SONOMA - MARIN SAVING WATER PARTNERSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2023-2024

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

The Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership (Partnership) represents 13 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, Healdsburg, and Cloverdale; North Marin and Valley of the Moon Water Districts; Town of Windsor, Marin Water and California American Water - Larkfield and Sonoma Water (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 remaining members in good standing of the California Water Efficiency Partnership.

OUR SERVICE AREA

More than 600,000 residents in Sonoma and Marin counties rely on the water delivered from the Russian River by Sonoma Water to nine of the cities and districts in the Partnership. The water provided by Sonoma Water is supplemented by local supplies including recycled water, groundwater from underground aquifers and surface water reservoirs.

Recreation, agriculture and wildlife, including threatened and endangered steelhead, 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.

READY FOR THE FUTURE

An uneventful and average water supply year is the best time to prepare for the future – one that looks to be less predictable with more frequent and severe weather extremes. As such, the Partnership focused on building resiliency, encouraging the community to "be climate ready".

Choices we make today can affect outcomes far into the future so the Partnership has developed the tools and resources to help our community make educated decisions on sustainable, water efficient fixtures, equipment and landscaping that will increase resiliency against droughts, floods, and fires.

In February through March, finding and fixing leaks were promoted with the Dye Tab Challenge and Fix-a-Leak Week.

In May, the Eco-Friendly Garden Tour grew to feature 26 gardens in Sonoma and Marin counties, promoting sustainable landscape practices with more than 3,800 participants visiting and learning about climate appropriate plants, rainwater harvesting, and more.

Each month from June through September, the Partnership's summer outreach campaign promoted #BeClimateReady, highlighting a variety of helpful programs and tools each week.

The Partnership and the UC Master Gardener Program of Sonoma County partnered to build and host a climate ready landscape display at the Sonoma County Fair. The master gardeners staffing the display had one-on-one interactions with more than 630 fairgoers and over 50 new sign-ups for the Garden Sense program, which provides free residential consultations on how to easily conserve water (and save money) by creating a climate-appropriate garden that is healthy, environmentally sound, and most of all – beautiful! The Partnership's dedicated fair webpage had more than 540 people visit to learn more about climate ready landscapes during the 10-day run.

As a result of these and other efforts, the Partnership again garnered national recognition, this time with two U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2024 WaterSense Sustained Excellence Awards and the 2024 Outstanding Industry Partnership Award from the Irrigation Association. We are very proud of these awards as they are a testament to our commitment and success at making water conservation a California way of life.

Sincerely,

Natalie Rogers, Chair
Water Advisory Committee

David Rabbitt, Chair
Sonoma Water Board of Directors

PARTNERSHIP ACHIEVEMENTS

OUTDOOR WATER USE PROGRAMS

523
IRRIGATION SYSTEMS RETROFITTED WITH SMART CONTROLLERS

372,698
SQUARE FEET OF LAWN REMOVED VIA CASH FOR GRASS / MULCH MADNESS

324
REBATES GIVEN FOR LAWN REMOVAL VIA CASH FOR GRASS / MULCH MADNESS

163
LANDSCAPE PLANS REVIEWED

6
RAINWATER HARVESTING WORKSHOPS

9
LOW WATER USE GARDEN DESIGN CLASSES

1,174
WATER WASTE ENFORCEMENTS

4
SHEET MULCHING WORKSHOPS

2
DRIP IRRIGATION CLASSES

22
IRRIGATION SYSTEM EFFICIENCY UPGRADE REBATES

81
POOL COVER REBATES

ECO-FRIENDLY GARDEN TOUR
3,812 PARTICIPANTS
26 GARDENS

44,399
GALLONS OF RAINWATER HARVESTING CAPACITY ADDED

36
RAINWATER HARVESTING REBATES

QWEL
QUALIFIED WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPER

62
QWEL PROS CERTIFIED

SONOMA - MARIN SAVING WATER PARTNERSHIP
water smart plant

FEATURED AT
32
NURSERIES

SENSE Garden
SONOMA COUNTY

210
CONSULTATIONS

BY THE NUMBERS

RESIDENTIAL INDOOR WATER USE PROGRAMS

19
HOT WATER RECIRCULATION SYSTEM REBATES

1,423
WATER SMART HOME EVALUATIONS

544
FLUME WATER MONITORING INSTALLATIONS

201
HIGH-EFFICIENCY CLOTHES WASHER REBATES

41
LAUNDRY TO LANDSCAPE GRAYWATER SYSTEMS

1,463
RESIDENTIAL TOILET REPLACEMENTS

COMMERCIAL PROGRAMS

27
INDOOR SURVEYS COMPLETED

7
BUSINESSES CERTIFIED OR RE-CERTIFED AS GREEN BUSINESSES

136
COMMERCIAL HIGH EFFICIENCY TOILETS RETROFITTED

K-12 EDUCATION PROGRAMS

16,457
STUDENTS IN **693** CLASSROOMS RECEIVED DIRECT INSTRUCTION

40,349
STUDENTS IN **1,463** CLASSROOMS RECIEVED SCHOOL SUPPLIES FROM THE PROGRAM

93
STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN THE WATER AWARENESS VIDEO CONTEST

110
CLASSROOMS PARTICIPATED IN THE STEELHEAD IN THE CLASSROOM PROGRAM

11,874
STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN ZUNZUN MUSICAL ASSEMBLIES

33
VIDEOS WERE ENTERED IN THE WATER AWARENESS VIDEO CONTEST

PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

QWEL Develops New Rainwater Catchment Curriculum

The Qualified Water Efficient Landscape Program, the Partnership's landscaper training and professional certification program, developed a new Rainwater Catchment Training Module (Module) in a collaboration with the Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District, Sonoma Resource Conservation District, and Sherwood Engineers.

The development of the Module was funded by the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 through the California Department of Water Resources, and the County of Sonoma Climate Resiliency Fund. The Module includes a classroom teaching curriculum and an accompanying student reference manual for 16 hours of classroom instruction and an exam, providing introductory concepts in rainwater catchment system design and installation meant to complement the sustainable water management practices of QWEL.

In December 2023, Sonoma Water hosted a 2-day pilot class of the Module and certified thirty-three landscape professionals.

Summer Outreach Campaign

This summer's outreach campaign "Be Climate Ready" focused on building climate ready landscapes by promoting tools and resources that prepare landscapes to be resilient to droughts, fires and floods.

In June, the outreach focused on choosing water smart plants and improving soil health. The Partnership's Plant Picker and Santa Rosa's list of climate ready trees were featured.
July focused on irrigating efficiently and avoiding water waste to coincide with the Irrigation Association's Smart Irrigation month. Rebates on WaterSense labeled smart irrigation controllers were highlighted.

In August, the focus turned to landscape design and maintenance with the Partnership's Water Smart Landscape Design Templates and Water Smart Gardens Maintenance Manual being promoted. The Partnership also partnered with the UC Master Gardener Program of Sonoma County on a climate ready landscape display at the Sonoma County Fair (pictured here).

Implementing measures to slow, spread, and sink rainwater were the focus of September's outreach with information on rebates for rainwater catchment and graywater systems.

Partnership Earns Three Awards

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Water Sense Program has recognized the Partnership for its continued water use efficiency and community engagement efforts throughout 2023. After winning three Water Sense Partner of the Year Awards as a Promotional Partner, the Partnership won its first *Sustained Excellence Award* in October 2024.

The Partnership's Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) program was also recognized with its eighth consecutive *Sustained Excellence Award*. QWEL is a WaterSense labeled professional landscape certification program that emphasizes a holistic approach to landscaping and landscape irrigation practices.

The QWEL program also received recognition from the Irrigation Association's Smart Water Application Technologies Program, which awarded the program with the *2024 Outstanding Industry Partnership Award*.

PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

(In thousands of dollars)

	FY 22-23	Minimum
California American Water	$54	$21
City of Cloverdale	$25	$39
City of Cotati	$21	$18
City of Healdsburg	$100	$35
Marin Water	$1,133	$512
North Marin Water District	$435	$168
City of Petaluma	$1,243	$172
City of Rohnert Park	$100	$94
City of Santa Rosa	$2,026	$374
City of Sonoma	$138	$40
Valley of the Moon Water District	$55	$53
Town of Windsor	$237	$69
Sonoma Water	$2,942	NA
Regional Total	$8,510	$1,595

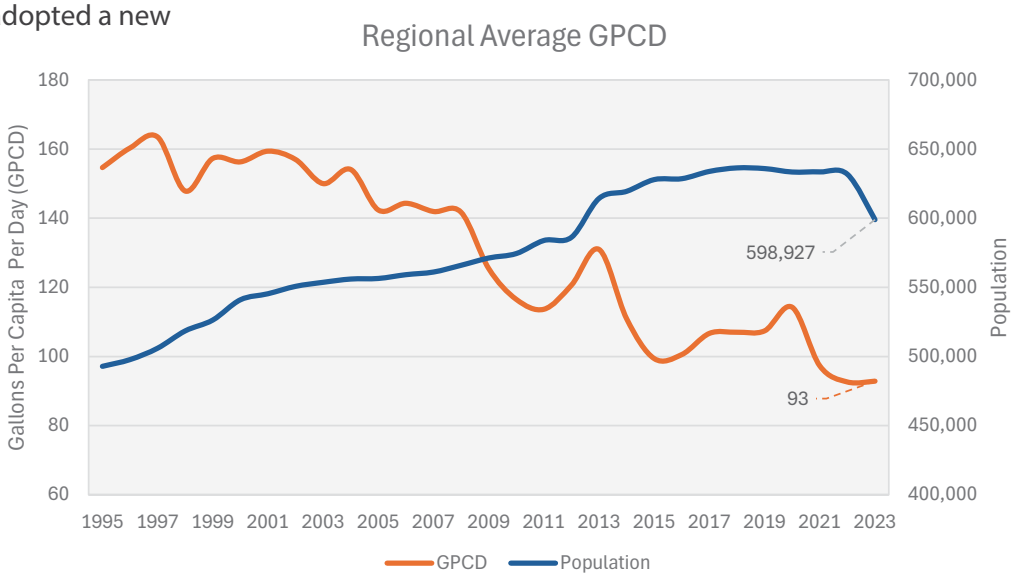
Minimums are established for Partners in the MOU.

Regional Water Use Holds Steady Post Drought

During 2023, the Partnership's regional average gallons per capita per day (gpcd) remained steady at 93 gpcd, maintaining the reduction achieved during the drought that ended in 2022.

In July 2023 the State Water Board adopted a new water conservation framework regulation for retail water agencies, called Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life. This new framework was set in motion in 2018 by the passage of SB 606 and AB 1668 and includes new water conservation targets, called Urban Water Use Objectives, for retail water agencies to achieve beginning in 2025 and extending out beyond 2040.

Although these reduction targets are being phased in, the laws are clear in setting new standards for water agencies that go beyond the previous water saving targets in 2020. The Partnership will be continuing its work to meet these new water reduction goals and to secure a reliable water future for all our communities.



SONOMA - MARIN SAVING WATER PARTNERSHIP

savingwaterpartnership.org

Town of Windsor
707-838-1004
townofwindsor.com

City of Sonoma
707-933-2237
sonomacity.org

City of Rohnert Park
707-588-3300
www.rpcity.org

North Marin Water District
415-761-8933
nmwd.com

Marin Water
415-945-1520
marinwater.org

Valley of the Moon
Water District
707-996-1037
vomwd.com

City of Petaluma
707-778-4507
cityofpetaluma.org
/water-conservation

City of Santa Rosa
707-543-3985
srcity.org/water

City of Cotati
707-665-3631
cityofcotati.org

California American Water
Larkfield
707-542-8329
calamwater.com

City of Healdsburg
707-431-3122
smartlivinghealdsburg.org

City of Cloverdale
707-894-2521
cloverdale.net

Sonoma Water
707-547-1933
sonomawater.org