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December 28, 2020

Board of Directors
Triunfo Water & Sanitation District
Ventura County, California

ON-LINE CLASSES FOR TWSD CUSTOMERS

Summary

At the November 23, 2020 Triunfo Water & Sanitation District (TWSD) Board meeting, staff requested the Board members' input on the idea of hosting one or more online water-related classes for customers as a means of public outreach. Staff presented topic and format alternatives for conducting such classes with Green Media Creations. The Board requested that staff research additional providers that may be less costly than the proposal from Green Media Creations (\$500-\$1,250), and present those alternatives at the December TWSD meeting.

Staff contacted Anna Harrington, Green Gardens Group, Greenwood Gardens, Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains, Surfrider Foundation, Urban Water Group, and Ventura County Master Gardeners. Staff also contacted the public outreach departments at Calleguas Municipal Water District and Las Virgenes Municipal Water District to inquire about their plans and potential providers, if any, for online water-related classes.

Of the potential providers above, staff received responses and proposals from six:

- **Anna Harrington** – Ms. Harrington is a professional landscape designer who specializes in soil health. She proposes to offer an hour-long live online presentation on the importance of healthy soil and the need to effectively manage and conserve rainwater on residential property. *Cost: \$750-\$1,000.*
- **Green Gardens Group** – This company, also known as G-3, is the contract education provider for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). They have presented in-person classes for TWSD in the past and currently have several options for online sessions:
 - Regularly scheduled workshops on California-friendly landscaping (60 min.), turf removal/replacement (60 min.), and drought-friendly landscape design (90 min.). TWSD could simply make the public link available to customers: <https://greengardensgroup.com/turf-transformation>. *Cost: \$0.*

- Custom scheduling of one or more of the above workshops on a date and time of TWSD's choosing. We would need to guarantee a minimum audience of 20. *Cost: \$0.*
- Specialized 60-minute sessions on rainwater capture, composting, and irrigation. These would be scheduled at a date and time of TWSD's choosing. *Cost: \$1,500.*
- **Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains** – This agency specializes in educational programs for students in grades K-12, but also conducts classes for adults. They propose to conduct a 90-minute online fire-wise landscaping class, including defensible space zones and fire-resistant/native plant selection, as well as a demonstration of the defensiblespace.org website. *Cost: \$300.*
- **Surfrider Foundation** – Foundation representative Laura Oergel, a professional landscape designer, suggests that TWSD consider offering a series of live online classes that would be recorded for archiving and presentation on the agencies' websites or YouTube channels. Topics include: evaluating your garden, grow living soil, detain the rain, right plant right place, water wisely, and tend the garden. She suggests they be offered in pairs for one or more hour-long presentations. *Cost: \$0 (a District donation to the Surfrider Foundation is optional).*
- **Urban Water Group** – As the designers of the demonstration garden at Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, representatives Tom Ray and Marilee Kuhlman have several topics they could offer in a 60-minute online presentation, including California-friendly planting, rain barrels/stormwater tanks, and harvesting rainwater in the garden. *Cost: \$600.*
- **Ventura County Master Gardeners** – This organization is affiliated with the University of California and offers several landscape-related online classes. They propose to conduct a water-focused landscape session by Dani Brusius, a master gardener from Oak Park. Ms. Brusius was the instructor in the "Landscaping for Fire" class that TWSD sponsored in November 2019. *Cost: \$50.*

Staff also received responses from the two water agencies:

- **Calleguas Municipal Water District** – The subject of online classes was discussed briefly at the December 15 meeting of the Public Information Officer/Conservation Coordinator group. No suggestions for online class providers were offered outside of those presented above.
- **Las Virgenes Municipal Water District** – The public outreach staff at LVMWD are concentrating their online education efforts at the K-12 student group and have no plans at this point for customer-focused online education.

Fiscal Impact

In addition to the above fees, there would be costs associated with promotion of the class(es). Depending on the Board's preferences and direction, these would include:

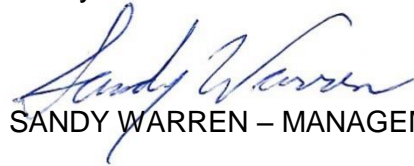
- Staff time for website posting and several announcements on social media (2-4 hours)
- Staff time for creation of a water bill insert (1-2 hours)
- Printing and insertion of the bill insert (+/- \$300)
- Display advertising in The Acorn and the Thousand Oaks Acorn (\$500-\$1000 per ad, depending on size)
- Staff time for administration of class registration (2-4 hours)

Funding for the above expenses is not included in the TWSD FY 2021-22 Adopted Budget; therefore, a budget adjustment sufficient to cover costs of the desired class(es) and promotional activities would be required.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board review the options for offering one or more online water-related class to customers, together with the associated costs, and direct staff accordingly.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (818) 400-9278 or sandywarren@vrsd.com.



SANDY WARREN – MANAGEMENT ANALYST

REVIEWED AND APPROVED


Mark Norris, General Manager

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