



SILICON VALLEY  
**WATER CONSERVATION  
AWARDS**

**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **10 Years of Water Conservation Yield Remarkable Results Awards to Honor Water Conservation Leaders**

Last year was one of the wettest on record. This year is shaping up to be one of the driest. Such uncertainty in weather patterns from year to year is likely to be the “new normal” for California in the face of climate change.

In response to the growing threat of extended droughts, a coalition of water agencies, business networks and conservation groups came together in 2009 to establish the Silicon Valley Water Conservation Awards. Now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, the awards program continues to shine a spotlight on leaders in water conservation and reuse who serve as role models for others.

The 2018 Silicon Valley Water Conservation Awards ceremony and 10<sup>th</sup>-year gala will be held on World Water Day, March 22 from 6:00-9:00pm at the Mitchell Park Community Center, 3700 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto. Wallace J. Nichols, author of “Blue Mind,” will give the keynote address. There also will be a special reception sponsored by Service by Medallion. Tickets are \$20. Details are available at [www.WaterAwards.org](http://www.WaterAwards.org).

### **And the winners are:**

Government Agency: **City of Mountain View**

Business: **Sierra Circuits**

Organization: **San Jose State University**

Greenscape Management: **City of Morgan Hill**

Innovation: **DripCycle**

Education: **Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center**

Water Champion: **Sherri Osaka**

### **About the Winners**

**Government Agency** – The **City of Mountain View** municipal water system supplies water to 78,000 residents and 80,000 workers. In 2009, the City completed installation of a recycled water system, which has saved over 1 billion gallons of potable water by

delivering recycled water to the North Bayshore area. In 2016 Mountain View began serving its first dual-plumbed building, and beginning in 2018, all new buildings over 25,000 square feet will be required to be dual-plumbed. The City offers WaterSmart home water reports, and was the first agency in Silicon Valley to pilot the use of WaterSmart as an Advanced Metering Infrastructure customer interface. It also was the first Santa Clara Valley Water District member agency to utilize Waterfluence water budgets for large landscape customers, and is currently ranked by Waterfluence as the most water-efficient Parks Division of all participating agencies in California. City-wide, potable water use is down 38% from a high of 13.3 million gallons per day (mgd) in 1997 to just 8.28 mgd in 2017. Residential per capita use is 63 gallons per person per day, among the lowest in California. Despite a mandated reduction of 16% during the height of the recent drought, Mountain View's water use decreased by 29%, even as development continued to bring new residents and jobs to the City.

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**Business – Sierra Circuits** is a circuit board manufacturer headquartered in Sunnyvale. They use various processes to produce printed circuit boards (PCBs), including drilling, imaging, etching and plating copper, nickel, palladium and gold. The wastewater is treated by both conventional (chemical adjustment, flocculation and clarification) and ion exchange methods, followed by pH adjustment and filtration before discharge to the Sunnyvale Sanitary System. To reduce the water required to manufacture PCBs as well as wastewater discharge, Sierra Circuits implemented an innovative program to both reduce required water and recycle wastewater after primary treatment through several steps, including ion exchange, secondary microfiltration, electrowinning, ozonation and reverse osmosis. Sierra Circuits also captures and uses rainwater when available. As a result, they now recycle 60% - 70% of the 1.6 million gallons per month required to manufacture PCBs. In addition to reducing water demand, Sierra Circuits also saves \$182,000 per year as a result of these efforts.

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**Organization –** Founded in 1857, **San Jose State University (SJSU)** is the oldest public institution for higher education in California. It occupies 155 acres, serves a student population of 33,000, and was one of the first users of recycled water from the South Bay Water Recycling system. Since receiving a Silicon Valley Water Conservation Award in 2011, SJSU has not rested on its laurels, but instead continues to lead the region in the use of recycled water. By the end of 2011, the Main Campus irrigation system was connected to recycled water, saving over 32 million gallons per year. In 2014, the Student Union underwent a major retrofit and expansion that included adding a dual-plumbed system which resulted in an annual water savings of 2.2 million gallons. In 2015, SJSU began installation of a new recycled water main that will serve the rest of the campus, including Campus Village 2, which was completed in 2016. In 2017, they overcame technical challenges to convert their existing boilers from potable water to recycled water, saving an additional 18 million gallons of potable water each year. As a result of their efforts over the years, SJSU has reduced its annual potable water use by almost 100 million gallons.

