

About Us

Valley Water manages an integrated water resources system that includes the supply of safe, clean water, flood protection and stewardship of streams on behalf of Santa Clara County's 1.9 million residents. Valley Water effectively manages 10 dams and surface water reservoirs, three water treatment plants, a state-of-the-art water quality laboratory, nearly 285 acres of groundwater recharge ponds and more than 333 miles of streams. Valley Water also provides wholesale water and groundwater management services to local municipalities and private water retailers who deliver drinking water directly to homes and businesses in Santa Clara County.



This 14th Water Conservation Annual Report documents the actions taken by Valley Water, and the community at large, to achieve water conservation goals throughout FY 2017–2022. Water conservation actions from July 1, 2022 (FY 2023) and beyond are not covered within this report, as they will be comprehensively detailed in future reports.

In 2019, Valley Water updated its Water Supply Master Plan 2040 and identified a water conservation goal of approximately 99,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) of savings by 2030 and 110,000 AFY of savings by 2040. In order to achieve these goals, Valley Water updated its Water Conservation Savings Model (a customized water conservation tracking tool) to evaluate conservation program water savings, costs, and benefits in 2019; and in 2021, Valley Water updated its Water Conservation Strategic Plan, which provides a blueprint for meeting these goals.

Valley Water faced critical challenges during the reporting period, such as a severe drought emergency (2021–2023) impacting the western United States, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the draining of Anderson Dam for seismic retrofitting. Valley Water responded by enhancing conservation programs, hiring more staff, pivoting to more online options, and launching innovative solutions to these challenges. Notably, the total annual long-term water savings achieved by Valley Water increased 15.5% from under 70,000 acre-feet per year (TAFY) in FY 2017 to over 80,000 TAFY in FY 2022 (Figure 1, Figure 2A). These long-term savings were in addition to short-term reductions that were achieved primarily in response to the drought.

Valley Water continues to be a leader in water conservation with many innovative, effective, and comprehensive water conservation programs for every property type in the county, several of which are supported by Safe, Clean Water and Flood Protection Program funding.

Valley Water has accomplished the following during the reporting period:

- 11 new programs launched (3 rebate programs, 3 educational programs, 2 survey programs, 2 indoor conservation programs, and a program to promote the installation of Advanced Metering Infrastructure)
- 6 programs re-envisioned to incorporate digital resources and tools
- 4 pilot programs launched
- Rebate rates and maximums increased for the Water Efficient Technology Rebate Program (January 2020) and Landscape Rebate Program (July 2021)
- 36 cost-sharing agreements and amendments negotiated (an average of 6–7 per year)
- 57 cost-sharing agreements and amendments maintained (an average of 9–10 per year)



Example of a water-efficient landscape.

