



# FIRE AND WATER

2017



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- How to upgrade to a "Water Wise Home"
- 6 easy to grow plants native to California



Supplement to Gold Country Media publications published in partnership with Placer County Water Agency

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# FIRE AND WATER 2017

**F**ire and Water is a special publication supported by the Placer County Water Agency to provide timely information to residents. Our goal is help residents learn about vital fire and water issues, explore conservation options, and above all, stay safe. Our thanks to Cal Fire and the Placer County Sheriff's office for their contributions to this publication.

## PCWA History

- 1948** — Placer County authorizes Upper American River Project to begin securing water rights for Placer County and its residents
- 1957** — Placer County Water Agency formed by the State Legislative Act. PCWA organized under Placer County Board of Supervisors
- 1961** — Placer County voters approve \$140 million in bonds, putting PCWA into business
- 1963** — Middle Fork Project construction begins, PCWA enters into 50-year Power Purchase Agreement with Pacific Gas & Electric
- 1967** — Middle Fork Project begins producing power
- 1975** — PCWA installs first independent governing board, separate from the Board of Supervisors
- 1983** — Hell Hole power house built
- 2006** — PCWA and Placer County create Middle Fork Project Finance Authority



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# Canal Safety

During the hot summer months, the water in canals may look inviting, but underneath the surface are powerful currents that can pull a person or animal under very quickly.

**Here are some important tips to keep you and your family safe:**

- Never go swimming, tubing or rafting in canals.
- Obey all posted warning signs, barriers and fences.
- If you drop something in a canal by accident, leave it.
- If walking, jogging or biking along canals, keep a safe distance from the edges which can be slippery.
- Keep a close eye on children and pets around canals.



[pge.com/safety](http://pge.com/safety)

# Smoke jumpers: first line of defense against wildfires

For most people, jumping from an airplane onto the frontlines of a growing wildfire sounds crazy. For Shelly Allen, however, this was a standard workday during her 8-year career as smokejumper for the United States Forest Service. The elite force she was part of is the first line of defense during wildfire season across the country. Now serving as Forest Fire Management Officer for the Tahoe National Forest, we sat down with Shelly to ask about her experience.



**Q** How did you become interested in smokejumping?

**A** My interest stems from my childhood. I grew up in the Frank Church River of no Return Wilderness area in Central Idaho. My dad was in charge of a remote outpost for the Forest Service. As I child, we had a dirt airstrip where the jump plane would land to pick up the jumpers after they hiked out of a fire. They shared their experiences with me, and I was just fascinated by the whole idea. I thought to myself, I want to do this too. When I went off to college at Boise State, I joined a hotshot crew with the Forest Service and started applying to jump. After about four years of fire-fighting experience, I got hired as a rookie smokejumper.

**Q** What does smokejumping entail?

**A** Smokejumpers are really the first line of defense for wildfires in remote terrain. Typically, we parachute in, as close to the fire as is safe, and remove the things that fuel fires. For example, we might stir up the soil so it can cool over time, create a firebreak, or cut up branches and other material that can lead to larger problems. In short, we try to create conditions that prevent fires from becoming larger.



**Q** What kind of equipment is required to do your job?

**A** In addition to the main parachute we carry on our back, we have reserve parachute on our chest. At that time Forest Service jumpers use a static line parachute system, so there is less of a free fall most people are accustomed to when sky diving. We wear Kevlar suits in case we land in tree or rocks, and the packs we carry include chainsaws, shovels, other hands tools, and supplies to keep us self-sufficient up to 48 hours. All-in-all, we jump with about 90-115 pounds of equipment, which we then have to hike out when the job is done.

**Q** That sounds pretty arduous. Is there special training required to prepare smokejumpers?

**A** Yes. First year smokejumpers must pass a five-week training exercise similar to boot camp. In addition to completing a specified number of push-ups, sit-ups, and pull-ups, you have to run 1.5 miles in under 11 minutes and complete a 3-mile flat ground “pack-out” with 110 pounds of weight. As well as a rough terrain pack out that varies in length with 100 lbs of weight. Of course, your parachuting skills are also evaluated.

**Q** Are there any jumps that are most memorable?

**A** Well, that is a tough question to answer. I’ve had so many memorable jumps, and traveled to some amazing places that other people will never have the pleasure of seeing because they are so remote.

I remember one jump my rookie year into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness area on the Nez Perce Forest in Idaho. It was just me one other girl and we had such a good time putting the fire out. The landscape was absolutely stunning, out in the middle of nowhere. After we hiked out we were treated one of the best meals of my life at a the Moose Creek Lodge.



COURTESY PHOTOS



**Q** Can you describe some of the hazards?

**A** I would break it down into four categories. First, there is the jump itself. Wind and other factors can affect whether you land safely or not. Second, you have the effects of fire. One of the biggest concerns is working around trees that are already weakened and compromised. Third, there are wildlife considerations. Although not the biggest hazard, Florida and Arizona have lots of snakes and other critters that bite, and Alaska a lot of bears. Being prepared if encounter wildlife is important. The fourth, and biggest, hazard are environmental factors. Working in intense heat for long periods of time in remote locations. Working on steep slopes with potential for rocks to roll out under you. And, of course, fires that get out of control and come up on you quickly.

**Q** How many smokejumpers are there?

**A** Nationwide, between the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, about 400. That includes somewhere between 20-30 women at a given time.

