

# On Tap

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Your newsletter from the Santa Margarita Water District

## Landscape Overhaul Cuts Water Usage for Local Community

Oso Valley Greenbelt Association develops a five-year plan to save water and money

When it comes to landscaping, there's more to saving water than just planting drought-tolerant plants.

The Oso Valley Greenbelt Association in Mission Viejo saved 108 million gallons of water and more than \$251,500 in two years by adopting a systematic, long-term maintenance plan founded on resource efficiency.

The association hired Professional Community Management (PCM), Monarch Environmental Inc., and Harvest Landscape Enterprises Inc., to help reduce the flow of water — and red ink — pouring out of its monthly maintenance budget.

The 150-acre landscape had become wildly overgrown in 25 years. Broken irrigation pipes, capped off sprinkler heads and detached timers meant that much of the irrigation system was malfunctioning. Overgrowth on the slopes blocked many of the sprinkler heads that did work, prompting the need to leave timers on — sometimes for as long as an hour — to make up for the lack of irrigation elsewhere.

"This wasn't a simple maintenance contract," said Steven Schinhofen, president of Harvest



Community slopes  
**BEFORE**



Community slopes  
**AFTER**

Landscape Enterprises Inc. "We spent a year out there with a chipper clearing overgrowth, repairing broken lines, installing smart timers and systematically fine-tuning the system."

Landscape consultant Matt Davenport of Monarch Environmental worked with the

association board to create a five-year master plan, which Harvest has successfully begun implementing, he said. This meant upgrading the irrigation system, reducing passive turf areas, removing dead or dying plants, rejuvenating high impact areas and replanting designated areas within the community.

PCM community manager Laurisa Quella said the results have been significant. "We are very pleased with the water cost savings the association has realized and, at the conclusion of the program, the beautification of the slopes throughout the community will be greatly enhanced."

For more water saving tips for indoors and outdoors, visit [www.smwd.com](http://www.smwd.com) or [www.bewaterwise.com](http://www.bewaterwise.com).