



Winner: **Ken and Sally Coverdell**

Award Category: **Water Champion**

Contact Name: **Ken Coverdell**

Owner, Blue Sky Designs

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Why Ken and Sally Coverdell were chosen for this Award

The Coverdells own and operate Blue Sky Designs, an award-winning landscaping firm, and Blue Sky Farms, a retail nursery and coffee shop in Half Moon Bay. They are dedicated to educating others about the importance of water conservation and native ecosystems, and practice what they preach both at home and at work. Their conservation efforts have steadily reduced their water consumption from 970,000 gallons in 2000 to 220,000 gallons in 2010.

Ken's visible role in the community makes him a particularly effective water champion. In 2004 he was recognized by the San Mateo County Farm Bureau as the Coastsides Farmer of the Year, and has served as a director of the Coastsides County Water District since 1992, and as a director of the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency since 2009. Sally is the inspiration and driving force behind Blue Sky Farms, which is dedicated to the restoration of California's native environment in everyone's backyard. They focus on the removal of suburban lawns and non-native invasive plants.

Inside the Blue Sky Farms cafe, customers receive water awareness with their coffee and pastries. A sign on the door proclaims, "Water is Precious on California's Central Coast." A poster prominently displayed on one wall shows San Francisco's Hetch Hetchy water system, the source of most local water. Below that, there's a diagram of a rainwater collection and storage system for irrigation.

Features that demonstrate the Coverdells' commitment to responsible water use include a 30,000-gallon cistern under the parking lot that collects rainwater for irrigation. A smart controller receives current evapotranspiration data and then determines water needs for the nursery. At home, the Coverdells have installed drip irrigation, replaced lawn areas with native mow-free grasses, and replaced non-native plants with appropriate Mediterranean and native species on their 2.9-acre parcel.