



# 2023 Partner of the Year Awards



Sonoma-Marín Saving Water Partnership pop-up event.

## Look to WaterSense® Partners of the Year for 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 nine Partners of the Year in particular for helping consumers and businesses save water in 2022.

### PROMOTIONAL PARTNERS OF THE YEAR



#### Harris-Galveston (Texas) Subsidence District

The Harris-Galveston Subsidence District (HGSD) in Texas has won its second Partner of the Year Award following another successful year of consistently promoting WaterSense and water efficiency. Using the WaterSense 2022 Editorial Calendar, HGSD spent the year sharing valuable water conservation tips, tools, and resources through its SmarterAboutWater.org website, blog, and social media channels, garnering over 11,000 impressions. The blog had over 3,000 readers and included several water efficiency themes, one of which educates children using WaterSense’s “Save Water at Home” coloring booklet.

“We are proud to be recognized as a Partner of the Year for the second year in a row and collaborate with the WaterSense program to help provide education and resources to make water efficiency obtainable for all!”

Mike Turco, General Manager of the Harris-Galveston Subsidence District

In 2022, HGSD launched its new and improved school program, called H2O Lab!, providing third through sixth grade students in Harris, Galveston, and Fort Bend counties with water education and a free, take-home water conservation kit containing a toilet flapper, leak detection tablets, a toilet tank bag and fill cycle diverter, faucet aerators, a sprinkler gauge, a 5-minute shower timer, and a water flow rate bag. Each kit has the potential to save over 8,000 gallons of water per year and was provided to nearly 25,000 students and teachers for a combined estimated savings of over 215 million gallons of water per year.

HGSD’s water conservation grant program awarded \$450,000 in matching funds spread across five projects to local entities last year. These projects included developing advanced metering infrastructure (AMI), implementing water loss control focusing on leak detection on main water lines, and replacing

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showerhead fixtures using WaterSense labeled products. HGSD mentioned WaterSense resources and promotions during several speaking engagements throughout the year to local water utilities, schools, associations, forums, and even partnered with fellow WaterSense partner Houston Public Works during their Water Works Festival.



HPW employees handing out water-saving information at a local event.

### Houston Public Works

Houston Public Works (HPW) promoted water efficiency across its service area and in other parts of Texas in 2022, winning its second Partner of the Year Award. In partnership with WaterSense partners in the cities of Dallas, Fort Worth, and Round Rock, as well as Tarrant Regional Water District, HPW organized a virtual Fix a Leak Week workshop series with two half-day workshops—one indoors and one outdoors. Nearly 750 participants registered for this event, and the virtual trainings were watched an additional 242 times.

For commercial customers, in partnership with Imperial Utilities and Sustainability Inc., HPW was able to provide one year of free professional water, electricity, and gas utility assessments to nine buildings. HPW also collaborated with 15 of its wholesale utilities through the Wholesale Water Conservation Dashboard Program, which allows utilities to analyze costs and quantify potential savings for over 70 water conservation activities.

In collaboration with 53 Houston community centers, churches, temples, associations, health centers, and other organizations, HPW distributed water conservation tip cards that included WaterSense information. HPW promoted water conservation to students and youth through their summer outreach with scout camps, Houston Parks Department summer camps, and local STEM camps. HPW even hosted a water conservation education and showerhead giveaway at a local brewery!



### Rancho California Water District

Rancho California Water District in California ramped up promotion of WaterSense and water conservation in 2022, earning its first Partner of the Year award! To promote WaterSense labeled products inside and outside the home, Rancho Water teamed with a Lowe's Home Improvement store to create WaterSense outreach videos. One video, *Creating a WaterSense Garden with Wade*, shows the District's mascot

choosing WaterSense labeled products for a water-efficient landscape. *Creating a Water-Wise Home with Lowe's* highlights WaterSense labeled bathroom faucets, toilets, and showerheads available to customers to upgrade their homes. The videos were shared on Rancho Water's social media platforms and included in newsletters, e-blasts, and on the District's website.

“Rancho Water continually strives to engage in activities and outreach programs which promote WaterSense labeled products, water use efficiency, and water sustainability. Our team is dedicated to creating effective campaigns that are fun and leverage partnership opportunities which resonate with customers.”

Robert Grantham, Rancho Water General Manager

To address outdoor water waste and encourage landscape transformations, the District created a new website, Temecula Murrieta In Bloom, which shows hundreds of climate-appropriate plants that thrive in the community’s semi-arid climate while supporting the natural ecosystem. Users can save their plant and design preferences and contact a local designer, contractor, or nursery listed on the site. Customers are also directed to the District’s rebates page to find eligible WaterSense labeled irrigation products.

To encourage customers to transition from a traditional irrigation timer to a WaterSense labeled weather-based model, Rancho Water provided free irrigation controllers to attendees at multiple events. The District collaborated with Rachio and the California Water Efficiency Program (CalWEP), offering discounted Rachio controllers for eligible customers and distributing over 200 devices.