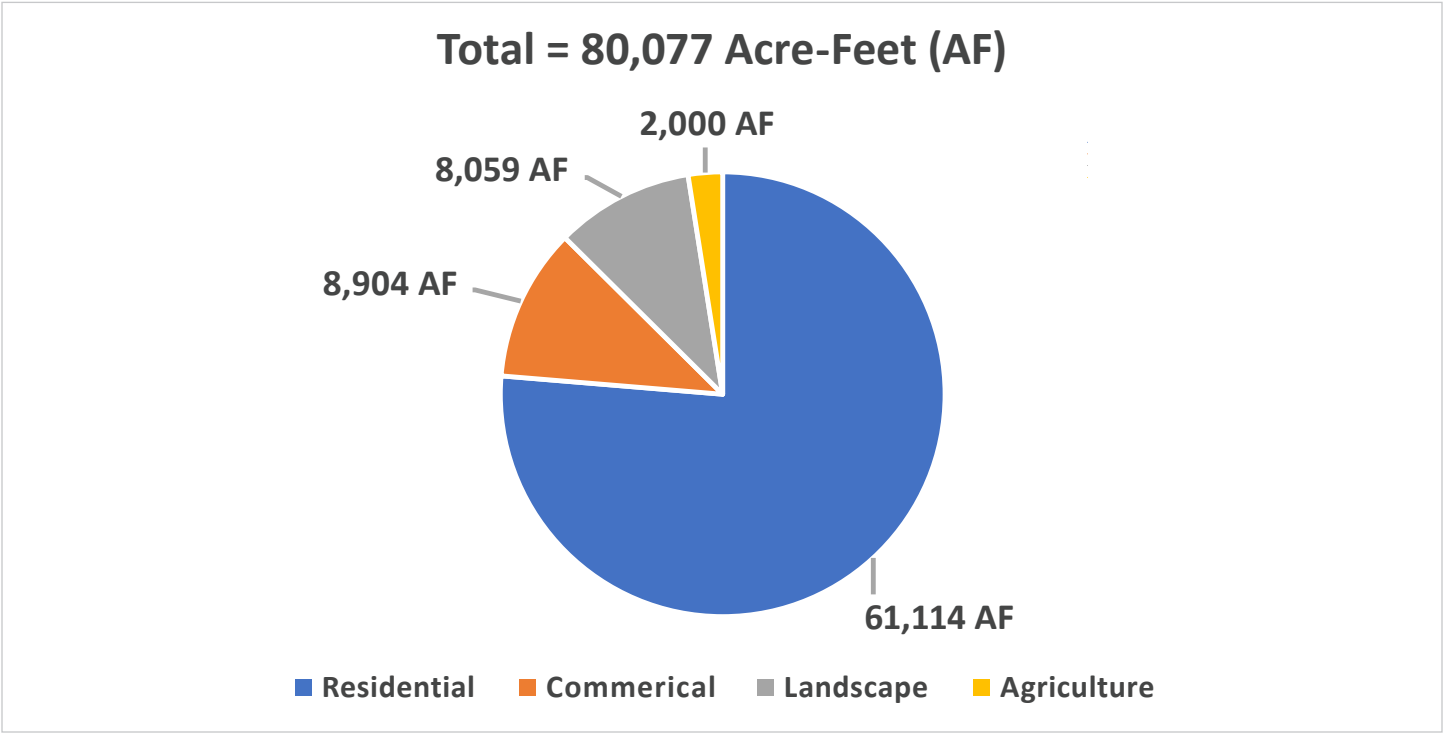


Figure 1: Total water savings for Santa Clara County in FY 2022 showing amounts (in acre-feet) and identifying the respective categories from which savings were derived.

