



# Partners Help People Save 2022 Partner of the Year Awards

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 16 years, WaterSense partners have helped Americans save more than 6.4 trillion gallons of water. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is pleased to recognize 11 Partners of the Year in particular for helping consumers and businesses save water in 2021.

## PROMOTIONAL PARTNERS OF THE YEAR

### Big Bear Lake Department of Water and Power



Service, Quality, Community

The City of Big Bear Lake Department of Water and Power in California won its third WaterSense Partner of the Year Award for its outstanding work encouraging customers to save water with WaterSense labeled products and other tips. To help residents make their yards more water-efficient, Big Bear Lake collaborated with the Sierra Club and local experts to host a virtual Xeriscape Garden Tour to promote drought-tolerant, native plants and reduction and reuse of water sources for irrigation. As part of the tour, the department hosted an eight-part webinar series that was broadcast live and made available on its YouTube channel. Continuing its focus on outdoor water savings, Big Bear Lake continued to expand its Outdoor Efficiency Rebate program in 2021, including rebates for WaterSense labeled weather-based irrigation controllers and WaterSense labeled spray sprinkler bodies.

For Fix a Leak Week, Big Bear Lake distributed over 150 water conservation kits that included aerators, showerheads, high-efficiency hose nozzles, dye tabs, coloring books, leak trivia, and more. The department also provided activity kits for kids during Fix a Leak Week. Fifth grade kids even received WaterSense labeled showerheads and aerators to take home and share the water conservation tips they learned with their families.

Big Bear Lake only purchases and distributes WaterSense labeled showerheads and faucet aerators, and encourages its customers to purchase WaterSense labeled toilets. The Department made information available in its office lobby, by phone, on its website, and via email, which provides customers with detailed information on WaterSense and WaterSense labeled products.

### City of Durham Water Management

The City of Durham (North Carolina) Water Management Department has added a second WaterSense Partner of the Year Award to its water conservation accolades. To celebrate Fix a Leak Week in 2021, the City created an online virtual scavenger hunt, with the theme “Leaks can run, but they can’t hide.” Participants navigated through pages of its website to track down clues and solve 10 different riddles as they learned about the department and WaterSense labeled products. Participants that completed the



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scavenger hunt received a prize pack with WaterSense labeled products, promotional items, and a Fix a Leak Week T-shirt. Durham Water Management posted a Fix a Leak Week ad on Spotify using WaterSense messaging that garnered over 50,000 impressions.

The City also updated its TV advertisement with the “Check, Twist, Replace” message to run during March 2021 for Fix a Leak Week. To make the most of its outreach during COVID, the City offered a mix of virtual and in-person outdoor events, including online sessions with students, virtual tours, environmental field days, and appearances at several community vaccination events, where they provided information on WaterSense and water efficiency. The City was able to reach over 400 individuals through these various events!

“Durham Water is very proud to be a WaterSense partner. It has become an integral part of what we do, and we’re extremely honored that WaterSense is recognizing the creative efforts of our team to promote water efficiency here in Durham.”

—Don Greeley, Director of Durham Water Management

The City of Durham Water Management rebated over 550 water-efficient toilets in 2021. They also conducted nearly 100 residential water use assessments, providing visual inspections of all water-using fixtures and appliances. During these assessments, they gave away nearly 100 WaterSense labeled showerheads and aerators to residents.

### City of Fort Worth



The City of Fort Worth (Texas) won its second Partner of the Year Award and fourth WaterSense Award overall. To make water efficiency more accessible, Fort Worth Water launched a minor plumbing leak repair program in 2021 called SmartRepair. Qualifying low-income homeowners could participate in the program, which repairs or replaces toilets and fixtures. Fort Worth Water directed

city-contracted plumbers to use WaterSense labeled fixtures whenever possible. Repairs for nearly 50 homes in 2021 resulted in an estimated yearly savings of 821,200 gallons of water!

To reduce water waste even further, Fort Worth Water alerted customers who had high water use based on Advanced Metering Infrastructure data showing long periods of usage; this often indicates a potential leak. In 2021, Fort Worth Water notified over 68,000 customers of high water use with a link to their web page about checking for leaks. An analysis of the mailings showed 65 percent of customers no longer showed continuous usage 30 to 60 days after receiving the letter.

