

Regional Water Conservation Program

Post-Performance Report

Grant Agreement No. 4600009560

Project Description

The Regional Water Conservation Program was a multifaceted program consisting of a suite of conservation programs and activities designed to increase efficiency, reduce future water demand, and assist the Coachella Valley in meeting the requirements of the 20x2020 Plan. The Regional Water Conservation Program had an emphasis on coordination and collaboration between the member agencies of the CVRWMG.

The Regional Water Conservation Program objectives were as follows:

1. Continue to conduct outreach activities to encourage regional water use efficiency;
2. Perform a concentrated outreach effort to extend to local schools through the Water Wise outreach program;
3. Continue to conduct water audits and corresponding workshops to communicate recommendations regarding ways to increase water use efficiency to local constituents; and
4. Assist in the ability of local constituents to act upon recommendations from water audits by subsidizing the costs of these audits both indoor and outdoor.

The Program was composed of 9 subtasks:

- 9.1 Outreach
- 9.2 Water Audit Program
- 9.3 Water Wise Program
- 9.4 Workshops
- 9.5 Irrigation Clocks
- 9.6 Turf Reduction Program
- 9.7 Sprinkler Upgrades
- 9.8 Residential leak Detection
- 9.9 Irrigation System Upgrades

Project Benefits

The Project included the following benefits:

1. Bring water conservation activities to an accessible level to a wide range of constituents through outreach, water audits, and various mechanisms to assist in implementation of water conservation methods;
2. Evaluate irrigation systems for inefficiencies through an auditing process. These audits are an efficient way to communicate recommendations to constituents and identify potential conservation opportunities;
3. Provide outreach and education will be achieved by program measures such as the release of public service announcements, fliers, workshop details and other public relations techniques to encourage water use efficiency.

Post-Performance Update

The project was completed on December 31, 2017 and the Project Completion Report was submitted on July 26, 2017. This post-performance update covers the period of July 27, 2015 through September 15, 2019.

The actual work completed did not vary from the above Project Description. As planned, member agencies implemented water-efficiency programs for customers. Additional programs were also born from the original programs without grant funding for some agencies. The CVRWMG group also evolved into CV Water Counts after grant funding ended. It is a collaboration of local water agencies in the Coachella Valley and has fully funded by the agencies since July 2016.

CV Water Counts outreach accomplishments are listed below.

Collaborative Outreach

A unified effort to promote and educate the community on water-use efficiency continues among the member agencies.

- **New branding**
 - Logo was updated in 2017
 - The website (CVWaterCounts.com) is updated annually with new fact sheets and information pages as needed.
 - A new water drop spokes-character, Splash, was created in 2017.
- **Digital ad campaigns (2016-2019)**
 - Online banner ads in English and Spanish as part of a Facebook Network campaign, Google Adwords featuring Geo-fencing and YouTube Video ads.
 - Social Media posts about 2-3 times per week on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- **Television ads (2016-2019)**
 - Two 30-second PSAs in English and in Spanish, edited down to create eight 15-second PSAs, airing more than 1,000 times each year. Airing on CBS Channel 2, ABC's News Channel 3, FOX 11, KUNA TV, Entravision, and Spectrum Reach cable channels.
- **Billboards**
 - Outdoor billboards have been in place since 2016 throughout the Coachella Valley.
- **Print ads**
 - Various sized ads, in English and Spanish, in black and white and in Color, appearing weekly in The Desert Sun, El Informador, The Public Record, CV Weekly, Desert Star Weekly, and Chamber of Commerce Newsletters.
- **Collateral materials**
 - Posters in English and in Spanish distributed to all schools in Coachella Valley Unified School District, Desert Sands Unified School District and Palm Springs Unified School District, as well as all Boys & Girls Club locations, the Family YMCA of the Desert, and Chambers of Commerce.
 - Water Conservation Brochure in English and Spanish distributed at community events.
- **Promotional items promoting conservation**
 - Buttons

- Temporary Tattoos
- T-Shirts
- Water Bottles
- Water Counts Academy Graduate Pins and Certificates
- Public events
- **Public events**
 - Member agencies attend public events such as the Desert Horticultural Society's Desert Garden Community Day (2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018).
 - A Water Counts Symposium for the public was hosted in 2016 and in 2017. The program included speakers from U.S. Geological Survey, Association of California Water Agencies and the California State Water Control Board.
- **Hispanic Customer- Focused Initiatives**
 - Digital Ads
 - Television PSAs
 - Radio PSAs
 - Print Ads
 - School and Community Posters
 - Outdoor Billboards
 - Water Conservation Brochure
- **Water Counts Academy**
 - Member agencies created this education program geared toward local community members, which covers history, use and management of water in the Coachella Valley.
 - The academy first launched in November 2017. It is a free annual program consisting of four weekday sessions from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., and a tour of several water facilities. This class is geared toward non-water industry community members through an application and questionnaire process. CV Water Counts accepts 45 students year.
 - CV Water Counts chooses participants based on their application and questionnaire answers. The most recent class included participants from various age groups and occupations such as local government, cities, business owners, retirees, solar companies from throughout the valley.