Figure 2A

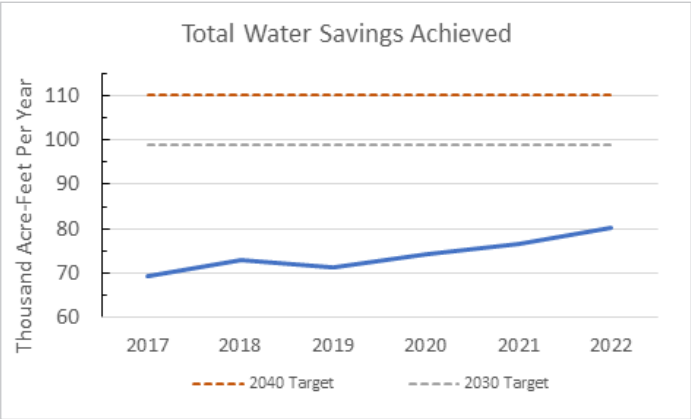


Figure 2B

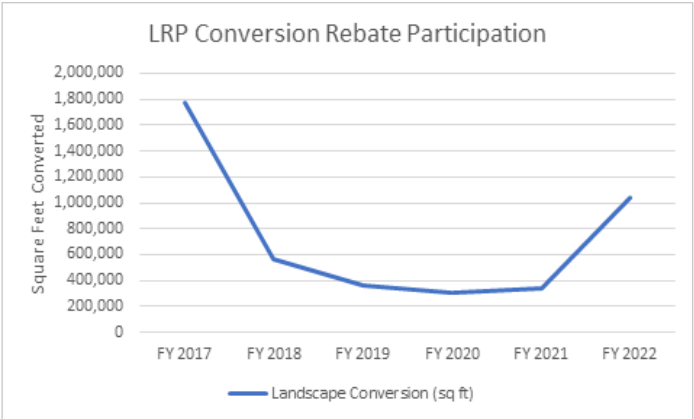


Figure 2C

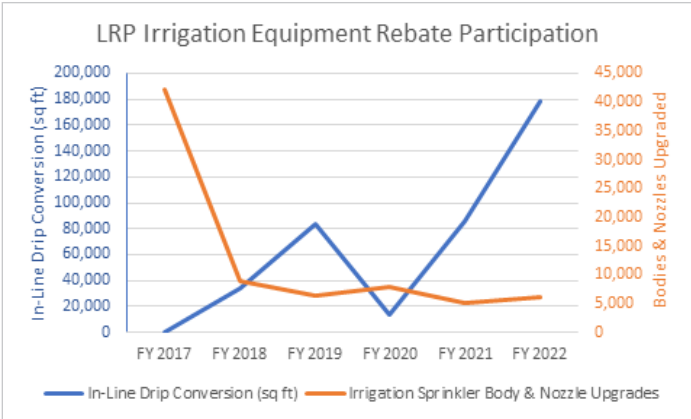


Figure 2D

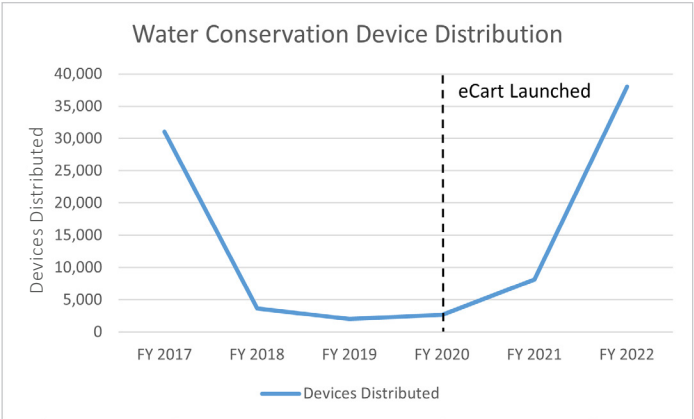


Figure 2: Key metrics of Valley Water’s conservation efforts in Santa Clara County during the reporting period. (A) Total water savings achieved in thousand acre-feet per year. (B) Total amount of square feet converted through the LRP landscape conversion rebate. (C) LRP in-line drip conversion participation in square feet (sq ft) and the number of irrigation sprinkler bodies and nozzles upgraded through the program. (D) Water conservation devices distributed throughout the county before and after the launch of the eCart.



Understanding Water Use

In FY 2019, Valley Water began development of an Advanced Metering Infrastructure Program that installed more than 15,000 meters in the county throughout the reporting period. In FY 2022, Valley Water funded the distribution of 35,303 water use reports through the Water Use Report Program. During the reporting period, the Submeter Rebate Program issued 613 rebates, averaging 102 annually, with 1-2 participants per year; notably, this is the first time this program has provided rebates to accessory dwelling units.

Outdoor Water Conservation

Throughout the reporting period, Valley Water enhanced four of its ongoing outdoor programs and launched two new consultation services. Valley Water expanded the Landscape Rebate Program (LRP) to provide rebates for in-line drip conversion in FY 2017, rainwater capture in FY 2019, and the conversion of turf landscapes to mulch in FY 2022. In FY 2022, LRP provided rebates for 1,035,542 sq ft of landscape conversion (Figure 2B), 178,882 sq ft of in-line drip conversion (Figure 2C), 6,291 irrigation equipment pieces (Figure 2C), 610 weather-based irrigation controllers, 304 rain barrels, 6,675 cistern gallons, and 11,787 sq ft of rain garden conversions. During this reporting period, irrigation equipment rebate participation decreased, while in-line drip conversion rebate participation increased, suggesting a community shift towards different types of water-efficient irrigation (Figure 2C). Valley Water also launched the Landscape Maintenance Consultation Program (LMCP) in FY 2018 for LRP customers to help maintain converted landscapes. The LMCP provided 1,031 customers with assistance since launch with 180 performed in FY 2022. Additionally, Valley Water has provided funding for Our City Forest to convert 22,841 sq ft of lawn through the Lawn Busters Program in FY 2022. The Graywater Rebate Program issued 11 graywater rebates in FY 2022 in addition to 71 completed graywater projects performed through the Graywater Direct Installation Pilot Program between October 2018 and June 2020.

In FY 2017, Valley Water launched the Water Wise Outdoor Survey Program and provided 831 surveys with 61 surveys performed in FY 2022. Valley Water also expanded the Large Landscape Program (LLP) significantly since FY 2017 from 1,305 active sites to 3,881 active sites in FY 2022. The number of water retailers participating in the LLP has also increased from 5 retailers in FY 2017 to 9 retailers in FY 2022. Lastly, Valley Water has enhanced its Water Waste Program by adopting Ordinance 22-02 which implements fines for repeated water waste during drought, and has responded to 2,066 reports in FY 2022.

Indoor Water Conservation

In 2021, Valley Water launched two indoor conservation programs for the county. The Online Shopping Cart (eCart) Program was launched to provide free water conservation devices to the county and delivered 10,251 orders in FY 2022 (Figure 2D). In the same year, Valley Water launched its Fixture Replacement Program to retrofit plumbing fixtures, replacing 1,689 fixtures in FY 2022, which resulted in 66.4 acre-feet of annual water savings. Valley Water also provided six rebates through the Water Efficient Technology Rebate Program throughout the reporting period, saving a total of 27,610 hundred cubic feet (CCF) of water.

Agricultural Water Conservation

The agricultural sector represents one of the lowest categories of water usage in the county but offers potential for achieving future water-use efficiency. Valley Water is progressively broadening its efforts to establish benchmarks for sustainable water conservation by maintaining the Mobile Lab Program to provide free irrigation system evaluations and efficiency services for growers and by conducting an Agricultural Water Use Baseline Study that was finished in FY 2023.

