



SILICON VALLEY  
**WATER CONSERVATION**  
AWARDS

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Water Conservation Awards Highlight Model Programs and Practices**

California is struggling through its third year of drought, 2013 was the driest year on record, and the California Conference of Catholic Bishops is praying for rain. Our current water situation is bleak, but Silicon Valley is leading the way in innovative practices aimed at stretching our limited supply. As a result, The Valley is in much better shape than much of California.

The Silicon Valley Water Conservation Awards Coalition is pleased to announce its 2014 winners, including a government agency that is cleaning contaminated groundwater and using it for industrial purposes, a gardening business that landscapes with climate-appropriate, native plants, a vaudeville-style performance troupe that entertains, educates and inspires kids to conserve water, a non-profit organization that oversees drought-tolerant tree plantings, a business that uses recycled water for landscape irrigation, an individual who is leading the charge on promoting greywater systems, rainwater capture and composting toilets, and a water utility that is doing just about everything possible to educate and motivate its customers.

And the winners are...

**City of Palo Alto Utilities** (Water Utility)

**NASA-Ames Research Center** (Government Agency)

**Google** (Business)

**Canopy** (Organization)

**Middlebrook Gardens** (Greenscape Management)

**EarthCapades** (Education)

**Laura Allen** (Water Champion)

**Kathy Machado** (Lifetime Achievement)

The Awards will be presented at a special ceremony on Monday, March 24 from 1-2pm at the William J. Walker Recreation Center, 650 Shell Blvd., Foster City. Political satirist, Will Durst, will give the keynote. Details can be found at <http://www.waterawards.org>.

## About the Winners

**City of Palo Alto Utilities** (Water Utility) – The City of Palo Alto Utilities (CPAU) has one of the most comprehensive water conservation programs in the state. From 2004 through 2013, they provided more than 18,000 free indoor and landscape water surveys, rebates for high-efficiency toilets, clothes washers, turf grass conversions and irrigation upgrades, and free direct installation of high-efficiency fixtures for residents and businesses. In 2013, CPAU contracted with WaterSmart to become the first water agency in Silicon Valley to deliver home water reports to residential customers. This program has been shown to result in water savings of up to 5% for participants. Over the past two years, CPAU has piloted a new technology for cellular-based, real-time water use monitoring and advanced metering analytics, which has been attributed to reducing water use by an average of 8% for program participants. Indoor water efficiency regulations for new construction require installation of high-efficiency fixtures and appliances to meet at least a 20% reduction in water use. Larger non-residential buildings must be plumbed for use of recycled water for flushing toilets, urinals and in landscape irrigation. New business landscape reports and water budgets will target 100 of the City's largest irrigation customers. Between 2005 and 2013, water use in Palo Alto declined by 4.4%, despite a 14% increase in population. While a variety of factors can influence reductions in water demand, CPAU's conservation programs alone have been credited with saving close to 300 million gallons of water (enough to fill 12,000 swimming pools) over the past 10 years.

**Contact:** Catherine Elvert, 650-329-2417

**NASA-Ames Research Center** (Government Agency) – NASA's Ames Research Center, located at Moffett Field, operates the Arc Jet Complex (AJC) for the development and testing of spacecraft heat shields. The AJC simulates the extreme heating and thermal loading encountered by spacecraft during atmospheric entry. The AJC, operating 150-170 days per year, requires approximately 110,000 gallons of water per operating day for industrial steam production and cooling. Recently the Complex activated a wastewater recovery system that uses cleaned up contaminated groundwater instead of potable water for its needs. The conversion from potable water to groundwater has reduced Ames' potable water use by more than 10%, saving approximately 20 million gallons of potable water per year.

**Contact:** Ken Kono; media contact: Ames Public Affairs, 650-604-4789

**Google** (Business) – Through the implementation of interior and exterior water efficiency measures, Google saved close to 20 million gallons of potable water in 2013. They removed the batteries from all of their auto-flush urinals and installed urinal cake with enzymes that help eliminate the build up of calcium crystals. This has essentially made the urinals waterless, eliminating hundreds of flushes per day. Google also worked closely with the City of Mountain View on two large irrigation projects that converted existing systems from potable to recycled water. They are currently using about 15 million gallons of recycled water per year, and anticipate this increasing to 24 million gallons by the end of the year.

**Contact:** Meghan Casserly, 650-214-0531

**Middlebrook Gardens** (Greenscape Management) – Located in San Jose, Middlebrook Gardens creates gardens featuring native plants and healthy landscapes that allow for minimal disruption of the water cycle. Features included drip irrigation, downspout diversion, living roofs, aquaponics, perennial edibles, porous hardscapes, constructed wetlands, greywater systems and garden swales. They have designed and built over 500 gardens for residential, commercial and school clients. Middlebrook Gardens also hosts the California Native Garden Foundation (CNGF) and the Environmental Laboratory for Sustainability and Ecological Education (ELSEE). These programs educate students and the community about sustainable, urban gardening. ELSEE oversees an internship program with Santa Clara University, San Jose State University, Stanford and UC Davis, focusing on teaching water conservation, watershed stewardship, water reuse, and water cleansing to K-12 and university students. Each year CNGF works with approximately 75 interns, and awards garden grants to schools, and ELSEE is developing a model garden program at 25 public and private schools throughout California this year.

**Contact:** Alrie Middlebrook, 408-292-9993

**Canopy** (Organization) – A non-profit organization that promotes tree planting and care in Palo Alto, East Palo Alto and neighboring communities, Canopy selects drought-tolerant species that require no irrigation after a three-year establishment period. Their East Palo Alto Tree Initiative planted 1,000 trees in East Palo Alto, adding 20% to the City's street tree urban forest. Their "Healthy Trees, Healthy Kids!" initiative planted 1,000 trees at local schools over the past three years. Canopy engages more than 1,500 volunteers each year, stressing water conservation at all stages of urban forestry: landscape design, species selection, irrigation choices and tree care. Their programs ensure that urban trees continue to provide water-related benefits, such as saving water as their shade slows evaporation from landscaped areas, diffusing rainfall, reducing runoff, recharging groundwater and preventing harmful herbicides and fertilizers from entering waterways. A recent Canopy innovation includes using DriWater gel that delivers water to young trees at one-tenth the amount supplied by conventional irrigation. Canopy also successfully advocated for improving recycled water quality from the local wastewater treatment facility to reduce salinity to levels suitable for the irrigation of most landscape trees.

**Contact:** Catherine Martineau, 650-964-6110

**EarthCapades** (Education) – Founded in Pacifica in 1996, EarthCapades provides a vaudeville-style performance for students that effectively weaves comedy, circus skills, music and storytelling with clear lessons about Earth sciences and positive environmental choices. Their H2O Show promotes water awareness and engages the audience in the water cycle (i.e., journey of water from the clouds and rain, to rivers and lakes, through pipes and treatment plants, and into homes and schools). Audiences are inspired to respect, protect, and conserve water through EarthCapades interactive "Edutainment" presentations. In 2010, the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA) began contracting with EarthCapades, and since then they have performed over 425 shows in the BAWSCA territory, reaching more than 90,000 students. Regionally, EarthCapades reaches more than 100,000 students each year.

A video is available at <http://earthcapades.com>

**Contact:** David "Hearty" Heartlife, 650-557-4258

**Laura Allen** (Water Champion) – Laura is a founding member of Greywater Action and has spent a decade exploring low-tech solutions to urban sustainable water issues. She is a co-editor of the anthology "Dam Nation: Dispatches from the Water Underground," focusing on strategies for water sustainability from small-scale eco-technologies to global grassroots political movements. She recently authored "The Water-Wise Home: How to Conserve and Reuse Water in Your Home and Landscape," forthcoming from Storey Press. She also was lead author of the "San Francisco Graywater Design Guidelines for Outdoor Irrigation," and was instrumental in the creation of the Santa Clara Valley Water District's greywater installation rebate program. Greywater Action has become the Bay Area's leading resource for installation of greywater, rain catchment and composting toilet systems, and has led efforts to remove institutional barriers to sustainable water use at the state level.

**Contact:** Laura Allen, 510-423-3102

**Kathy Machado** (Lifetime Achievement) – Kathy began working at the Santa Clara Valley Water District in 1995 after an accomplished career in education. During her first year, District education programs reached more than 4,000 K-12 students and trained 290 teachers. Over the years the curriculum has evolved to provide hands-on lessons for each grade level that follow Common Core guidelines. This year, programs and field visits will reach 21,000 students and 1,000 teachers. Since 1995, Kathy and her staff of teachers and interns have taught 331,264 students and 18,700 teachers. For teachers, Kathy presents the Project WET 2.0 (Water Education for Teachers) curriculum, thereby expanding the reach of her innovative lessons that are easily replicated and effective at creating long-lasting behavioral changes. In addition to her official role with the Water District, Kathy has a double identity as the "Water Wizard," performing water magic shows that mesmerize and educate children about the preciousness of water and the need to conserve it.

**Contact:** Kathy Machado, 408-630-2331

### **About the Water Conservation Awards Coalition**

The Coalition overseeing the Silicon Valley Water Conservation Awards includes: Acterra, Bay Area Water Supply & Conservation Agency, City of Foster City, City of Palo Alto, GreenTown Los Altos, Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network, Santa Clara County Creeks Coalition, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Sustainable San Mateo County, Sustainable Silicon Valley and Tuolumne River Trust. Special thanks to The Campbell Foundation and The San Francisco Foundation for their support of the Silicon Valley Water Conservation Awards.