026!)

**Time:** 10:30 – 11:15 a.m.

**Where:** Milt Brandt Visitor Center at Lake Sonoma, 3227 Stewarts Point-Skaggs Springs Road, Geyserville



Explore the history of Lake Sonoma and Warm Springs Dam, learn how water supply and infrastructure are managed, and discover the important partnership between Sonoma Water and USACE (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers). Tours also highlight recreational opportunities at the lake and efforts to protect salmon and steelhead populations. Reservations are not required. Tours are free.

***Mondays from 10:30am – 11:15am at Milt Brandt Visitor Center of Lake Sonoma***

[Learn more here](#)

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***Holidays with the Coho: Learn about the Coho salmon run with Marin Water***

Join a Marin Water fish biologist from 10-11:30am Tuesday, Dec. 23, at Leo T. Cronin Fish Viewing Area in Fairfax for a walk and talk about the Coho salmon run. Learn about ongoing restoration work and the history of salmon spawning in Lagunitas Creek. No registration required. Limited parking available, please arrive 10 minutes before the walk begins.



***Tuesday, December 23rd from 10:00am – 11:30am at Leo T. Cronin Fish Viewing Area in Fairfax***

[Learn more about how Marin Water's fisheries work](#)

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***Need something mended? Visit your local Repair Fair to get it fixed free of charge!***

Do you have a small appliance, textile, or bike in need of repair? Bring it to a Repair Fair hosted by Reuse Alliance!

Volunteers and specialized repair professionals will be on-hand to repair many types of items. Please stay with your item while it's being fixed, so you can learn tips for future maintenance, how to shop for repairable goods, and even how to repair things yourself!

If you'd like to bring an item to repair, please register the item [here](#). (Pre-registering allows them to prepare for your item!)

Alternatively, does fixing things sound like a fun way to spend a Saturday afternoon? Or, want to help out in other ways?

Email [volunteer@reusealliance.org](mailto:volunteer@reusealliance.org) or [sign up here](#) to get involved!



#### Upcoming repair fairs include:

- [San Rafael](#) - Saturday, **January 10 from 1-4pm** at the San Rafael Community Center
- [Healdsburg](#) - Saturday, **January 24 from 1-4pm** at the Healdsburg Community Center
- [Sausalito](#) - Saturday, **January 31 from 10am-1pm** at Edgewater Room at Sausalito City Hall
- [Petaluma](#) - Saturday, **February 7 from 1-4pm** at the Petaluma Regional Library

[Click here to find an event](#)

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### **Educator workshop: Marin Water to host workshop on climate change and California water**

Attention educators! Join us for an inspiring workshop on climate change and its impact on California's water resources. Designed for those working with grades 3 – 12, the workshop covers the science of climate change and its connection to California's water resources.

This workshop is offered in collaboration with the California Department of Water Resource's Climate Team and the Water Education Foundation's California Project WET program.



Registration cost is \$25, and includes continental breakfast, lunch, and an opportunity to earn CEU credits and a stipend.

***Saturday, January 24th from 8:00am – 4:00pm in the Mt. Tamalpais Room at the Marin Water Administration Building in Corte Madera***

[Click here to register for the workshop](#)

## Calling all landscape professionals! Tree Care & Lawn Conversion in a New Regulatory Landscape



Calling all landscape professionals, contractors, HOAs, and municipal partners! Want to know more about the future of turf under California's new law, AB1572?

Join the Russian River Watershed Association (RRWA) for Turf's Up! Tree Care & Lawn Conversion in a New Regulatory Landscape.

Get practical guidance, timelines, and strategies to keep your sites compliant and thriving.

**Wednesday, February 11 from 8:00am – 12:30pm at Finley Community Center in Santa Rosa**

[Click here to learn more and to register](#)

## Save the Date: 2026 Eco-Friendly Garden Tour – May 9th!

Save the date: the 2026 Eco-Friendly Garden Tour will take place on **Saturday, May 9th** from **10:00am to 4:00pm!**

The Eco-Friendly Garden Tour is an annual tour showcasing local homes and gardens that have crafted beautiful, low water use, sustainable landscapes. It aims to demonstrate how native landscaping can be even more beautiful than traditional landscaping styles.

The self-guided tour will take place across Sonoma and Marin counties. It's a great way to celebrate gardening, find inspiration for your own projects, and connect with like-minded people!

Last year's tour featured 19 gardens and saw over 3,600 registrations. Local organizations provided educational information and advice at many of the



gardens. We expect the 2026 tour to be even better!

**Registration is free but required** to attend. Keep an eye out for more updates in the coming months, including a registration link and a sneak peek of the featured gardens on the tour.

**Saturday, May 9th from 10:00am – 4:00pm across Sonoma and Marin counties**

[Click here for more information](#)



California American Water · Larkfield · City of Cloverdale · City of Cotati · City of Healdsburg  
Marin Water · North Marin Water District · City of Petaluma · City of Rohnert Park · City of Santa Rosa  
City of Sonoma · Sonoma Water · Valley of the Moon Water District · Town of Windsor

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