Water-efficiency programs listed by agency:

Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD)

Using Prop 84 Round 1 grants, Coachella Valley Water District continued its Weather-Based Irrigation Clock Program along with other water-saving rebate and discount programs for residential and commercial customers. CVWD continues to offer several water-efficiency programs through its annual budget. The district is researching several new incentives based on changing customer needs such as washing machine and water heater rebates. Outreach and education to the public including K-12 schools is also a large part of CVWD's efforts to spread the "conservation is way of life" message to its customers. Below are several programs CVWD continues to offer to its customers.

Water Audit Program

- CVWD's Water Audit Program consists of three components, residential Conservation Reviews, Simplified audits and Proteus Consulting – Comprehensive Water Audits.

- Conservation Reviews
 - Residential or small commercial
 - Onsite review, walk the property and make suggestions
- Simplified audits
 - Homeowner's Associations or commercial
 - Walk the property, provide a written analysis
- Proteus Consulting – Comprehensive Water Audits
 - Specific to Tier 5 Customers
 - Thorough and comprehensive report with recommendations

Conservation Reviews		Simplified Audits	
2015	1,915	2015	N/A
2016	4,232	2016	N/A
2017	2,809	2017	22
2018	2,225	2018	20
(As of October) 2019	1667	(As of October) 2019	7
Total Conservation Reviews	12,847	Total Simplified Audits	49

Proteus Consulting - Comprehensive Water Audits	
2015	N/A
2016	N/A
2017	6
2018	1
Total Proteus Consulting - Comprehensive Water Audits	7

Water Wise Program

In 2016, CVWD continued this program with a different vendor. CVWD funds the program through its annual conservation program budget. To date, CVWD has distributed 792 kits to residential customers free of charge.

Workshops

CVWD offers several water-efficiency and conservation workshops throughout the year for residential customers.

- Residential workshops include the topics listed below.
 - Turf Conversion & Drip Irrigation at Home
 - Backyard Composting
 - Irrigating Landscape Trees Efficiently
 - Improve Water-Efficiency in Your Landscape with CIMIS
 - What's Your Soil Type?
 - Get the Buzz on Pollinator-Friendly Landscapes
 - Water-Efficient Plant Palettes
 - Water Wise Leak Workshop

- CVWD previously offered a Water Management Seminar for landscapers but replaced the program in 2016 with an online Professional Landscaper Certification Course. City Ordinance requires this course to apply or renew a business license. College of the Desert offers the free online course.

Weather-Based Irrigation Controller Program (WBIC)

The Weather-Based Irrigation Controller Program consists of two (2) components residential and commercial. Since 2015, CVWD has offered these devices to residential customers at no charge including installation. Commercial and HOA customers can apply to receive a rebate for 50 percent of the cost of controllers (up to \$10,000).

Residential WBIC Program	WBIC Installed
2015	803
2016	929
2017	419
2018	351
(As of October) 2019	211
Total Residential WBIC	2,713

Commercial WBIC Program	WBIC Installed
2015	319
2016	527
2017	129
2018	106
(As of October) 2019	19
Total Commercial WBIC	1,100

Desert Landscaping Program (Turf Conversion)

The Desert Landscaping Program consists of two (2) components, residential and commercial. Single-family home residents can receive \$2 per square foot, up to \$20,000 per project for converting grass lawns to desert-friendly landscaping.

Residential Turf Conversion	Square feet
2015	2,896,057
2016	5,729,820
2017	2,345,478
2018	2,139,073
(As of October) 2019	378,125
Total Square feet of Turf Converted	13,488,553

Commercial/Large Landscape customers can receive up to \$25,000 per project. Multiple projects are allowed in one year.

Commercial/ Large Turf Conversion	Square feet
2015	2,135,963
2016	3,323,508
2017	1,704,194
2018	2,139,073
(As of October) 2019	643,591
Total Square feet of Turf Converted	13,754,019

Irrigation System Upgrades

CVWD's implemented the Irrigation-Efficiency Upgrade Program in July 2018 for HOA and commercial customers.

