

Giving Credit Where It's Due to Intelligent Users

All regions of the United States — North, South, East and West — have different geographic and demographic characteristics that contribute unique challenges to our country's water situation.

Regardless of where we live, it's imperative for all of us to stay the course and continue to practice the Intelligent Use of Water in our daily lives.

Certain states, cities and associations in these regions recognize the growing importance of water conservation, and they are setting examples for others to follow. Through its annual Intelligent Use of Water State of the Union Awards, Rain Bird Corp. recognizes organizations like these for their significant contributions to environmental improvement.

The latest recipients of these awards were announced at the WaterSmart Innovations Conference in October, and they're truly breaking new ground in the quest to use water wisely:

Indian Wells, Calif.

The City of Indian Wells, Calif., is making a major impact on water use by combining smart irrigation controllers and effective water management with the full recycling and reuse of its green waste. By using smart controllers to manage irrigation, the city's landscaped areas saved 6.5 million gallons of water in only six months. The

city also uses locally processed, recycled organic materials in these same areas instead of fertilizers that could negatively affect freshwater supplies.

Inland Empire Utilities Agency, Chino, Calif.

In the hot, dry Inland Empire region of California, 60 percent to 70 percent of all residential water is used for outdoor irrigation. To address this issue, the Inland Empire Utilities Agency brought together its member agencies and other regional stakeholders to form the Inland Empire Landscape Alliance (IELA). The IELA has spawned a pilot program that encourages residents to remove water-intensive lawns. It also offers free residential water-efficient landscaping workshops and recognizes innovative landscapes.

Missouri Botanical Garden, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District

The Missouri Botanical Garden has sponsored a citizen-driven initiative, the Deer Creek Watershed Friends. The goal of this initiative is to improve the Deer Creek Watershed, a 40-square-mile area that drains many of the small cities adjacent to the St. Louis metropolitan area. The organization's Deer Creek Clean-Up drew 571 volunteers who removed 4.87 tons (9,740 pounds) of debris. In addition,

the initiative has stimulated tremendous citizen interest and political support for addressing other watershed health issues.

San Antonio Water System/Conservation Department

The Conservation Department of the San Antonio Water System has created and continues to support a variety of initiatives to reduce outdoor water waste. In addition to developing a system for the reporting, enforcement and citation of "Water Wasters," the department offers a number of rebate programs that support the adoption of water-efficient landscaping by both residential and commercial customers. So far, the conservation department has helped city residents save about 1.3 billion gallons of water.

A Positive Impact

All four of these organizations have demonstrated that, with hard work and resourcefulness, it's possible to leave a tremendously positive impact on the world around us. Rain Bird commends these trailblazers and encourages others to follow their lead by making water awareness a priority in their own neighborhoods, cities and states. ■

