



County of Santa Cruz

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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COUNTY, PARTNERS ACT TO PROTECT GROUNDWATER

The County of Santa Cruz, together with partners City of Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency, today recognized a public-private landscaping collaboration that saves 350,000 gallons of water annually.

By tearing out 15,500 square feet of turf surrounding the County's Crestview/Freedom Campus and replacing it with native, drought-tolerant plants donated by local nurseries, the County, City and PVWMA hope to inspire other South County residents to do the same at their homes.

"Water is one of the key issues on the Central Coast, impacting everything from the environment to farmers to residents," said Karina Cervantez-Alejo, Watsonville's vice mayor and a member of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. "Local government should lead by example. Together, we can make a difference."

Santa Cruz County is self-reliant when it comes to water, using only local surface streams and groundwater, and does not depend on any state water projects. That has made water conservation and collaboration critical for the sustainability of the community.

In the Pajaro Valley, groundwater is in a state of critical overdraft, with seawater intrusion spreading inland. With half of urban water use going toward landscaping, water-saving landscaping projects can be critical toward protecting water for municipal and agricultural uses.

"This project is a testament to our commitment to working together, and a reminder that the drought is not over," Watsonville Mayor Felipe Hernandez said. "Everyone has a part to play in protecting one of our most precious resources."



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The turf replacement would not have been possible without contributions from a crew of 11 California Conservation Corps (CCC) members and a dozen local landscapers and nurseries, who contributed time and materials to bring the project to fruition. They include: UC Master Gardeners, Wild Rose Landscape, My Green Earth Landscaping, Aqua Green Landscape Irrigation Co., California Landscape Contractors Association, Toro Irrigation, Flora Vista Design, Hunter Industries, Site One Irrigation, Ewing Irrigation, Native Revival Nursery, Monterey Bay Nursery and Vision Recycling.

“I’d like to thank the private sector for stepping up and volunteering their time and resources to be a part of the solution,” Supervisor Greg Caput said. “Collaborations like these are what makes Santa Cruz County such a unique place.”

Most local water agencies offer incentive programs to encourage homeowners to install drought-tolerant landscaping, and the state offers turf replacement rebates of up to \$2,000.

More information about rebates can be found at watersavingtips.org or www.saveourwaterrebates.com. Examples of drought-tolerant landscaping ideas can be found at santacruz.watersavingplants.com.