



Water Efficient Landscape Plan Submittal Compliance Statement

Applicant name: _____ APN: _____

Site Address: _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Type of landscape: ☐ Nonresidential ☐ Residential Total landscape area: _____ (sq.ft.)

Which projects must submit a water efficient landscape plan? Pursuant to State and County law, a water efficient landscape plan is required for any new or refurbished landscape associated with a commercial, industrial, public or agricultural service establishment project requiring a building or grading permit. The requirements of the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELO) apply to additions and reconstruction but not to remodels or accessory dwelling units. **Landscapes within the Soquel Creek Water District or the City of Santa Cruz Water Department Service Area are regulated by those agencies for water efficiency.** Please contact the applicable jurisdiction for their requirements.

A [Water Efficient Landscape Checklist](#) may be submitted in lieu of a landscape plan for landscapes associated with 1-2 unit residential development, or any landscape where at least 30 percent of the estimated total water use is provided by graywater, captured rainwater or recycled water.

The following landscapes are exempt from the County of Santa Cruz' Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (WELO), but still subject to water conservation requirements imposed by the Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Department, the Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency or other agencies:

- Landscape areas irrigated for an establishment period of 2-5 years, after which time the irrigation system is removed.
- Areas dedicated to edible plants within family or community gardens.
- Agricultural crops, feedlots or pastures.
- Ecological restoration projects.
- Stormwater treatment or erosion control.
- Landscapes irrigated entirely by graywater, captured rainwater or recycled water.
- Registered historical sites with a period landscape.
- Plants cultivated for scientific research or public exhibit in botanical institutions.

To qualify your landscape for an exemption, please fill out, sign and submit a [Water Efficient Landscape Checklist](#) form with your permit application.

Water use limitations

Landscape water use is limited to 50% of reference evapotranspiration, or ET_o. For example, if the evapotranspiration for your site is 30 inches per year, annual water application is limited to 15 inches per year. The ET_o for every parcel is listed under the Biotic and Water Resources tab in the County's online GIS system. For help in calculating your water allowance in gallons, use the [calculator](#) linked from the County's WELO web page.

Your irrigation schedule must reflect your water allowance. For more information or assistance, please see the Water Efficient Landscapes page, inquire at the Zoning Counter, or call WELO Information, 831-454-2130.

Additional Information

The Water Efficient Landscaping [page](#) provides information and resources about low water use plants, landscape design and irrigation. The page also includes links to forms that you might need, and to calculators that enable you to estimate your allowed water use and proposed or existing water use. You can also find links to WELO pages, certificates, forms and the WELO ordinance at the "Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance" [page](#). To navigate to this page from the Community Development and Infrastructure home page, hover over Unified Permit Center, Building Permits and Safety - then click on Water Efficient Landscaping Info. You may also email Planning.ZoningInfo@santacruzcounty.us or call 831-454-2130.

Landscape Plan Application Requirements

In addition to the regulations summarized here, landscape installations shall comply with Santa Cruz County Code. Please refer to SCCC [Chapter 13.13](#).

(A) Plan Preparer. The plan must be prepared by a licensed landscape architect, certified irrigation designer, certified landscape irrigation auditor, licensed civil engineer, licensed landscape contractor or other entity authorized by the State to prepare water efficient landscape plans.

(B) Project Information.

- Project applicant: name, address, email, contact phone, parcel number(s), scale and north arrow.
- Site plan: APN, property lines, structures, driveways, streets, sidewalks, retaining walls, other hardscape features, waterways.
- Separate sheets for the planting plan and irrigation plan, drawn at the same scale. Delineate any slope areas greater than 25%.
- Total landscape area, in square feet.
- State areas of turf and high water use plants and water features, separately and in total, limited to a combined 25% of landscape area. Note: swimming pools are not counted as water features, but as Special Landscape Areas, allowed 100% of reference ET_o.
- Maximum Applied Water Allowance in inches and cubic feet per year (use website [calculator](#)).
- Estimated Total Water Use for first year and for the installation once well-established and mature. Base ETWU on website [calculator](#) and/or irrigation schedule.
- Soil types found in landscape areas.

