



# THE SARATOGAN

FALL 2015



## Sustainable Saratoga

The Bay Area, along with the rest of California, is facing a historic drought. Precipitation is at an all-time low and this summer is expected to be another extremely dry season.

In recognition of California's extreme drought condition—and to conserve water—the City of Saratoga has cut its water use. The City is on track to use at least 30 percent less water in 2015 than it did in 2013.

Last summer, the City reduced the watering schedule for lawns at Saratoga City Hall. The City has also replaced faucet heads with aerators in kitchens and bathrooms throughout City Hall. The aerators slow the flow from faucets, thereby saving water.

The City's Public Works Department implemented a turf reduction program eight years ago. Since then approximately 140,000 square feet of grass has been pulled from Saratoga's parks and replaced with drought-tolerant plants. That's enough turf to fill two-and-a-half football fields.

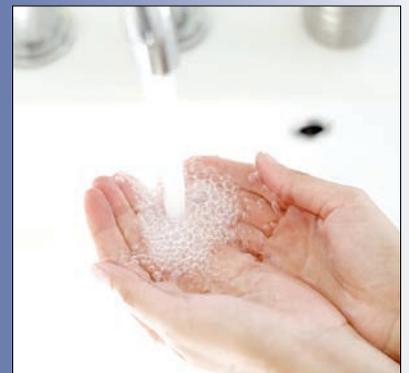
The City has also focused on planting native, drought-tolerant plants in City medians and the Public Works Department has installed smart irrigation controls to monitor watering. The controllers work like a weather station for the watering system and automatically adjusts the City's watering schedule based on local weather and landscape conditions.

## *In This Issue*

This issue of Saratoga's quarterly newsletter focuses on water conservation and sustainability. Residents will find out what the City has done to conserve water, as well as learn about tips and resources available to help them save water in their homes.

Residents will also read about the Saratoga Quarry Park, its history, and grand opening in October; local nonprofit television station KSAR-15; graywater systems; and upcoming community events.

Happy reading!



## Share Pictures of Your Water Conservation Efforts!

The City of Saratoga is inviting residents to share pictures of their water conservation efforts. Have you replaced your grass lawn with drought-tolerant plants, or are you watering plants with a bucket filled with water from your shower? Snap a shot and email it to [saratoga@saratoga.ca.us](mailto:saratoga@saratoga.ca.us).

Photos accepted by the City will be featured on the City's website and social media pages, such as Facebook and Nextdoor. Residents will also receive a certificate of appreciation signed by the Mayor.

# SAVING ONE DROP AT A TIME

California's drought affects everyone and conservation efforts have been mandated by the State. But what can Saratoga residents do? Below are some tips and resources to help save water... one drop at a time.

## 1. SCHEDULE A WATER AUDIT

San Jose Water Company offers a free water audit for customers. An inspector will check for leaks and plumbing inefficiencies. The inspector will then make recommendations and provide conservation tips. To make an appointment, contact San Jose Water at (408) 279-7900. For more information, visit [www.sjwater.com](http://www.sjwater.com).



## 2. ORDER FREE HOME ITEMS

Santa Clara Valley Water District offers free conservation items for homes and gardens. Items include faucet aerators, low-flow showerheads, toilet flaps, and moisture meters for gardens. To order items, contact the Water District at (408) 630-2554.



## 3. RECEIVE REBATES

The Santa Clara Valley Water District also offers rebates for a variety of water-efficiency upgrades in homes. Rebates are available to homeowners who purchase and install high-efficiency toilets or Energy Star clothes washers, convert grass lawn to drought-tolerant landscape, or attach their clothes washers to graywater systems. For more information, visit [www.valleywater.org/programs/rebates.aspx](http://www.valleywater.org/programs/rebates.aspx).

## 4. USE MULCH UNDER TREES

Spread a three- to four-inch layer of mulch/wood chips under trees to insulate the soil. The mulch holds moisture in the soil by reducing evaporation, meaning trees do not have to be watered as often. Replenish the mulch yearly.

## 5. TAKE VEHICLES TO THE CAR WASH

Instead of hosing down vehicles in the driveway using potable water, take them to the car wash. Not only do car washes use recycled or reclaimed water, but the water (with all the cleaning chemicals) doesn't run off into gutters and then out to waterways.

# *Follow the Trail to the Saratoga Quarry Park*

Want to get away?

There's no need to take a flight to some far-off destination. Just jump in a car and head up Highway 9 to the Saratoga Quarry Park. Located just two miles from downtown Saratoga, the tranquil and picturesque 64-acre property is a natural haven from the hustle and bustle of Silicon Valley.

