



Russian River Watershed Association

300 Seminary Ave, Ukiah, CA 95482 • (707)833-2553 • www.rrwatershed.org

RRWA Environmental Column – May 2016 Water Awareness Month

May is Water Awareness Month. This statewide celebration and [education campaign](#) originates from the joint efforts of the California Department of Water Resources and the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA).

Water Awareness City-wide

California’s last 4 years of below average rainfall have heightened the public’s understanding about the value of water. Locally, a majority of our drinking water supply comes from the Russian River. Our water supply also includes water we save with water efficiency measures. During the recent drought, our region has been incredibly responsive to Governor Brown’s April 2015 call to reduce water usage by 25% statewide.

The [California State Water Resources Control Board](#) has maintained statewide water conservation reporting. Below is a summary of some local water savings goals and actual water reduction.

City Name	State Mandated Emergency Water Reduction Goal	Cumulative Percent Saved (June 2015 – February 2016 as compared to 2013)	Goal Met?
Healdsburg	24%	25.6%	Yes
Rohnert Park	16%	17.4%	Yes
Santa Rosa	16%	25.4%	Yes
Ukiah	20%	25.9%*	Yes
Windsor	16%	22.8%	Yes

*Cumulative savings for Ukiah is based on June 2015 – January 2016

Note: On February 2, 2016 the State Water Board adopted an extended and revised emergency regulation to ensure that urban water conservation continues in 2016. The regulation extends restrictions on urban water use through October 2016.

By working toward a common goal, our region is withstanding the multi-year drought without compromising public health, economic vitality, or our environment. Though one year does not alleviate our area’s drought concerns, recent El Nino storms have helped refill our reservoirs this winter. As of April 2016, the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) estimates the drought intensity of Mendocino and Sonoma Counties at “abnormally dry,” with parts still in “moderate drought.”

Water Awareness for the Individual

During May, water agencies throughout California find creative ways to connect with their communities to promote water-use efficiency and provide practical tools. In Sonoma County, water awareness information will be provided at the [Day Under the Oaks](#) festival at Santa Rosa Junior College on May 1st along with the [Cinco de Mayo festival](#) on May 5th. You can also keep track of the annual [Water Awareness Poster Contest](#) in which thousands of third and fourth grade students compete for a chance to be in the 2017 Water Awareness Calendar. Mendocino County encourages residents to use water wisely with the help of the [100+ Ways to Conserve](#).



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Saving water day to day is easy in practice but can be difficult to quantify. The average American uses (both directly and indirectly) about 2,000 gallons of water per day. This is **twice** the global average. To estimate how much water you're using individually and find the best areas where you can cut back, take the [Water Footprint Assessment](#).

While the residents of Sonoma and Mendocino Counties have proven they are water aware, the trends need to continue. It's important to remember that there is *never* enough water to waste.

This article was authored by the City of Santa Rosa's Water Use Efficiency Team on behalf of RRWA. RRWA (www.rrwatershed.org) is an association of local public agencies in the Russian River Watershed that have come together to coordinate regional programs for clean water, fisheries restoration, and watershed enhancement.