(C) Planting Plan. Planting plans shall identify and locate the following:

- Existing and proposed: trees, shrubs, groundcover, and turf areas within the landscape area, including existing native habitat areas.
- Planting legend indicating plant species, spacing, and quantities.
- Water use classification / plant factor (high, moderate, low, or very low) for each plant material specified; refer to Water Use Classifications of Landscape Species ([WUCOLS](#) – see <https://cimis.water.ca.gov/Content/PDF/wucols00.pdf>).
- Each hydrozone (high, medium, low water use) delineated, labeled and sq.ft. stated; total area of each hydrozone category stated. Demonstrate that hydrozones are irrigated with separate valves.
- Planting specifications and details.
- Soil treatment, including application volume and depth of compost amendment, and location, depth and type of surface mulch. Additional soil amendments shall be added as appropriate to address adverse factors such as high clay or salt content, low nutrient content or unfavorable pH.
- A soils analysis shall be submitted, and its recommendations implemented, where adverse soil factors would otherwise require water application exceeding plant factors to provide healthy growth.

(D) Irrigation Plan. Irrigation plans shall identify and locate the following:

(Note – hand watering is acceptable for 1-2 unit residential development; a fixed irrigation system is not required unless the Planning Director finds it necessitated by project-specific circumstances, such as projects in scenic areas.

- Irrigation legend stating manufacturer, model #, description and legend symbol for all equipment.
- Irrigation point of connection to water system; state water pressure; show location of pressure regulator if working pressure at the water meter exceeds 80 psi.
- Location and size of water service meter(s) and any irrigation submeters.

- All the following mandatory components: backflow prevention device; accessible manual shut off valve; flow sensor with automatic shutoff response to system damage or malfunction; check valves to prevent low-head drainage.
- Location and type of all irrigation system components, including mains and laterals, valves, nozzles, sprinkler heads, riser protection equipment, spray patterns, spray radius, precipitation rates and low volume irrigation equipment.
- State controller type and specifications. Required: self-adjusting controller, based on weather station data or soil-moisture, equipped with rain-sensor and timer to prevent irrigation for 48 hours following measurable rainfall; does not lose programming data during power outages.
- Any additional written specifications applicable to the landscape improvements.
- Irrigation schedule (printed) for each month of first year, including number of irrigation days per week, number of start times (cycles) per day and minutes of run time per cycle for each irrigation event; and a final irrigation schedule for long-term maintenance of landscape after established.

(E) The following statements appear on the plan and on printed irrigation schedule: “Irrigation system shall be inspected regularly for leaks, misaligned heads and bad valves. “Broken equipment shall be repaired promptly with identical or equivalent equipment. “The installed landscape shall be maintained free of invasive plants.

“Watering schedules shall be adjusted to reflect variations in water need based on season or plant maturity.”

(F) Stormwater best management practices to control runoff and increase onsite filtration are strongly encouraged. The following elements are recommended:

- Minimize impervious surfaces and direct runoff into planting beds or landscaped areas.
- Incorporate rain gardens, cisterns, and other rain harvesting or catchment systems, vegetated stormwater treatment features.
- Incorporate infiltration beds, swales, basins and drywells to capture storm water and dry weather runoff and increase percolation into the soil.
- Consider constructed wetlands and ponds to retain water, equalize flow and filter pollutants.

☐ I understand that my installed landscape requires inspection by an independent, third-party inspector, and that my building or grading permit will not receive final inspection and clearance until landscape installation is verified to comply with Santa Cruz County Code Chapter 13.13. Information on finding qualified inspectors is available from the County WELO homepage or the Planning Department.

☐ The Landscape Plan submitted with this Water Efficient Landscape Application was prepared by, and bears the signature of, a certified irrigation designer or landscape irrigation auditor, or licensed landscape architect, landscape contractor or civil engineer, and complies with the Landscape Plan application requirements listed above.

Applicant signature

Date_____

Print name