### Santa Clara Valley (California) Water District

Santa Clara Valley Water District in California (also known as Valley Water) won its first WaterSense Partner of the Year Award, thanks to its water-saving collaboration and outreach efforts. Valley Water offers programs that promote WaterSense labeled products such as their Landscape Rebate Program, Online Shopping Cart Program (eCart), and direct-install Fixture Replacement Program (Fix-RP). Valley Water’s eCart offers free, high-efficiency devices to Santa Clara County properties; in 2022 it facilitated distribution of over 9,000 WaterSense labeled showerheads and other resources to help conserve water indoors and outdoors.

Fix-RP replaces inefficient fixtures at qualifying multifamily residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional properties at no cost. Through this program, Valley Water replaced over 2,800 toilets, 800 faucet aerators, and 1,300 showerheads with WaterSense labeled models. Their landscape rebate program issued incentives for over 600 WaterSense labeled weather-based irrigation controllers and nearly 1,900 WaterSense labeled spray sprinkler bodies. To promote this program and other water conservation efforts, Valley Water offered virtual weekly “Office Hours,” which reached over 600 residents during 2022. Additionally, Valley Water offered a six-part webinar series on Zoom and Facebook Live featuring local experts in the landscape and irrigation industries on outdoor water efficiency, which were live translated in up to four languages.

In Spring 2022, Valley Water conducted a multilingual water conservation campaign, “Is Your Yard Drought Ready? Our rebates can help make the change,” and promoted it with digital ads, social media posts, videos, radio ads, and print advertorials in community newspapers. Valley Water also created animations displaying the WaterSense label on products such as smart irrigation controllers. Their Speakers Bureau Program provided drought information to community groups, service clubs, neighborhood associations, homeowners’ associations, libraries, senior centers, and city councils across Santa Clara County. At 38 community presentations, staff distributed WaterSense labeled products to more than 1,000 attendees in 2022.



TRWD's WaterSense labeled showerhead exchange.

### Tarrant (Texas) Regional Water District

After winning a WaterSense Excellence Award for education and outreach in 2022, Tarrant (Texas) Regional Water District (TRWD) ramped up its water conservation promotion to win its first WaterSense Partner of the Year Award. Throughout 2022, TRWD promoted a variety of WaterSense campaigns, including Love Your Bathroom, Fix a Leak Week, Sprinkler Spruce-Up, Your Better Yard, and Smart Irrigation Month. To promote Shower Better, TRWD created a showerhead exchange program for three of the District's customer cities: Arlington, Bedford (both WaterSense partners), and Burleson. Residents returned 172 old showerheads to their local water utility offices and received a WaterSense labeled showerhead in exchange.

To celebrate Fix a Leak Week in March, TRWD partnered with the City of Arlington (Texas) Water Utilities and Arlington Public Libraries to offer two in-person workshops focused on do-it-yourself (DIY) home

leak repair and DIY sprinkler repair, where participants learned from a certified plumber and a licensed irrigator about finding and fixing leaks in faucets, toilets, showers, and sprinklers. Participants also received an indoor leak or sprinkler test kit. In July 2022, TRWD offered two more workshops for Smart Irrigation Month, highlighting DIY sprinkler savings and sprinkler repair; over 150 people attended.

Using ideas from the WaterSense Partner Marketing Calendar, TRWD shared 36 posts on the Save Tarrant Water social media accounts about conserving water in 2022. TRWD helped people give the gift of water savings through its Water Conservation Holiday Conservation Gift Guide, which included ideas for indoor and outdoor gifts, including rain barrels, smart irrigation controllers, and WaterSense labeled faucet aerators. TRWD used the December 2022 edition of the *Save Tarrant Water Monthly Drop* e-newsletter to advertise the guide.



A Vallecitos customer featured in the WaterSmart Landscape contest.

### Vallecitos (California) Water District

Vallecitos Water District promoted water efficiency across its Southern California service area, winning its first Partner of the Year Award. The District leveraged its in-house video production to help promote water efficiency by creating educational videos for each of the 12 monthly themes in WaterSense's Editorial Calendar, including Love Your Bathroom, Shower Better, World Toilet Day, and Water-Smart Landscapes. The District created a WaterSense web page that included WaterSense materials along with the videos. WaterSense was able to then share the videos for partners to use in their social media channels.

Vallecitos Water held a WaterSmart Landscape contest promoting water efficiency and rewarding customers who participated with a certificate to a local nursery. The District created a video highlighting the top three winners and showcasing their water-efficient landscapes.

They also partnered with local agencies on videos about a new landscape optimization program and San Diego County's Waterscape Rebate Program.

To further promote water conservation, the District participated in street fairs and other events throughout their service area, distributing WaterSense materials and native plants. Customers could receive a \$25 gift card by taking the January pledge to save water and were provided rebate information on WaterSense labeled products.



### Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership

The Sonoma-Marin Saving Water Partnership in California has won its second Partner of the Year Award, and seventh overall award for promoting WaterSense labeled products and water conservation. In 2022, the Partnership participated in several WaterSense campaigns, including Fix a Leak Week, Sprinkler Spruce-Up, Smart Irrigation Month, and When in Drought with newspaper placements, social media, web banners, and WaterSense materials. To educate a wider audience, the Partnership translated many of its educational materials into Spanish.

Throughout the summer, the Partnership held pop-ups at home improvement stores, farmers markets, nurseries, summer concerts, and other community events. For example, at an event in June, the Partnership partnered with five local hardware stores; staff educated customers about saving water and gave away WaterSense labeled showerheads and faucet aerators.

With California still facing prolonged drought conditions in 2022, the Partnership created a slogan, "The Drought is STILL Here," to encourage California residents to maintain conservation efforts despite winter rains. For its annual Eco-Friendly Garden Tour, the Partnership created a video highlighting how to properly care for trees during droughts. To help people save on water-efficient irrigation products, the Partnership rebated over 300 WaterSense labeled smart irrigation controllers in 2022.

"The WaterSense label makes it easy for our customers to choose water-efficient products for their homes, and our water conservation staff rely on the WaterSense campaigns like Fix a Leak Week for timely messages to help us meet our savings goals, especially during drought."



Mike Healy, City of Petaluma Councilmember and Water Advisory Committee Chair for the Partnership

## MANUFACTURER PARTNER OF THE YEAR



### Niagara®

Niagara®, a manufacturer of WaterSense labeled toilets, has earned its seventh WaterSense award and second Partner of the Year Award!

Messaging about WaterSense and water efficiency has been a cornerstone of Niagara's advertising, marketing, and public relations campaigns for more than 13 years. To ensure that the more than 100 wholesalers and distributors that carry Niagara's WaterSense labeled products across the United States are educated about their benefits, they must complete a training course that includes information about the WaterSense label and program. Niagara also works closely with industry organizations such as the

“We are honored to accept the WaterSense Partner of the Year Award. Our mission is to provide customers with innovative technology that saves water without compromising performance. This recognition is a testament to our team’s dedication and a significant step in fulfilling our mission.”

Carl Wehmeyer, Executive Vice President, Niagara



American Institute of Architects and the American Society for Plumbing Engineers to promote WaterSense labeled products and program messaging through its continuing education courses and by attending and sponsoring their trade shows.

Niagara has contributed directly to WaterSense program tools and improvements; for example, Niagara participated in beta testing and provided feedback as EPA developed the WaterSense Partner Savings Calculator—an online tool that allows manufacturers to estimate water savings from their products as a measure of their environmental, social, and governance goals.

Niagara encouraged its more than 16,000 social media followers to upgrade plumbing fixtures to WaterSense labeled models during Fix a Leak Week in 2022; they also promoted the WaterSense Rebate Finder.

The company features a WaterSense page with labeled products on its corporate website, as well as on Niagara’s Pro website, and these pages describe Niagara’s dedication to and history with WaterSense. Niagara also reached professional customers by attending 26 trade shows in 2022, where staff promoted WaterSense at booths, in marketing collateral, and in conversations with attendees.

### RETAILER PARTNER OF THE YEAR



#### The Home Depot

The Home Depot secured its third consecutive Partner of the Year Award and continued to help customers save water by making over 6,000 WaterSense labeled product models affordable and accessible in more than 2,000 stores across the country. The retailer ensured that 100 percent of the toilets, bathroom faucets, and showerheads sold in U.S. Home Depot stores were WaterSense labeled models. The Home

Depot estimates that its customers’ purchases of WaterSense labeled products during its 2022 fiscal year helped reduce annual water consumption by over 33 billion gallons, which would collectively mean savings of more than \$686 million on water bills.

To promote these products to customers, the retailer highlighted WaterSense in their in-store marketing, online ad campaigns, direct-to-customer emails, and infographics on its website. In calendar year 2022, The Home Depot placed over 62 million print ads featuring WaterSense labeled products. They also offered several virtual workshops on bathroom planning, kitchen planning, and how to install faucets and toilets. The workshops highlighted WaterSense labeled products and their water-saving benefits.

The Home Depot also worked with utilities to make over 500 local rebates available, offered instant rebates at over 760 stores and worked with the Texas government to promote tax-free weekends for ENERGY STAR appliances and WaterSense labeled products. The Home Depot ensures that its employees understand the savings and benefits of WaterSense labeled products by including information in their online training modules, a pocket guide for store associates, the retailer’s merchant handbook, and in a quarterly newsletter sent to all U.S. associates.

#### Learn More

WaterSense congratulates the 2023 Partner of Year Award winners. For more information and to learn about all the benefits of partnership, visit [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense).