

# 8 Principles for Regenerative Landscapes



ReScape California is a non-profit organization that educates about and advocates for a whole-systems approach to landscaping that works in harmony with the natural world and addresses the changing environment. ReScape’s landscaping practices are based on 8 regenerative principles which foster soil health, sequester carbon, conserve water and protect habitat and valuable resources while reducing waste and preventing pollution in our communities and watersheds.

## Sacramento River Watershed

A watershed is all the land in a region from which rain collects and drains into a common creek, river, lake or bay. The water in a watershed moves across the land and through the storm drain system both underground and on the surface. Water that flows onto streets and into gutters is called urban runoff. On the way to the creeks and rivers, urban runoff picks up pollutants that eventually end up, untreated, in our waterways.

The 27,000 square-mile Sacramento River Watershed drains the Sacramento Valley, the Modoc Plateau, and parts of the Cascade Range and Sierra Nevada Range. This watershed is one of the largest in the United States and covers most of northern California. The Sacramento River carries 31% of the state’s total surface water runoff. The mouth of the Sacramento River is at Suisun Bay near Antioch where it combines with the San Joaquin River, flows into the San Francisco Bay and ultimately meets the Pacific Ocean under the Golden Gate Bridge.

Whether your landscape is next to a creek or miles away, your activities impact the quality of water in the Sacramento River Basin. In healthy landscapes, water from rain or irrigation percolates through soil that is rich in organic matter and alive with organisms. Living soils absorb and retain much of the water while also filtering out pollutants before the water reaches the aquifer or watershed. Incorporating ReScape’s 8 Principles into your landscaping practices will ensure that you are helping to protect the watershed and minimize pollutants that reach the waterways where we live, work and play.



# 8 Landscape Principles



## 1. Act Local

Built landscapes are a part of the larger ecosystem of the Sacramento Watershed and they can contribute to its health if designed and maintained using sustainable practices.



## 2. Reduce Waste

Reduce waste by choosing the right plants, avoiding invasive plant species, using recycled and salvaged products in the landscape, and by composting, mulching and grasscycling plant debris.



## 3. Nurture Soil

Soils are living ecosystems and when landscape practices allow the soil food web to thrive it can filter pollution, store water, provide plant nutrients and help plants resist pests naturally.



## 4. Sequester Carbon

Healthy vegetation works together with soil rich in organic matter and beneficial microorganisms to remove carbon dioxide from the air and store it as soil carbon, an important strategy for addressing climate change.



## 5. Save Water

Creating drought resistant soils, select plants naturally adapted to summer-dry climates, use stormwater, greywater and recycled water in the landscape as much as possible, and use efficient irrigation systems that include self-adjusting, weather-based controllers.



## 6. Conserve Energy

Reduce the need for mowing and shearing, shade buildings and paved areas, use efficient outdoor lighting, and buy local landscape products.



## 7. Protect Water & Air

Maximize permeable surfaces and minimize stormwater runoff, use integrated pest management, minimize the use of synthetic pesticides and avoid overuse of fertilizers, reduce fossil fuel consumption, and plant trees to remove CO2 and absorb air pollutants.



## 8. Create Habitat

By using native plants and increasing the diversity of plant palettes, our built landscape can provide food, water and shelter for birds, butterflies, beneficial insects and other welcome creatures.

## Need help? Join ReScape!

Search our directory for a landscape professional trained in ReScape's 8 Principles, or join the regenerative landscape community by becoming a ReScape member.

Details at [rescapeca.org](https://rescapeca.org)

## Resources

Calscape Native Plant Nursery Directory. [www.calscape.org](https://www.calscape.org)

California Association of Nurseries & Garden Centers Directory. [www.cangc.org](https://www.cangc.org)

Our Water Our World Eco-Friendly Product Locator. [www.ourwaterourworld.org](https://www.ourwaterourworld.org)

Regional Water Authority. [www.bewatersmart.info](https://www.bewatersmart.info)

Sacramento River Watershed Program. [www.sacrivier.org](https://www.sacrivier.org)

Sacramento Stormwater Quality Partnership. [www.beriverfriendly.net](https://www.beriverfriendly.net)





Our Create Habitat principle acknowledges that biodiversity is crucial to the health and resiliency of the local landscape. Plant and animal diversity is one of the many factors that make the Sacramento River watershed unique and beautiful. More than 1,000 local plant species bloom during the year, supporting hundreds of native pollinators, beneficial insects and other organisms that contribute to a healthy landscape.

### Simple steps to Create Habitat

1. Diversify your plant palette. Include annuals, biennials and perennials of different sizes, shapes and colors. Plant evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs that bloom at different times.
2. Choose California native plant species first. Many native plants flourish in the Sacramento area, often with less water and maintenance.
3. Provide food and water. Select plants that will provide food in a variety of ways—from berries to nuts to nectar. Let some plants go to seed. Be sure to change water in birdbaths every few days to avoid creating breeding sites for mosquitoes.
4. Shelter allows wildlife a safe place from predators and also from extreme weather, like Sacramento's hot summers. Cover can be provided by a dry-laid rock wall, roosting box, pond, boulders, or native vegetation.
5. Eliminate the use of pesticides. Pesticides do not kill only the targeted pest species. Birds, bees, butterflies and beneficial insects are also vulnerable.

### Creating habitat protects our watershed

- Attracting beneficial insects helps control pests without the use of pesticides.
- Selecting native plants prevents the spread of exotic invasive plants.
- Providing food, water and shelter enhances local habitat and increases biodiversity.



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National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat. [www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife](http://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife)

Our Water Our World Eco-Friendly Product Locator. [www.ourwaterourworld.org](http://www.ourwaterourworld.org)

Regional Water Authority. [www.bewatersmart.info](http://www.bewatersmart.info)

Sacramento Area Beekeepers Association. [www.sacbeekeepers.org](http://www.sacbeekeepers.org)

