

MINUTES OF THE  
WATER SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE OF  
VISTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT

May 22, 2019

A meeting of the Water Sustainability Committee of Vista Irrigation District was held on Wednesday, May 22, 2019, at the offices of the District, 1391 Engineer Street, Vista, California.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Vásquez called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Committee members present: Vásquez and Sanchez

Committee members absent: None.

Staff present: Brett Hodgkiss, General Manager, Marlene Kelleher, Director of Administration, and Brent Reyes, Water Conservation Specialist.

Other attendees: None.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved as presented.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT TIME**

No public comments were presented on items not appearing on the agenda.

**5. 2019 WATERSMART LANDSCAPE CONTEST**

See application packages attached hereto.

Mr. Reyes provided the Committee with an overview of the landscape contest. He explained that the contest is jointly coordinated and promoted, but individually judged, by the participating agencies. Mr. Reyes also mentioned that a new website had been developed for the landscape contest which allowed entries to be submitted online for the first time.

After discussion and careful consideration of all the applications, the Committee selected Deborah Brandt as the winner of the 2019 WaterSmart Landscape Contest. As the winner of the landscape contest, Ms. Brandt will receive a plaque and a \$250 gift certificate at the June 5, 2019 Board meeting.

The Committee also discussed ways to promote the landscape contest to attract more participants, such as leaving door hangers with information about the contest at homes with attractive water-wise landscape and using the Nextdoor social media platform to raise awareness about the contest. Staff indicated that it would look at ways to enhance promotional efforts by using these two methods to raise customer awareness about the landscape contest.

**6. COMMENTS BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

No committee member comments were presented.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, at 9:33 a.m. Chair Vásquez adjourned the meeting.

  
Richard L. Vásquez, Chair

ATTEST:

  
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Lisa R. Soto, Secretary  
Board of Directors  
VISTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT



**WATER SUSTAINABILITY  
COMMITTEE  
STAFF REPORT**

**Agenda Item: 5**

**Meeting Date: May 22, 2019**  
**Prepared By: Brent Reyes**  
**Reviewed By: Breona Paz**  
**Approved By: Brett Hodgkiss**

**SUBJECT:** 2019 WATERSMART LANDSCAPE CONTEST

**RECOMMENDATION:** Review submittals and select a winner of Vista Irrigation District's 2019 WaterSmart Landscape Contest.

**PRIOR BOARD ACTION:** At its June 6, 2018 meeting, the Board awarded a gift certificate and plaque to the winner of Vista Irrigation District's 2018 WaterSmart Landscape Contest.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** \$300.

**SUMMARY:** The District participated in 2019 WaterSmart Landscape Contest jointly coordinated and promoted, but individually judged, by the participating agencies. The District participated along with twelve other local agencies (Helix Water District, Olivenhain Municipal Water District, Otay Water District, Padre Dam Municipal Water District, San Dieguito Water District, Sweetwater Authority, Vallecitos Water District, California American Water, Rincon Del Diablo Water District and the cities of Escondido, Oceanside and San Diego) in this year's contest. The landscape contest winner receives a \$250 gift certificate from the participating agency.

**DETAILED REPORT:** This is the seventh straight year the District has participated in the landscape contest. Promotional materials were emailed to customers who participated in the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's turf removal program and who attended recent landscape training workshops hosted by the District. Additional landscape contest promotional efforts included: social media promotion by the San Diego County Water Authority, leaving promotional flyers at homes with attractive water-wise landscaping, advertising the contest in the 2019 Water Awareness Calendar, placing promotional materials in the lobby and announcing the contest on the District's website. The District received four applications by the April 26, 2019 deadline.

Water Conservation and Sustainability Committee members Vásquez and Sanchez are the judges for the contest. A \$250 gift certificate and plaque will be presented to the landscape contest winner at the June 5, 2019 Board meeting. The District's winner will have their landscape featured at [www.landscapecontest.com](http://www.landscapecontest.com) as well as on the District's website.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Contest Judging Matrix/Criteria  
WaterSmart Landscape Contest Applications

## 2019 WaterSmart Landscape Contest

Applicant Name	Attractiveness/ Appeal	Plant selection	Design	Maintenance	Irrigation/Water Use	Total
<b>Brandt</b>						
<b>Locke</b>						
<b>Sainz</b>						
<b>Santel</b>						

Please rate the landscape contest applicants on the basis of the following five (5) areas. Please rate from 1-5 (5 being high).