- Program is for customers to replace overhead spray sprinklers, adjustable bubblers or surface emitters with subsurface/in-line drip tubing and non-adjustable pressure compensating bubblers and/or pressure compensating emitters.
- Offers rebate of \$0.50 per converted square foot or the total cost of the approved irrigation hardware (whichever is less).
- Up to 20,000 square feet of converted area or \$10,000 of irrigation hardware.
- Customer must provide receipts.

Irrigation System Upgrades	Participation in Square Feet
2015	N/A
2016	N/A
2017	N/A
2018	103,847
(As of October) 2019	436,081
Total Participation in Square Feet	539,928

Toilet Rebate Program

Residents can receive a rebate up to \$100 per toilet for installing high-efficiency ones rated at 1.28 gallons per flush or less. The District also offers a rebate of \$10 for having the old toilet recycled.

Commercial establishments can receive a rebate of up to one-half the cost of each toilet and installation up to a total cost of \$280 per toilet. The maximum rebate is up to \$140 per toilet. New toilets must be rated a 1.28 gallons per flush or less. The waterless urinals rebate is \$100 per unit.

Residential Toilet Rebate Program	Toilet Rebates
2015	387
2016	707
2017	478
2018	346
(As of October) 2019	845
Total Residential Toilets	2,763
Commercial Toilet Rebate Program	Commercial Toilet Rebates
2015	N/A
2016	N/A
2017	1,380
2018	369
(As of October) 2019	24
Total Commercial Toilets	1,773

Water Brooms and Pre-Rinse Nozzles

High efficiency pre-rinse nozzles and water brooms are offered free to commercial customers.

Water Broom Rebate Program	Water Brooms
2015	N/A
2016	N/A
2017	21
2018	24
(As of October) 2019	11
Total Water Brooms	56

New Generation Rotary Nozzle Rebates

Residential rebates for new generation rotary nozzles are up \$4 per nozzle with a maximum of \$2,000, which is equivalent to 500 nozzles.

New Generation Rotary Nozzle Rebate Program	Nozzles Replaced
2015	N/A
2016	N/A
2017	5,728
2018	673
(As of October) 2019	428
Total New Generation Rotary Nozzles	6,829

Coachella Water Authority (CWA)

Using Prop 84 Round 1 grants, the Coachella Water Authority launched its first conservation rebate program. The program consisted of several water saving programs and was well received from residential, institutional and commercial customers.

Coachella Water Authority currently offers a variety of rebates. To date, these grant funded programs account for significant change within the community.

[Turf to Desert Landscape Program](#)

Approximately 59,181 thousand square feet removed since 2015.

- Roughly 99 acre-feet saved

[Weather-Based Irrigation Controller Rebates](#)

- 12 controllers installed

[Indoor/Outdoor Retrofit Rebates](#)

- More than 444 efficient showerheads, aerators and hose nozzles distributed
- WaterSense toilet rebates
 - Approximately 42 toilets replaced

Coachella Water Authority continues its conservation efforts with the development of a website dedicated water conservation. With the implementation of programs from Round 1 of Proposition 84, the Coachella Water Authority has offered customers information that helps create water savings habits. These efforts in addition to the many outreach events throughout the years have help to create a community that understands the conservation is a way of life.

Desert Water Agency (DWA)

Since receiving Prop 84 Round 1 grants, Desert Water Agency has continued existing conservation programs and began offering new water saving programs.

Desert Water Agency currently offers a variety of rebates. To date, these investments account for significant change within our community. Some of these rebates have been grant-funded, while others are funded by our agency or corporate contributions.

[Grass to desert landscape rebates \(single-family, large-scale and municipal\)](#)

- Approximately 1.9 million square feet removed

[Weather-based irrigation controller rebates](#)

- About 3,023 controllers installed

[Efficient sprinkler/pressure compensating bubbler rebates](#)

- More than 4,386 efficient nozzles and bubblers installed

WaterSense toilet rebates

- Approximately 1,845 toilets replaced

EnergyStar Washing Machines

- A new program rolled out in September 2019 has rebated five washers

DWA has also increased its investment in outreach related to water conservation. They have hired an additional staff person and created a new water-efficient demonstration garden that boasts pollinator plants. They also initiated a conservation coupon program to feature discounted leak detection, pool filtration and recycled water car washes. In 2019, DWA expanded the coupon program to include a nursery and two rock/gravel wholesalers.

Round 1 of Proposition 84 allowed our agency to offer water audits to customers, which is something that we continue to do using agency funding. These audits are important to helping customers, especially HOAs, determine where they can achieve the most water savings.