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**Greenscape Management** – The **City of Morgan Hill** converted five parcels of grass area to drought-tolerant landscapes, incorporating many native plants and mulch. They worked directly with the Santa Clara Valley Water District, which provided proper guidelines for creating gorgeous, water-conscious gardens. All standard overhead sprinklers were replaced with below-ground, in-line drip systems. Conversions took place at the Aquatic Center, Police Department, Civic Center, Community Center and at the Dunne Hill Fire Station. The Civic Center and Community Center gardens were designed to be teaching tools for the public. Informational handouts, plant identification signs and displays were placed throughout the gardens for public viewing. In all, these locations converted a total 67,831 square feet of lawn to drought tolerant landscapes, saving roughly 3,730 gallons of water per day, or 1,361,707 gallons per year.

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**Innovation – DripCycle** is a Mountain View-based startup founded by recent college graduates. They invented a first of its kind, chemical-free, plug-and-play water savings system for commercial buildings that collects water produced from air conditioning units, along with rainwater, to be used for landscaping, cooling towers and more. Their patented 3-stage filtration system takes five minutes to clean, is 100% self-contained and is small enough to fit in the back of an SUV. DripCycle's first Silicon Valley-based client was Dennis Kobza & Associates, an architecture firm in Mountain View. DripCycle also has installed two units at Loyola Marymount University, and another at the Black Canyon Center in Phoenix. Each system can save anywhere from 100,000 - 1.2 million gallons of water per year, depending on the size and use of the building.

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**Education** – The **Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center (SVAWPC)** was opened in 2014 by the Santa Clara Valley Water District in partnership with the City of San José. The facility is the largest of its kind in Northern California. Using microfiltration, reverse osmosis and ultra-violet light, the SVAWPC processes up to eight million gallons of secondary-treated effluent into advanced-purified water daily. Eventually the plant will produce up to 32 million gallons per day of high quality, drought-proof water. The advanced-purified water is currently used for irrigation and industrial uses, but eventually will augment drinking water supplies. Over the past few years, the SVAWPC has hosted hundreds of tours, targeting elected and business leaders, community leaders, neighboring water districts, regulatory agencies, environmental groups, the Latino and Asian-American communities and the general public. At the facility's grand-opening, mayors, elected officials and other VIPs drank the advanced-purified water to demonstrate its purity, making local and national news. In 2015, outreach staff hosted 14 tours in English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Mandarin Chinese in a single day, educating over 900 people about the benefits of advanced-purified water. Over the last year, outreach staff hosted 1,757 visitors. 9 out of 10 attendees stated their support for using advanced-purified water for potable use in post-tour surveys.

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**Water Champion – Sherri Osaka** is a licensed landscape architect and Bay-Friendly Qualified Designer whose business – Sustainable Landscape Designs – has been helping clients create water-efficient, low-maintenance gardens for over 20 years. In her free time, Sherri is a member of the Santa Clara Valley Water District’s Landscape Advisory Committee and Chairperson of the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS). As the volunteer chairperson of the Gardening with Natives subgroup of her CNPS chapter, she organizes over 30 free 90-minute talks per year in partnership with local libraries in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. The topics vary widely, but mainly focus on native plants, wildlife, drought-tolerant gardening, and graywater and rainwater systems. She also teaches water saving classes through the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency. Over the past seven years, Sherri has helped educate 8,648 people, for an average of 1,235 per year. **Contact:** Sherri Osaka, [sdosaka@sustainable-landscape.com](mailto:sdosaka@sustainable-landscape.com), 408-264-7427

### **About the Water Conservation Awards Coalition**

The Coalition coordinating the Silicon Valley Water Conservation Awards includes: Acterra, Bay Area Water Supply & Conservation Agency, City of Palo Alto Utilities, City of San Jose Environmental Services, Grassroots Ecology, GreenTown Los Altos, Joint Venture Silicon Valley, ManageWater Consulting, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Sustainable San Mateo County, Sustainable Silicon Valley, Tuolumne River Trust and Waterfluence.

Silicon Valley is defined as San Mateo County, Santa Clara County and Alameda County from Hayward south.