**Q** Lastly, any advice for aspiring smokejumpers?

**A** I certainly encourage anyone interested to go for it. It certainly isn't a normal job, and its physically demanding, but it is such an amazing experience. The people are amazing, and the level of professionalism and the dedication to what they do is awe-inspiring. We still have guys at the base, who are 56-years old who can run a 9-minute mile and a half. They love what they do and are 100 percent dedicated.

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BEFORE



AFTER

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The concentration of flammable material in the fuel break before it was cleared six years ago would burn too hot to go near and even if a firefighter could get near the blaze it wouldn't make a difference, Fire Chief Mark D'Ambrogio said.

With the trees trimmed up and the brush cut back the area looks like a park and allows firefighters to set up an offensive front against a fire.



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# A future of water efficiency

## not mandated conservation

Q&A  
with



Einar Maisch  
PCWA  
General  
Manager

**Q** How are water supplies this year?

**A** In terms of water supply, 2017 is a banner year for PCWA. According to measurements at Lake Spaulding, which supplies approximately 90 percent of our demand, this is the wettest year on record. Snowpack in the American River Basin is also robust, our reservoirs are full and spilling, and our hydropower generators are running at full capacity creating clean and renewable energy.



**Q** Speaking of energy, what are the energy production projections for this year?

**A** With the large volume of water running through the Middle Fork Project we are trying to produce as much hydroelectric power that is feasible. With the abundance of water, we are now projecting revenues roughly one-and-a-half times higher than what the Agency budgeted at the beginning of the fiscal year.

**Q** With the drought in the rear-view mirror, can we expect changes to water use in the future?

**A** Over the last two years, with reservoirs refilling in 2016, and the region experiencing the most rain on record in 2017, urban water use has slowly evolved to a new normal, which respects the right of people to enjoy their yards and be water efficient at the same time. Some are replacing their landscapes with more drought tolerant materials, while others are restoring their landscapes with improved irrigation technology.

Despite the efficiency improvements people have made, state regulators want us all to live every year as if it were a critical drought, regardless of the level of investments the community has made to ensure a reliable water supply.

PCWA is currently working with a statewide coalition to temper those passions and forge a new future of water efficiency, as opposed to mandated conservation. The good news is, I think we are making progress on that front.

**Q** That is good to hear. How about specifically for the Agency. Are there any major undertakings this year?

**A** The biggest project PCWA is undertaking this year is the creation of a new zone. Currently, PCWA operates four zones that were each formed on an as-needed basis as the Agency accepted responsibility to own and operate new water systems for the benefit of existing and future retail customers. The formation of what we are calling Zone 6, would provide for the consolidation of the administration and accounting for all water systems operated by the Agency under a single set of rules. This will allow the Agency to serve Placer County's growing population into the future, and help the Agency comply with changes in the law.



**Q** What does the potential creation of Zone 6 mean for PCWA customers?

**A** If the zone formation is approved, there will not be an immediate change. Over the next few months, the Agency intends to consolidate the rules and regulations that would apply to all customers within the new zone. This includes the consolidation of rate schedules and existing policies, based on findings from an independent rate review which we began earlier this year.

**Q** Does that mean a rate change is associated with the new zone?

**A** The formation of the new zone does not, in itself, create new rate schedules. If the rate study shows the need to adjust rates, and the Board of Directors adopt the proposed Zone 6 Rules and Regulations, PCWA will adhere to rate setting requirements contained in Proposition 218. Staff anticipates returning to the Board later this year to present more details about the rate study.



# PCWA partners on French Meadows Forest Resilience Project

In an effort to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire in the forests and watersheds that source PCWA's water supply, the Agency is partnering with the County of Placer, Tahoe National Forest, The Nature Conservancy, American River Conservancy, and the University of California, Sierra Nevada Research Institute on the French Meadows Forest Resilience Project.

The aim of the French Meadows Forest Resilience Project is to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration in a critical municipal

watershed, using an approach of ecologically-based forest management. The partner agencies are collaborating to develop project goals and direction, manage the project, contribute in-kind staff and expertise, and raise necessary funds.

The project area sits upstream of PCWA's French Meadows Reservoir, one of PCWA's two major reservoirs, and includes land managed by the United States Forest Service and land owned by American River Conservancy.

Forest conditions in the area are unhealthy and at risk of high-severity wildfire due to past management, fire suppression, and years of drought. Severe wildfires in recent years, downstream of the project area, have caused hundreds of thousands of tons of topsoil to erode into the river system, clogging infrastructure and habitat, and affecting the stability of the watershed.

Through this innovative partnership, the agencies hope to prevent these negative effects of wild-

fire and create a new model for advancing the pace and scale of forest and watershed restoration in the Sierra Nevada and across the western United States.

In addition to improving resiliency to wildfire on public and private lands around French Meadows Reservoir, the project will monitor the hydrologic effects of prescribed forest treatments, and a research component will study the relationship between forest thinning and downstream water supply.



# The Water-Wise Home

Each drop of water drawn from our local lakes, rivers and streams is precious. Here are some ways to both upgrade your lifestyle with high-efficiency products and fixtures while making water efficiency a way of life.

## TIPS!

### 1 Check and fix leaky toilets

Add food coloring to the tank. If the color seeps into the bowl within 15 minutes, your toilet is leaking. Flush quickly to avoid staining  
Saves 30 to 50 gallons per day per toilet

### 2 Take five-minute showers

Saves 3.5 gallons

### 3 Turn off the faucet when brushing teeth or shaving

Saves 5 gallons per day

### 4 Fix leaky faucets

Saves 10 to 15 gallons per day per leak

### 5 Run the clothes washer and dishwasher only when full

Saves 2 to 4.5 gallons per load of dishes  
Saves 15 to 30 gallons per load of laundry

**WaterSense Faucet**  
Saves 660 gallons per household

**Kitchen Aerator**  
Saves 1.2 gallons per person/day

**Efficient Dishwasher**  
Saves 3 to 8 gallons/load

**High-Efficiency Clothes Washer**  
Saves 15 gallons per load

**REBATES WaterSense Toilet**  
Saves 16 gallons per person/day

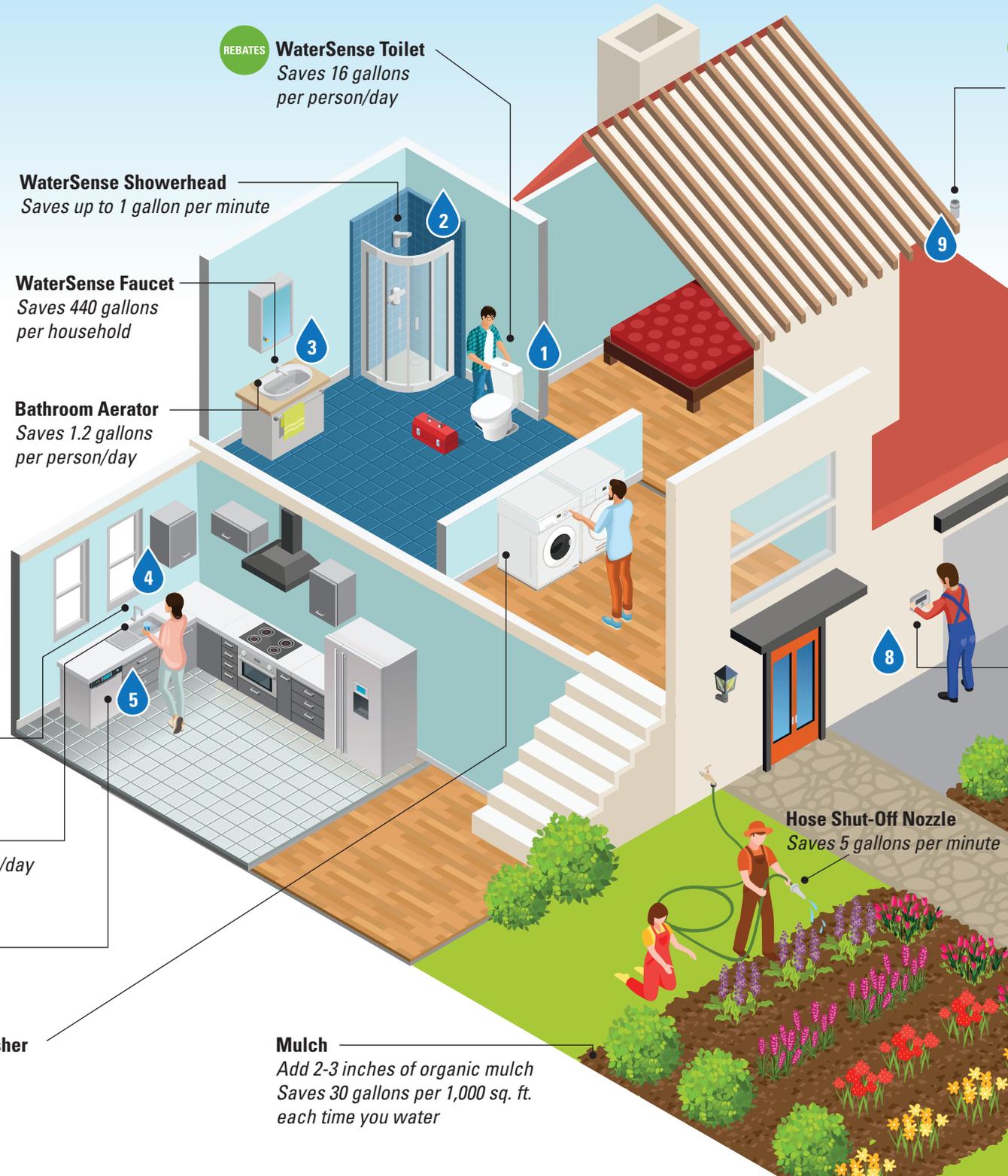
**WaterSense Showerhead**  
Saves up to 1 gallon per minute

**WaterSense Faucet**  
Saves 440 gallons per household

**Bathroom Aerator**  
Saves 1.2 gallons per person/day

**Hose Shut-Off Nozzle**  
Saves 5 gallons per minute

**Mulch**  
Add 2-3 inches of organic mulch  
Saves 30 gallons per 1,000 sq. ft. each time you water





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REBATES

### Drip Irrigation

Saves 15 gallons each time you water

REBATES

### Replace Grass with Low-Water Trees & Plants

Saves 90 gallons per 1,000 sq. ft. each time you water

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### High-Efficiency Rotator Sprinklers

Saves 4,500 gallons per 1,000 sq. ft. per year

### Sprinkler Heads Adjusted to Water Plants not Pavement

Also stops fertilizers and pesticides from washing into the storm drain, which leads directly to our creeks, streams and rivers  
Saves 12 gallons each time you water

REBATES

### Smart Sprinkler Controller

Acts like a thermostat for your sprinklers  
Saves 100–150 gallons per day

### Hot Water Recirculating System

Gets hot water to the tap fast so you save more time, water and energy

## TIPS!

### 6 Look for and quickly repair leaks in your irrigation system

A leak about as small as the tip of a ballpoint pen can waste about 6,300 gallons of water per month

### 7 Set mower blade to 3 inches

Longer grass reduces evaporation  
Saves 16 to 50 gallons per day

### 8 Water in the morning

To beat evaporation from sun and wind  
Saves 50 gallons each time you water

### 9 Check out the Smart Sprinkler Scheduler at [BeWaterSmart.info](http://BeWaterSmart.info)

To create a custom watering schedule based upon the weather

### 10 Stop runoff

Water in several shorter segments, allowing water to soak in, rather than one long one  
Saves 10 to 40 gallons each time you water

## Did you know...

Most household water use occurs outdoors? There are lots of ways to save, but using water efficiently in the landscape can make the biggest difference of all.



## Bud's Dry Cleaning

is drier than ever

**B**ud's Dry Cleaning replaced inefficient water-cooling equipment with an efficient water recycling and cooling system nearly two years ago, lowering its water use by an estimated 3.6 million gallons per year. That's the amount of water typically used each year by 24 Roseville households of four.

"When you think about dry cleaning, 'water' might not be the first thing that comes to mind," Sharon Sargent, office manager at Bud's Cleaners, told us. "But water is one of our largest costs. Of course, we use it in the laundry. But most of the water we use is to cool our dry-cleaning machine, which is about the size of a Volkswagen."

"With our old dry-cleaning machine," Sharon continued, "water was 'one and done.' We used it once to cool the equipment then we disposed of it. But our new dry-cleaning machine came with a chiller, which allows us to reuse water to cool the equipment. We figure that's saving us about \$1,000 per month in water costs alone. This is helpful since most of our other costs continue to rise and the cost of the new machine was over \$125,000."

"It's not easy running a small business, particularly these days," Sharon said. Bud's Cleaners has been operating for 57 years in Roseville. It's a local landmark. There are other dry

cleaners in town, but none have the longevity of Bud's. She is grateful her water bill has declined. So are we.

As our recent drought stretched into its fourth year, David Kitchell, Bud's owner, went to Environmental Utilities' website looking for rebates for water-efficient equipment, Sharon explained. "We were going to have to replace our dry-cleaning machine anyway, so David was wondering if he could get some financial help for choosing a model that saved water."

"I feel the city really looks out for its small businesses," Sharon said. "Our job is to make your clothes look as good as the day you bought them. The people at Environmental Utilities are helping us do our job better, and at a lower cost."

"The water specialist we worked with made it easy. He was really nice to work with. He took the time to understand how we use water, and he filed a rebate application on our behalf. We got our rebate check for \$2,010 within a month after the new equipment was installed."

Sharon urged other small businesses to reach out to Environmental Utilities to see what rebates are available. "They'll come out and give you a free onsite evaluation of your water use, which was really helpful. We all need to use water wisely. It's such a precious resource."



WISE WATERING  
goes high tech

**B**rian Rickards says he really "geeked out" after installing his new "smart" sprinkler controller. Like other WaterSense-labeled controllers on the market these days, his wifi enabled RainMachine Mini-8 uses real-time weather data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to deliver just the amount of water his landscape needs.

"You can input restrictions for watering during certain hours, days and months, and even get into how your stations may react to rain and wind," Rickards said. And he can garden from his smart phone.

The new controller was just one of several water-wise upgrades Brian installed at his Roseville home. In the front yard, Brian replaced his lawn with low-water plants and efficient drip irrigation. In the back yard, where he still maintains a small lawn for his kids

to play on, he replaced his older sprinklers with rotary nozzles. These high-efficiency sprinklers slowly deliver multiple rotating streams of water, reducing water waste by applying water at a rate the soil more easily absorbs. They also provide better coverage, which can eliminate brown spots.

"In the mornings, whenever the other sprinklers were on, they would be misting, and any type of wind would blow the mist away," Rickards said. "The rotators are definitely more efficient."

Even better, all of these high-tech upgrades were funded in part with rebates from PCWA, his water provider, which offers up to \$500 for updating in-ground irrigation systems, sprinkler timers and new high-efficiency equipment.

Learn more water-wise stories and tips, including information about rebates, at pcwa.net.

# 3 WAYS to save with PCWA's Rebate Program

**P**CWA is offering rebates to customers who install high-efficiency equipment to improve existing in-ground irrigation systems and/or automatic timers. With a maximum rebate of \$500 per residential and \$1,500 per non-residential meter, the money back may be well worth the investment, not only saving customers money, but also saving time and reducing stress.

With proper installation, programming, and maintenance, high-efficiency irrigation equipment takes the guess-work out of watering and users no longer need to worry about wasting water.

Outdoor water use accounts for approximately 30 percent of average household water use nationwide. Current estimates accounts for nearly 9 billion gallons of water each day, mainly for landscape irrigation. This number rises dramatically in hotter and drier parts of the country. Taking advantage of high-efficiency technology and hardware will help reduce outdoor water use.



## Smart Controllers

- Tailor watering schedules to actual conditions on the site, allowing landscapes to flourish by providing optimal watering.
- Act like a thermostat for sprinkler systems, telling it when to turn on and off, using local weather and landscape conditions.
- Allow watering schedules to better match plants' specific water needs.
- Replace existing standard clock-timer controllers, allowing for an easy transition to current systems.
- Automatically and accurately schedules weather-based irrigation, reducing human errors in making irrigation schedule calculations.



## High-efficiency Nozzles

- Deliver heavier streams and bigger droplets, preventing water from being carried away by wind or evaporation.
- Allow a much more significant amount of water to land on the desired area — some as much as 35 percent in certain conditions, according to most manufacturers.
- Decrease runoff by applying water at a much slower pace than traditional spray nozzles, allowing water more time to soak into the soil.
- Operate at a lower pressure, creating an especially excellent solution for those who experience low water pressure.



## Drip Irrigation

- Uses 30 to 50 percent less water than conventional watering methods, such as sprinklers.
- Targets the root systems of your plants and effectively reduces pests, weeds, and harmful fungal growth.
- Adapts to any landscape and can be customized to garden configurations, vegetable rows, containers, and balconies.
- Can be added to a system for automatic watering, saving time as setting and moving sprinklers is not required.
- Applies water evenly along the length of the system.



The Rebate Program is available to customers who receive water through a treated water metered service in the PCWA service area. The program is not retroactive, so projects underway or completed prior to a pre conversion site visit are not eligible. Please contact PCWA's Water Efficiency Division for more information about eligibility and Terms and Conditions by visiting our website at [pcwa.net](http://pcwa.net) or by calling Customer Services at (530) 823-4850.



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# 6 easy to grow plants native to California

BY LYNORA SISK  
PLACER COUNTY MASTER GARDENER

Last year the Placer-Nevada County Master Gardeners visited the UC Davis Arboretum. We were completely in awe and wanted to let folks know what a jewel we had discovered! The Arboretum highlights plants called the UC Davis "All-Stars." These are plants that have been tested in the Arboretum and are "easy to grow, don't need a lot of water, have few problems with pests or diseases, and have outstanding qualities in the garden."<sup>1</sup> They also include many California native plants.



## California Lilac 'Valley Violet'

I'm sure many of you have noticed the large purple-blue bushes that bloom heavily in the spring, but did you know that this is a California native? Ceanothus, or California lilac, has 50 to 60 different varieties, ranging from a low growing ground cover to a very tall (6 to 12 foot) shrub. The UC Davis Arboretum All Stars feature four varieties of ceanothus including Ceanothus maritimus 'Valley Violet', C. 'Concha', C. 'Ray Hartman' and C. x pallidus 'Marie Simon'.

This particular variety, 'Valley Violet', is recommended by the UC Davis Arboretum as the "best small ceanothus for Central Valley gardens." It blooms in spring, attracting many beneficial insects including bees.

'Valley Violet' is very easy to grow, needing little to no pruning. Watering needs are also very low, making this my kind of plant: low maintenance! This native can tolerate a variety of soils and can grow in part shade to full sun.

The UC Davis Arboretum Teaching Nursery has done a YouTube video on several varieties of ceanothus growing at the Arboretum, including our feature 'Valley Violet'. This video gives you a snapshot of the wide variety of ceanothus available.

Plant ceanothus to support our bee population and bring beauty to your garden.



## Santa Barbara Daisy

One of the appeals of the Santa Barbara daisy is the multiple colors it displays including a yellow center with petals that open white and then change to pinkish purple. Sunset magazine also recognized the daisy's appeal and featured it as one of their "9 Beautiful Easy-care Plants."

The Santa Barbara daisy is a perennial forming a low growing mat. It's great for containers or trailing over a wall. Sunset magazine suggests using it as a border in front of tall grasses and the Royal Horticultural Society suggests using it in rock and cottage gardens. By the way, yes, they do grow Erigeron karvinskianus, also known as Mexican fleabane, in the United Kingdom.

You can plant this daisy in full sun or part shade where it will provide nonstop blooms from spring through fall. To encourage continuous flowering, grab your clippers and do a little deadheading. For those of you not familiar with "deadheading" it's simply cutting off the flowers as they start to fade.

This Arboretum All Star requires low water and will attract butterflies and beneficial insects. Santa Barbara daisy will spread slowly through self-seeding so, if you want to expand your garden, let some of the flowers go to seed. You can also collect the seed and propagate the plant in pots. During the winter, cut it to the ground to promote new and vigorous growth.



## Lillian's Pink Coral Bells

I'm sure many of you may remember the old nursery song;

*"White Coral Bells, upon a slender stalk, lilies of the valley deck my garden walk, oh, don't you wish that you might hear them ring, that will happen only when the fairies sing."*

Gardens can be magical and we're fortunate in California to have a native pink coral bells that is sure to light up your shady border or garden.

Coral bells are a perennial and grow in clumps where often the crowns rise up and out of the soil. You can either apply mulch around the crowns or dig them out to divide and replant. They also develop a large tap root which makes their water needs low. Grow this All Star in shade to part shade and protect from hot afternoon sun. Coral bells bloom in spring and once the flowers are spent you should cut them back. I've actually had them re-bloom after cutting. During the winter, remove the dead or damaged foliage to make way for new spring growth.

This California native attracts hummingbirds and bees. The foliage is very colorful and interesting. I have cut the leaves, leaving a long stem, and use them in flower arrangements. Maybe, if you listen carefully, you'll get to "hear them ring."



### Oregon Grape

One of the California native plants featured at UC Davis Arboretum is the *Berberis aquifolium* 'Compacta'. This plant, commonly known as the compact Oregon grape, is intriguing because of its beautiful yellow flowers that bloom in the winter-spring providing nectar for hummingbirds and other beneficials. Then in the fall it produces dark, grape-like fruits that provide food for birds such as robins, finches and towhees. The fruit can also be used for making jelly or preserves. This plant is a shrub with a low spreading habit of up to 5 feet and will only get about 1 to 2 feet tall. It needs little or no pruning and likes part shade to shade. Perfect for growing under oaks, not only for the shade but for its low water needs.

Below are a few fun facts about the Oregon grape from the Native Plant Society of Oregon *Kalmiopsis*.

- It was designated the Oregon State flower in 1899.
- Meriwether Lewis of the Lewis and Clark expedition discovered the species in 1806 along the Columbia River.
- Native Americans used the roots for yellow dye in woven materials such as baskets.



### Hummingbird Sage

I'm sure most of you have heard about sage, particularly the culinary version used in your Thanksgiving turkey dressing. But sages, part of the mint family, come in many different varieties, colors, smells and tastes. In California, we are fortunate to have a native sage, *Salvia spathacea*. This is one of the hummingbird's favorite foods, resulting in the plant's common name: hummingbird sage.

Hummingbird sage is a very fragrant perennial and is an excellent drought-tolerant groundcover. It spreads by underground rhizomes and in good conditions can cover a large area. It has broad leaves and the flower stalk can grow to a foot or more. The pink flowers, which can bloom from spring to winter, have the perfect shape and obviously great taste for hummingbirds.

This sage can be grown in full sun to part shade. However, the Santa Clara County Master Gardeners report that too much summer sun burned the leaves and made the plant unattractive. They are now trying the plant in a shadier spot under oak trees. Caring for hummingbird sage is very easy with a little pruning to remove the old flower stalks at the end of the season.

Enjoy the hummingbirds that this native sage will bring to your garden.



### Canyon Snow

Looking for a plant that requires low water and little maintenance? *Iris douglasiana* 'Canyon Snow' is one of the most dependable and beautiful irises of the Pacific coast.

As you can see, 'Canyon Snow' has white orchid-like flowers and evergreen narrow leaves that form a grass-like mound. This iris prefers the shade and is perfect to grow in a perennial border, a meadow garden or under native oaks. The beautiful white flowers bloom in the spring and attract beneficial insects. You can spread this California native by digging up and dividing the rhizomes in the fall.

'Canyon Snow' was selected by horticulturist and author Dara Emery, who served as the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden horticulturist from 1955 to 1980, and then as plant breeder to 1991. In 1978, 'Canyon Snow' received the American Iris Society's Sidney B. Mitchell award. What a star this iris is.

# IT'S OFFICIAL:

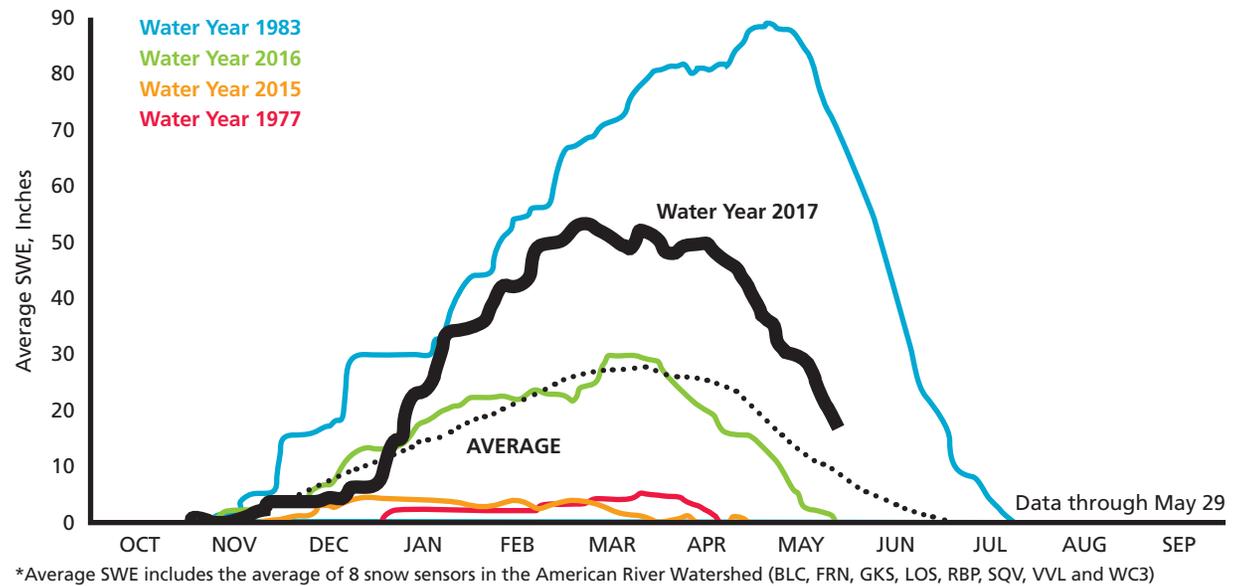
# 2017 is the wettest year on record

**W**inter and spring storms boosted Northern California precipitation totals to record levels in 2017. At Lake Spaulding, PCWA's primary water source, cumulative rainfall through the end of May measured 131.6 inches. The previous record was 125.8 inches measured in 1995. Cumulatively, precipitation values are approximately 200 percent above normal. Records date back over a century.

