



SILICON VALLEY  
**WATER CONSERVATION**  
AWARDS

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **Silicon Valley Responds to the Drought** **Awards to Honor Water Conservation Champions**

Challenged by one of the worst droughts on record, Silicon Valley responded with innovation, technology and commitment, conserving 38.6 billion gallons between 2013 and 2016. This 26% reduction saved enough water to fill 58,446 Olympic-size swimming pools. The Silicon Valley Water Conservation Awards recognize the best of the best in water use efficiency, shining a spotlight on leaders in the field who serve as role-models for others.

The 2017 winners will be honored at an awards ceremony on March 22 (World Water Day) from 11:00am to 1:30pm at Cubberley Community Center Theatre, 4000 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto. This will be a free event (including lunch), but guests must register in advance. Details can be found at [www.WaterAwards.org](http://www.WaterAwards.org).

### **And the winners are:**

Business: **Oracle**

Government Agency: **San Mateo Resource Conservation District**

Organization: **Ecology Action**

Greenscape Management: **Stanford University's Residential & Dining Enterprises**

Innovation: **Ouroboros Farms**

Education: **Frank Jahn**

Water Champion: **Rich Gordon**

### **About the Winners**

**Business: Oracle** uses reclaimed water at its campuses in Redwood Shores and Santa Clara. This represents a 42% reduction in potable water use at Redwood Shores, saving more than 31 million gallons of potable water and \$285,000 per year. In Santa Clara, reclaimed water is used for irrigation and cooling towers, representing 89% of total water use on campus and saving more than 57 million gallons of potable water and \$144,000 per year. All irrigation is sub-metered for better monitoring, and both

campuses have installed Weathertrak controllers that adjust irrigation automatically according to real-time weather conditions. In Redwood Shores, irrigation is monitored through Waterfluence, and reports routinely rate Oracle “Best in City.” In addition to using reclaimed water, irrigation water has been reduced by 29% through conservation measures, saving an additional 10 million gallons and \$91,000 per year. Oracle is currently implementing a multi-million-dollar project to convert landscape at Redwood Shores to xeriscape, with 20% completed. In Redwood Shores, cooling tower water is cycled up to 18 times, versus a more typical eight to 10 cycles in other buildings, reducing water usage by approximately 1.5 million gallons, saving \$63,000 per year. Restrooms at Redwood Shores are being retrofitted with faucet flow-restrictors, low-flow showerheads and high-efficiency toilets and urinals, saving an additional 5 million gallons and \$97,000 per year. Total annual savings were 91 million gallons of potable water and \$573,000.

**Contact:** Amber Resnick, 650-506-1171

**Government Agency:** The **San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD)** collaborates with private and public land owners, agricultural producers, public agencies and interest groups in San Mateo County to conserve water, protect water quality, restore wildlife habitat, sustain agriculture and mitigate climate change. Water availability is one of the most significant forces shaping the future of the San Mateo coast, especially along the south coast, which has no water utility, no irrigation district, no large-scale water storage and no interties to the State and Federal water projects. During the drought, farmers were forced to fallow fields, ranchers sold undersized cattle due to lack of forage, and endangered coho salmon and threatened steelhead trout risked extinction as creeks dried up. The RCD responded by facilitating a Drought Relief Program aimed at helping farmers conserve, manage and store water so that more could remain in local creeks for threatened and endangered species. Key partners have been Trout Unlimited, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and American Rivers. Water storage is an important aspect of the program because it enables water users to pump and store water during wetter months for use during drier months, reducing or eliminating withdrawals during the dry season. Farms are not eligible for water storage assistance until they’ve maximized water use efficiency. Improvements will result in 30 million gallons of new storage and 46 million gallons of annual water savings. The RCD also partnered with six cemeteries and the Town of Colma to audit irrigation systems and identify opportunities to improve efficiency. When implemented, depending on funding, these improvements could save 53 million gallons of water per year.

**Contact:** Kellyx Nelson, 650-712-7765 x102

**Organization:** In 2016 **Ecology Action’s** WaterLink program provided free turnkey water-energy upgrades to residents and businesses in Santa Clara County. Over 75% of their services were in neighborhoods that are disproportionately impacted by pollution and poverty. 42% of Ecology Action’s residential team and 36% of their overall delivery team live in disadvantaged neighborhoods served by the program. Ecology Action was one of only 21 organizations statewide to receive funding from the California Department of Water Resources’ 2014 Water-Energy Grant, allowing them to launch

WaterLink. In 2016, their door-to-door multilingual teams installed low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators in 2,678 homes, and are on target to serve 6,000 households by the end of 2017. Ecology Action installed low-flow, pre-rinse spray valves and faucet aerators in 1,121 restaurants and grocery stores, resulting in an average water savings of 37,000 gallons per year at each site. Future projects include converting 50,000 square feet of turf at schools and community centers to climate-appropriate landscapes with water-efficient irrigation systems, installing ozone laundry systems at nursing facilities and hotels to reduce overall water use by 25-35% and hot water use by 85-95%, installing hot water heaters in single family homes and upgrading hot water recirculation pump controls and clothes washers in apartments. Based on calculations approved by the California Department of Water Resources, in 2016 Ecology Action saved 148 million gallons of water, 30 million kWh of energy and 8.7 million kg of greenhouse gases (CO<sub>2</sub>e).

