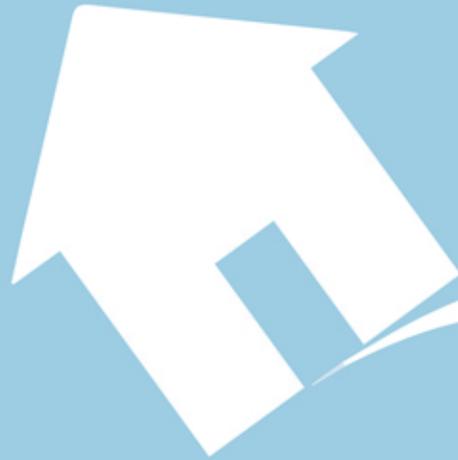


COMMUNICATIONS



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
SOLAR DECATHLON



Our H₂O use. Our Water Use.

UC DAVIS

Communications Jury Narrative

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Our Story

With its second entry into the Department of Energy Solar Decathlon, the University of California at Davis (UC Davis) is proud to continue its history of appealing design and student-driven engineering, with its new team name: the Blue Mustangs. Since its inaugural entry in Solar Decathlon 2015, UC Davis has capitalized on the project as an opportunity for students to explore designs that can address a need. For the agriculturally-focused UC Davis, the lack of suitable housing for migrant farmworkers was a social and environmental problem that felt close to home for the 2015 team. To address this problem, the 2105 entry "Aggie Sol" presented below market-rate zero-net-energy (ZNE) housing, featuring night-time radiant cooling via rooftop sprinklers and a purpose-built floorplan catered to low-income agricultural workers. For the 2017 home, defining the problem scope and determining how the Blue Mustangs could address the problem would be the starting point. Amid a severe drought in California in 2015, the problem seemed obvious, but refining the problem scope and how to tackle such a problem would come to be an extensive and iterative process. Eventually "Our H₂Ouse" (pronounced "Our House") arose, and similar to the UC Davis 2015 entry, we continue the philosophy of addressing environmental and social needs. Our H₂Ouse balances innovative and experimental systems with a simple and adaptable implementation, designed around our three pillars to be drought-resilient, educational, and inclusive.

Our State

California houses the largest U.S. state population and produces the largest total agricultural output in the United States. With 50-100 million acre-feet of water required annually to sustain this high living standard for more than 39 million residents, there is a growing demand for sustainable and renewable sources of water and energy. To sustain such levels of agricultural and residential activity, California produces the second largest carbon footprint in the United States. However, California's per-capita emissions are the third lowest in the nation. Although the total environmental burden of California is immense, its low per-capita emissions is a testament to the cognizant and progressive nature of Californian residents. California continues to lead standards and innovations in terms of environmental and technological platforms, with numerous environmental movements that help form the state's public perception. The state's acres of fertile soil, fields of oil, and other abundant natural resources have caused Californian officials to seriously reflect upon how to protect and maintain these natural environments. Today, widespread support from almost all sectors of government and society have brought about rapid funding and development of renewable energy production, advanced water management and treatment systems, as well as the overarching call for everyone and everything in the state to operate at heightened levels of efficiency and conservation. The success of these initiatives and mandates are evident: California residents repeatedly weathered years of moderate-to-severe drought, keeping per capita electricity use almost constant for the last 40 years, whilst experiencing one of the highest population growth rates in the world. It is at this pivotal and chaotic time that Team Blue Mustangs from UC Davis has developed Our H₂Ouse (pronounced "Our House") as a model residential solution to help combat these issues in the home.

Our Goals

Public Outreach

The Governor of California, Jerry Brown, announced "the end of the drought" this past April; however California's struggle is far from over. This proclamation, while true for some fleeting time, risks creating inaccurate public perception that water conservation is no longer a priority for everyday living. With the cyclical nature of the drought events in California, combined with the continued growth and development of the state's population and cities, the need for sustainable and renewable water and energy management will only grow more pressing. In 2015, Californians successfully reduced their urban water consumption by 25%, and Governor Brown then called upon California's population to "make water conservation a way of life", rather than a temporary practice. Governor Brown's 2015 call for a change of mindset resonated with the Blue Mustangs team, as we believe the message is still relevant.

For many Solar Decathlon teams, the communications strategy is used solely as a way of broadcasting their project progress efforts to public and private individuals and organizations, but for the Blue Mustangs team, our communications strategy centered around the belief that water conservation within Our H₂Ouse is "a way of life". Our communications strategy followed two paths for information broadcasting. The first path informed the public about the past and present activity of the United States Department of Energy Solar Decathlon as well as the history of UC Davis's involvement which began with their 2015 entry, Aggie Sol. The second path is to dispel misconceptions about past, current, and future drought conditions within California, and to communicate the likelihood of continued drought years, while phrasing and the implications, all through widely understandable and impactful language.

Our H₂Ouse

Building on our 2-pronged approach, exciting the community with our progress and keeping the discussion about water consumption alive, the Solar Decathlon 2017 entry from the UC Davis Blue Mustangs augmented the role of this crucial project component and thoroughly incorporated its utility into the physical home design. The 2017 entry features a design based around our three pillars to be: *drought resilient, educational, and inclusive*. From these pillars bloomed the idea that the most effective, long-term strategies for resource conservation stem from addressing user behavior related to water and energy use within the home. We wanted to do more than just build the home in a water- and energy-conservative manner. Our goal was to influence the occupants with relatable and thought-provoking information feedback devices which would ultimately guide them to realize the benefit of regular, daily conservation practices. The success of this initiative is the result of clear communication of resource consumption data and the related implications which occupants find important, relevant, and worthy of their attention. As such, Our H₂Ouse features several original formats of information feedback which move occupants to reflect on their way of life and practice moderation in their daily water and energy use.

Our Audience

The communications team sought target audiences from various levels of education and occupation, and they identified the unique approaches they would use to build maximum interest, engagement, and participation. Communication included the dissemination of information about watershed and management conditions within California, and relevant future implications. This general component of the communication strategy was almost entirely sourced from a document titled "California's Water" which was published by the Public Policy Institute of California (Figure 1), and provided thorough summaries of the key features, problems and proposed solutions having to do with sustaining California's water supply.

In speaking with college students, the competition was shared as an opportunity to join an alternative form of hands-on education where students would experience a more enriching and valuable learning experience than they would encounter in a traditional classroom setting. High school students were provided with information and tours of the home, to inspire them to engage in future participation in Solar Decathlon competitions, as well as motivate them to pick career paths that furthered the development of sustainable and renewable technologies and methodologies. To professionals, mentors and business partners, the second Solar Decathlon iteration was presented as an access to contribute to students' education, support a prestigious project, and advertise for their own interest. To other groups unaffiliated with UC Davis, communications focused around disseminating facts about drought problems, as well as the solutions that Our H₂Ouse entailed, thus making it important to share the most up-to-date information and predictions about the state of California's incredibly complex water management system(s). In addition, through our Our H₂Ouse table at the bi-weekly Farmer's Market in Downtown Davis, we had the opportunity to reach our local market, to inspire and connect with environmentally conscious Davis residents.

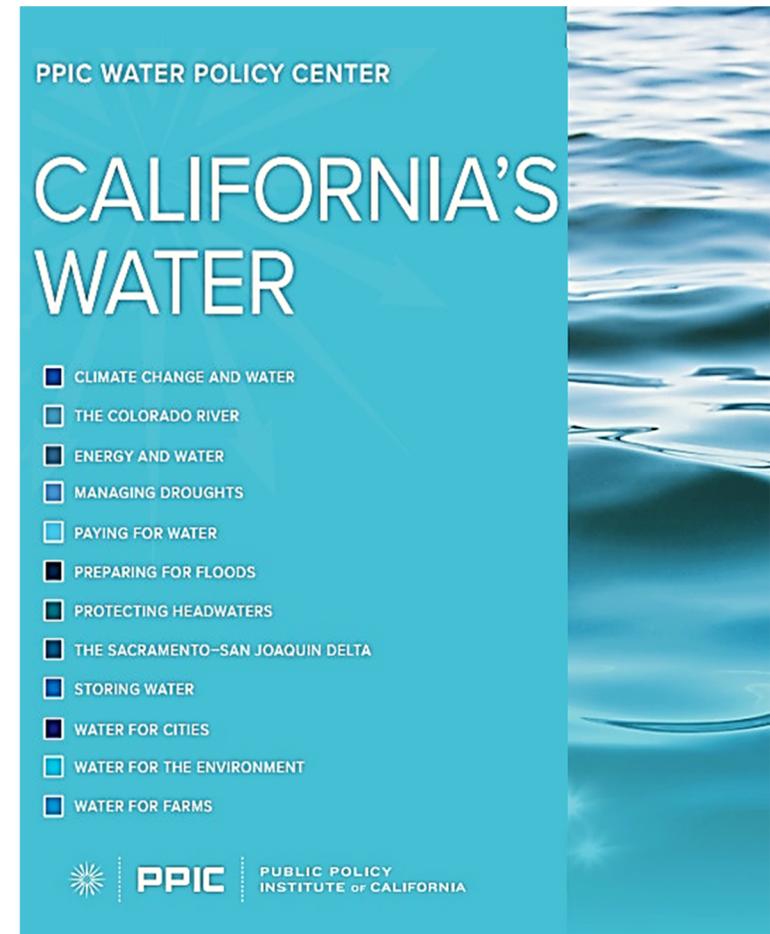


Figure 1: California's Water Policy - published by the Public Policy Institute of California