In 2016, DWA conducted a smart meter pilot test to assess the effectiveness additional information had on customer conservation habits.

By the end of this fiscal year, they also intend to roll out a landscape design rebate and a low-income plumbing and irrigation repair program.

Indio Water Authority (IWA)

Since receiving Prop 84 Round 1 grant money, Indio Water Authority (IWA) has expanded existing conservation programs and began offering new water efficiency programs using a combination of grant funds and agency funds.

IWA currently offer rebates and incentives for turf removal, clothes washer and toilet replacements, smart controller installation, and irrigation upgrades. Compared to the last reporting period, the rebates and incentives paid out to IWA customers during this reporting period increased by 31% or \$54,272; the average rebate amount received was \$522. Toilet replacements and irrigation upgrades are the most popular incentives. While every drop counts, the biggest water savings are gained outdoors, which makes turf removal and irrigation upgrades the biggest contributor to water savings and demand reduction.

To eliminate more turf within the IWA service area, the IWA Board of Directors at its September 18, 2019 meeting increased the incentive to \$2.00 per square foot for residential and commercial customers. In addition, it raised the incentive maximum limit from \$1,500 to \$20,000 for residential customers and from \$4,000 to \$60,000 for commercial customers. Furthermore, to encourage the largest turf areas in the city to be reduced, a new turf removal incentive category was created for City/Schools/Government with an incentive of \$3.00 per square foot and a maximum of \$150,000 per account; customers in this new category were previously in the commercial category. These changes are expected to increase large-scale

turf removal across the City of Indio in the next 18 months. IWA's conservation efforts are largely funded by customer rates in the higher tiers of consumption and this revenue stream will reduce as more customers conserve. To help pay for the increased turf rebates and reduce overall cost to our customers, staff will be pursuing local, state, and federal grant opportunities that will help drive water conservation as a major pillar of our water supply program.

Turf to Desert Landscape Program

- Since 2014, an additional 1.6 million square feet of turf has been removed by customers, saving over 600 acre-feet of water per year.

Weather-Based Smart Irrigation Controller & Toilet Rebate Program

- Since 2014, more than 4,376 smart irrigation controllers and high-efficiency toilets have been installed.

Water Conservation Kits (Indoor/Outdoor)

- Thousands of water conservation kits, shower timers, efficient nozzles and showerheads have been distributed and water audits are still being provided. In addition, 300 washing machines have been replaced with more water efficient ones.

IWA Water Conservation Outreach

Due to a vacancy in the Conservation Coordinator position during the 2018-2019 period, some of the water conservation activities were impacted and recorded a lower level of activity. The impacted programs include speaking engagements, classroom demonstrations and school outreaches, water audits, and workshops. These programs will be reenergized when the new Conservation & Outreach Coordinator in late October. After experiencing a post-drought decline in 2017 and 2018, other conservation programs such as smart irrigation controllers, turf reduction, sprinkler upgrades, residential leak detection, and efficiency upgrades and retrofits are enjoying a rebound in 2019.

Advanced Metering Infrastructure

In 2016, IWA started the implementation of advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) and customer web portal to provide customers with real-time consumption data. Since 2017, the web portal has reduced the need for residential leak detection for many of our customers. The customer web portal has empowered customers to set triggers and alerts to monitor consumption and leaks, while the same functionalities provided by AMI and the web portal allows staff to review water consumption data in a timely fashion and contact customers for consumption abnormalities. Staff continues to promote the web portal as a tool for customers to actively manage their water use and save money.

Additional changes and augmentation to IWA's conservation program are planned for the next reporting period to increase the number of participants and enhance water savings. Some of the major changes that staff will be presenting to the Board of Directors for approval as part of the Fiscal Year 2020/2021 budget include a Commercial Clothes Washer Rebate Pilot, a Direct Installation Program Pilot, a Hot Water Recirculating Pump Rebate Pilot, and changes to the irrigation upgrade rebates to cover professional labor

installation and increase the maximum amounts. Staff will also explore and implement technology solutions in 2020 to automate water use efficiency evaluations and rebates.

Proposition 84 Round 1 has been a great catalyst for conservation efforts at the Indio Water Authority. Since 2016 alone, over \$2 million of agency funds have been invested alone in water conservation education and outreach, advanced metering infrastructure, and the web portal. Moving forward, IWA will continue with these efforts to leverage agency resources and grant funding in making conservation a permanent way of life in Indio and the Coachella Valley at large.

Mission Springs Water District (MSWD)

MSWD no longer offers rebates as grant funding has been exhausted.