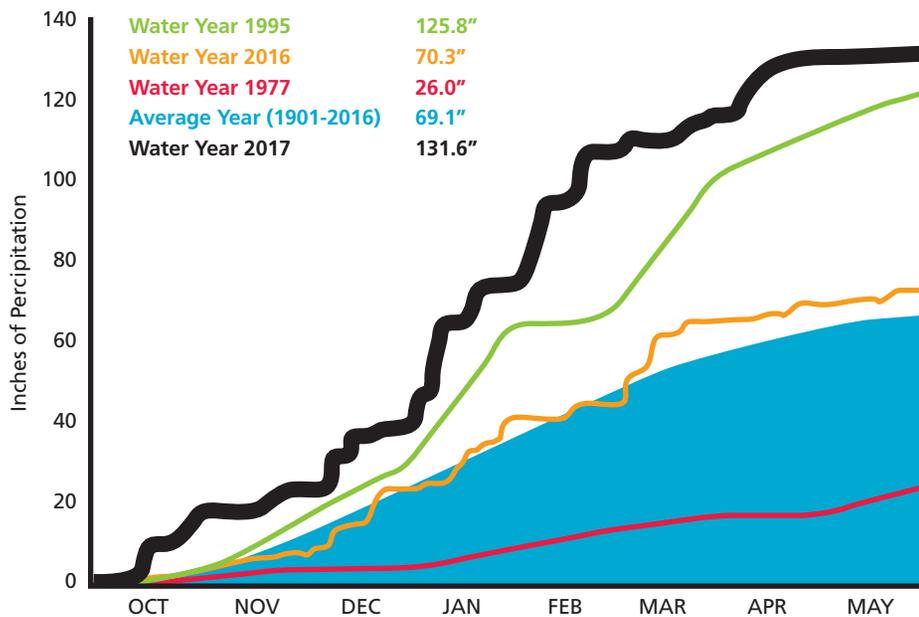
Snow sensors in the American River Basin report the snow-water equivalent equal to 185 percent of normal. PCWA's Middle Fork Project reservoirs remain full, and hydro generators are running at maximum capacity. The reservoirs are expected to remain full and spill excess runoff that the generators cannot pass from melting snowpack as temperatures continue to increase. Above-normal flows of water can be expected in the American River through mid to late summer. Recreation opportunities will be limited during the runoff and spilling period until flows recede later in the summer.

The water year runs Oct. 1 through Sept. 30. Although a few months witnessed average, or slightly below-average precipitation, the majority of months saw above-average precipitation of 130 percent or more. October topped monthly rainfall measurements at 427 percent of average.

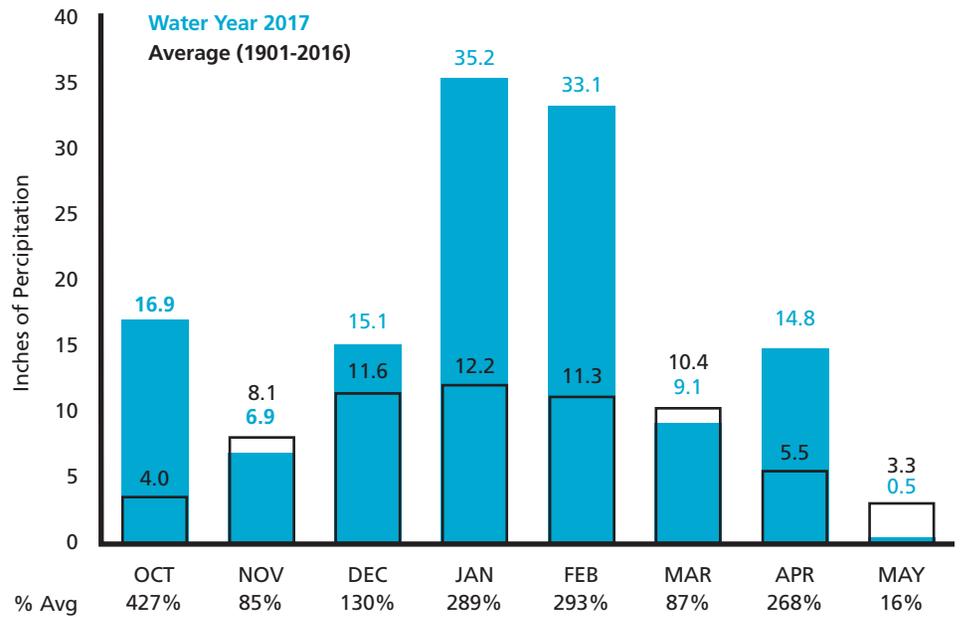
## Water Year 2017 Daily Snow Sensors: American River Basin Index



## Water Year 2017 Cumulative Precipitation: Lake Spaulding



## Water Year 2017 Monthly Precipitation: Lake Spaulding



# WILDFIRE IS COMING. ARE YOU READY?



**Defensible Space is your property's front line defense against wildfire. Creating and maintaining defensible space around your home can dramatically increase your home's chance of surviving a wildfire and improves the safety of firefighters defending your property. 100 feet of defensible space is required by law.\***



**ONE LESS SPARK**  
ONE LESS WILDFIRE

\*For more information on creating defensible space and legal requirements visit

**READYFORWILDFIRE.ORG**

## TWO ZONES MAKE UP THE REQUIRED 100 FEET OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE:

### ZONE 1: 30 feet of Lean, Clean & Green

- 1 Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds.
- 2 Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters.
- 3 Keep tree branches 10 feet away from your chimney and other trees.

### ZONE 2: 30-100 feet of Reduced Fuel

- 4 Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- 5 Create horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees.
- 6 Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs and trees.

### Use Equipment Properly to Keep from Sparking a Wildfire

- 7 Mow before 10 a.m., and never on a hot or windy day. String trimmers are a safer option (vs. lawnmowers) for clearing vegetation.



### VERTICAL SPACING

Large trees do not have to be cut and removed as long as all of the plants beneath them are removed. This eliminates a vertical "fire ladder."



### HORIZONTAL SPACING

Create horizontal and vertical spacing between plants, the amount of spacing will depend on how steep the slope is and the size of the plants.



# FIRE SEASON PREVIEW:

BY MACKENZIE MYERS

SPECIAL TO FIRE AND WATER

**T**hough California has had one of its wettest winters on record, area fire chiefs warn against complacency as fire season approaches.

