

This presentation premiered at WaterSmart Innovations

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Blue Thumb Neighbors

Tackling the Most Challenging Water Wise Behaviors

Presented at Water Smart Innovations

October 3, 2012



REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY



FREE Water Wise Tips and Services: rwah2o.org or call us at: 888-WTR-TIPS (888-987-8477)

Presentation Overview

- Background/Blue Thumb regional outreach campaign
- Research
- Planning/piloting
- Implementation
- Evaluation and results
- Next steps
- Q&A





Pop Quiz

Which behavior are residents **MOST** willing to adopt?

- Adjust schedule according to season
- Reduce watering to prevent runoff
- Use low water-use plants in yard
- Replace lawn with low water-use plants
- Check irrigation system monthly for leaks
- Fix irrigation problems monthly



Answers

Residents are **MOST** willing to...

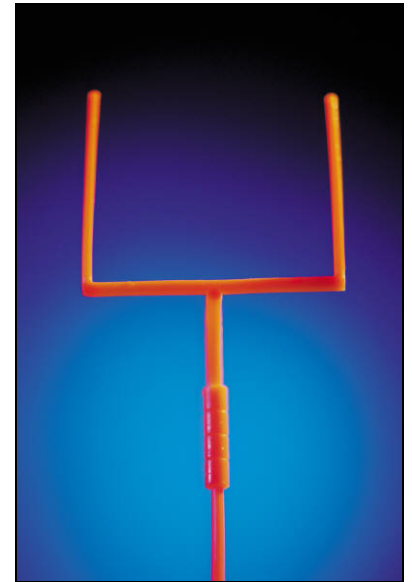
- Adjust schedule according to season
- Reduce watering to prevent runoff
- Fix irrigation problems monthly

Residents are **LEAST** willing to...

- Use low water-use plants in yard
- Replace lawn with low water-use plants
- Check irrigation system monthly for leaks

Goals

- Motivate participants to undertake key behaviors
- Foster a positive attitude about sustainable, River-Friendly landscaping
- Create lasting behavior change



Key Behaviors

Behaviors focused on 26 River-Friendly practices within four broad areas:

- Conserve Water: Stop runoff, schedule properly, plant low-water use plants, check/fix irrigation
- Water and Air Quality: Reduce/eliminate pesticides and herbicides
- Conserve Energy: Use low-water use plants and trees
- Landscape Less to the Landfill: Grasscycle, mulch, compost



Overview

Blue Thumb Neighbors includes:

- At-home consultation on efficient watering (landscape survey by water provider)
- Three fun, classroom-style workshops
- Hands-on workshop (Garden Party)
- Resource kits
- Chance to win weather-based “smart” controller
- Brief pre- and post-program surveys



REGIONAL WATER EFFICIENCY PROGRAM



Social Marketing Strategy

- Identify a cohesive neighborhood/careful selection
- Work with well-respected neighborhood influencers
- Ask participants to sign a participation pledge
- Make that pledge public
- Engaging education
- Provide participation incentives



Neighborhood Selection

- Water providers nominated neighborhoods
- Nominations considered according to:
 - 13 criteria
 - Strong community leadership
 - Demographic similarities to other successful programs
 - No HOA
- Interviewed influencers from three neighborhoods



Neighborhood Assoc. Outreach

- Web site
- Newsletter
- E-mail
- Direct mail
- Facebook page
- Events/meetings
- Other existing outreach

Next Meet: June 2, 2011, 7:00 pm @ Atonement

Rosemont Community Association

Serving you since 1959

BLUE THUMB NEIGHBORHOOD

Learn How to Create a Beautiful, Sustainable Landscape

You are invited to participate in a **FREE** program offered in partnership with the Rosemont Community Association.

The Rosemont community has been selected for a unique program called **Blue Thumb Neighbors** designed to help residents create beautiful, sustainable landscapes that benefit both the environment and each neighbor's pocketbook!

The Blue Thumb Neighbors team will be going door-to-door on **Saturdays, April 30, May 7 and May 14** in some Rosemont neighborhoods to provide more information and invite residents to participate.