Our Strategy

Public Outreach

UC Davis is a research university renowned for innovative ideas and paving the way for developing sustainable water and energy practices and technologies. With our public presence as a backdrop, we utilized our inclusive, educational and drought resilient pillars to spark the interest of the community and fellow university affiliates. In-person outreach and virtual approaches cohesively and consistently covered as many platforms as possible to reach the largest audience. By creating a regular presence in the community, our communications strategies worked to establish the Solar Decathlon as a valuable and dynamic project, and as something in which the UC Davis students and surrounding community could be proud and engaged in its progress. After goals formulation and target audience selection, the third step of developing the communications strategy was developing a logo and descriptive material for physical and virtual advertisement. The team used the iconic UC Davis colors of blue and gold to form the shape of an open globe which juxtaposes a dark blue segment (representing the potable water stored underground) against a much larger segment which represents a parcel of dry land, representative of the drought. Our H₂Ouse is represented in the logo by an easily identifiable icon of a home, enclosed in a bright blue water drop, representing the connection between homes and urban water use as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Our H₂Ouse Logo

The communications team next registered the project as an official campus club, allowing greater access to opportunities for outreach to more UC Davis students. The project was listed on the online club directory, and interested students could find the team's website and send an email to get involved. Multiple large signs were made and posted around frequented areas on campus such as the student Activities and Recreation Center (ARC), the Memorial Union (MU), and the Student Community Center (SCC). Team members participated with other student clubs advertising at the crowded walk way between the MU and the Quad lawn during daily club tabling opportunities. Collaboration with design and engineering faculty members helped promote the project in different classes and share information about the opportunity of this project, while some classes and internships even discussed and assisted in creating designs, in-house communication approaches, and publicity materials. In addition to in-person communications, the communications team maintained connection by frequently updating our accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These accounts were updated weekly with text and graphics to keep followers engaged, and to present the progress of the project to followers. The posting updates ranged from topics of house design, innovative technology, team member introductions, and sponsor involvement. These accounts often reposted graphic and textual information from other organizations who were posting related topics including but not limited to renewable energy development and watershed research and management.



Figure 3: Each image shows three different formats of outreach including an Instagram live feed of tabling outreach at the farmer's market, giving tours to high school students and PG&E sponsor representatives, and tabling at the MU with A-frame signage

Competition

Our H₂Ouse visitors will learn about California's drought history, the lasting impact, and the resilient solutions that Our H₂Ouse puts forward. This information is communicated via signage accompanied by succinct and uncomplicated textual descriptions of the systems within Our H₂Ouse. Most of this signage is placed at the entrance of Our H₂Ouse and along the walkway where the visitor line forms for the convenience and entertainment of waiting visitors. In addition to the signage, waiting visitors can also play with giant Jenga games made from 2x4 cutoffs. Additionally, certain components of Our H₂Ouse are displayed by miniature scale models (such as wall cutaways) and the mechanical room doors are left ajar so the home's water and energy distribution devices can be seen by the public. The floorplan of Our H₂Ouse allows for tour guides to lead visitors through the entirety of Our H₂Ouse in a circular tour route while displaying every interesting and important feature. This circular flow allows multiple tours to be conducted simultaneously without risk of overcrowding or obstruction.

Our H₂Ouse

Household appliances and devices tend to be used with little regard for their energy and water demand, which leads to unnecessary resource waste. Research papers and collegiate interviews regarding user habits verified that occupants consume more than intended due to a basic lack of awareness. This lack of awareness is fed by the status quo of societal norms. For example, showers are characterized by units of time, rather than gallons of water, thereby distancing the behavioral use from the resource consumption. If showers were characterized by gallons of water, the user would be inherently reminded of the impact, simply through accurate and quantitative feedback. Typically, occupants are provided feedback only on a high-level basis by sources like energy and water bills. This feedback is nonspecific in both time and space, meaning the user cannot pinpoint when the most influential behavior occurs or what appliances cause the most impact with regards to water and energy use. The Blue Mustangs electrical team addressed this void with a water and energy monitoring system. This system embodies the design pillars of the home by promotion of water and energy efficiency to improve statewide drought resilience, through cost-effective data collection, and dynamic displays of eye-catching, thought-provoking, and informative data feedback.

Our Results

Public Outreach

The diverse communications strategies employed by Team Blue Mustangs resulted in significant outreach to on and off campus individuals and organizations. Currently, the team contact sheet lists over 100 students who have worked on the project, with a core group of roughly 20 students who have become dedicated to seeing the project through to completion. These students are representative of three different schools within UC Davis consisting of the College of Engineering (civil/environmental, chemical, computer science, and mechanical/aerospace engineer majors), the College of Letters and Sciences (communications majors), and the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems, landscape architecture, and environmental policy analysis and planning majors). In addition to diverse and widespread student engagement, the project negotiated successful sponsorships with over 20 different local and national companies/NGOs and collaborated with 5 different on campus organizations including the Center for Water-Energy Efficiency, the Western Cooling Efficiency Center, the Center for Lighting Technology, the Center for Watershed Sciences, and the Center for (data) Visualization. In addition, several of these sponsors made up a significant percentage of the 10 tours we gave to various student, industry and academic groups which showed interest in the project. Online communications strategies netted many benefits for project and DOE Solar Decathlon exposure with over 200 followers on Instagram and an average of 32 likes per post, more than 100 followers on Twitter, and more than 300 followers and likes on Facebook. In addition to this social media presence, the project was featured in three UC Davis news releases, as well as two off-campus news organizations articles (*The Davis Enterprise* and *Comstock's Magazine*).

Our H₂Ouse

Our H₂Ouse features unique occupant-level and community-level devices which show real-time water consumption to overcome user indifference and establish a salient reference point for appropriate and adequate water use. Sequential illumination of individual LEDs, which correspond to incremental units of water, allow for visible water meter feedback near the kitchen, bathroom sink, and shower. These devices transform unconscious waste into thought-provoking conservation, resulting from individual behavioral changes - changes that the Blue Mustangs are confident will permeate beyond the walls of Our H₂Ouse to influence conservation on a much grander scale.

To further expand upon the influence of Our H₂Ouse, a community-level feedback device was created to educate, inspire, and facilitate awareness of water resource responsibility. Aggregated occupant water use, in relation to gallons saved when comparing to the average occupant water use, is shown via an unconventional and dynamic water feature. This feature, placed prominently at the front of the house, directly relates to the home's total water consumption compared to an average household's total water consumption. The ambient, eco-feedback display mimics ecological processes, such as the filling and draining of reservoirs with a limited water supply, providing homeowners a more physical and relatable depiction of water conservation. The occupants are rewarded with this dynamic water feature when they save more water compared to the average. Rewarding such positive behavioral changes motivates occupants and can be a catalyst for a friendly neighborhood challenge, turning household occupants into a conservation team and increasing both inter-household and neighborhood accountability. This system could be upscaled, with water features for individual houses as well as a hub for a

neighborhood-level water feature which aggregates all water-saving data, allowing neighborhoods to team up and challenge other neighborhoods to this conservation game. Our H₂Ouse not only engages its occupants in water conservation, but the community as a whole.

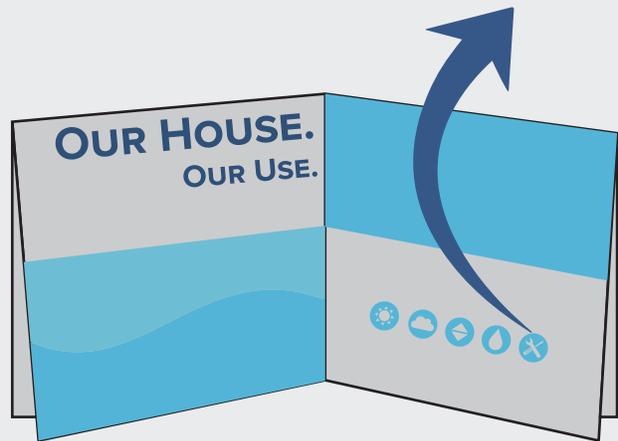
The interior of Our H₂Ouse features a single device that appears at first glance to be similar to many of the tablet-based HUDs that many teams utilize for control purposes. However, the user interface (UI) of Our H₂Ouse's system emphasizes clear and customizable information feedback formats. As such, the device features usage breakdowns, prospective economic costs that the occupants can expect based off their current water and energy usage, as well as a comparison to household usage goals. The flexibility of the UI allows for settings on the device, such as how many occupants are living within the home, goals for water use, and format of displayed data to be changed by the occupant. The last unique feature of the device relates to how it is assimilated into the architecture of the building. The tablet itself is integrated into the home by placing it behind different pieces of two-way mirrored glass throughout the home. In this format, occupants can be greeted by information summaries while looking at themselves in the bathroom vanity mirror as they brush their teeth, shave, etc., or in a more public format located in the home's main living room. The tablet is easily removable and can be carried to and placed in an alternate area of the home depending on occupant preference. These adjustability features relate to the uncertainty that surrounds feedback devices (i.e. where they would best be best located for maximum sustained impact). This flexibility is a key innovation of the UI, as the development of effective feedback is still very much in flux. By allowing occupants the ability to alter the location and format, we hope they can custom create a platform that they find most helpful and beneficial. To enhance this process, the device tracks its own effectiveness by allowing homeowners to log when placement and formatting changes were made in relation to changes experienced in water and energy use.

Our educational feedback system allows residents to integrate water and energy mindfulness into their way of life, and has the potential to share the water and energy information with relevant government agencies, utility companies and community members. Users can be conscious about their water and energy use, utility companies can plan for the future based on past data, and government agencies can implement policies and plans by utilizing such logistics. Furthermore, with neighborly information of water and energy use, communities can unite with an end goal and create an experience of water and energy reduction as an exciting collaborative project. Communication begets power. By communicating residential water and energy use to occupants, neighbors and professionals, society is empowered to take action.

TEAM HANDOUT:

The team handout is a 8"x12" house-shaped piece of paper with various text/graphic displays that describe the most important and interesting features of Our H2Ouse. In addition, the handout recognizes the three general competition sponsors and our team-specific sponsors.

ICONS





OUR HOUSE.
OUR USE.