Fort Worth Water collaborated with several other partners to promote WaterSense as part of its educational offerings in a combination of live and virtual classes focused on water conservation. They increased the number of water conservation classes offered from 11 in 2020 to 25 in 2021, adding new partners for most of them to help develop, teach, and promote the new classes. Four irrigation classes were conducted in collaboration with Tarrant Regional Water District, along with two YardSmart conferences. The City created eight landscape videos featuring WaterSense labeled products and a two-part virtual seminar on the Your Better Yard campaign in collaboration with a group called Rooted In. Fort Worth Water also worked with the cities of Dallas and Houston to host a two-part virtual Fix Leak Week workshop.

### City of Round Rock

The City of Round Rock (Texas) ramped up its promotion of WaterSense and water conservation in 2021, earning its first Partner of the Year award! The City focused on reducing residents’ outdoor water use and built off Smart Irrigation Month with free irrigation check-ups for homeowners. They also held free weekly workshops to educate residents on ways to maximize efficiency of their irrigation systems and make simple repairs. To promote WaterSense labeled irrigation products, the City offers incentives for residents who purchase and install WaterSense labeled irrigation controllers and spray sprinkler bodies. The City also conducted research on the effects of WaterSense labeled irrigation controllers installed at residents’ homes. The study found that most had reduced water use



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amounting to an average savings of 58 percent! After completing the study, the City physically checked every new applicant's controller settings and corrected controllers that weren't set up properly, to ensure they watered efficiently.

The City also encouraged the use of indoor WaterSense labeled fixtures through its new Your Better Bathroom rebate program, which provided incentives for over 200 WaterSense labeled toilets, over 50 WaterSense labeled showerheads, and over 90 WaterSense labeled bathroom faucets in 2021. The installation of these fixtures saved Round Rock residents an estimated 2.9 million gallons of water in 2021 alone! To promote fixing leaks and saving water among do-it-yourselfers, the City also developed a toolkit that included WaterSense labeled showerheads, WaterSense labeled faucet aerators, dye tablets, a toilet flapper, plumbers tape, a drip gauge, and the Alliance for Water Efficiency's Plumber Guidebook.

New for 2021, the City mailed thousands of WaterSense welcome postcards to new residential water customers. The postcard was customized to include a QR code to go to the City's main water conservation webpage, where customers can find information on WaterSense.



The City hosted a free irrigation workshop.

### Harris-Galveston Subsidence District



The Harris-Galveston Subsidence District (HGSD) in Texas has won its first Partner of the Year Award—its second overall WaterSense Award—after measurably increasing its water conservation achievements in 2021. HGSD collaborated with organizations such as Galveston Bay Foundation and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to launch a promotional campaign for the Water My Yard program utilizing funds from an EPA grant. The program supplies customized recommendations to users each week on how much water is needed for their specific area using data from an extensive network of weather stations combined with local plant water needs. Currently, it can be accessed by web or mobile app and reaches over two million Texans, including Spanish-speaking populations.

The District also teamed up with another WaterSense partner, Houston Public Works, to reach over 200,000 people through an e-blast that provided summertime water-saving information and resources, and encouraged readers to take the WaterSense 10-Minute Leak Detection Challenge. HGSD continued its support for outdoor water savings by providing grant funding for two independent school districts to install smart irrigation systems with WaterSense labeled irrigation controllers. The schools demonstrated quantifiable water savings in 2021 and have earned an award for their successful impact on water conservation.

HGSD reached Houston-area schools by providing water conservation education and resources to over 30,000 third, fourth, and fifth graders last year through its Water Conservation School Program. As part of the program, students were given a free, take-home water conservation kit containing WaterSense labeled showerheads and faucet aerators, along with other water-saving products that could save each household up to 1,400 gallons of water per month. Additionally, the Harris-Galveston Subsidence District showcased WaterSense resources and promotions during several speaking engagements throughout the year, including a virtual symposium for local water utility managers, engineers, architects, and community members.

### Houston Public Works

Houston Public Works (HPW) won its first WaterSense Partner of the Year Award, thanks to its water-saving collaboration and outreach efforts. In 2021, HPW expanded its participation in Fix a Leak Week by partnering with the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth to host two virtual workshops focused on indoor and outdoor leaks, which had over 400 attendees. HPW promoted WaterSense labeled products through the launch of its Showerhead Swap initiative that provided free WaterSense labeled showerheads to customers who brought in their old models. The utility gave away nearly 500 water- and energy-saving showerheads through this program.



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To expand its water conservation reach even further, HPW collaborated with 15 of its wholesale utilities through the launch of its Wholesale Water Conservation Dashboard that allows utilities to separate the potential costs and savings for over 70 water conservation activities. Houston also partnered with the Texas Water Foundation to launch the Texas Runs on Water campaign, which aims to promote and protect the future of water in the state.

To help businesses save water, HPW launched its Smart Utility Checkup Program in partnership with Imperial Utilities and Sustainability Inc. This program provided one year of free professional water, electricity, and gas utility assessments to 14 commercial buildings throughout the year. Through the 2021 program, participating buildings collectively will save an estimated 4.7 million gallons of water annually from capital improvements and infrastructure updates.

“Houston Public Works is excited to be named a 2022 WaterSense Utility Partner of the Year for our efforts in water conservation. The City of Houston considers water to be our most critical natural resource. Our Houston Water team continues to expand programs and opportunities to explore the value of water. By utilizing more efficient methods of water consumption, we can transform how our community uses water to ensure it is available for future generations to come.”

—Carol Haddock, Houston Public Works Director

### Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District



The Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District continued promoting efficiency across its service area throughout 2021, winning its third Partner of the Year Award. Northern Water illustrated its commitment to WaterSense by donating nearly 200 WaterSense labeled showerheads to the non-profit Energy Resource Center for their retrofits of low-income housing. Northern

Water also worked with WaterSense to assist in the creation of a case study showing the value of irrigation professionals certified by a WaterSense labeled program and the use of the WaterSense Find a Pro tool.

To educate professionals on water-smart landscaping, Northern Water partnered with Colorado State University's Horticulture Department to produce and co-host the Biennial Short Course, a half-day virtual workshop on landscape and horticulture for 130 landscapers, master gardeners, municipal employees, and landscape architects. Northern Water once again collaborated with Colorado State University, along with its Colorado Stormwater Center, to host three virtual trainings on how to reuse rainwater on the landscape. Each webinar featured live translation and was offered in Spanish and English. The three courses had 470 viewers.

New in 2021, Northern Water launched a pilot commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) audit program to provide in-depth indoor water inspections for schools, municipal properties, and office buildings; auditors utilized the WaterSense commercial and institutional water assessment tool. Many audits included installation of WaterSense labeled showerheads and faucet aerators. In 2021, nine properties participated in the pilot, including six schools in the Thompson School District.

### Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership

Although it is a longtime award winner in the professional certifying organization category, the Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership won its first Partner of the Year Award for its promotional activities in 2021, adding to its five Excellence awards for promoting WaterSense labeled products and outreach and education. As a response to drought conditions in California, the Partnership created a series of three “Drought Drop-By” events to educate residents on water shortages and distribute drought kits with water-saving devices. In 2021, more than 10,000 kits with toilet leak detection tablets, WaterSense labeled showerheads and aerators, shower timers, and water-saving tips were distributed in buckets, which could be used to capture water for reuse while waiting for it to heat up.



To promote water-smart landscapes, the Partnership sponsored an Eco-Friendly Garden Tour, which included information about water-efficient irrigation and climate-appropriate plant selection. Held virtually, the tour garnered nearly 5,000 unique page views. The Partnership also printed 10,000 decks of baseball-style Water Smart

Plant Cards featuring different types of low-water-using plants and trees. One card promoted the WaterSense labeled Qualified Water Efficient Landscape (QWEL) program and encourages homeowners to hire a QWEL professional.

The Partnership created the Saving Water Challenge for the months of July and August, when it asked residents to pledge to participate in water-saving actions and provided a different tip for each day of the month, including a suggestion to install WaterSense labeled toilets. Over 500 residents took the pledge and were entered into drawings to win prizes that included a WaterSense labeled toilet, WaterSense labeled irrigation controller, and more.



