

Designer Checklist

Notes to the Landscape Designer:

Below is a checklist of best practices that the City of Sacramento Department of Utilities (DOU) would like discussed during the landscape design consultation with participants in the City's River Friendly Landscape Rebate Program. This is not intended to be an all-inclusive list, but a guideline for the designer and a method to record topics covered during the consultation for both the Participant in the Landscape Design Assistance Program and the City. The City will provide the participant with a copy of the completed checklist for their records.

This is the printable version of the Designer Checklist. Once the consultation is complete, please submit the completed checklist to the City by one of the following methods:

1. Email to riverfriendly@cityofsacramento.org
2. Mail to: City of Sacramento Department of Utilities, Water Conservation Office, 5730 24th Street, Bldg. 22, Sacramento, CA

All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

Designer's Name *

Date of Consultation *

Participant's Name *

Participant's Address *

Street Address *

City *

State *

Zip *

Overview of River Friendly Landscape:

The watershed approach is a natural approach to integrated and site-specific landscape design, construction, and maintenance that transcends water-use efficiency...

- Build and protect healthy, living soil
- Use rainwater as a resource through retention and infiltration of stormwater
- Use climate-appropriate plants and group them according to water and sun requirements
- Use highly efficient supplemental irrigation, when irrigation is necessary

Benefits:

- Increased soil health and water retention capacity with use of compost and mulch
- Slow, spread, and sink mantra (instead of pave it, pipe it, pollute it)
- Use advanced water efficiency technologies for rainwater capture, storage, and use
- Increased stormwater capture and infiltration, decreased stormwater runoff
- Increased opportunities for graywater as sparingly-used supplemental irrigation
- Use of permeable and pervious materials
- Reduced or eliminated pesticide and fertilizer application and runoff
- Utilize high-efficiency irrigation system components to deliver water where and when needed
- Reduced “green waste” production through proper plant selection and placement
- Reduced energy consumption, cost, and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)
- Increased GHG capture and improved air quality
- Increased food production and habitat improvement for beneficial insects, wildlife, and humans
- The above saves water and augments local supply.

Overview:

Evaluating climate, exposure, and topography

Benefits:

This knowledge is critical to creating a beautiful, water-efficient landscape and being able to select plant materials that match the site.

NOTES (Include notes & instructions for participants)

Overview:

Assessing the soil and soil health; inquire about drainage issues, if any.

Benefits:

Understanding the soil and soil health are critical to landscaping in an environmentally friendly manner.

NOTES (Include notes & instructions for participants)

Overview:

Improve compacted spoils

Benefits:

Aerate, if necessary; topdressing with compost and/or worm castings relieves compaction, stimulates root growth and disease resistance.

NOTES (Include notes & instructions for participants)

Overview:

Apply 1 inch of compost to the surf of the soil

Benefits:

Compost fosters a diverse, fertile and disease-suppressive soil. It can improve structure, aeration and water holding capacity of the soil, thereby reducing the need for irrigation.

NOTES (Include notes & instructions for participants)

Overview:

Choosing plants suited to the Sacramento region that also fit your yard's conditions.

Benefits:

Climate-appropriate plants are more likely to thrive, which reduces their susceptibility to disease and other pests and their need for fertilizers and pesticides. Water can be conserved.

NOTES (Include notes & instructions for participants)

Overview:

Appropriately sited plants

Benefits:

Place and space plants so they can grow to mature size and natural form.

NOTES (Include notes & instructions for participants)

Overview:

Grouping plants by water (creating hydrozones) and solar (sun) needs.

Benefits:

Placing plants with the same water and sun requirements together enables plants in that group to be in their preferred growing conditions, which fosters resistance to pests, conserves water, and promotes plant health.

NOTES (Include notes & instructions for participants)

Overview:

Use 3-4 inches of organic layer of mulch (e.g., leaves, wood chips, arborist mulch) in shrub and plant areas, and around the base of trees.

Benefits:

Mulch conserves water, reduces evaporation, moderates soil temperature, suppresses weeds, reduces soil erosion, enhances plant growth and landscape appearance. Note: Mulch should not be in contact with the base of tree trunks or plants.

NOTES (Include notes & instructions for participants)

Overview:

Designing for on-site rainwater and storm water management.

Benefits:

Benefits: Examples: Rain gardens, catchment systems, contours, terraces, earth shaping.
Helps to recharge groundwater and reduce use of potable water.

NOTES (Include notes & instructions for participants)

Overview:

Increase pervious surfaces; advocate for the use of pervious materials/surfaces and reduce connected non-pervious materials (e.g., driveway to walkway to patio).

Benefits:

Decreases runoff, protects the biology of the Sacramento River watershed and contributes to the restoration of our streams, creeks and wetlands.

NOTES (Include notes & instructions for participants)

Additional Topics

Overview:

Install a high-efficiency irrigation system

- Goal: System uses only low-flow drip & sprinklers
- Goal: System has Smart (weather-based) controller

Benefits:

High efficiency systems target water to where it is needed (soil and plants), limit evaporation and runoff, prevent disease and minimize weed, protects water quality.

NOTES (Include notes & instructions for participants)

Overview:

Manage irrigation schedules.

Benefits:

Appropriate watering promotes plant health and reduces plant replacement costs, the need for pesticides and excessive pruning, as well as promoting the efficient use of water.

NOTES (Include notes & instructions for participants)

Overview:

Maintain the irrigation system so every drop counts.

Benefits:

Properly maintained irrigation systems can avoid unnecessary plant, fencing, and asphalt replacement and/or repair costs, and increase property values.

NOTES (Include notes & instructions for participants)

* Benefits adapted from the River-Friendly Landscaping Guidelines and The Watershed Approach to Landscaping document prepared by the California Water Efficient Partnership (CalWEP, previously CUWCC). For more information, visit [website](#).