SPONSORED BY:



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
SOLAR DECATHLON

SUNPOWER



warmboard

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

JELD-WEN
WINDOWS & DOORS



ENERGETICS

A Subsidiary of VSE Corporation

Karsten
HOMES



OWENS
CORNING

PHNIX

TimberTech

SIMPSON
Strong-Tie

BamCore
Build Stronger - Foster - Greener



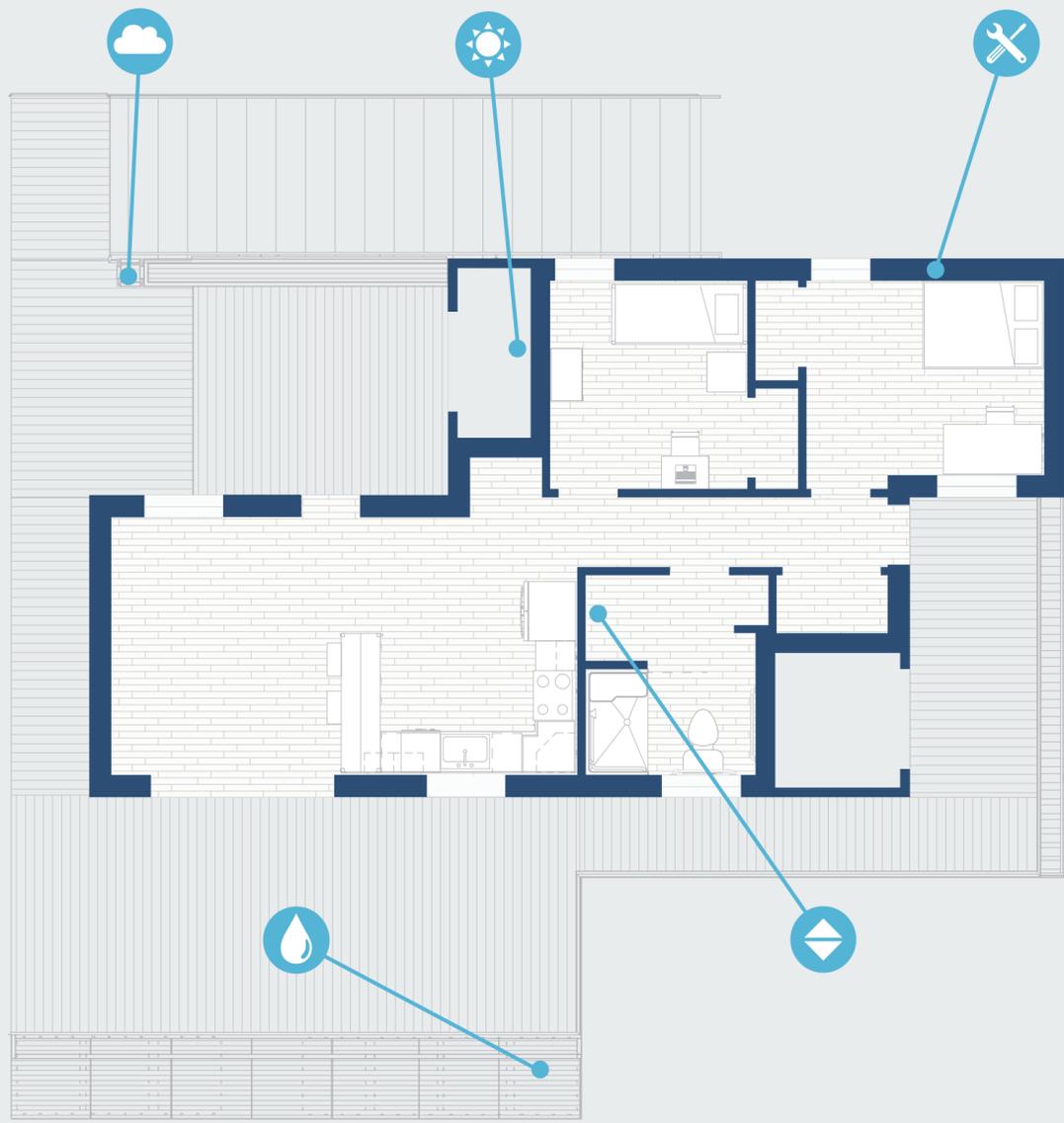
HEISING-SIMONS
FOUNDATION

UC DAVIS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

SnapNrack
Solar Mounting Solutions



OUR H₂OUSE

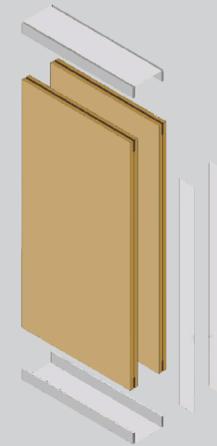


WATER

Our H2Ouse uses 50% less water than the standard California home by replacing outdoor potable water usage with greywater and rainwater.



BamCore



The panelized wall system is made from bamboo, which has a smaller carbon footprint and uses less water than traditional wood framing.



DROUGHT EDUCATION

Due to the severity of the most recent four year drought in California, several ecological and economic areas were directly impacted



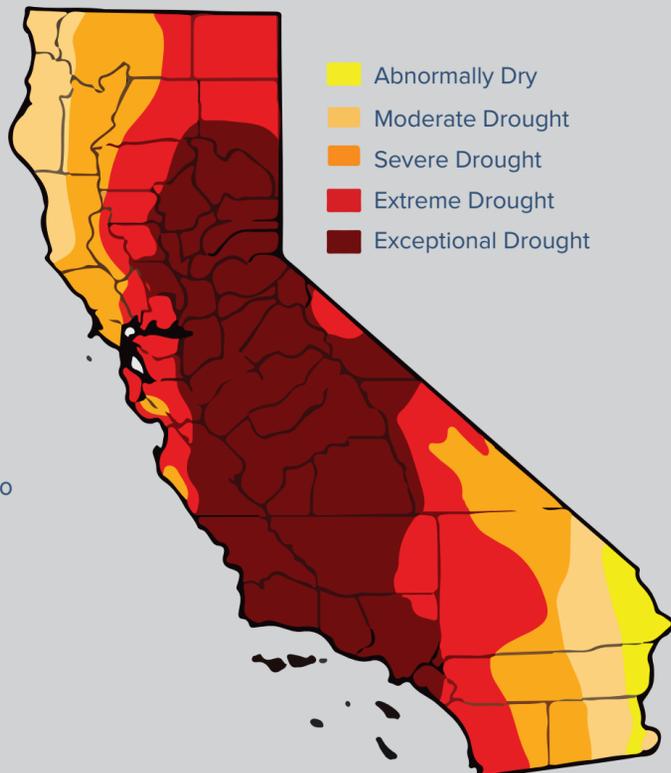
The shortage of water made trees more susceptible to insects, resulting in felled trees



Without rainfall, underground aquifers are depleted and unable to recharge



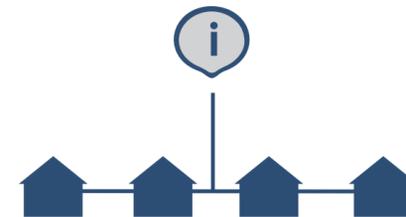
California is reliant on water-based extractions for oil production, thermoelectric, and hydroelectric power



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



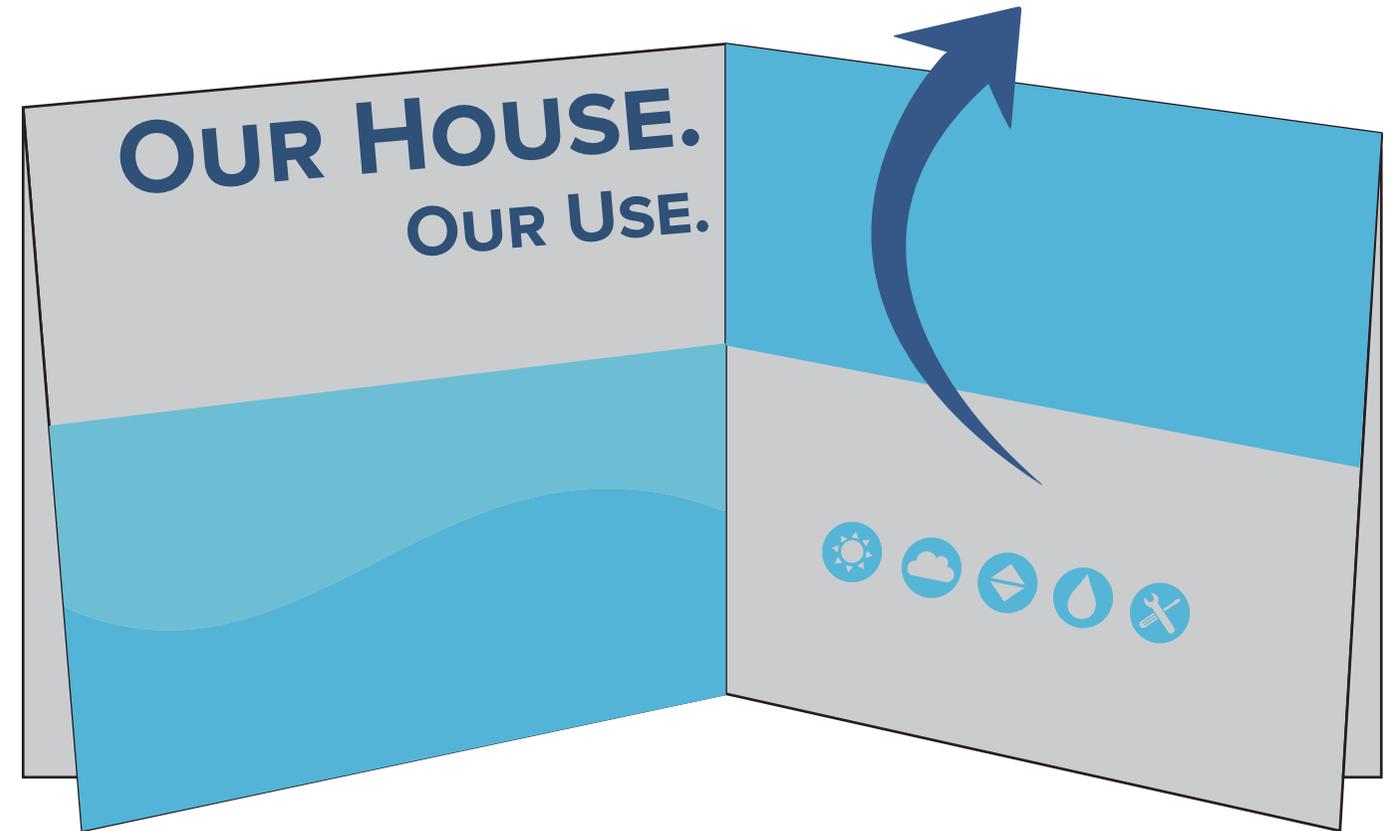
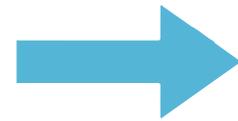
The cloud based information analysis and storage system allows communities to share, compare, and evaluate their collective direct resource consumption over time.



