An Educational Approach to Saving Water
Public School Water Assessment Program
San Mateo County Energy Watch (SMCEW) and the Green Star Schools (GSS) Program

Project Overview

The GSS Certification Program recognizes teachers in San Mateo County who have integrated waste management education into their core curriculum. GSS also provides online resources and technical assistance toward certification, and will soon launch certification pathways for water, transportation, energy and food.

In 2008, the Pacific Gas & Electric Company partnered with the City/County Association of Governments to form an Energy Watch team in San Mateo County. The Energy Watch team serves local governments, small businesses, non-profits, low-income residents, schools, and farms by providing energy efficiency services like free audits, incentives, and public classes and training.

Legacy with GSS

- To certify their classroom, teachers must engage students to complete a background worksheet on where water comes from and how it’s used
- To certify their school, teachers and students must form a Green Team
- The Green Team must audit the whole school and generate an annual Action Plan to educate all students in water conservation

Results and Deliverables

- 5 schools audited and 5 water savings-cost analysis reports generated, including recommendations for improvements
- Potential average annual school savings of $2300 and 185,000 gal
- Map of overlapping boundaries between 23 school districts, 150+ schools, and 16 water agencies; had not existed
- Portfolio of water incentive programs offered by each water agency, available for use by schools

Megan Waters, a Bay Area Fellow, graduated from Princeton with a degree in Politics and Environmental Studies. Her experience spans both the non-profit and private sectors, ranging from youth and college coaching to resource conservation and transportation planning and finance. Megan is interested in creating public-private partnerships to reduce GHG emissions and increase access to employment and academic opportunities.