

ACTION 21

Reduce water use for landscaping around the Estuary

Facilitate more efficient use of water, whether recycled or potable, on landscaping. Collaborate with municipalities, water supply agencies, land use agencies, and others to reduce overall water use on landscaping. Create standards for measuring progress regionwide.

TASK 21-1 Work with water supply agencies, municipalities, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), the California State Water Resources Control Board, and others to develop a standardized approach to quantifying and reporting on water use for all new and existing landscaped areas. Use the latest available technology, as well as the methodology developed by DWR for the updated 2015 Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance (MWELo), and other methods as appropriate.

BY 2018 Ensure standardized reporting in place.

TASK 21-2 Working with the partners identified in Task 21-1, develop permanent (i.e., non-drought) performance standards against which progress in reducing landscape water use region-wide will be measured.

BY 2018 Ensure performance standards in place.

TASK 21-3 Support expansion of local or regional water efficient landscape maintenance training programs that use the watershed approach. Support use of models such as the California Friendly Landscape Training Program and Bay-Friendly Landscape (Rescape California) Program.

BY 2019 Launch training programs in three new regions around the state.

TASK 21-4 Collaborate with municipalities, land use agencies, and others to create pilot programs that expand the application of efficiency standards to all new and existing landscaping projects.

BY 2020 Establish pilot programs in three municipalities.

BACKGROUND

Outdoor water use is responsible for about 40 percent of total water use in the Estuary's urban environment, and an even higher percentage of use in hotter inland portions of the region. Existing state law calls for a 20 percent reduction in per capita water use by 2020. Although many parts of the region have already met or exceeded that goal under the recent drought regulations, these reductions may be short-lived according to the 2015 *State of the Estuary Report*.

While additional indoor water use efficiency is possible through the installation of low-flow toilets, shower heads, leak detection, and other steps, getting to the next level of long-term reduction will require focused attention on outdoor water use, including housing and development planning (see Action 23).

Reductions in water use for landscaping and gardening can benefit stormwater management, water quality, and water supply. Water use policies that include reductions for landscaping can both increase water supply reliability and offset use of imported water, as well as groundwater and local streamflows.

This CCMP action supports the Department of Water Resources' revised Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELo, 2015). The revised ordinance applies to new landscaping projects over 500 square feet and rehabilitated landscapes over 2,500 square feet. The MWELo also encourages the use of a watershed approach and collaboration among industry, government, and property owners to achieve multiple benefits, and provides a methodology for calculating the upper limit for water use on a particular landscape. This methodology, or a similar approach, could be applied to all existing landscaped areas.

In the long term, incentive programs such as lawn-to-garden or "cash-for-grass" rebates, stormwater capture, greywater reuse, and other on-site reuse by both residential and commercial water users will be key to reducing urban water use. This CCMP action has been identified in the *California Water Action Plan*, Executive Order B-29-15, and the non-governmental report *Wetter or Not*. It has also been written into state law through the Water Conservation in Landscaping Act of 2006 (AB 1881). The State Water Resources Control Board is also formulating performance standards for long-term water use reduction, which will help inform the tasks associated with this action.

OWNERS

Rescape California (Task 21-3)
SF Estuary Partnership (Tasks 21-1, 21-2, 21-3, 21-4)

COLLABORATING PARTNERS

CA Department of Water Resources, CA Urban Water Conservation Council, State Water Resources Control Board, The Bay Institute, various local and regional governments and planning agencies, and local water agencies

NEXUS

Actions 18, 19, 22-24, 27
Goals 1, 3, 4
Objectives a, g, j

