



2023 Excellence Awards



Department of Water, County of Kauai giveaway.

WaterSense® Partners Excel in Water Savings

WaterSense and its more than 2,100 utility, manufacturer, retail, builder, and other organizational partners promote water-efficient products, homes, and programs to consumers and businesses across the country. Over the past 17 years, WaterSense partners have helped Americans save 7.5 trillion gallons of water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is pleased to recognize 25 Excellence Award winners in particular for helping consumers and businesses save water in 2022.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



Big Bear Lake Department of Water and Power (California)

The City of Big Bear Lake (California) Department of Water and Power won an Excellence Award for Education and Outreach, its fourth WaterSense Award overall. The department helped educate the Big Bear Lake community with presentations on water conservation and WaterSense. Attendees at the presentations received free WaterSense labeled showerheads and faucet aerators. To promote Fix a Leak Week 2022, Big Bear Lake posted WaterSense graphics on Facebook and Twitter and held a raffle where residents who submitted a story about their indoor or outdoor leaks could win one of five water conservation kits. To help increase outdoor water efficiency awareness, Big Bear Lake reached out to landscapers and businesses that sell ornamental turf to promote both its turf buyback program and rebate program for WaterSense labeled irrigation controllers.



Irvine Ranch Water District (California)

Irvine Ranch (California) Water District (IRWD) won an Excellence Award for Education and Outreach, the District's fifth WaterSense award, due to its water conservation promotion efforts. IRWD participated in several WaterSense campaigns in 2022, including Fix a Leak Week, Sprinkler Spruce-Up, and Your Better Yard. It hosted a virtual "Don't Spring a Leak" workshop, which provided over 100 attendees with tips for saving water at home, and a Sprinkler Spruce-Up workshop

To learn more about WaterSense, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.

(866) WTR-SENS (987-7367) | watersense@epa.gov



832-F-23-019
October 2023

on irrigation maintenance practices. Over 600 customers attended IRWD’s Better Yards by Design Expo to learn about the turf removal rebate program and sustainable landscape design tips. To encourage customers to save water during drought, the District created an interactive “How Do You Drought” social media campaign and sweepstakes to engage customers in a conversation about saving water. Overall, the month-long campaign secured 3.2 million impressions and over 19,000 engagements!



Kearns Improvement District (Utah)

Kearns Improvement District (KID) in Utah won its first WaterSense Award for Excellence in Education and Outreach. To teach children about the importance of water conservation, Kearns contacted fourth grade teachers from local elementary schools to present media films, short clips, and facts about how to check and report water leaks to their classrooms. Students who looked for leaks at home received a reward from Kearns, and 124 students participated in 2022! Each month, Kearns management attended Township and Community Council meetings to report on the progress of conservation efforts in the community. Kearns staff also participated in six community events and distributed information about WaterSense and available landscape conservation classes, grants, and water efficiency programs. Kearns also asked residents in the community to post signs in front yards that shared water-wise and WaterSense conservation tips.



KID booth at the community Spring Fest.



Monte Vista Water District (California)

Using social media and in-person education, Monte Vista Water District in Montclair, California, won its first WaterSense Award for Excellence in Education and Outreach. For Fix a Leak Week 2022, the District had a social media campaign and invited Monte Vista customers to visit its lobby to receive promotional items, information about rebates on WaterSense labeled products, and a chance to win installation of a free WaterSense labeled toilet. MVWD also educated its customers with an in-person workshop, “Ready for Drought: Simple Ways to Save Water Inside & Outside Your Home.” Monte Vista also launched a social media campaign, Water Watch Wednesdays, to provide drought updates and tips to help its followers on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter save water inside and out.

EXCELLENCE IN PROMOTION AND OUTREACH



San Diego County (California) Water Authority

The San Diego County Water Authority won its fourth WaterSense Award, this time for Excellence in Promotion and Outreach. The Water Authority has offered the Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) certification program free of charge to people who live and work in the Water Authority’s service area since 2015. When COVID

“Trainings in English and Spanish are among the most impactful strategies to help our community thrive in a changing climate. We thank WaterSense for its partnership and guidance as we advance water-saving practices.”

Mel Katz, Water Authority Board Chair



restricted in-person meetings, classes transitioned to virtual to keep the program active. This also provided new flexibility for those unable to attend in-person classes. In 2022, nearly 300 new participants were certified through the program. Fifty percent of their QWEL certified individuals attended webinars to renew their certifications, and after conducting more than 25 in-person and online exams, there were nearly 460 certified participants for the year. To reach San Diego’s Spanish-speaking residents, the Water Authority recruited and trained bilingual instructors and offered virtual training in Spanish, attended by more than 40 new participants. The Water Authority’s Irrigation System Auditing video, available with English and Spanish captions, received over 700 views in 2022.

EXCELLENCE IN ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH



THE TORO COMPANY

The Toro Company

The Toro Company has won its ninth WaterSense Award, for Excellence in Engagement and Outreach. To engage contractors, The Toro Company supported nearly 40 training events in 2022 and promoted WaterSense via catalogs, sell sheets, trade shows, online, press releases, social media, and its “Take Five” newsletter distributed to over 3,500 professionals. With the help of a student at Texas A&M University, The Toro Company began collecting data in the region on soil moisture variability and irrigation scheduling for turf applications. Toro also began a new project at the University of Minnesota’s Turfgrass Research, Outreach, and Education Center to evaluate thresholds for sensor-based irrigation scheduling to reduce water use while preserving turf quality. Company representatives attended several local events at schools and in the community to educate the public on water conservation and the benefits of WaterSense labeled products.

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION, OUTREACH, AND PROMOTING WATERSENSE LABELED PRODUCTS



Sacramento Suburban Water District (California)

The Sacramento (California) Suburban Water District (SSWD) earned its second WaterSense Award for Excellence in Education, Outreach, and Promoting WaterSense Labeled Products. Throughout 2022, SSWD participated in a WaterSense promotional campaign every month! To kick the year off, the district put the “I’m For Water” pledge in its January bill insert distributed to 40,000 customers. For Mulch Mayhem, SSWD held an open house that 150 customers attended, gave away 60 yards of mulch, and staffed a booth focused on water conservation and WaterSense, where they raffled off a WaterSense labeled weather-based irrigation controller. In 2022, SSWD processed rebates for 35 WaterSense labeled toilets, 45 labeled weather-based irrigation controllers, and 27 irrigation system upgrades. SSWD also sent over 10,000 postcards that generated more than 200 leak investigations and resulted in 50 leak repair rebates, saving over 90 million gallons of water per year.



Cobb County giving away showerheads at an event.

Cobb County (Georgia) Water System

Cobb County (Georgia) Water System earned an Excellence Award for Education, Outreach, and Promoting WaterSense Labeled Products—its 12th WaterSense Award overall! To help customers better understand their water use, Cobb County partnered with Flume, a company that makes smart home water monitors and leak detector devices, and provided a \$100 bill credit rebate to their customers who purchased and installed a device in their homes. To celebrate Fix a Leak Week in 2022, Cobb County hosted a give-away event to distribute pressure gauges, educational materials, leak detector dye tablets, and plumber’s tape. Approximately 100 customers received the water-saving packages during Fix a Leak Week 2022. Cobb County also hosted a virtual lunch-and-learn on “How to Become a Leak Detective,” focused on finding and repairing common and sneaky leaks throughout the home and in the yard. To engage customers who come to its office, Cobb County created an interactive, Jeopardy-style display using questions about water-efficient practices; one month focused on WaterSense’s Shower Better campaign.



Department of Water, County of Kaua’i (Hawaii)

The Department of Water, County of Kaua’i (Hawaii) won its third WaterSense honor, an Excellence Award for Education, Outreach, and Promoting WaterSense Labeled Products. Throughout 2022, the Department participated in numerous WaterSense outreach efforts including Fix a Leak Week, Flip Your Flapper, Your Better Bathroom, and Shower Better, and hosted several in-person events in the County of Kaua’i. To help broaden their reach during Fix a Leak Week, the Department helped to promote several of WaterSense’s YouTube videos describing leak detection, how to install an aerator, and how to change a showerhead. The local promotion helped to highlight and educate their customers online and in person. The Department also partnered with the locally owned Tanaka Hardware Store to set-up a Fix a Leak Week display and together, they distributed more than 1,000 leak detection kits and toilet dye tablets in the community, exceeding their campaign outreach goal. Later in the year, as part of their Your Better Bathroom campaign, they displayed a WaterSense labeled toilet in their lobby, which was donated by a local Ferguson Facilities Supply outlet.

EXCELLENCE IN PROMOTING WATERSENSE LABELED PRODUCTS



Alameda County (California) Water District

Alameda County (California) Water District won its second WaterSense Award for Excellence in Promoting WaterSense Labeled Products.

“We appreciate the simplicity of pointing our customers toward devices and fixtures that are fully vetted through the WaterSense program, and we rest easy knowing that our customers are receiving high-performing equipment that supports our water savings goals.”



Stephanie Nevins, District Water Use Efficiency Supervisor

In 2022, the District offered seven water efficiency programs that encouraged residential and commercial customers to switch to WaterSense labeled products, including rebates for WaterSense labeled irrigation controllers and toilets and free water conservation kits. The District partnered with Pacific Gas & Electric on a Water Savings Assistance Partnership Program (WSAPP), which provides income-qualified customers with free home water assessments, conservation education, direct installs, and toilet retrofits. In 2022, the program expanded the number of WaterSense labeled bathroom faucets that were eligible for installation through the program to accommodate the diverse types of sinks found in customers’ homes. The toilets installed through WSAPP in 2022 alone are estimated to save over 11 million gallons of water over a 30-year period. Thanks to these efforts, over 4,300 WaterSense labeled products were rebated or provided to District customers in 2022—an increase of more than 3,000 products since 2021.



California Water Service Company

California Water Service (Cal Water) earned its first WaterSense Award for Excellence in Promoting WaterSense Labeled Products. To support its customers’ efforts, Cal Water made it easy for customers to save water and money by offering rebates and direct installations of WaterSense labeled toilets, weather-based irrigation controllers, and spray sprinkler bodies. To incentivize customers to be more water-efficient during periods of drought, Cal Water’s toilet rebate amounts

were increased to \$150 for residential customers and to \$400 for commercial customers. In 2022, Cal Water provided rebates and direct installations for 240 toilets, more than 1,600 weather-based irrigation controllers, and over 8,000 spray sprinkler bodies. Cal Water also provided nearly 7,500 free water conservation kits with WaterSense labeled showerheads and faucet aerators, along with toilet leak detection dye tablets and hose nozzles. WaterSense labeled devices installed through Cal Water’s Conservation Program last year will save 579 million gallons of water over the lifetime of the devices.



WATER RESOURCES
& CONSERVATION

City of Flagstaff (Arizona) Water Conservation Program

The City of Flagstaff (Arizona) has won its second WaterSense Award, for Excellence in Promoting WaterSense Labeled Products. In 2022, the City conducted 53 public outreach events reaching over 4,000 people, where they provided free WaterSense labeled showerheads and aerators and educated stakeholders about WaterSense. Through these events, mailings, home water consultations, and other programs, Flagstaff distributed over 450 showerheads and more than 1,200 aerators. To help customers reduce water use at home, the City



The City's table at local plant sale.

offers free Home Water Check-up Kits, which include instructions for checking plumbing fixtures for leaks, a WaterSense labeled faucet aerator, and materials to encourage residents to replace inefficient fixtures with WaterSense labeled models. The City's Water Conservation Program Manager spoke to the Flagstaff City Council in 2022 about Flagstaff's WaterSense partnership and previewed a new code proposal that would require all newly installed showerheads, aerators, and toilets to be WaterSense labeled.



City of Tucson (Arizona)/Tucson Water

The City of Tucson (Arizona)/Tucson Water received their first WaterSense Award for Excellence in Promoting WaterSense Labeled Products. In 2022, Tucson Water launched its Responsible Desert Dweller campaign to encourage residents to save water and share how the City is preparing for the future of water conservation. The campaign recommends replacing plumbing fixtures with WaterSense labeled products. To make them more accessible to customers, Tucson Water provided over 2,500 rebates for WaterSense labeled toilets, including over 500 direct installations. Tucson Water also sent water conservation kits by request to nearly 2,500 customers with WaterSense labeled showerheads and faucet aerators, shower timers, rain gauges, and drip irrigation repair kits. To help the City promote long-term water savings, Tucson Water staff helped draft an ordinance requiring both residential and commercial new construction to install WaterSense labeled fixtures.



Marin Municipal Water District (California)

Marin (California) Municipal Water District earned its first WaterSense Award for Excellence in Promoting WaterSense Labeled Products. In 2022, Marin Water relaunched its Conservation Assistance Program (CAP) to help customers take control of their water use, find leaks, and improve water efficiency indoors and out; participants received free WaterSense labeled showerheads and aerators. Marin Water staff made over 380 site visits in 2022. Marin Water continued to collaborate with Marin Master Gardeners, promoting their irrigation controller rebate to customers participating in its popular Garden Walk Program. The WaterSense labeled controller rebate was also promoted through social media marketing campaigns, customer bill inserts, and e-news blasts. They rebated over 130 irrigation controllers and nearly 70 WaterSense labeled toilets in 2022.



Metropolitan Council (Minnesota)

The Metropolitan Council in the Twin Cities metropolitan region of Minnesota earned its second WaterSense Excellence Award, this year for Excellence in Promoting WaterSense Labeled Products. The Metropolitan Council's Water Efficiency Grant Program promoted WaterSense labeled products and funded the replacement of toilets, irrigation controllers, and spray sprinkler bodies with WaterSense

labeled models. The grant program also required irrigation audits conducted through the program to be performed by professionals certified by a WaterSense labeled certification program. Nearly \$300,000 of grant funding was awarded in 2022. The Metropolitan Council's Irrigation Efficiency Educational Trailer, also known as the Turfgrass Trailer, promoted WaterSense labeled irrigation controllers and visited 14 neighborhoods, fairs and events, including the Minnesota State Fair.



"The WaterSense label and informational resources help our customers make efficient use of their water. We appreciate the role that WaterSense plays in our effort to save water."

Isam Hireish, District General Manager



San Dieguito Water District (California)

Winning its first WaterSense Award for Excellence in Promoting WaterSense Labeled Products, San Dieguito (California) Water District helped customers save water, energy, and money with WaterSense labeled plumbing and irrigation fixtures. To encourage customers to expand their water conservation efforts during drought season, the District distributed drought kits, which included information on WaterSense labeled products, at the City of Encinitas' EcoFest. The District gave multiple presentations to local community organizations about the drought and actions to save water, including installing WaterSense labeled products and using a QWEL certified landscape professional to increase outdoor irrigation efficiency. The District also participates in the SoCal WaterSmart rebate program for turf removal, WaterSense labeled toilets, WaterSense labeled weather-based irrigation controllers, and other water-saving fixtures to help their customers save water at home.



Tampa Bay (Florida) Water

Due to its commitment to making water efficiency more affordable with WaterSense labeled plumbing and irrigation fixture incentives, Tampa Bay (Florida) Water won its first WaterSense Award for Excellence in Promoting WaterSense Labeled Products. Tampa Bay Water offered rebates on a variety of WaterSense labeled products, including toilets, faucet aerators, showerheads, and weather-based irrigation controllers. Over 3,400 WaterSense labeled products were rebated in 2022 and are helping families and multi-family property owners save nearly 34 million gallons of water annually! Some of those old toilets were recycled into reef balls as part of a pilot program to restore oyster habitats. Tampa Bay Water provided free installations of WaterSense labeled weather-based irrigation controllers or rebates up to \$250 for the purchase and professional installation of a labeled irrigation controller. They also worked with WaterSense partners The Home Depot and Lowe's Home Improvement to obtain corporate permission to put up signs and stickers in nearly 40 stores' aisles and on the products for which Tampa Bay Water offers rebates.

Utah Division of Water Resources

The Utah Division of Water Resources (UDWR) earned its first WaterSense Award for Excellence in Promoting WaterSense as it helped put water-efficient devices in the hands of more customers and



“Water conservation is critical to building drought resiliency and ensuring a reliable water supply. We are dedicated to growing our programs and promoting WaterSense products to our residents.”

Candice Hasenyager,
Director



businesses in Utah. UDWR’s state-wide rebate program provides incentives for WaterSense labeled toilets and weather-based irrigation controllers. In 2022, customers received rebates on nearly 900 toilets and over 3,500 controllers. Since the launch of their irrigation controller rebate program in 2018 and toilet rebate program in 2019, UDWR has helped consumers save an estimated 342.4 million gallons of water by switching to WaterSense labeled products. Part of what makes this program a success is that, due to collaboration among UDWR and the Central Utah, Jordan Valley, Weber Basin, and Washington County water conservancy districts, statewide rebates are available through one online portal—UtahWaterSavers.com. To further increase awareness of WaterSense, UDWR supports the Utah Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) certification program, by encouraging participation from industry professionals, recommending homeowners hire QWEL certified professionals, and encouraging landscape irrigation audits offered throughout the state by districts, municipalities, and Utah State University’s Water Check Program.

EXCELLENCE IN PROMOTING WATERSENSE LABELED PRODUCTS IN THE MARKETPLACE



Smart Rain

Smart Rain ramped up its promotional efforts in 2022, winning its second Excellence Award for Excellence in Promoting WaterSense Labeled Products in the Marketplace. The Smart Rain Foundation launched a new Smart Rain for Smart Kids program for public K-12 schools nationwide, encouraging school districts to save water and money with WaterSense labeled irrigation controllers. Smart Rain spoke to school district administrators and directors from around the country to promote its WaterSense labeled products. Since 100 percent of Smart Rain’s irrigation controllers have earned the WaterSense label, staff promoted them at more than 70 trade shows. They also sent nearly 30 emails to customers, held about 40 virtual demonstrations per week, and conducted more than 200 trainings for professionals.

EXCELLENCE IN INCREASING THE VISIBILITY OF WATERSENSE LABELED PRODUCTS



Hunter Industries

Hunter Industries has won its third WaterSense Award, an Excellence Award for Increasing the Visibility of WaterSense Labeled Products. In 2022, Hunter added two new models to its suite of WaterSense labeled products, bringing its total to 12 labeled spray sprinkler bodies and 54 irrigation controllers. To promote the WaterSense Labeled Homes Program, Hunter worked with EPA to create a 16-minute video for developers and others on its website and YouTube channel. To accompany the video, Hunter emailed a quiz to customers with a chance to participate in a rewards program. The quiz was taken by over 230 people! In 2022, Hunter hosted

over 1,600 customers at its headquarters and manufacturing facilities in San Marcos, California, and promoted WaterSense labeled products as part of an efficient irrigation system. Hunter also donated these products and funds to students at the University of California Davis' California Center of Urban Horticulture SmartLandscape program for testing water consumption of varying turf species.

EXCELLENCE IN STRATEGIC COLLABORATION



“AWE is proud to partner with the team at WaterSense to advance water efficiency and labeled products across the U.S. We are grateful to receive this award and look forward to many more years of impactful partnership.”

Ron Burke, AWE President and Chief Executive Officer

Alliance for Water Efficiency

Thanks to its continued work with others committed to saving water, the Alliance for Water Efficiency (AWE) has won its sixth WaterSense Excellence Award for Strategic Collaboration. With over 500 members, AWE is dedicated to promoting the efficient and sustainable use of water across North America. AWE championed WaterSense's work through myriad activities. AWE hosts the WaterSense and Water-Efficient Products Committee, which met five times in 2022, and the Water Efficiency Research Committee, which discussed research to promote WaterSense labeled products and conservation messaging. AWE also held a forum to discuss the WaterSense reverse osmosis draft specification and spray sprinkler nozzles and regularly comments on Notices of Intent and other draft specifications for EPA. Additionally, AWE partners with WaterSense each year to host free webinars for the public focused on outdoor water use. Together in 2022, they hosted three webinars attended by 500 participants.