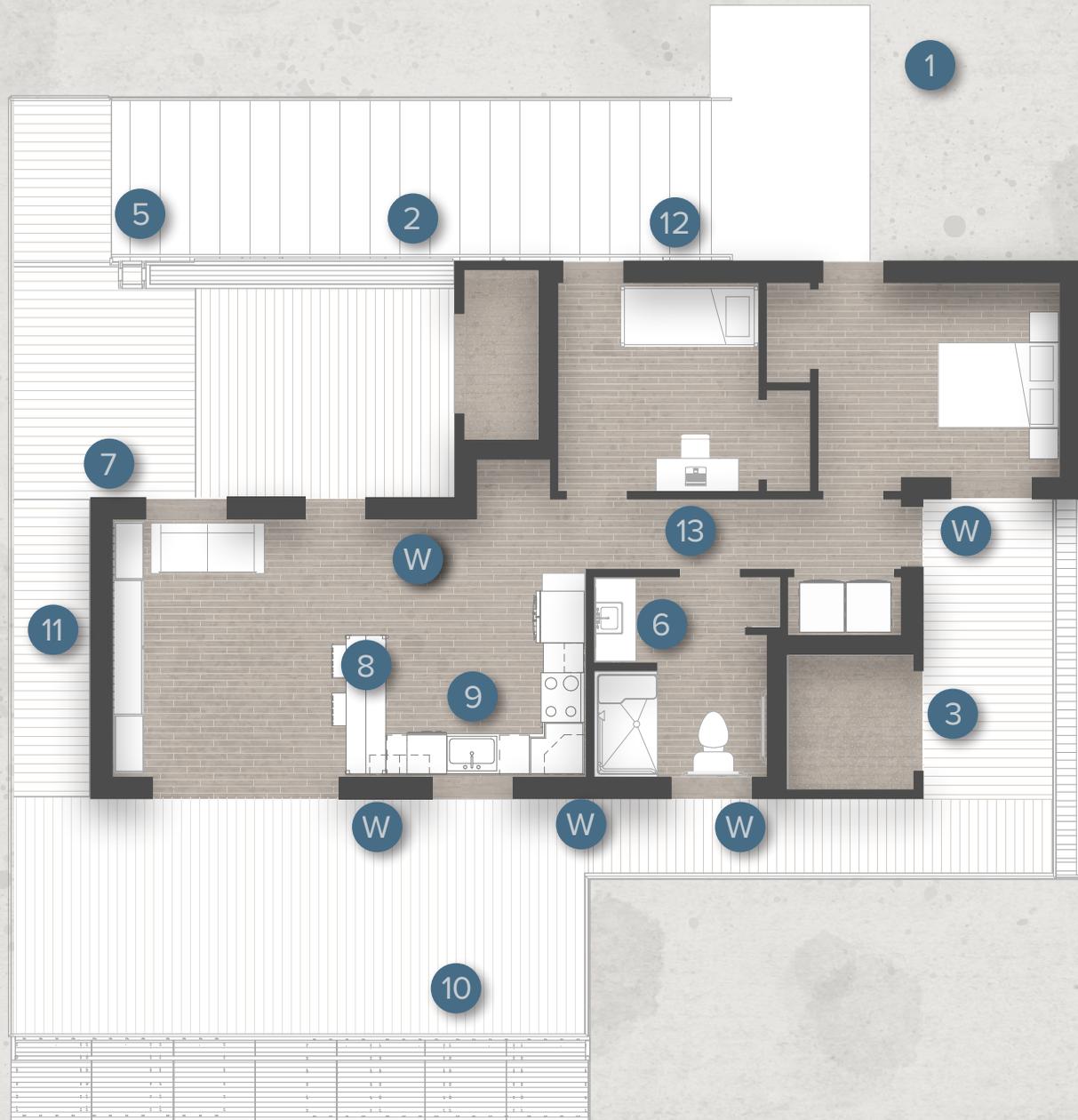
INFORMATION FEEDBACK



Feedback devices present real-time data right at the point of use in new, engaging, and accessible displays.



PUBLIC EXHIBIT PLAN



- ### EXHIBIT SIGNS
- 1 OUR H2OUSE INTRODUCTION
 - 2 DROUGHT TIMELINE
 - 3 RADIANT FLOOR DIAGRAM
WATER FACTS ●
 - 5 WATER FEEDBACK #1
 - 6 WATER FEEDBACK #2
 - 7 BAMCORE WALL CUT-AWAY
 - 8 ACCORDION TABLE DIAGRAM
 - 9 WATER FEEDBACK #3
 - 10 RAIN WATER DIAGRAM
 - 11 SPONSOR RECOGNITION
 - 12 INTRODUCTORY SIGNS
 - 13 HYDRAO



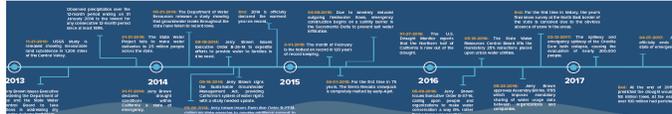
MAIN EXHIBIT SIGNS:

The main exhibit signs are composed of three different arrays of informational displays that are primarily designed to provide prospective tour-goers with reading material while they wait in line. The first array consists of 5 **introductory signs** that measure 20"x13" and feature a block of text with an infographic. The second array is a single sign that measures 20"x10' and provides a summary of important events that occurred in the 2014-2016 California drought. The third array is 8 pole mounted signs that measure 8"x6" and alternate between general facts about water and facts about water use in California.

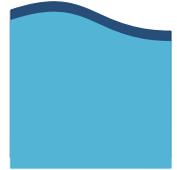
INTRODUCTORY SIGNS



DROUGHT TIMELINE



GENERAL WATER FACTS



INDIVIDUAL SYSTEM SIGNS:

Individual system signs consist of two separate, unrelated text/graphic displays that measure 24"x24" and help explain unique water and energy systems in the home. The first sign is dedicated to explaining how our HVAC system functions in heating and cooling mode, and the second sign explains the unique design of our rainwater filtration system.



INDIVIDUAL COMPONENT SIGNS:



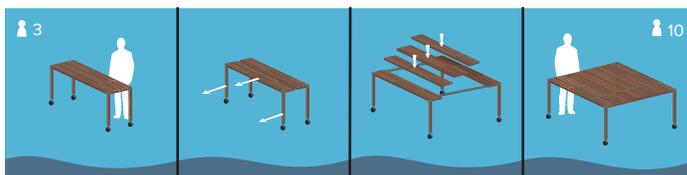
The first set of individual component signs consists of 3 8"x10" text explanations of different water feedback devices throughout the home. The second 8"x32" stand-alone sign displays the different configurations of the accordion table in the main living room.

