

Key Strategy No.X: Workforce Transformation

Background

About half of our urban potable water demand in California is for outdoor water use. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there are 13.9 million households existing in California with more than 55% owned and 31% in multi-unit structures. The vast majority of these homes have landscaped area irrigated by potable water supplies. The California Department of Finance, Household Projections Report, P-4, estimates another 2 million homes planned to be constructed in the next 15 years¹. Each of these homes with landscaped area will need to conform to the California Model Landscape Ordinance (MWELo) or local equivalent codes. Overall, the need for professional services to properly design, construct and maintain our landscapes continues to expand due to new installations and conversion of our existing ornamental turf oriented landscapes to ones more sustainable and watershed approach based. This need is more pronounced in the wake of our ongoing epic drought conditions and lack of solutions to create more storage capacity.

Every property owner, professional and worker that designs, constructs, maintains or regulates landscapes that use supplemental irrigation has a duty to ensure that applied water is used efficiently and in a manner that protects public health and safety as well as promoting the watershed approach. The ITP understands that there has been significant effort into training the workforce and residents alike and that there is more work to be done.

Opportunities and Challenges

The following primary areas of workforce opportunities and challenges need to be overcome as we convert our prominently turf-based communities into more water efficient and water conserving landscapes:

- Provide up to date information and training for landscape professionals, including requiring CEUs with oversight by Department of Consumer Affairs or another authorized agency (i.e., third party non-governmental organizations like California Urban Water Conservation Council similar to how American Water Works Association, California Nevada Section provides training CEUs for the Department of Public Health for drinking water systems).
- Maintain and/or create new standards of accreditation by the Department of Consumer Affairs including “apprentice approach” for gaining access to accreditation for:
 - Landscape architects;
 - Irrigation consultants; and
 - Landscape designers.
- Provide a mechanism for DWR to review curriculum for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) including training on MWELo
- Support state funded, locally hosted landscape training and education to residential and commercial property owners, and landscape maintenance companies and staff and public agency personnel.

¹ <http://www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic/reports/projections/view.php>

- Develop a technical educational curriculum through the community college system focusing on landscape sustainability, the watershed approach and meeting the goals of MWEL0

Key Actions to Support this Strategy

Key actions to support this strategy include:

- State-wide Landscape Certification Program (Recommendation 8-1)
- Update C-27 Exam Requirements (Recommendation 8-2)
- Require CEUs for accredited professionals
- Statewide clearinghouse and promotions of WaterSense certified programs
 - QWEL (Qualified Water efficient Landscaper)
 - WMCP (Water Management Certification Program)
 - G3 Program
 - Green Gardener
 - Etc.
- Find appropriate state agency to resolve the issues of landscape professionals and designers such that skills are leveraged to the greater good with regards to meeting MWEL0 requirements

Section 8 provides additional background and details on specific recommendations.