The park, which will officially open to the public in October 2015, was acquired by the City from Santa Clara County in 2011. Since then the City has engaged the Saratoga community with guided tours of the property and volunteer opportunities to help remove invasive shrubs and brush.



*Volunteers remove invasive plants at Quarry Park*

The public was also instrumental in creating the Quarry Park Master Plan, which was approved by the Saratoga City Council in June 2014. The Master Plan outlines improvement projects including hiking trails, picnic areas, recreational facilities, parking and restrooms. These improvements will be completed in phases over several years.

The Master Plan also includes several goals for the property. One of those goals is to use the open space to protect viewsheds and natural resources. By achieving habitat restoration, the City will be able to create a sustainable area that will be retained in perpetuity in its natural and scenic condition.

For more information on the Saratoga Quarry Park and Master Plan, visit [www.saratoga.ca.us/quarrypark](http://www.saratoga.ca.us/quarrypark).



## **\* SAVE THE DATE \*** **Saratoga Quarry Park Grand Opening**

**Saturday, October 31, 2015  
10:30 a.m. to Noon  
22000 Congress Springs Road**

### **A Brief History of Quarry Park**

#### **Early 1900s to 1967**

There were two active quarries on the site in the early 1900s. Both were converted from lime quarries into one gravel quarry after the purchase of the properties in 1908. In 1921, Santa Clara County bought the property and operated it as a rock and gravel quarry, which supplied the material for the county's roads. The County closed the quarry in 1967 due to complaints from neighboring residents.

#### **1967 to late 1990s**

Following the 1967 closure, County Road Department employees used the site with their families and friends for recreational activities. On their own time, they installed and maintained picnic tables, barbecue pits, and sitting areas. The site, which was restricted to the public, was used for parties, including the occasional wedding, until the late 1990s.

#### **2011 to present**

The City of Saratoga acquired the property in 2011 with a conservation easement and joint-funding from the County and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. A Master Plan for the park was approved by the Saratoga City Council in 2014. The Master Plan set the stage for a unique local and regional destination that improves trail and open space connectivity.



## The Show Goes on for KSAR-15

Education and entertainment and news! Oh my!

For three decades, KSAR-15 has been Saratoga's go-to television station for local news, education, and entertainment. The local nonprofit organization is responsible for operating the public, education, and government access station for the Saratoga community.



Its mission is to provide an energetic medium of communication for Saratoga residents to express and view the diverse talents and interests within the community. The station also provides facilities, training, and support to those who would like to create their own shows.

KSAR-15 records and broadcasts Saratoga City Council and Planning Commission meetings, as well as a variety of local community events. Residents can tune in and watch on Comcast channel 15, AT&T UVerse channel 99, and online at [www.ksar15.org](http://www.ksar15.org).

KSAR-15 videos can also be viewed on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/KSARsaratoga](http://www.youtube.com/KSARsaratoga).



## Ask Our Staff featuring Poh Yee

Have a question? Send your question(s) to [bbabcock@saratoga.ca.us](mailto:bbabcock@saratoga.ca.us) or (408) 868-1275.

**Q: I've heard about my neighbors installing graywater systems in their homes. What is graywater and do I need a permit to install a graywater system?**



*A: Graywater (also spelled "greywater") is untreated household water from sinks, bathtubs, showers, and washing machines that can be used to water outdoor landscapes, such as grass, ornamental plants and trees. While graywater might look "dirty," it is safe to use in a yard.*

*Graywater systems are allowed in single-family homes in Saratoga. A permit is not required for a simple gravity system where graywater flows directly to yards. Permits are required for more complex systems, such as when pressurized pumps and holding containers are used.*

*For more information on graywater systems, contact me at [pyee@saratoga.ca.us](mailto:pyee@saratoga.ca.us). Residents can also drop by the Community Development Department at Saratoga City Hall and a staff member would be happy to answer any questions related to their graywater projects.*

**Poh Yee is the Senior Building Inspector/Plan Checker for the City of Saratoga. Yee is responsible for the administration of the City's Building Code Regulations, inspections and code enforcement.**



To learn more about *The Saratogan*, make comments, suggest story ideas, or just ask a question, contact Brian Babcock at [bbabcock@saratoga.ca.us](mailto:bbabcock@saratoga.ca.us) or 408.868.1275. You can also find *The Saratogan* online and sign up for email alerts at [www.saratoga.ca.us/saratogan](http://www.saratoga.ca.us/saratogan).