

# 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 Conserve Energy principle recognizes that conventional landscaping practices such as mowing, leaf blowing and transporting materials long distances consume large amounts of fossil fuels. A regenerative landscape conserves energy by reducing the need for mowing and shearing, by shading buildings and paved areas, using efficient outdoor lighting, and buying local landscape products.

## Simple steps to Conserve Energy

1. Plant and protect trees to moderate building temperatures. Shading buildings minimizes the need for air conditioning in the hot summer months. In the winter trees can help reduce heating needs by slowing the wind.
2. Design lighting carefully. Use energy efficient bulbs and take steps to minimize light pollution.
3. Choose equipment for fuel conservation. Use hand powered tools when possible. When power tools are necessary, select fuel efficient or electric models.
4. Buying local reduces the fuel consumption and air pollution from transporting products. Emissions from cars and trucks is a leading contributor to air pollution in the Sacramento area.
5. Shade paved areas and air conditioners. Sacramento County residents can receive free shade trees through the Sacramento Shade Tree Program.

## Conserving energy protects our watershed

- Planting trees stabilizes the soil and reduces erosion from winter rains that can lead to sedimentation in local creeks and rivers.
- Installing high-efficiency or solar-powered lights and pumps reduces greenhouses gas emissions that contribute to climate change.
- Using hand-powered tools eliminates the need for fuel and avoids spills that can end up in storm drains and waterways.



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- Regional Water Authority. [www.bewatersmart.info](http://www.bewatersmart.info)
- Sacramento Shade. [www.sactree.com/shadetrees](http://www.sactree.com/shadetrees)