Distributing buckets at a Drought Drop-By event.

## BUILDER PARTNER OF THE YEAR

### Fulton Homes

Fulton Homes has been hard at work bringing WaterSense labeled homes to the market, winning its third Partner of the Year Award. In 2021, Fulton closed on 609 WaterSense labeled homes, nearly double the number it built in 2020! This represented nearly 80 percent of the total new houses that Fulton Homes closed on in 2021. All homes built by Fulton Homes in 2021 included WaterSense labeled plumbing products.



Fulton project managers and their assistants are trained in all areas of WaterSense and sustainable building practices. Fulton Homes also works closely with plumbing contractors so that they understand the importance of WaterSense labeled products. To ensure its homes were able to meet version 2.0 of the WaterSense homes program, Fulton management met quarterly with their third-party inspectors to review the updated specification, discussed methods to meet the new requirements, and conducted community outreach.

Fulton Homes already advertises its WaterSense labeled homes by adding the label to their promotional materials, price sheets, and neighborhood banners. In 2021, Fulton Homes expanded its customer service team and trained them on WaterSense labeled products so they can help customers realize the value of saving water.

## MANUFACTURER PARTNER OF THE YEAR

### Niagara



Niagara has continued to manufacture and promote WaterSense labeled products across the country, winning its first Partner of the Year Award and sixth award overall. To spread the word about WaterSense and its labeled toilets, Niagara attended 21 trade shows in 2021 and secured placements of more than 50 stories on water-saving products and case studies on water conservation.

Niagara launched a suite of over 100 new WaterSense labeled toilets designed for distribution through a wholesale channel with features and benefits for builders, remodelers, and plumbing professionals. The new product lineup carries a 15-year warranty, much higher than the typically five-year warranty. To expand the distribution and outreach for its products, Niagara

“We are honored to be named the WaterSense Manufacturer Partner of the Year and to join such an incredible list of industry leaders. Our mission is to bring new technology to our customers that conserves water without sacrificing performance. This award is a huge accomplishment for our entire team and a giant step in continuing to fulfill our mission.”

—Carl Wehmeyer, Executive Vice President, Niagara

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broadened its national representative network, working with more than 20 agencies and signing agreements with over 50 new wholesalers to distribute WaterSense labeled products. Representatives and wholesalers receive training from Niagara that includes information about the benefits of WaterSense labeled products.

In addition to manufacturing products that earn the WaterSense label, Niagara worked to educate others about WaterSense. Niagara employees and representative agencies trained plumbers and contractors on WaterSense labeled products and developed a short presentation on how to encourage their customers to install WaterSense labeled products in their homes. Niagara also created courses for architects and engineers to earn continuing education units (CEU) that highlight the benefits of WaterSense labeled products. In 2021, Niagara held 70 live CEU courses with an attendance of over 1,000 people both in-person and virtually.

## RETAILER PARTNER OF THE YEAR

### The Home Depot

Earning another Retailer Partner of the Year Award, The Home Depot continued to make a wide range of WaterSense labeled products available to customers. In 2021, 100 percent of the toilets, bathroom faucets, and showerheads sold in U.S. Home Depot stores were WaterSense labeled models. The retailer helped to save an estimated 66 billion gallons of water by selling WaterSense labeled products in 2021.



Stores offer a large selection of WaterSense labeled products, which also help customers save money on their utility bills. The Home Depot also promoted WaterSense labeled products and easy ways to save water on its rebranded, sustainability-focused Eco Actions website.

The Home Depot also focused on education and training in 2021. Associates were given training on WaterSense labeled products through rapid web-based training, pocket guides, and newsletters. The Merchandising Execution Team prepared detailed plans to execute WaterSense signage in-store, and the marketing team worked with suppliers to ensure the WaterSense label is visible on packaging. Additionally, The Home Depot offered a livestream workshop on bathroom planning that covered the benefits of selecting WaterSense labeled products.

## Learn More

WaterSense congratulates the 2022 Partners of the Year. For more information and to learn about all the benefits of partnership, visit [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense).