



2023 Sustained Excellence Awards



Upper District's annual WaterFest.

Partners Sustain Support for WaterSense® and 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 13 Sustained Excellence Award winners in particular for helping consumers and businesses save water for several years or more.



Valentine's Day Tour attendees.

Athens-Clarke County (Georgia) Public Utilities Department

Earning its seventh Sustained Excellence Award, the Athens-Clarke County (Georgia) Public Utilities Department's Water Conservation Office (WCO) continued its commitment to WaterSense and water conservation outreach in 2022. WCO creatively demonstrated the importance of saving water during a trip to a local brewery for its Imagine a Day Without Water: Tappy Hour. They set up several games throughout the brewery, including taste test challenges and a Water Bingo Scavenger Hunt, where guests searched for a WaterSense logo that WCO staff had hidden around the brewery.

On Valentine's Day, WCO held a "romantic tour" of the Water Reclamation Facility. Residents could explore the facility and learn about water conservation and efficiency and received toilet leak-detection dye tablets and WaterSense labeled showerheads. Due to popular demand, the WCO had to add a second tour to the schedule and offered a virtual tour for those who could not attend in person.

To promote Shower Better, Athens-Clarke County continued to partner with two local hardware stores to distribute dye tabs and showerheads. They also encouraged customers to save water with the Shorter Shower Power Challenge, creating a Spotify playlist consisting of songs around

2.5 minutes in length, so people could listen and know five minutes was up after two songs. Athens-Clarke also worked with local nonprofits, offering free water efficiency evaluations that included a comprehensive facility walk-through to check plumbing fixtures for leaks. Following the evaluations, WCO provided four replacements for toilets that were outdated and inefficient or had a visible leak.

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

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Class participants from the Classroom Toilet Leak Detection Challenge

Citrus County (Florida) Utilities

Citrus County (Florida) Utilities ramped up its water conservation education and outreach efforts in 2022, winning its fifth WaterSense Sustained Excellence Award. Twenty Citrus County school classes participated in the Classroom Toilet Leak Detection Challenge, testing over 300 toilets for leaks. As a result of the challenge, students identified 32 leaks to fix, resulting in water savings of more than 6,400 gallons of water per day.

For Fix a Leak Week, Citrus County provided outdoor water efficiency training to 560 residents through its “Schedule a Specialist” program. Nearly 200 of those who received the training had a WaterSense labeled irrigation controller installed. The utility completed Phase 5 of its WaterSense Labeled Irrigation Controller Installation Program in September 2022; results from Phase 4 indicated a 34 percent average reduction in water use.

To spread the water savings, Citrus County helped Bonita Springs (Florida) Utility start an irrigation controller rebate program and encouraged the utility to become a WaterSense partner. Citrus County Utilities also gave a presentation on its water conservation efforts to the grant agency, Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority.



City of Charlottesville (Virginia)

The City of Charlottesville (Virginia) won its sixth Sustained Excellence Award, thanks to its exceptional outreach and educational efforts. Charlottesville promoted a variety of WaterSense campaigns, including Your Better Yard, Shower Better, and Sprinkler Spruce-Up, along with a month-long celebration for Fix a Leak Week. The City also helped local companies promote saving water with “WaterSense at Work” resources.

To promote “Imagine a Day Without Water,” Charlottesville held a youth art contest focused on the value of water. The City was active on social media, posting weekly on Water Tip Wednesday (#WTW) about water-saving actions that aligned with WaterSense’s monthly water conservation themes. Charlottesville also held a contest that encouraged residents to submit photos of their rain barrels while promoting the city’s rain barrel rebate and WaterSense outdoor water conservation messaging.

Along with promoting water-saving behaviors, Charlottesville also distributed WaterSense labeled and water-efficient plumbing fixtures.

“Aligning our outreach and education with WaterSense helps us be clear, consistent, accurate, and informative. We look forward to continued support on ways to communicate and engage our community.”

Kristel Riddervold,
Environmental Sustainability
Manager



In 2022, the City rebated 84 toilets for a total of over \$8,000, helping save more than 780,000 gallons of water annually. The City distributed 160 conservation kits, 60 WaterSense labeled faucet aerators, and 440 toilet leak detection dye tabs to community groups to give away at local events, along with 60 toilet flappers to prevent toilet leaks.



City of Durham (North Carolina) Water Management

After winning multiple Excellence and WaterSense Partner of the Year Awards, the City of Durham (North Carolina) Department of Water Management has won its first Sustained Excellence Award. In 2022, the City reached nearly 2,900 Durham residents and businesses with water conservation and WaterSense messaging by participating in 28 outreach events and presentations, including festivals, concerts, and school outreach.



Table at Durham Earth Day Festival.

To celebrate Fix a Leak Week, the City had a table at the Durham Food Truck Rodeo, gave away free WaterSense labeled showerheads, offered three virtual Fix-a-Leak workshops, held an online virtual scavenger hunt, and created ads and infographics in both English and Spanish. To encourage people to take advantage of the City's WaterSense labeled toilet rebate, the City created a short spot, "Even Toilets Have to Do Better," to post on social media.

Durham Water Management also partnered with Waste Reduction Partners to offer water auditing services to its larger, non-residential customers. The City coordinated with other departments to highlight WaterSense in six issues of the *City Manager's Report* in 2022, including the We're for Water pledge, Sprinkler Spruce-Up, Durham's toilet rebate program, and the benefits of replacing fixtures with WaterSense labeled models.



City of Plano (Texas)

Continuing its conservation streak, the City of Plano (Texas) has earned a fourth Sustained Excellence Award for continued water conservation efforts and promoting WaterSense. In addition to a virtual leak-fixing workshop, Plano held an in-person, hands-on Fix a Leak Week workshop with 36 attendees. The City also offered a three-part Sprinkler Spruce-Up webinar series, which had more than 100 attendees, and two in-person, hands-on Sprinkler Fairs, with 63 attendees.

To expand its water conservation reach even further, the City partnered with North Texas Municipal Water District and the Texas Legends basketball team to conduct water-efficient education during a local youth basketball clinic. The City also partnered with Rain Water Solutions in North Carolina to offer residents discounted rain barrels and compost bins and led 18 in-person, water-focused school programs that reached more than 350 children in 2022.

"We are excited to receive our seventh consecutive WaterSense award! We thank WaterSense for the example they set and the vast resources provided that result in exceptional water savings nationwide."

Rachel C. Patterson, Director of Environmental Health and Sustainability

The City of Plano’s Residential Water Conservation Rebate Program provided incentives on more than 500 WaterSense labeled toilets, saving residents over \$45,000. The City also provided rebates for 55 rain/freeze sensors and WaterSense labeled weather-based irrigation controllers. This rebate program saved residents more than \$3,000. Finally, the City provided rebates for 19 pressure-reducing valves at qualifying homes, saving residents more than \$9,000.



City of Sacramento (California) Department of Utilities

The City of Sacramento (California) Department of Utilities won its second WaterSense Sustained Excellence Award, continuing to promote water conservation through education, outreach, and collaboration. In 2022, the City dedicated the entire month of March to Fix a Leak Week, promoting the WaterSense Flip Your Flapper campaign, and held a webinar, “Become a Leak Detective: Take the 10-Minute Challenge,” encouraging residents to track down leaks at the home.

In 2022, the City held its first Water Conservation Showcase since 2019, inviting local smart irrigation vendors, landscape professionals, and conservation experts to share information. Attendees could enter raffles to win rain barrels, smart controller systems, and other prizes. Over 300 attendees received information on water-wise landscaping, rainwater storage, and native plants.

To help make saving water more affordable, the City’s Residential Leak Assistance Rebate Program provided more than \$54,000 in reimbursements for 44 homeowners to repair plumbing leaks. The Department of Utilities also continued to partner with the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) to provide customers with instant rebates for a variety of WaterSense labeled products, including smart irrigation controllers, faucet aerators, showerheads, and a drip conversion kit. The City held a “River Friendly Landscape Virtual Office Hours” webinar for nearly 200 attendees to discuss their rebate programs and answer questions about turf conversion and irrigation efficiency upgrades.



Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

Thanks to its long-standing dedication to water conservation, collaboration, WaterSense outreach, and water resources education, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District has earned its sixth Sustained Excellence Award. In 2022, the District celebrated the 10th anniversary of its annual Water Drop Dash as both an in-person 5k and virtual 10k race, and more than 700 runners participated! They held a post-race Water Festival outdoors, with many utility and community partners, where attendees learned about Fix a Leak Week and received free swag to help find, fix, and prevent leaks, including toilet flappers and a Flip Your Flapper infographic.

To promote Imagine a Day Without Water and WaterSense programs, the District partnered with the local Dad’s Garage Theatre Company for an evening of improv that featured water-saving information, materials, games, and comedy performed for 90 guests. In fact, the second half of the show had a panel of water experts talking about finding and fixing leaks, Shower Better, and other fun water conservation



The Dad's Garage Theatre Company.

initiatives. Metro North Georgia partnered with the University of Georgia Extension and others to promote Smart Irrigation Month, drought-tolerant landscaping, and efficient irrigation systems.

To broaden its audience, the District contacted Metro Atlanta's largest Spanish-speaking network, TelevisaUnivision, to assist in promoting its 2022 High School Video Contest with a Your Better Bathroom theme. Metro North Georgia regularly distributes WaterSense campaign materials in Spanish to ensure all customers in the area receive important water-saving messages. The District also introduced a TikTok-

style video category to their contest in 2022, allowing students to use the platform to create original videos about making their schools more water-efficient.



“The WaterSense program, products, and people provide an ideal foundation to promote, facilitate, and celebrate water efficiency. The partnership between private industry, government, and nonprofits delivers sustained water savings and high performance, allowing comprehensive conservation of this vitally important resource on which we all rely.”

Frank Kinder, Water Efficiency and Sustainability Department Manager



Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District

After winning three Partner of the Year Awards, the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District received its first Sustained Excellence Award for its achievements in outreach and collaboration. Northern Water collaborated with two nonprofits to facilitate direct-install programs, offering low- or no-cost toilet, showerhead, and faucet aerator replacements while the organizations provided labor, thereby expanding their reach and the use of water-saving fixtures. Through these partnerships, they collectively retrofitted 213 toilets, 355 showerheads, and 618 aerators with WaterSense labeled products, resulting in an estimated 5.1 million gallons of water savings.

To help commercial customers save water, Northern Water performed 48 landscape consultations, inspecting landscape conditions and irrigation components, and recommending WaterSense labeled irrigation controllers and sprinkler components to help improve efficiency. Northern Water also funded 11 projects through the Collaborative Water-Efficient Landscape (WEL) Grant Program, which specifically requires WaterSense labeled equipment be installed; the 11 projects funded from the 2023 WEL Grant program helped save more than seven million gallons of water.

At a Growing Water Smart Workshop, Northern Water hosted an inspector for WaterSense labeled homes who explained WaterSense and the WERSH₂O rating system to the audience. Northern Water also met with a large regional builder, Hartford Homes, and encouraged them to construct WaterSense labeled homes as a path to achieve a potential water dedication reduction in the six cities in which they build.



San Gabriel Valley Water supplier issuing water conservation kits to residents

The kit includes leak detectors, aerators and low-flow shower heads to help people conserve water.

By Carlos Granda
Wednesday, May 18, 2022 6:17PM



News story highlighting conservation kit giveaway.

Upper San Gabriel Valley (California) Municipal Water District

The Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District in California has earned its second Sustained Excellence Award. The Upper District promoted numerous WaterSense outreach campaigns throughout 2022, including Fix a Leak Week, Save Water at Home, Bath Hacks, Shower Better, We're for Water, Sprinkler Spruce-Up, and Find a Pro (certified in water-efficient irrigation). For Fix a Leak Week, Upper District hosted an on-demand, virtual leak detection workshop highlighting WaterSense labeled products.

Upper District hosted 15 live water-efficient landscape webinars in 2022, with over 400 participants, focused on best practices and devices for smart landscaping, irrigation, and gardening. To engage the public in water efficiency and raise awareness about WaterSense labeled products, Upper District brought back the annual WaterFest event; approximately 1,000 people participated in the event and were introduced to the WaterSense label through various booths and activities.

For 2022, following the success of their Water Smart Home Program, Upper District revamped the program by introducing a Water Smart Home Kit containing replacement devices, WaterSense educational materials, a showerhead, shower start device, and toilet flapper. The kits and program were featured in a segment that aired on the local ABC News affiliate in May 2022 on the Upper District's emergency call to action to reduce water use.



Fulton Homes

After being named a WaterSense Partner of the Year three times, Fulton Homes has earned its first Sustained Excellence Award. In 2022, Fulton built 796 homes designed to meet the WaterSense specification, and 92 percent of those earned the label. Fulton ensures that 100 percent of the homes they build contain WaterSense labeled products, along with ENERGY STAR appliances, smart irrigation controllers, and water recirculation and leak detection systems. Fulton puts the WaterSense "We Build" logo on outreach materials, website, social media, and banners in their communities.

Fulton Homes holds regular field meetings with plumbing contractors at various stages of the building process to ensure everyone involved understands the WaterSense program benefits, guidelines, and proper building practices. Fulton also schedules meetings with preferred landscape providers to ensure sensors are installed in their homes and within their communities.