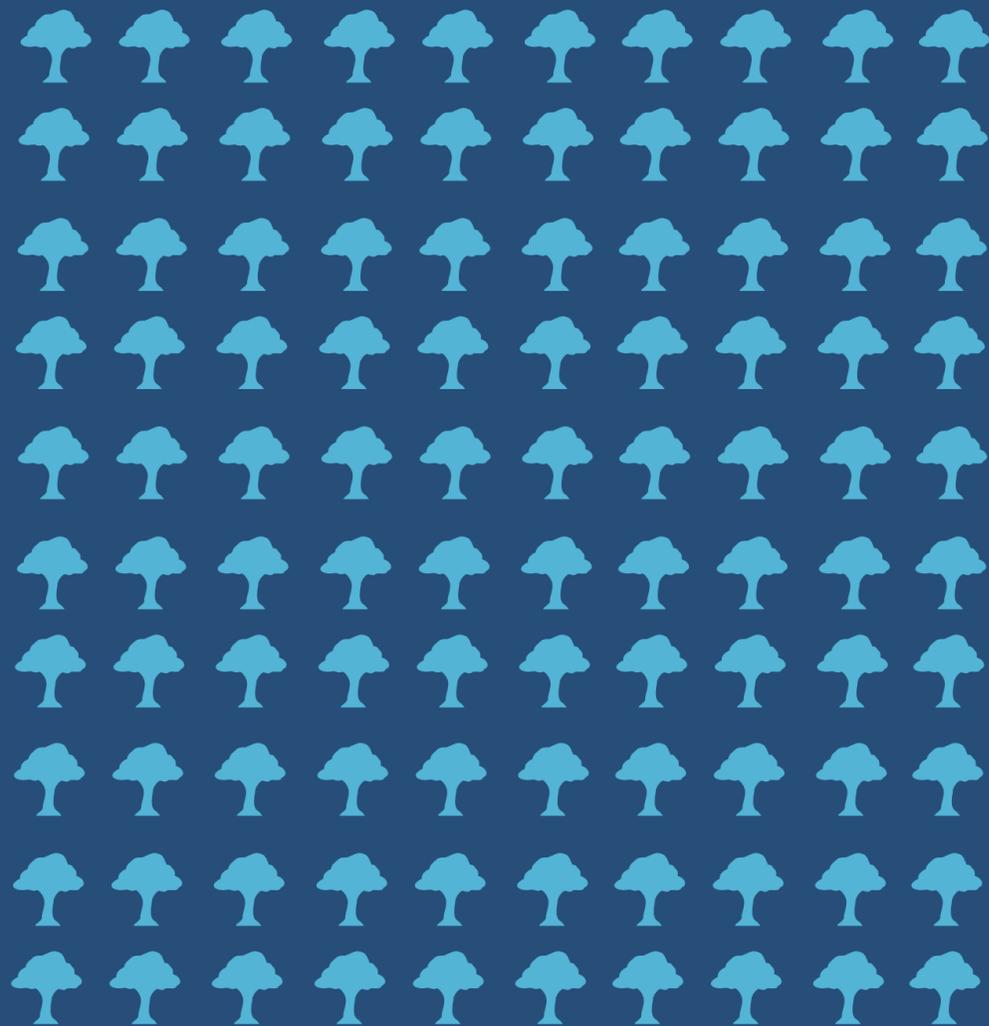
SPONSOR SIGN



WATER FEEDBACK SIGNS

TABLE SIGN





 = 1 million trees dead from the drought

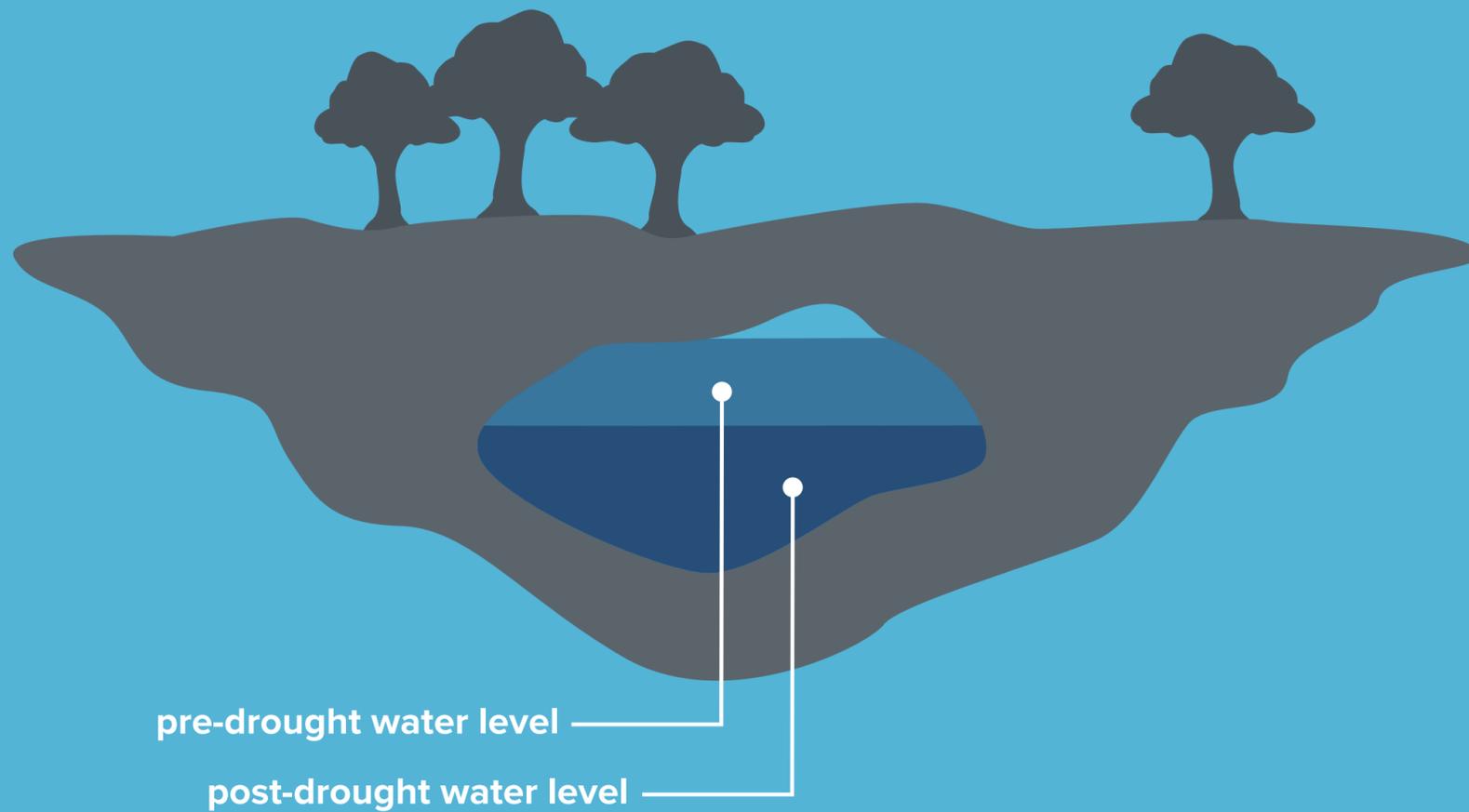
The wood used on and inside the house comes from a tree that is one of about 100 million trees dead as a direct result of the recent California drought. About 50% of California water stays in nature to keep the flora and fauna healthy, and without this water supply, trees become weak and susceptible to insects and disease. This mass of dry, dead trees creates an environment severely at risk for wildfires.





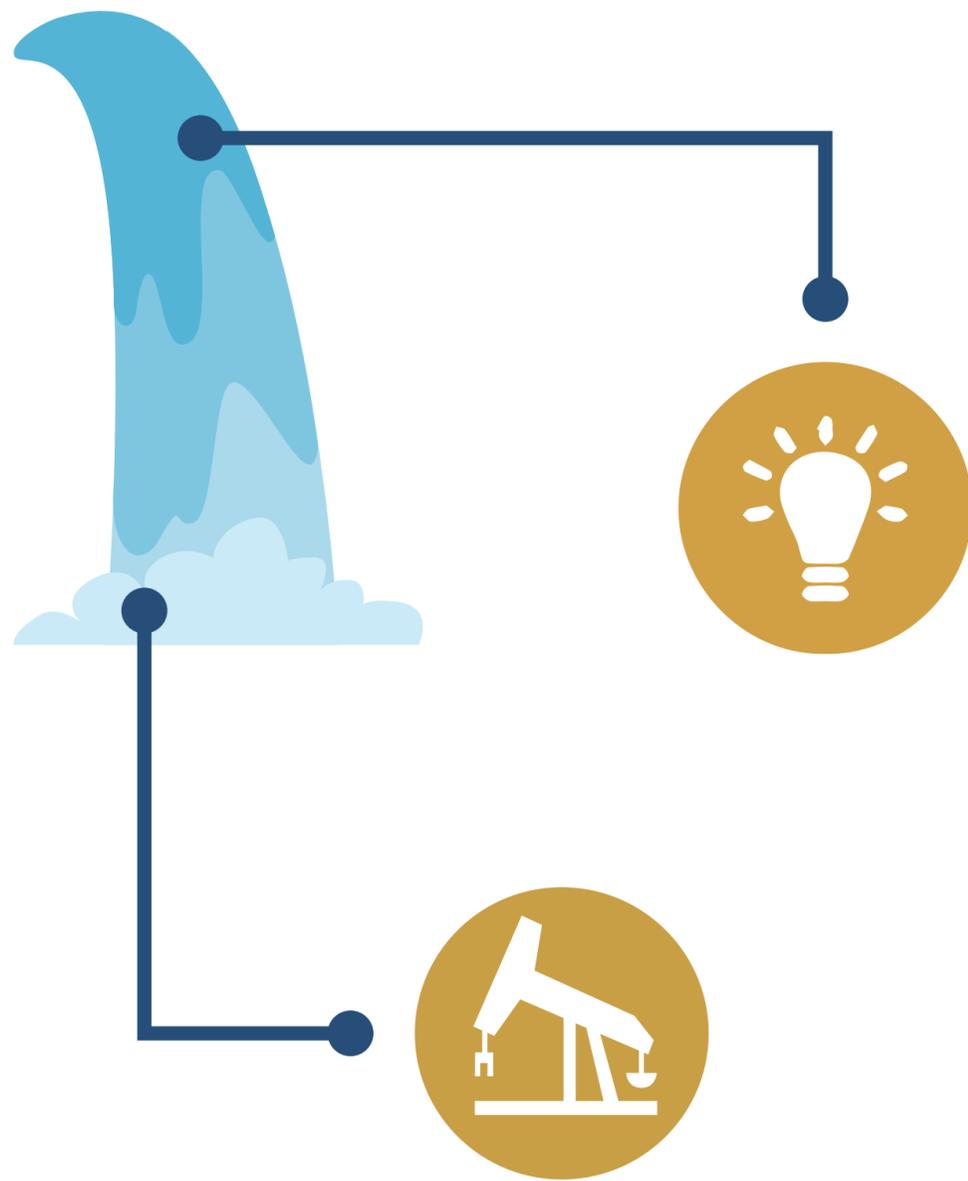
Since 1900, California has experienced 10 large-scale, multi-year droughts. The most recent drought lasted from 2012 to 2016 and had the driest four-year stretch in 120 years of record keeping.





Droughts cause irreparable damage to California's water storage systems. Billions of gallons of water are stored in natural underground aquifers. In times of drought, this water is withdrawn more quickly than it can be replenished, causing the land above it to collapse into the empty space, permanently preventing water from refilling it.





In California, most energy production methods rely on adequate water stores. California is the nation's third-largest oil producing state, and is becoming increasingly reliant on water-based extraction methods to maintain production. Additionally, thermoelectric and hydroelectric power production are also closely linked to water supply levels.



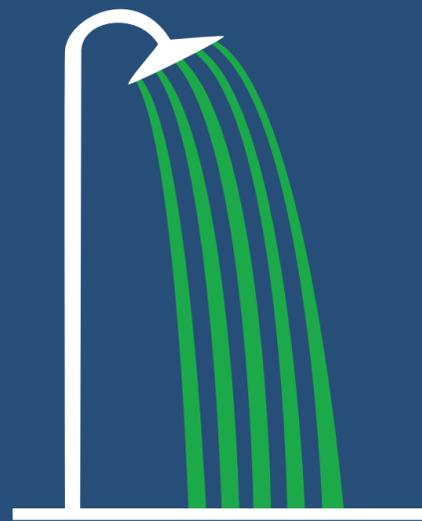


Our H2Ouse (pronounced “our house”) combines water and energy efficient technologies with data feedback and control systems to help foster sustainable habits. Our H2Ouse not only uses 50% less water in a year than a normal residences, but it most importantly proposes a paradigm shift, wherein water and energy conservation become the norm to create a sustainable lifestyle for the residents and the community.

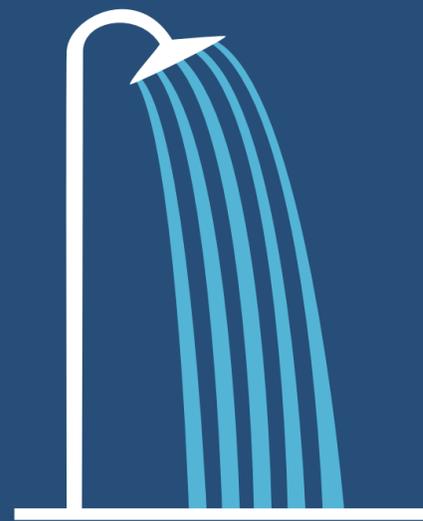


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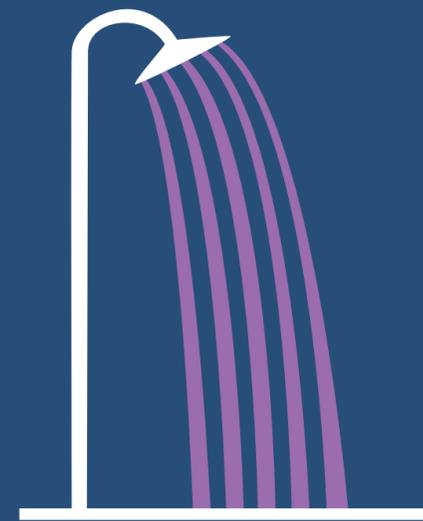
The Hydrao shower head's integrated LED system lights up the water with different colors depending on the amount of water used. This gives the user real time feedback on their water usage.



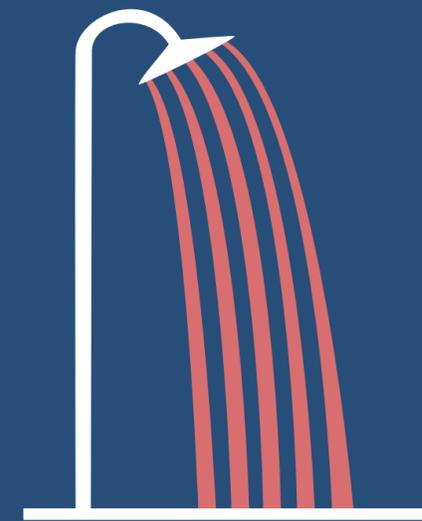

10 Liters




20 Liters




30 Liters




40 Liters



= 2 Liters or about 1/2 gallon

WELCOME TO OUR H₂OUSE



Drought Resilient

Our H₂Ouse responds to California drought events with water efficient technology, drought tolerant landscaping, and water conscious interior design.



Inclusive

Our H₂Ouse is suitable for a wide range of residents with full ADA accessibility, low-cost solutions, and reconfigurable features.



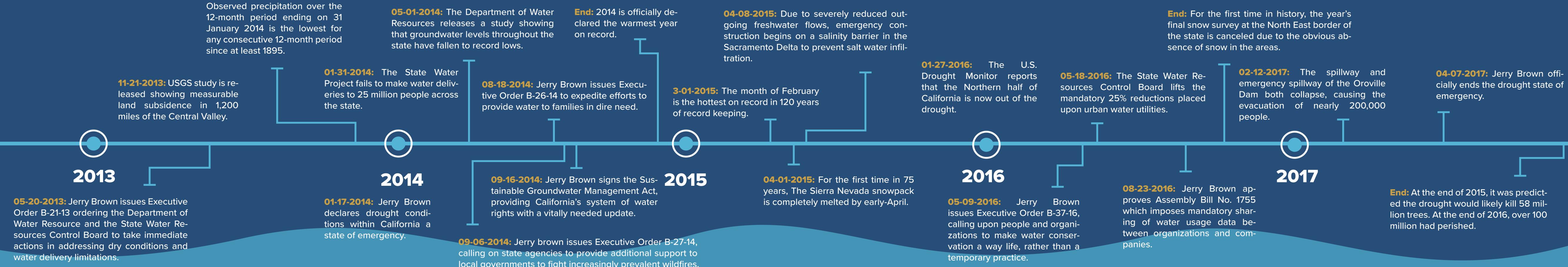
Educational

Our H₂Ouse educates occupants through feedback mechanisms, salient systems, and intentional design.



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ENERGY

DROUGHT TIMELINE

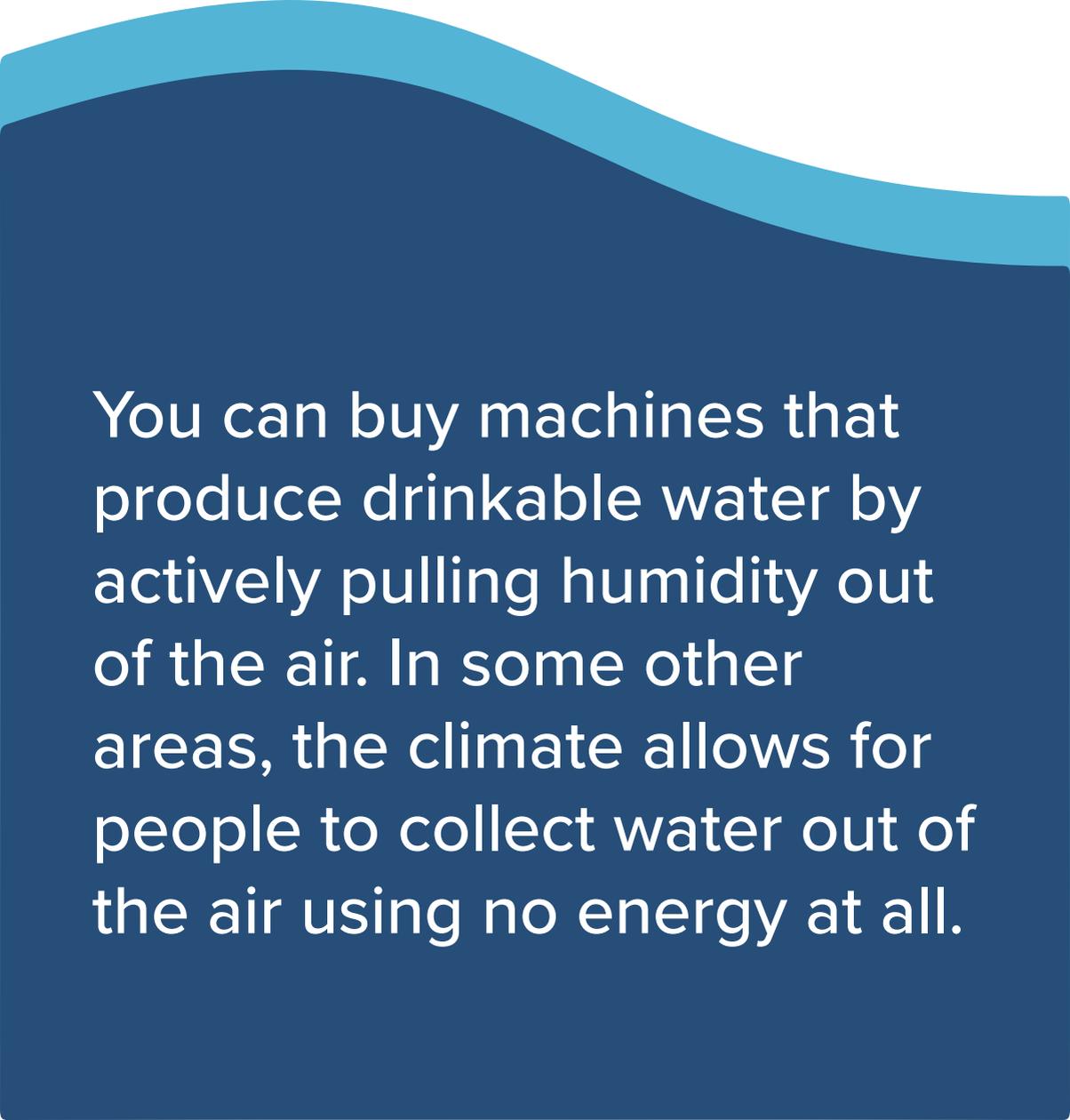




Water is the only substance on earth that naturally exists in the solid, gas and liquid phase.



Landscape irrigation
accounts for nearly
half the water used by
urban Californian
residents.

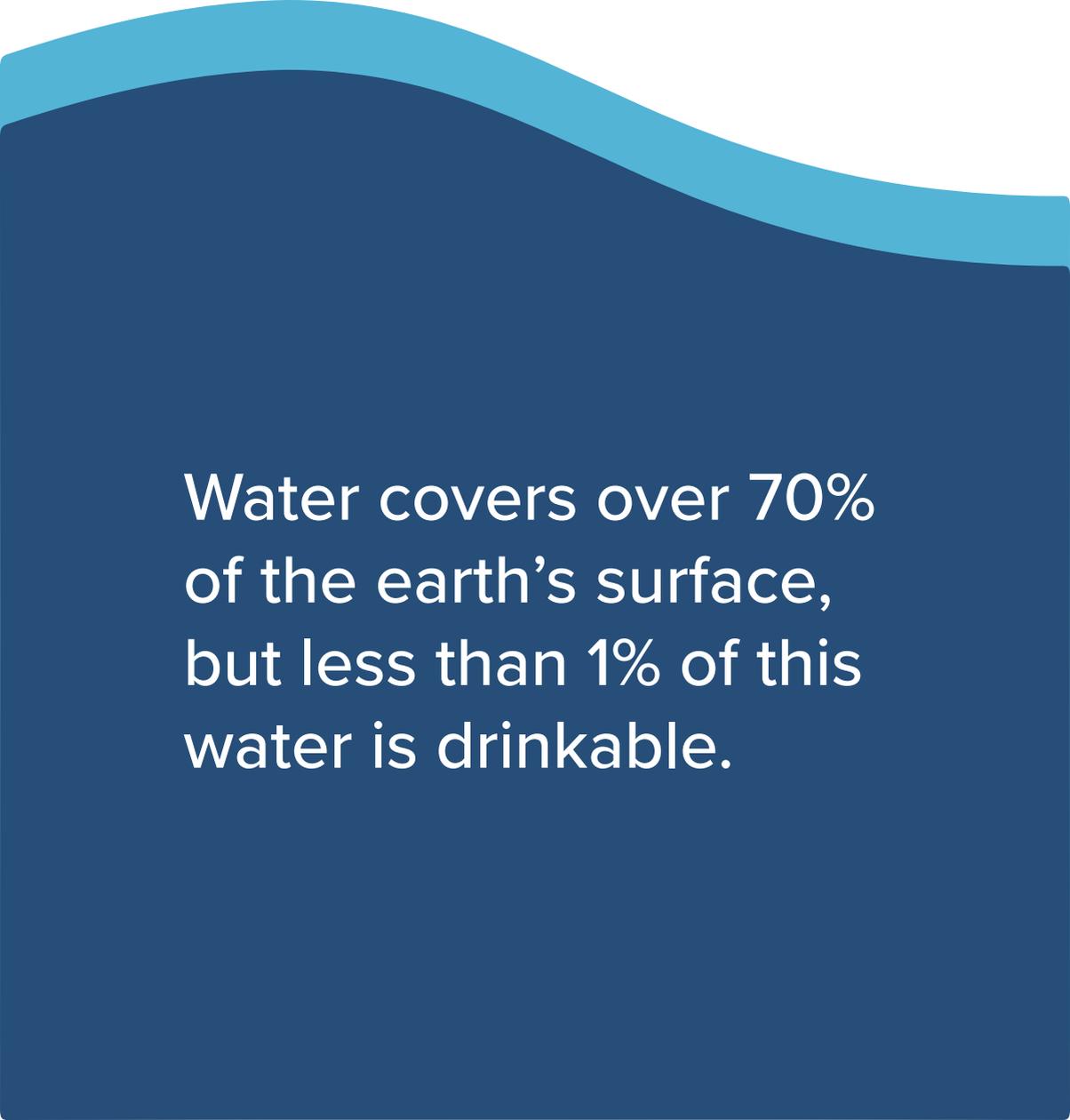
The background of the slide features a dark blue base with a lighter blue wavy shape at the top, resembling a stylized horizon or water surface.

You can buy machines that produce drinkable water by actively pulling humidity out of the air. In some other areas, the climate allows for people to collect water out of the air using no energy at all.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

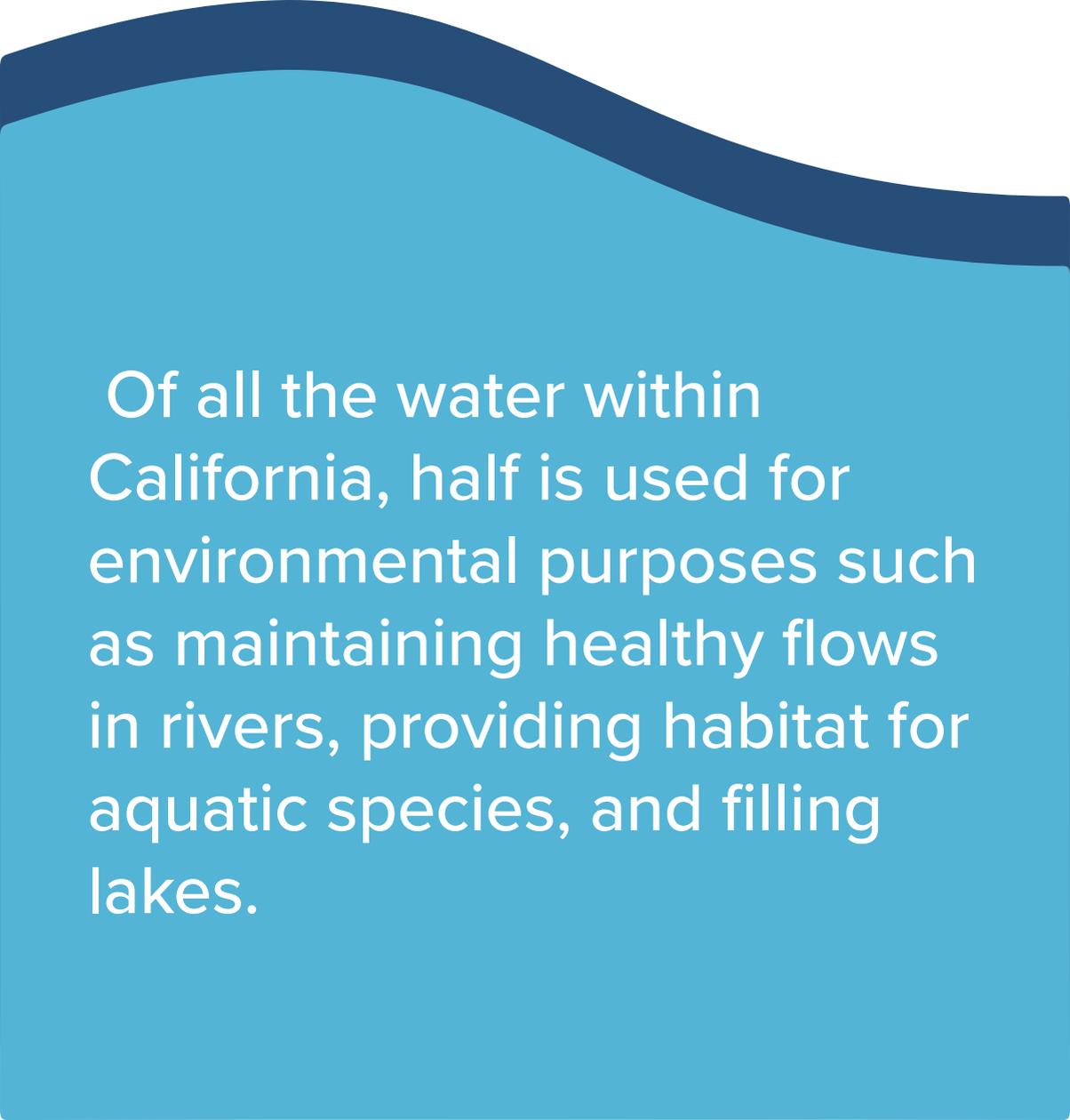


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SOLAR DECATHLON



Water covers over 70%
of the earth's surface,
but less than 1% of this
water is drinkable.

Water use in an average California household is distributed to landscaping water (14%), then faucets (53%), toilets (17%), showers (16%), faucets (15%), laundry (14%), and leaks (14%).



Of all the water within California, half is used for environmental purposes such as maintaining healthy flows in rivers, providing habitat for aquatic species, and filling lakes.

PEOPLE GET THIRSTY, AND SO DO PLANTS.



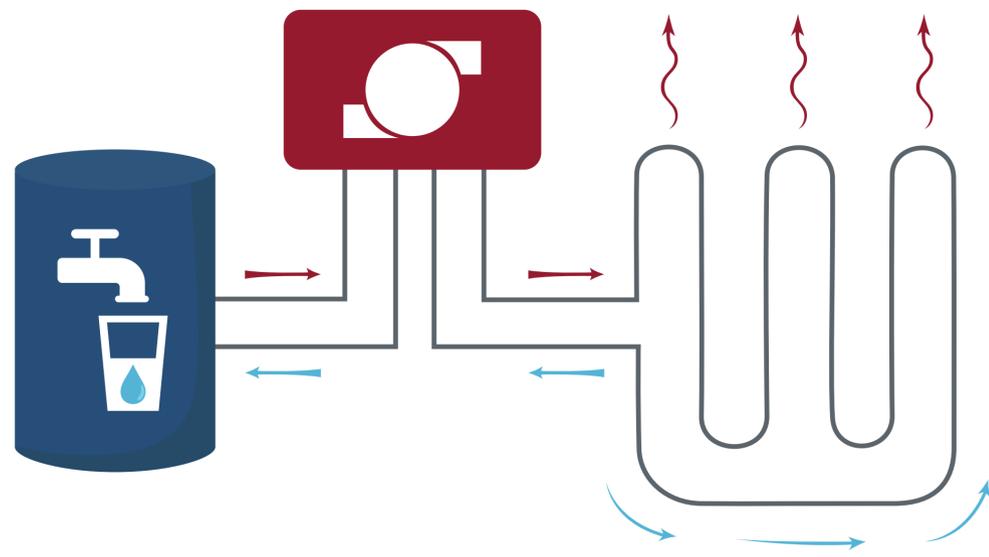
Thankfully, plants aren't as picky, so they can use recycled water from the shower and washing machine. This water is called "greywater," and is used to water our non-edible plants.