**Contact:** Susan Wright, 408-614-4148

**Greenscape Management:** In 2015 **Stanford University's Residential & Dining Enterprises** (R&DE), which provides housing for more than 13,000 students and a dining program that serves more than 18,000 meals per day, overhauled their entire irrigation system, encompassing 57 acres of landscape. This million-dollar project included upgrading 90 irrigation controllers, implementing weather-based models, installing 70 flow sensors and master valves and replacing more than 20,000 sprinkler heads and nozzles with the latest in efficient technology. The weather-based controllers allow irrigation schedules to be automatically adjusted based on the weather, including automatically shutting off in response to rain. Central control allows the controllers to be managed remotely, saving staff time and improving response time to issues. Flow sensors significantly cut down leak times as stations are automatically shut off if they exceed expected flow rates due to breaks or leaks. As a result of this project, R&DE reduced irrigation water use by 44%, saving nearly 32 million gallons of water per year.

**Contact:** Kristin Parineh, 650-521-4422

**Innovation: Ouroboros Farms** is a commercial aquaponics farm in Half Moon Bay that uses a combination of fish and plants to maximize resource-efficient food production. Their technique uses up to 90% less water than most traditional soil-based agriculture, and up to 90% less land to grow the same number of crops. For example, it takes an average of .75 gallons of water to produce a head of lettuce, whereas in soil it would take 15 gallons. By producing more food on less land, aquaponics offers an opportunity to grow food in urban areas where land would otherwise be prohibitively expensive. Ouroboros also provides tours to the public and to local schools to inspire the next generation of farmers, a farm stand where customers can pick their own produce and monthly aquaponics classes. They sell aquaponics kits to help others get started. The name Ouroboros comes from an ancient symbol depicting a serpent or dragon eating its own tail, representing the nutrient cycle.

**Contact:** Ken Armstrong, 650-522-0542

**Education:** For nearly two decades, **Frank Jahn** served as the Public Education Specialist at the Alameda County Water District (ACWD), which serves the cities of

Fremont, Newark and Union City. During his tenure, he created revolutionary hands-on water saving programs that influenced hundreds of thousands of residents. Each year he provided direct program content to 20,000-25,000 students through assemblies and classroom programs. Students took home ideas and items to encourage conservation, including shower timers and toilet testing kits, reaching many additional family members. Under his leadership, the ACWD received the Claire A. Hill Award for its "Stop that Running Toilet" school outreach program, which is estimated to have saved 13 million gallons of water per year. He spearheaded an outreach program about drought tolerant plants that provided students with seeds of plants native to the service area. Frank also coordinated a very popular Water Conservation Poster and Slogan Contest for local schools that often garnered more than 2,000 entries per year. Winning entries were featured in a calendar distributed to every teacher in the ACWD service area. Having retired last year, Frank also will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award.  
**Contact:** Frank Jahn, 503-427-0191

**Water Champion:** Former Assemblymember **Rich Gordon** served in the California State Legislature for six years, and was termed out in 2016. During his tenure, one of his mottos was, "If drought is potentially our new normal, then conservation is also our new normal." He initiated and chaired the Select Committee on Water Consumption and Alternative Sources, leading an effort to educate other legislators about the importance of water conservation and new technologies to address potential water shortages in the era of climate change. He championed the use of recycled water, promoting new building codes and ways to encourage water reuse on site. His vision of a diverse water portfolio included capture and storage of rain and stormwater runoff. As a part of this effort, he authored two pieces of legislation aimed at raising awareness about the safety of potable recycled water and the importance of stormwater capture. AB 2022 enables water agencies to distribute bottles of advanced purified recycled water for educational purposes, and AB 2594 allows public agencies to capture and use stormwater directly or for groundwater recharge. Assemblymember Gordon also was a strong proponent of California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, and his actions at the legislative level will leave a legacy for generations to come.  
**Contact:** Rich Gordon, 650-380-6491

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

The Coalition coordinating the Silicon Valley Water Conservation Awards includes: Acterra, Bay Area Water Supply & Conservation Agency, City of Palo Alto Utilities, City of San Jose Environmental Services, GreenTown Los Altos, Joint Venture Silicon Valley, ManageWater Consulting, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Sustainable San Mateo County, Sustainable Silicon Valley, Tuolumne River Trust and Waterfluence.

Silicon Valley is defined as San Mateo County, Santa Clara County and Alameda County from Hayward south. The awards program was established in 2009.