As part of its collaboration efforts, Fulton holds quarterly meetings with home verifier Arcxis and works with local energy companies APS/SRP

“As Arizona’s largest family-owned and operated builder, we understand our unique responsibility to engineer water conservation into our homes and communities. Participation in the WaterSense program provides actionable steps to achieve these goals, while maintaining high quality standards and delighting our customers.”

Doug Fulton, Chief Executive Officer, Fulton Homes

and Southwest Gas, as well as with municipalities, to encourage energy efficiency, indoor air quality, and WaterSense labeled homes. And to help promote the program to potential homeowners, Fulton has a WaterSense mark on every page of its website so viewers can get to its WaterSense page from anywhere on the site.



KB Home

KB Home extended their winning streak, earning a ninth WaterSense Sustained Excellence Award as the company continued to demonstrate its leadership position and dedication to building WaterSense® labeled homes. In 2022, 1,760 homes built by KB Home were WaterSense labeled, representing 13 percent of the homes they constructed that year. Additionally, 100 percent of KB homes incorporate WaterSense labeled plumbing fixtures, and about 60 percent of the irrigation controllers they install are WaterSense labeled.



WaterSense labeled homes built by KB Home.

In July 2022, KB Home became the first national homebuilder to commit to EPA's highest water efficiency standards in drought-stricken Arizona, California, and Nevada. To ensure the success of this initiative, the builder's sustainability team conducted extensive outreach and provided comprehensive training and materials to each of its divisions, marketing teams, and home raters. KB Home also implemented a new internal tracking system to ensure their homes achieved the WaterSense labeled homes certification.

KB Home promotes its WaterSense labeled homes in all forms of media, emphasizing the importance of water conservation. A 2021 water use study of KB Home's WaterSense labeled homes in Las Vegas was published in the May 2022 issue of American Water Works Association's *Journal AWWA*. KB Home also highlights WaterSense and water savings on its website and in social media, public relations, emails and collateral.



Kohler Co.

Kohler Co. won its ninth Sustained Excellence Award—its 14th overall WaterSense award—as it continued to produce, promote, and donate WaterSense labeled plumbing products. In 2022, Kohler introduced 24 new tank-type toilets, 42 new bathroom faucets, 16 new showerheads, and three new urinals that earned the WaterSense label. Based on results from the EPA's WaterSense Partner Savings Calculator, the company estimates that its KOHLER, Sterling, and KALLISTA brand products saved an estimated 88 billion gallons of water, avoided two million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions, and helped customers save over \$1.35 billion on water, sewer, and energy bills in 2022 alone!

To make it easier for customers to find water-saving products, Kohler partnered with 27 online retailers including Amazon, The Home Depot, and Lowe's Home Improvement to provide information about WaterSense on its product pages. Additionally, many product displays and packaging in showrooms and retail outlets feature the WaterSense label. Kohler also created product sell sheets and product cards

for use in Lowe's Home Improvement, The Home Depot, and Costco stores across the United States and Canada to educate employees and consumers about WaterSense.

To collaborate with organizations around the globe, Kohler attended World Water Week in Stockholm, Sweden, in 2022, and held a panel that highlighted water conservation and WaterSense labeled products as a way to reduce consumers' environmental footprint. Kohler also donated WaterSense labeled toilets and showerheads to the Alliance for Water Efficiency's Long Beach (California) Water Affordability Initiative to provide water, energy, and natural gas savings with direct installs for homeowners who may not have the resources to upgrade to efficient appliances.



Sonoma-Marín Saving Water Partnership (California)

The Sonoma-Marín Saving Water Partnership in California won its seventh WaterSense Sustained Excellence Award for its outstanding work as a professional certifying organization (PCO). The Partnership offered virtual, in-person, and hybrid courses in 2022 for its Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) course and certified 766 professionals—200 more than were certified the previous year! In addition, over 1,400 professionals maintained their certifications in 2022 by meeting continuing education requirements.



QWEL certification course.

The Partnership continued to work with colleges in the area to promote QWEL and outdoor water efficiency, including Santa Rosa Junior College, where they helped integrate QWEL curriculum into the college's landscape irrigation course. The Partnership also educated 25 students at the College of Marin about WaterSense labeled products and QWEL. To promote WaterSense labeled irrigation controllers online, the Partnership created four YouTube videos in both English and Spanish.

Two Partnership staff members were appointed to the Irrigation Association (IA) Landscape Advocacy Committee, which monitors current and proposed laws and regulations that could affect the landscape irrigation industry at the state, regional, and national levels. Additionally, a Partnership staff member became an instructor for the IA in 2022 and co-taught an Advanced Landscape Irrigation Design and Management course at the 2022 IA conference in Las Vegas.

Learn More

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