Learn more:

- [Sustainable Landscaping Flyer](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about Blue Thumb Neighbors](#)
- [Rosemont Patch Article: Rosemont Selected for 'Blue Thumb' Sustainable Landscaping Program](#)
- Contact Christine Kohn, Blue Thumb Neighbors Program Coordinator, by phone: 916-944-1631 or via email.

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Additional Outreach

- Neighborhood Watch groups
- Community facebook and other social media sites
- News releases to local media
- Direct mail postcard
- Promotional lawn signs
- Door-to-door canvassing



Messaging

- Message for participants: Design and create a beautiful landscape, that is water-efficient, too
- Pre-program survey: Why are you participating?
 - Use water more efficiently
 - Have an improved lawn or garden
 - To learn landscape care practices



Want to Create a Beautiful, Sustainable Landscape?

Blue Thumb Neighbors is for You!

This **FREE** program includes:

- An at-home consultation on landscape water efficiency
- Three fun classroom-style workshops taught by landscape experts
- A hands-on workshop where volunteers improve a participant's front yard
- The chance to win a weather-based "smart" irrigation controller from Rain Bird or Hunter

Blue Thumb Neighbors will provide ideas and inspiration for creating your ideal landscape that also uses resources efficiently!

Sponsored by the Regional Water Authority and Carmichael Water District in partnership with the Carmichael Creek Neighborhood Association

BeWaterSmart.info

Engaging Education

- At-home consultation on efficient watering
- Three workshops by landscape experts:
 - “Sustainable Landscape Design”
 - “Efficient Watering”
 - “Right Plant, Right Place”
- Hands-on “Garden Party”
- Detailed resource kit



Blue Thumb Garden Party

- Workshop piloted in November 2011
- Hands-on opportunity to reinforce classroom workshops
- Incentive prize for full participation
- Chance for former BTN participants to refresh knowledge





**Improve two areas
of a participant's
front yard**





Hands-on learning



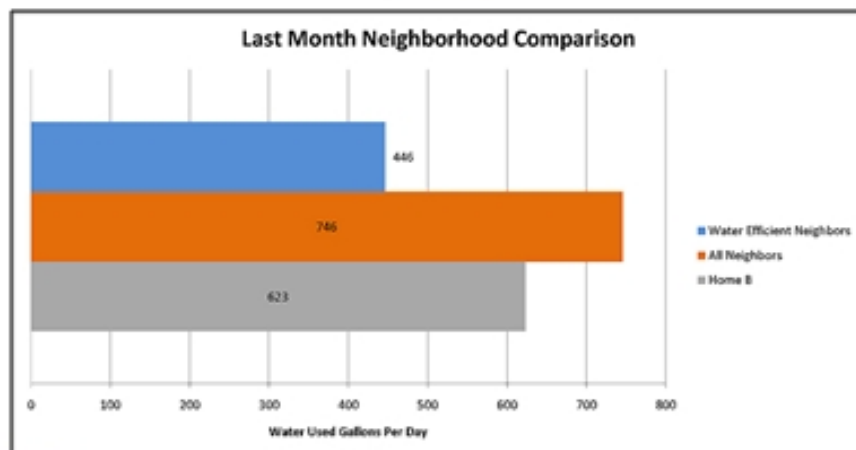
Incentives

By participating fully:

- Chance to host Garden Party/
have yard improved
- Chance to win weather-based
“smart” controller (donated)

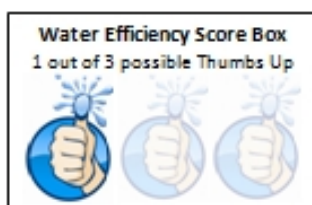


"Blue Thumb" Neighbor Program
Home Water Use Report
July 2010



Definitions:

- **Water Efficient Neighbors:** Average water use of nearby homes with similar square footage and lot size that are considered to be highly efficient
- **All Neighbors:** Average water use of nearby homes with similar square footage and lot size



Water Efficiency Tips

Is it Time for a Tune Up?

Remember to evaluate and adjust sprinkler heads and nozzles every month during the watering season to keep your irrigation system running efficiently.

- **Spray and Rotor Nozzles:** Check for clogging or blow outs; re-adjust the arc or radius if needed; and replace broken nozzles with the identical manufacturer and size.
- **Drip Systems:** Make sure the filter is clean; look for missing drippers, chewed or punctured tubing; and check for tube connections that may have blown apart.

Prepared by the Regional Water Authority (RWA) in partnership with the City of Roseville. For more information, contact Linda Higgins, RWA Water Efficiency Program Manager, at (916) 967-7625 or lhiggins@rwah2o.org.



Evaluation and Results

According to pre- and post-program surveys:

- **Roseville:** Positive change in 17 of 18 behaviors tested
- **Rosemont:** Positive change in 24 of 26 behaviors
- **Witter Ranch:** Positive change in 26 of 26 behaviors



“How Often Do You...”

Greatest change:

- Use low-water use plants in yard (all programs)
- Check irrigation system every month (all programs)
- Group plants by their water needs (all programs)
- Buy plants to support beneficial insects (2 of 3)
- Choose plants to match soil conditions (2 of 3)

Pop Quiz

Which behaviors are BTN participants LEAST willing to adopt even after the program?



Pop Quiz Answer!

Which behaviors are BTN participants LEAST willing to adopt even after the program?

- Add compost to garden beds
- Install a rain shut-off valve on their irrigation system
- Purchase a mulching mower or replace their mower blade with a mulching blade



“What Have You Done So Far...”

According to phone interviews:

- Developed a landscape design plan
- Improved irrigation
- Installed drip irrigation
- Made landscape changes
- Changed watering schedule
- Petitioned HOA board to implement water-efficient landscaping ideas





Before



After



Before



After



Before



After

4/2/11 | 268 views

★★★★★ RATE THIS

'Blue Thumb' participants save water

17 Cresthaven families involved in innovative water-wise landscaping program

By Sena Christian, The Press Tribune



Photo by Philip Wood

Larry Bergeron says residents in his Cresthaven neighborhood of Roseville have started watering their lawns at night to prevent evaporation and save water.



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Sometimes when people pass by one particular house in the Cresthaven neighborhood of Roseville, they stop and

They see a dozen or so cactus, lavender and other drought tolerant plants native to northern California. They see newly planted crape myrtle tree. But mostly, they notice how there's no grass, only shredded bark.

The homeowners of this residence, Charlie and Jan Catlin, participated in their neighborhood's "Blue Thumb" program sponsored by the Regional Water Authority, City of Roseville and California Department of Water Resources.

The Catlins are one of 17 Cresthaven families involved in innovative water-wise landscaping program. Larry Bergeron, vice president of the Cresthaven Neighborhood Association, said the couple's front yard showcases the conservative aesthetic benefits of eco-friendly landscaping.

"The grass was dead most of the time," Charlie Catlin said. "We hadn't taken good care of it. I didn't like taking care of it anyhow, to tell you the truth."

The Regional Water Authority, which represents 19 water providers in the region, launched Blue Thumb last year to promote landscape water efficiency throughout Placer and Sacramento counties.

More than 65 percent of a household's annual water consumption typically goes to landscape irrigation. Of that, 30 percent is lost due to over watering or evaporation.

In February 2010, the Regional Water Authority approached the Cresthaven Neighborhood Association to see if the group would help pilot Blue Thumb on a neighborhood scale.

Bergeron, who has lived in Roseville since 1986, said Cresthaven was chosen because the community is well-

Issue 30

dream:
plant
to serve
of Congress



Page 2

Workers
Open House



Page 4

Returns
to Region



Page 4

Carmichael Times

Issue 30

Serving Carmichael and Sacramento County since 1981

July 25

Carmichael Creek Community Selected for 'Blue Thumb Neighbors' Program

CARMICHAEL — Carmichael Water District is pleased to announce that its Carmichael Creek service area has been selected to participate in "Blue Thumb Neighbors," a free program designed to teach participants how to create beautiful, river-friendly landscapes.

River-Friendly landscaping is a holistic approach to sustainable landscaping that uses resources, like water, efficiently and incorporates practices that foster soil health, reduce waste and prevent pollution of the air and waterways.