Education & Outreach

Throughout the reporting period, Valley Water conducted annual media campaigns to promote water conservation, incorporating increasingly digital strategies. In 2021, Valley Water launched its inaugural spring campaign focused on drought readiness with messages like "Is Your Yard Drought Ready? Our rebates can help." In 2022, Valley Water expanded its drought messaging with its first year-round digital campaign featuring themes such as "Say Yes to Saving Water." Additionally, Valley Water staff developed an online, multilingual Water Conservation Webinar Series, hosted annual Landscape Summits, and delivered approximately 30 presentations annually at various community events, including neighborhood association meetings, environmental fairs, Earth Day events, and community garden gatherings. In FY 2022, Valley Water staff participated in 38 events both virtually and in-person.

Valley Water continues to partner with local water retailers, municipalities, and non-profit organizations to enhance its programs where relevant. In September 2019, Valley Water collaborated with 8 other Bay Area water agencies and CalWEP to create the Bay Area Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper Training. 108 participants who operate within the county have completed the training since launch. In FY 2022, Valley Water administered eight multi-year cost-sharing agreements with local water retailers and municipalities totaling \$785,295 in revenue and roughly \$1.7 million in expenses.



2016

- JULY** Valley Water enters cost-sharing agreements with City of Morgan Hill, City of Mountain View, San José Municipal, & City of Cupertino
- JULY** Landscape Rebate Program (LRP) launches In-Line Drip Rebates
- AUG** Valley Water enters cost-sharing agreements with Ecology Action & City of Gilroy

2017

- JAN** Valley Water enters cost-sharing agreements with City of Palo Alto & City of Santa Clara
- FEB** Valley Water transitions the Water Wise House Call Program to Water Wise Outdoor Surveys
- MAR** Launched South Bay Green Gardens website, a collaboration of 13 public agencies, to provide sustainable gardening resources and events in the county
- APR** Valley Water hosts its 2017 Landscape Summit
- JULY** Valley Water enters cost-sharing agreements with City of Morgan Hill and City of Santa Clara and begins covering Home Water Use Reports with local water retailers & municipalities

2018

- FEB** Valley Water hosts its 2018 Landscape Summit
- MAY** Launch of Landscape Maintenance Consultation Program
- JULY** Valley Water enters cost-sharing agreements with Ecology Action & City of Morgan Hill
- DEC** Valley Water enters cost-sharing agreement with City of Santa Clara

2019

- JAN** Landscape Rebate Program launches Rainwater Capture Rebates
- JAN** Valley Water enters cost-sharing agreement with San Jose Municipal
- FEB** Valley Water hosts its 2019 Landscape Summit
- JULY** Valley Water enters cost-sharing agreement with City of Morgan Hill
- SEPT** Valley Water enters cost-sharing agreement with City of Milpitas
- SEPT** Valley Water collaborates with 8 other Bay Area water agencies to offer Bay Area Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper trainings
- DEC** Valley Water enters cost-sharing agreement with City of Gilroy

2020

- JAN** WET rebate maximum increased to \$100k
- JAN** Valley Water amends cost-sharing agreement with San José Municipal

2020 (Cont.)

- FEB** Valley Water hosts its 2020 Landscape Summit
- MAY** Valley Water begins development of online shopping cart (eCart)
- JULY** Valley Water enters cost-sharing agreement with City of Morgan Hill
- SEPT** Valley Water hosts 6 Facebook Live water conservation webinars
- NOV** Renewal of Safe, Clean Water Act

2021

- FEB** Valley Water hosts its 2021 Virtual Landscape Summit
- MAR** Launch of online shopping cart (eCart)
- APR** Launch of Fixture Replacement Program
- APR** Valley Water launches its first-ever spring media campaign
- JULY** Valley Water publishes the Water Conservation Strategic Plan
- JULY** Valley Water enters cost-sharing agreements with City of Milpitas & Our City Forest
- JULY** Landscape Rebate Program rates increased to \$2/sq. ft. and site caps for single family and small multi-family sites increased from \$2,000 to \$3,000
- AUG** Valley Water publishes Sustainable Landscape Guidelines for distribution through the eCart

2022

- JAN** Valley Water amends cost-sharing agreement with San José Municipal
- FEB** Valley Water launches a collaboration with Water Wise Consulting for LRP and Water Waste Program
- FEB** Valley Water hosts its 2022 Landscape Summit
- APR** Launch of virtual water efficiency webinar series
- MAY** Launch of LRP virtual office hours
- MAY** Valley Water launches its first-ever year-round media campaign
- JUNE** Water Waste Program begins enforcement
- JUNE** Launch of Large Landscape Lawn to Mulch Rebate