**Overall attractiveness:**

Curb appeal; pleasing color, form, texture, contour; plants are well maintained; weeds kept to a minimum

**Appropriate plant selection:**

Climate-appropriate plant palette; minimal or functional turf; functional landscape, meets needs of owners

**Design:**

Landscaping is able to thrive with less water, has adequate plant coverage, permeable soils, and takes advantage of site features like shade, micro-climates, or low-lying flood areas; landscaping also meets needs of owners

**Appropriate maintenance:**

Mulch; weeds kept to a minimum; plants neat, tidy and attractive

**Efficient methods of irrigation:**

Uses appropriate irrigation equipment for plant material, such as drip irrigation or efficient rotating spray nozzles

**Owner's Name**

Deborah Brandt

**Landscape Installation Date**

08/01/2017

**How did you hear about the contest?**

Brent Reyes - Water Conservation Specialist

**Tell us why you decided to install a WaterSmart landscape (300 - 500 words):**

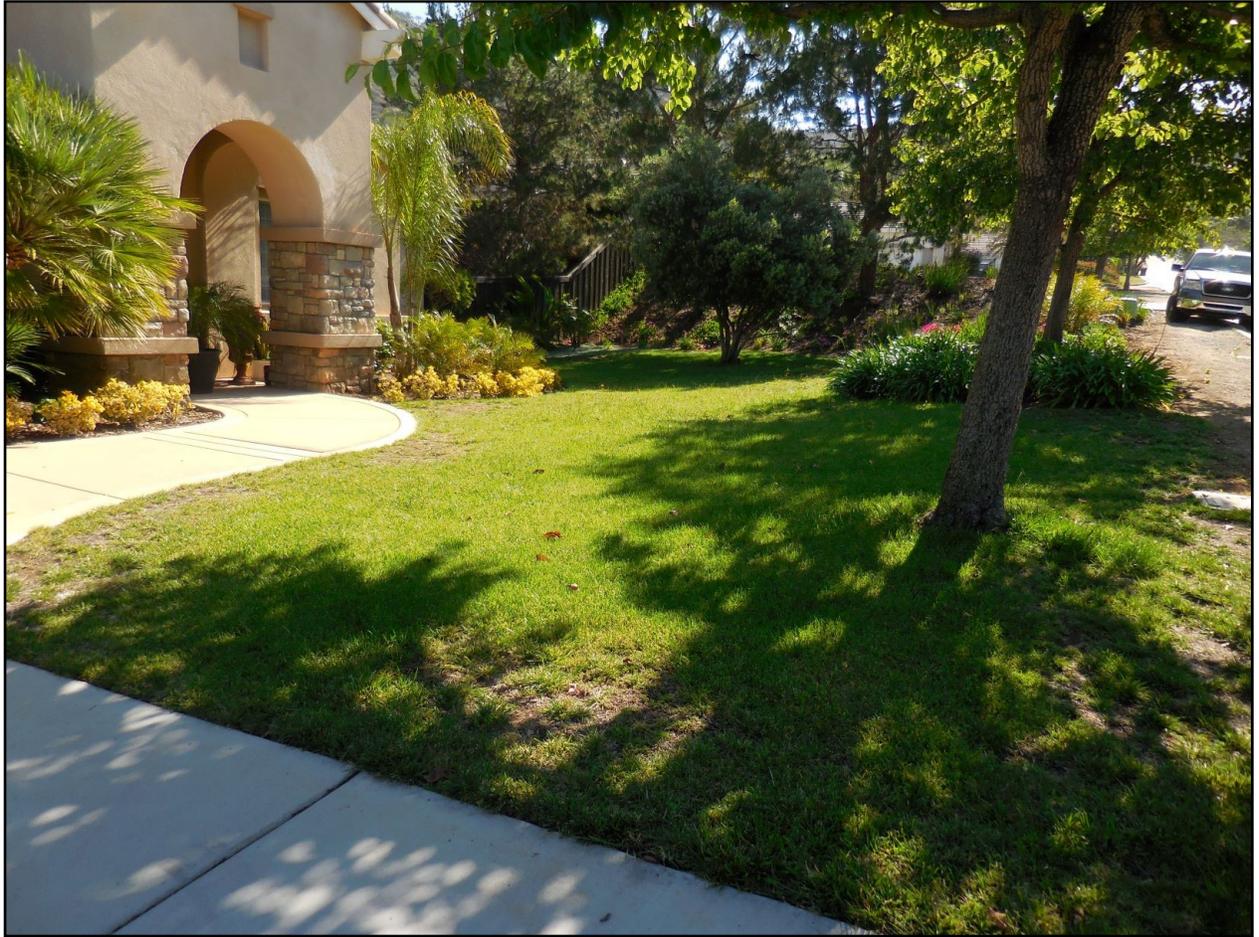
Why did I decide to install a water smart landscape.....Save water and reduce my time to maintain my yard! Love the results! Very low maintenance as my plant choices grow easily, require little care or trimming and provide a year round colorful contrast of form, shape and color! Majority of the base field material is redwood chips - they have a longer life, provide a wonderful aroma and I like the crunchy sound under my feet! I also used river rock as a contrast against the red wood chips - this is used around several of the central feature trees or cactus. Many of the cactus were given to me by my brother - they have made a great addition to my front yard - so many varieties, shapes, forms, sizes - actually stunning works of art! Water efficiency is a way of life and important responsibility that comes with living in a beautiful, Mediterranean climate like San Diego County. Designing beautiful and appropriate landscaping was a lot of fun.....and OK I admit.....I enjoy receiving wonderful compliments by neighbors and friends.....all of the time!!