AMERICAN WATER

nearly 3,000 attendees focused on a watershed approach to landscaping that includes efficient watering techniques. Representatives from American Water also participated in research and on committees to promote WaterSense labeling, program adoption, and overall water efficiency, including research with the Alliance for Water Efficiency on peak demand water. American Water worked with WaterSense to provide water efficiency education and information to its large manufacturer accounts.

American Water

American Water has earned its second WaterSense Award, an Excellence Award for Strategic Collaboration, as the company worked with other organizations to educate customers how to save water and conduct water efficiency research. In California, American Water partnered with G3, Green Gardens Group, to conduct 24 webinars for



G3, Green Gardens Group (Los Angeles)

Green Gardens Group, Los Angeles (G3LA) has won its fourth WaterSense Award, this time for Excellence in Strategic Collaboration, by working with partners in California and beyond to promote water-

efficient irrigation professional certification. In 2022, G3LA collaborated with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (SoCal) and SoCalGas to provide two-hour professional workshops on outdoor irrigation efficiency for over 150 registrants, along with 220 classes and workshops for property owners and water conservation staff in California. Branching out beyond the state, G3LA also collaborated with irrigation professionals to launch an online certification program through its new Watershed Wise Training website, allowing people across the United States to become certified Irrigation System Auditors. G3LA gave 16 professionals free access to the class in exchange for their technical input on the program, and seven of those professionals were certified in 2022.

EXCELLENCE IN PROMOTING THE EPA MULTIFAMILY WATER SCORE



SCV Water (Santa Clarita Valley, California)

Santa Clarita Valley (SCV) Water Agency in California has won its fourth WaterSense Excellence Award in a row for promoting the EPA Multifamily Water Score. Since its Multifamily Apartment Water Efficiency Program started in 2018, SCV Water has evaluated and scored approximately 90 percent of the multi-family buildings in its service territory using the EPA Multifamily Water Score. Based on the

Water Score analysis, SCV Water targeted properties where the most water savings could be achieved. In 2022, they visited eight customer apartment complexes—with a total of more than 2,800 units—to install WaterSense labeled products, conduct leak detection, and share good water management practices. SCV Water installed over 8,500 WaterSense labeled showerheads and faucet aerators and provided rebates for 470 premium high-efficiency toilets for one of the apartment complexes. Inspectors also audited 845 irrigation zones, providing pressure regulation, drip conservation for non-turf landscapes, turf conversion, and high-efficiency sprinkler nozzles. The program resulted in savings of 75 million gallons of water in 2022 and has saved over 214 million gallons since the program started in 2018!

EXCELLENCE IN CERTIFICATION PROGRAM GROWTH



Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

The Metropolitan Water District (MWD) of Southern California won its first WaterSense Excellence Award for Excellence in Certification Program Growth. MWD partnered with the California Landscape Contractors' Association (CLCA) to offer a dual certification course that combines QWEL and the CLCA's Certified Water Manager Program for landscapers. By offering the combined curriculum, audit, and exam,

MWD has created a unique program combining two WaterSense labeled certifications and is accelerating water-efficient landscape training for industry professionals. By partnering with CLCA, MWD reached a larger audience, including small landscaping companies and individual landscape contractors, as well as larger, regional companies. More than 3,700 irrigation professionals received marketing emails from CLCA promoting the course. To date, participation in this three-year-old program has doubled each year, and MWD has certified 270 landscape professionals. MWD promotes the program on bewaterwise.com and lists currently certified professionals online for customers.

Learn More

WaterSense congratulates the 2023 Excellence Award winners. For more information and to learn about all the benefits of partnership, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.