Last year California saw 51 wildfires, some of which are still ongoing, according to data from incident tracking system InciWeb. Drought-stricken conditions over the last several years have meant thinner resources and earlier ramp-up times for crews. Chief George Morris of the Nevada-Yuba-Placer CalFire unit said that crews began training in March last year, and their season lasted through late December. Though he believes there's no such thing as a "normal" fire season, this year should be more aligned with the regular May-to-November schedule. Between 300 and 350 firefighters will be on staff at CalFire's Auburn headquarters by June.

Already they're preparing, making sure vehicles run properly and have necessary equipment, such as shovels, Pulaskis and 45-pound fire hoses rolled up into backpacks. Morris's unit has also been working on fuel reduction, eliminating grasses and ladder fuels — shorter plants near trees that can help a fire leap from the ground to the canopy. Morris is excited about the fuel reduction, not only because of its impact on controlling a burn, but because it's visible to the community.

He said that keeping afloat during fire season is an interdepartmental effort. Between landowners maintaining property, local law enforcement developing evacuation plans and CalTrans clearing brush along highways, everyone plays a role in helping fire season pass smoothly.

"Each of us has a piece of landscape that we drive by every day and watch it," Morris said of his staff. "My main concern is complacency. We're not out of the woods yet."

Though rain means wetter vegetation for now, it will eventually dry up in late summer, and in many cases extra moisture means extra plant material. A wet winter doesn't indicate a low-risk fire season, it just means the risks are slightly different.

Lightning or, more rarely, spontaneous combustion can start fires, but Morris said most incidents are tied to human activity. Arson is a factor, but often fires start out of carelessness: operating vehicles in dry grass, burning debris or playing with fireworks.

"We tailor media campaigns, send messages out about those activities," Morris said.

## Practice fire safety

- Keep fire extinguishers in your home. Test fire alarms and replace batteries if needed.
- Keep a three-day supply of drinking water, nonperishable food, emergency lighting and first aid in a kit, in case of a fire or evacuation.
- Establish an emergency meeting place with family members.
- Make address numbers clear and visible from the road, especially at night.
- Clean gutters and remove dead branches that hang over structures.
- Remove ladder fuels on your property. Morris said this means up to 12 feet or one-third the canopy height.
- Maintain defensible space as required by law.

"We try to get people to understand the risks they're taking as the season progresses."

Morris said that even people in urban areas need to be aware of fire danger. A far-away blaze can still impact air quality, water quality and opportunities for recreation.

"There is not a place in California where wildfire doesn't affect you," he said. "You may not directly lose your home, but you may lose quality of life."

Though each community has slightly different circumstances when it comes to wildfire, municipal crews from Auburn to Folsom have already started their wildland training. Since local departments participate in a statewide mutual aid system — meaning crews can be anywhere in California, or even out-of-state, if they're needed — they have to be ready to cut fuel breaks, lay hoses, deploy emergency fire shelters and communicate effectively in dangerous situations.

# LOCAL FIRE CHIEFS WEIGH IN



## Auburn

Division Chief Tom Carlisle said that the American River Canyon is a large concern for the Auburn area, given its recreational popularity and vegetation-packed wilderness. In addition, canyons are extremely dangerous to fight fires on; fire travels faster uphill and the steep, rough terrain can cause unsteady footing for firefighters.

Carlisle said that his crews are always training and that Auburn is at “the lion’s share” of major wildfire incidents throughout the state, though Placer County fire departments are on a rotational system.

As far as the wet winter and tree die-off in Placer County, Carlisle said he’s not sure how they will have an impact on this season.

“It’s hard to make predictions,” he said. “All we can do is be as fire-safe as possible and do everything we can to prepare.”



## Rocklin and Lincoln

Though Rocklin and Lincoln share fire resources, Battalion Chief Martin Holm said the cities’ shared service agreement has “no change whatsoever” on how the department will help fight wildfires.

Rocklin and Lincoln don’t have heavy timber areas like Auburn and El Dorado Hills. Instead, Holm said the cities’ risk lies more in roadside starts and people being careless with fire. The cities contract a herd of goats to eat grasses and keep fire danger down, but Holm recommends that residents avoid stacking wood against their homes and make sure trees don’t grow directly over the roof.

“You’ve got to picture: if the fire spreads to that, where will it go?” he said. “Huge for us is access, as well, making sure your driveway isn’t overgrown. Clear fire hydrants in front of houses. All these things add up to making things easier for us.”



## Roseville

Though it’s one of greater Sacramento’s largest cities, Roseville still has some unique wildfire risks. Assistant Chief Brian Diemer said that undeveloped grassland on the city’s northwest side is an area of concern, as well as old agricultural lands and Secret Ravine.

Fortunately, with the right weather conditions, these grasslands give crews a place to practice suppressing controlled burns. The Roseville department also participates with neighboring agencies like CalFire and the Sacramento Fire Department as part of training.

Diemer said last year his crew helped out at the Trailhead Fire in Foresthill and that Roseville units are up and down the state every summer.

In addition to managing defensible space, Diemer said residents can prepare for fire season by developing an evacuation plan with family.



## PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM THE GROUND UP

Byers is celebrating 30 years of keeping families safe and smart. This fire season, take control of your land by clearing debris and creating a defensible space around your home. Protect your house by clearing accumulated sticks and leaves from your roof and gutters.



Byers LeafGuard gutters prevent leaves, sticks and debris from accumulating causing fire hazard. No leaks, no clogs, NO DANGER.



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