**List the water-wise plants you used in the design:**

Sea Lavender - purple straw like flowers  
Calandinia Grandiflora - succulent with pink flowers  
Sticks on fire - turns brilliant orange in full sun - gorgeous!  
Bird of Paradise  
Ornamental Grasses - Pennisetum, Pink Muhly, Deer, Pony Tail Mexican Feather  
Cactus - Barrel, Pear Fruit, Agave, Brain (Euphorbia Cactea Cristata)  
Yucca - several varieties  
Agave - several varieties

**Describe how you water your landscape (50 - 100 words):**

The entire area where grass was removed was covered with thick black felt to keep weed growth to a minimum, drip irrigation runs throughout the entire area, primary field material is redwood chips, low water plants, succulents, cactus were planted adjacent and around feature rocks of all sizes, shapes and colors, all nozzles are high efficiency, drip system is programmed to run early morning, additionally many of the plants are watered from a rainwater catch system. I have a catch capacity system of 325 gallons that are collected each time that it rains.











**Owner's Name**

Renie Locke

**Landscape Installation Date**

04/01/2015

**How did you hear about the contest?**

local rep

**Tell us why you decided to install a WaterSmart landscape (300 - 500 words):**

I suppose the most important reason was to save water. I removed 1400 square feet of lawn that required too much water to maintain a healthy green. It didn't hurt that the state was offering a two dollar per square foot to remove it. That helped to pay for the removal and dumping fees. I've always liked succulents so I was excited about the change. Turns out the pleasure of choosing these succulents and planting them got more and more enjoyable as more and more of them were in the ground. They are so vital and had a surprisingly fast development. I never lost even one plant. The best move I've made here. I'd do it again in an instant.

**List the water-wise plants you used in the design:**

So here's the truth: I don't know the actual names of these plants. All I did was go to a local nursery that specializes in succulents and found a diverse array of shapes and sizes. I picked them because I liked the way they looked. I know I have some Aloe plants, some cactus, some "fire sticks" but all purchased at the local nursery (probably less than a mile away as the crow flies. If you showed these pictures to any nurseryman they would likely know their names, particularly if they specialize in succulents.

**Describe how you water your landscape (50 - 100 words):**

Almost all these succulents are on a drip system. I only water twice a week for 3-5 minutes depending of the area. All are on a schedule using my Rainbird Timer. Best of all in the winter if we're getting any rain at all, I shut the whole thing down. Somewhat recently I was able to shut it down for 5 or 6 weeks because the ground got so saturated. These succulents obviously love the climate here. In fact one cactus is now over 7 feet tall ,considering it probably started out more like 15". I never planted a plant bigger than a 5 gallon size!



















**Owner's Name**

Elizabeth Sainz

**Landscape Installation Date**

01/15/2012

**How did you hear about the contest?**

Nextdoor.com

**Tell us why you decided to install a WaterSmart landscape (300 - 500 words):**

The mature macadamia, citrus, and pecan trees growing in the yard motivated me to purchase this home over other options back when I was home-shopping in late 2011. I've always adored eating freshly picked garden produce, and the large yard appealed to me.

**List the water-wise plants you used in the design:**

Pecan trees, artichokes, onions, garlic, naturalized herbs, flax, wild lettuce, swiss chard, naturalized volunteers, goji berries, figs, rosemary, lavender, mint, pigeon peas, nopales cactus, aloe vera, lemongrass, comfrey, horseradish, nasturtiums (they absorb excess water), date palms, succulents mixed in flower beds, sugar cane, plumeria, freeway daisies, re-seeding herbs like parsley, cilantro, and borage, and celery, feverfew, olives, strawberries.

**Describe how you water your landscape (50 - 100 words):**

Outdoor shower with hot and cold water drains into the water table, a portable outdoor sink drains into the ground and laundry greywater diverted around the garden by fitting the drain pipe with a garden hose fitting.

Drip irrigation for full-sun plants. Individual trees have 2' long ABS pipes installed vertically into the soil near their trunks. Hose water in the pipes penetrates the root zone deeply and quickly. We use rain gutters and barrels at the house to collect and re-distribute rainwater into swales, small ponds, and hugelkulturs (buried branches and twigs) all conduct rain in the ground.











**Owner's Name**

Jennifer Santel

**Landscape Installation Date**

08/15/2015

**How did you hear about the contest?**

email from Vista Irrigation District

**Tell us why you decided to install a WaterSmart landscape (300 - 500 words):**

We wanted to dramatically reduce our water usage while maintaining an open and inviting space for our family and also our dogs. We removed all but 120 square feet of turf, which serves our dogs.

**List the water-wise plants you used in the design:**

We installed pygmy date palms which surround the turf area, and also installed a water-wise tolerant turf to keep the dogs happy and the water bill as low as possible. We also installed several king palms to increase our shaded space in our yard.

**Describe how you water your landscape (50 - 100 words):**

We utilize drip irrigation for all plants along the fence lines; high-efficiency spray nozzles on the turf area; smart controllers to manage the system; rain catchment barrels to utilize rain water for all plants not on drip irrigation.



Total turf removal approved for #TRM109362: 1200 square feet  
Plants added: 5 pygmy date palms surrounding grass plot and 1 date palm on east side of yard

Original total turf area in yard: 1470 square feet  
Actual total turf removed: 1350 square feet  
Total turf remaining: 120 square feet







