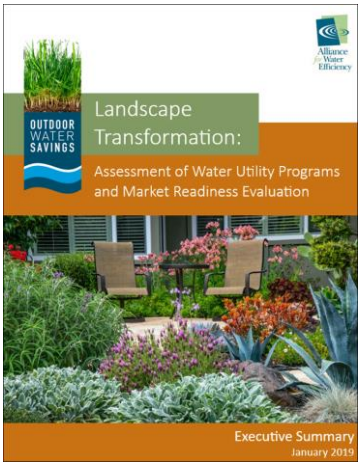
WaterSense-AWE Webinar Recap

Accelerating the Landscape Transformation

TODAY'S SPEAKERS	ORIGINAL DATE: FEBRUARY 28, 2019
• **Mary Ann Dickinson** – President and CEO, Alliance for Water Efficiency • **Julius Duncan** – Environmental Engineer, EPA WaterSense • **Dr. Thomas Chesnutt** – A&N Technical Services, Inc. • **Maureen Erbeznik** – Maureen Erbeznik & Associates • **Dr. Phil Dwyer** – Scotts-MiracleGro	Other Webinars Hosted by WaterSense Webinar Recording on YouTube

WEBINAR SUMMARY

In the introduction, Mr. Duncan provided a summary of WaterSense, which EPA launched in 2006 to promote water efficiency and encourage innovation in manufacturing. For outdoor water use, WaterSense labels Weather Based Irrigation Controllers and Pressure Regulating Spray Sprinkler Bodies. WaterSense has developed two guides for irrigation professionals and homeowners that give information on the installation, scheduling, and maintenance of microirrigation. To help promote the value of irrigation controllers, WaterSense created the irrigation controller brochure, "Is Your Watering Under Control?" which provides helpful information on why it is important to regularly check your controller's settings. Outdoor-related resources are posted at www.epa.gov/watersense/outdoors.



Ms. Dickinson described the Alliance for Water Efficiency's (AWE's) Outdoor Water Savings Research Initiative. AWE has been researching water savings data that could lead to the direct implementation of programs. Phase one of the program involved gathering existing research from around the nation and identifying gaps. One of the issues identified for future work was looking at the impact and water savings of transformed landscapes. In phase two they selected projects that provided new empirical research that was relevant, statistically validated, and peer reviewed. The reports are posted on the Alliance for Water Efficiency website. Studies include a peak demand study, landscape transformation, and drought restrictions.

LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMATION STUDY-IMPACT ANALYSIS: DR. THOMAS CHESNUTT

Dr. Chesnutt described the impact analysis, which looked at the range of water savings that could be expected from reducing landscape water requirements. The process evaluation looked at what motivates customers, what are the reasons for landscape choices, and what barriers exist. A major characteristic of this study is the diversity of partner utilities that participated. They were from around the country with a range of programs offered, data for water savings, customers, landscape types, and climate types.

Creating a common definition for landscape transformation helps to clear up miscommunication about what a water efficient landscape can look like. A landscape transformation occurs when customers

transition from high water use landscapes to landscapes that are more sustainable, reducing the irrigation water requirement and outdoor water use. Sustainable landscapes feature climate-appropriate landscape designs, use water-efficient irrigation practices (such as weather-based irrigation controllers, pressure regulating sprinkler, and microirrigation), and support homeowner goals for aesthetics and function.

LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMATION STUDY-MARKET ANALYSIS: MAUREEN ERBEZNIK

Ms. Erbeznik gave a review of the market analysis conducted as part of the landscape transformation study to better understand how to scale programs and maximize participation. AWE surveyed 3,390 water customers across the United States and Canada. In the study, 1,655 water customers participated in a landscape transformation study. Interviews were held with water agencies, manufacturers, retailers, suppliers, and program vendors. A highlight of the analysis was that consumers are generally unfamiliar with their outdoor water use. While 53 percent of water customers believe they use 10-30 percent of their water outdoors, most are using 30-60 percent. Beauty and appearance are also top landscape aspects and marketing should include how a sustainable landscape can be attractive and functional. All of this came together in a comprehensive report of market condition and recommendations to move the market towards significantly reducing the irrigation requirement at properties.

WATER EFFICIENT TECHNOLOGIES: PHIL DWYER

Mr. Dwyer provided input on how Scotts-MiracleGro has partnered with AWE in the landscape transformation study to expand the research in water efficient technologies. At the WET Center for Water Efficient Technologies they have worked on smart controller development, lawn care practices, drought tolerance, and low water use technologies. Collaborating with water providers is a major priority. By providing information on advances in controller technology, proven practices that save irrigation water, and education materials they ensure water providers have the information they need for their customers to save water.

SPEAKER QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: How do you propose landscape contractors get training on water efficient landscapes and landscape transformations?

A: Mr. Chesnutt answered there are programs like QWEL (Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper) that offer training in water efficient landscaping and irrigation. Ms. Erbeznik also answered that incentive programs can help promote professionals trained in water efficiency.

Q: Are there any national programs or federal grant programs or incentive programs to support landscape transformations?

A: Ms. Dickinson answered there currently are no programs on the federal level, except for some support from the US Bureau of Reclamation. There are some programs offered by states that provide support for landscape transformation.

Q: How often is a connection made between water-efficient landscaping and their impacts on stormwater?

A: Runoff from urban landscapes can carry fertilizer, pesticides, and herbicides into local waterways. It is helpful when efficient irrigation can reduce runoff through efficient irrigation.

Q: Did you only include utilities with irrigation meters?

A: No. The impact evaluation included properties with both mixed-use and dedicated meters. Modern statistical methods were used to control for weather, household differences, and to detect the change in consumption timed with participation in landscape transformation programs.