

We use more water than we should, especially in drought years, when we receive much less rain than usual. How do we solve this problem of not having enough water?

Some Solutions . . .

Wastewater Recycling and Greywater: Water that has already been used by people can be cleaned again for plants, parks, or other uses. Some people drain their washing machine, bath, or bathroom sink water to an underground pipe to water trees and other plants. This is called greywater. Parks in Scotts Valley and landscaping at the Boulder Creek Country Club use wastewater that has been cleaned. In Pajaro Valley, recycled waste water is used to irrigate over 5,000 acres of coastal farm land. There are laws to make sure recycled water is safe to use on plants.

Groundwater Recharge: Extra surface water from rain in Pajaro Valley is piped to ponds where the water percolates into an aquifer. Then water is pumped from the aquifer to nearby fields in the dry summer months. Find the Harkins Slough Recharge Facility on the right side of the map. New buildings drain their driveways and parking lots into swales so the water can percolate into the ground instead of rushing into storm drains. A swale is a wide ditch that slows water down, spreads it out, and lets it sink into the ground.



Conservation: People in Santa Cruz County use about 75 gallons per person per day, compared to 100 gallons for the average American. Businesses and farmers also work hard to conserve water. There is still more we can do. Water agencies encourage people to use water conserving appliances and to choose plants that use little water for their gardens. They work with farmers and large businesses to use new water conserving technologies and practices. People collect rainwater off their roofs in the winter to water plants during the dry summer.

Solutions Being Studied . . .



Desalination Plant: Desalination means “taking the salt out.” Desalination turns ocean water into fresh water by pushing water through high pressure filters.

Sharing Water: Some water agencies are looking into sharing water.



Surface Water: College Lake, located near the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds, is being studied as a source of irrigation water for farms near the coast. Some of the water from the lake could be used on farms, leaving enough water in the stream for fish and wildlife. This project could also benefit wildlife and fish and help during times of floods.