Each participating household will receive a free at-home consultation on efficient watering, sponsored by the Carmichael Water District, and then education and resource kits during three workshops. Workshops will be held at the Deterding Elementary School, Multipurpose Room at 6000 Stanley Ave. from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Workshop dates are: Tuesday, September 11: Sustainable Landscape Design—taught by Landscape Designer Cheryl Buckwalter of Landscape Liaison; Tuesday, September 18: Efficient Watering—taught by licensed Landscape Contractor and Irrigation Specialist Don



Cheryl Buckwalter of Landscape Liaison, at a recent Blue Thumb Garden Party, when participants improved two areas of a Blue Thumb Neighbors participant's front yard during a hands-on workshop. Photo courtesy of Blue Thumb Neighbors.

program," said Carmichael Water District General Manager Steve. After interviews with leaders at top-ranked neighborhoods the Regional Water Authority

Arrest Made and Run Collided in Carmichael

CHP Special Report

CARMICHAEL — On July 20, 2012, at approximately 1:22 p.m., Harrison Long-John, 21 year old from Oran and Gemily West, a 22 year old from Carmichael, were involved in a collision on a single road at Chertle. An unknown driver, a metallic light brown 1987 Nissan Maxima, eling southbound on Avenue just north of Road. An Randall, West four dogs were crossing in the crosswalk, the vehicle struck a stop on the northwest corner intersection. The suspect continued in a southerly direction striking Mr. West and the four dogs. The scene of the collision was witnessed by a man collision.

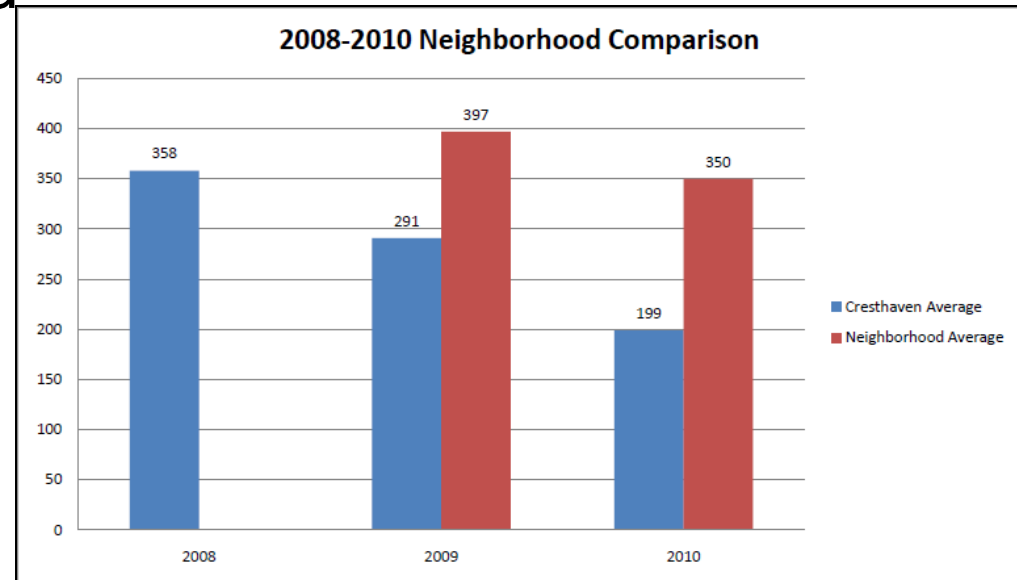
In a collaborative effort with the Sacramento County Department, CHP investigators utilized several resources where information was developed that a Mr. Walden was having matching the description provided by witnesses of the man collision.

On July 19, 2012, at approximately 1:22 a.m., a

Positive media

Water Use Analysis

- Participant water use compared to “test” neighborhood
- Most participants already consistently use less water than test neighborhood
- Irrigation season:
Water use down six out of seven months compared to the previous year



Next Steps

- Continuing to track and evaluate
- Keep the momentum going to turn plans into action
 - Progress reports to participants
 - Follow up/offer assistance/resources, as needed



Questions?



Thank You!

Linda Yager, Former Manager
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REGIONAL WATER EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