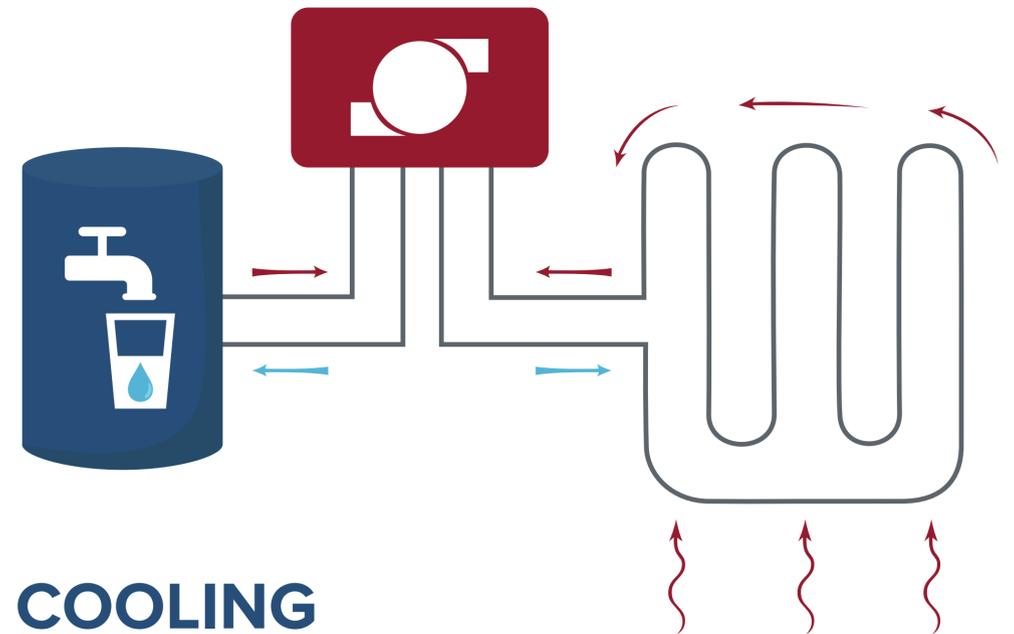
Health and safety laws prevent gray water from being used for edible plants, we designed a unique, long-term rainwater storage system to supply our edible garden with year round water. These combined systems completely eliminate outdoor potable water use.



WHAT'S UNDER THIS FLOOR?



HEATING



COOLING

Our radiant floor helps keep the house comfortable in an energy efficient way. Heated (or cooled) water is circulated through flexible piping under the floors, allowing heat to transfer into the living space evenly and quietly. After travelling through a loop, the water is recirculated back to the air to water heat pump where the process begins again.

When not in use for heating or cooling, our heat pump also heats the potable (drinking) water in the indirect water tank, eliminating the need for another heater.



Traditional fountains are eye-catching, but they don't have a place in a drought tolerant landscape because they continually lose water through evaporation. To solve this problem and increase its functionality, we made our fountain a closed system so it never loses any water and programmed the water level to represent the home's daily water consumption.



Smartphone apps are easy to ignore. We want to convey water usage to occupants in a more direct, yet non-intrusive manner. Our smart mirror projects different combinations of information through its reflective surface, including water and electricity usage, the time and date, calendars, weather forecasts, and reminders.



Information feedback is most helpful when it's immediately displayed at the source during usage. Our water meters clearly quantify and display a person's water use in real-time using easily recognizable units.

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of a thick, light blue wavy line that curves across the width of the page, set against a dark blue background.



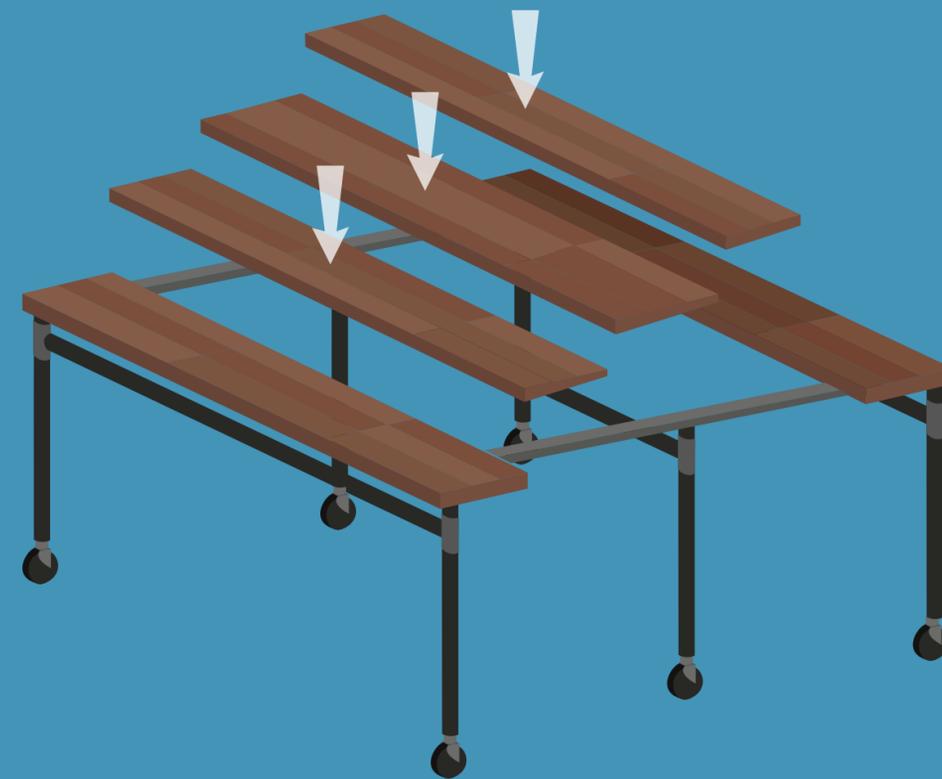
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Team Uniform Design

The Blue Mustangs team members will wear the long sleeve design when not working at the competition site and will wear the short sleeve t-shirt when working on the competition site. Designs of these shirts are presented below.









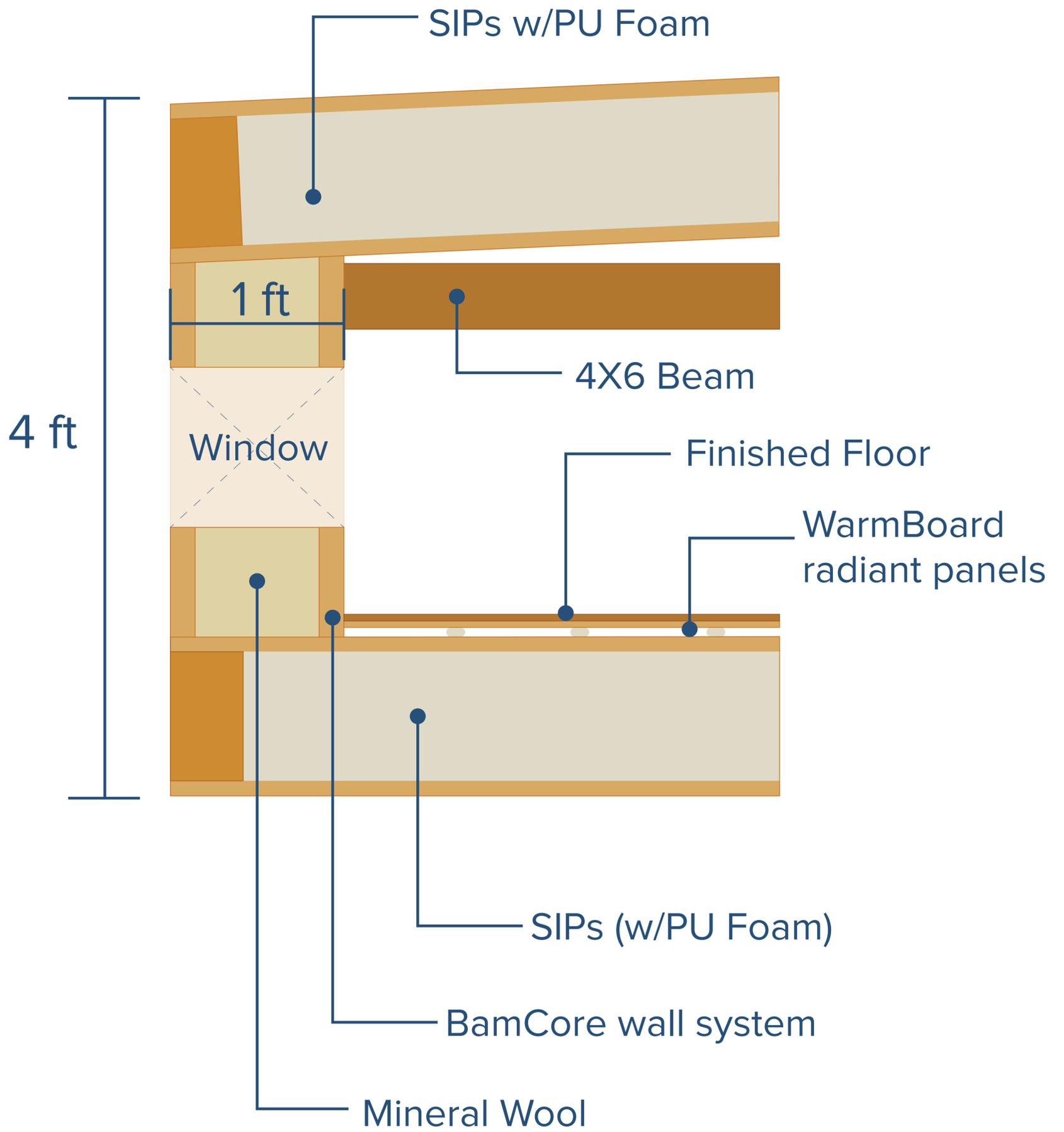








BamCore Exterior Wall Cutout



UC Davis Solar Decathlon 2017 Social Media + Website Links:

- 1.) Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ourhouse.ucdavis/>
- 2.) Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ucdavis.solardecathlon.2017/>
- 3.) Team website: <http://solardecathlon.ucdavis.edu/>