

## Demonstration Garden Brings Inspiration to Loomis

The UC Master Gardeners of Placer County, with support from Placer County Water Agency, has broken ground on an 11,000-square-foot demonstration garden at the Loomis Library & Community Learning Center.

The garden will function as a living, breathing classroom that showcases the best practices of water-wise landscaping while also serving as a hub for community workshops. It will also offer a sanctuary for beneficial insects and birds and serve as a beautiful oasis for the community. Over 165 businesses and individuals came together to make this dream a reality.



“It is a garden where we hope to demonstrate to the public the best and greatest in horticultural practices,” said UC Master Gardener Karen Covey. “Every element of this garden has been thoughtfully selected and designed just to serve that purpose of education to the public.”

The garden features 12 unique garden areas, composed of over 85 varieties of plants. There are fruit trees throughout the garden that highlight how residents can easily add them to their yards, utilizing different planting methods.

“The garden’s design embodies PCWA’s vision and message on water efficiency,” said PCWA Deputy Director of Customer Services Linda Higgins. “It demonstrates practical steps we can take as a community to use our water resources wisely. From adding beautiful low-water landscaping to adopting efficient drip irrigation, this garden is a blueprint for sustainable water use.”

There is an area dedicated to lawn alternatives, including a no-mow, water-wise lawn that can be mowed or left to grow for a meadow-type look. There is also a zone focused on planting ideas for homeowners associations that will showcase how to incorporate native plants.

Some of the other garden areas include:






-  California native woodland
-  Pollinator islands
-  Vegetables and raised beds
-  Rain garden
-  Mediterranean garden



Photo by Carol Koenig

There is helpful signage next to each of the different areas describing them in detail, including the plants and irrigation methods used.

The library also received a \$17,000 rebate from PCWA for the lawn removal and installation of irrigation equipment, including drip irrigation and weather-based sprinkler timers to efficiently water the garden.

The garden will be open to the public during the same hours as the Loomis Library, but will close at dusk. Please visit the UC Master Gardeners of Placer County’s website for more details about the garden, including location, hours of operation, calendar of events, and workshops at: [pcmg.ucanr.edu/Demonstration\\_Garden](http://pcmg.ucanr.edu/Demonstration_Garden).



## Year End Report

Every year, PCWA reflects on the previous year and highlights some of our biggest accomplishments. Scan the QR code to take a look at our 2023 annual report and learn more about how PCWA continues to serve the community and safeguard our water resources for our future.



## Consumer Confidence Report

PCWA is proud to supply safe, reliable water that meets or exceeds State and Federal public health standards for drinking water. Annually, PCWA publishes a water quality report titled “Consumer Confidence Report” as required by the State to inform customers about the quality of their drinking water. Scan the QR code to look up the report for your specific area.





# General Manager's Report

By Andrew Fecko

By now you may have heard that PCWA is facing an unexpected shortage from our water supply at Lake Spaulding. Perhaps water *supply* shortage isn't the correct phrase. What we face now is a water *delivery* problem caused by a failure in Pacific Gas & Electric's (PG&E) Drum-Spaulding hydroelectric system.

This presents a good opportunity to remind our customers of the history of the Drum-Spaulding system as the primary water supply for parts of Placer County. This water is delivered from a historic canal system that begins at a reservoir in the Yuba watershed and meanders through Placer County.

From the time PG&E purchased the gold rush-era reservoirs on the South Yuba River in the early 1900s, until 1967, PG&E was the primary water retailer in Placer County. During that time, the Placer County region was one of the leading producers of tree fruits in the nation. The same canals that were originally used to transport water to the productive lands of the county also became part of PG&E's Drum-Spaulding hydroelectric facilities.

In 1967, PG&E decided to exit the retail water business, and PCWA purchased its western water system with overwhelming support from voters. We did this to bring more affordable water to our customers and to ensure the water system received the best possible operation and maintenance.

Then, in 1983, PG&E sold the upper portion of their retail system, from Alta to Auburn, to PCWA. By this time, PG&E had exited the retail water business, and PCWA took over the duty to continue delivering water to the people of Placer County.

Importantly, through both of these water system sales, PG&E has been bound by long-term contracts to ensure the continued delivery of water from the Drum-Spaulding system to PCWA, in order to supply the same customers and lands historically served by PG&E.

This brings us to the issue causing this year's water delivery problem; here's a recap in case you missed it. Corrosion and cavitation have caused leakage in a large pipe inside PG&E's Spaulding #1 Powerhouse. This pipe needs to be repaired, but that can only be done by forcing an "outage" to stop the flow of water through this powerhouse. The problem is that about 85% of the water we provide comes from this source.

The leaking pipe is part of PG&E's hydroelectric system that moves water from Lake Spaulding, through a series of tunnels and conduits, into Rollins Reservoir. From here, it is delivered to PCWA's delivery points along the Bear River Canal and to the Nevada Irrigation District (NID).

At the moment, with no ability to move water from Lake Spaulding to Rollins Reservoir, while PG&E repairs their powerhouse, PCWA and NID must rely on the water currently sitting in Rollins Reservoir to serve both Agencies' needs. But, Rollins Reservoir is relatively small.

Thankfully, PCWA's proactive planning for scenarios like this will play a huge role in getting us by. PCWA has backup supplies from the American River and groundwater, and interties with neighboring water providers.

So, while we have plans to make up for much of the lost water supply, we need your help to ensure that the water currently available in Rollins Reservoir lasts through the duration of this outage.

PG&E is moving forward with a plan to partially restore water deliveries in mid-June, but full repair of the failed infrastructure isn't expected until the end of the summer, delaying the full restoration of water supply into late fall, which means that PG&E's water delivery problem will likely persist through the hot summer months.

**So, what can customers do to help?** To help us all get through this period, we're asking for voluntary reductions or temporary suspension in canal water deliveries now, while it's still cool. We also ask customers to be mindful of their water use and conservation in general, to preserve what we have, keeping demand under control now, to avoid facing a serious shortage later in the summer.



Lake Spaulding

**\$2,000** for a smart sprinkler timer at your business

**\$3,000** to replace lawn at your home

**\$100** to replace your old toilet

**Get The Drop on Savings**

[pcwa.net/rebates](http://pcwa.net/rebates)



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## Board of Directors

PCWA is an independent public agency governed by an elected Board of Directors. Directors represent each of five districts in Placer County and are elected by voters to four-year terms.

## Your PCWA Board of Directors:

- DISTRICT 1: Gray Allen (2024 Vice Chair)
- DISTRICT 2: Primo Santini
- DISTRICT 3: Mike Lee
- DISTRICT 4: Robert Dugan (2024 Chair)
- DISTRICT 5: Joshua Alpine

## Public Meetings

The Placer County Water Agency Board of Directors meets regularly the first and third Thursdays of each month at 2:00 p.m. at the Placer County Water Agency Business Center at 144 Ferguson Road in Auburn.