Session Spotlight: Drink, Wash, Water - Policy, Action & Greywater Irrigation

Published on **28 Sep 2012** | Written by **Jennifer Easton** | Posted in **Industry**

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Think fast: Do you need a permit to implement greywater irrigation? How about filters? What *is* greywater, anyway?

Get the facts at Greenbuild this November, during the "Drink, Wash, Water – Policy, Action and Greywater Irrigation" session. Greywater, untreated waste water which has not come in to contact with toilet water, (such as the water from bathroom wash basins or laundry tubs) is a big-time vehicle for reusing the water from our buildings. The Greenbuild session, led by Tim Kohut, Senior Strategist at Collaborative Project Consulting, Steve Bilson, CEO of ReWater Systems, and Katherine Spitz, Principal of Katherine Spitz Associates, will focus on California's revised greywater code and how projects are using it – what works, and what must be improved.

Here, Tim and Steve weigh in on why you should swing by "Drink, Wash, Water" at Greenbuild.

Why is the topic of your session important?

Tim Kohut: Many regions throughout the country are suffering through drought or other water restrictions. Rather than rely solely on drought tolerant landscapes and using less water, greywater irrigation offers an opportunity to reuse a viable water source to create landscapes that can thrive and serve as beacons for sustainable living. This session includes key ingredients to a successful greywater system - the landscape architect and the greywater irrigation consultant, who will discuss what works, what doesn't, and what steps to take to ensure enduring success of a healthy landscape irrigated with re-used water.

Steve Bilson: Greywater irrigation not only reuses up to half of all indoor water, while reducing up to half of all wastewater treatment costs, it also decreases urban run-off pollution significantly, and reduces energy demand, all cost effectively.

Why should Greenbuild attendees attend YOUR session specifically?

TK: LEED projects very often have curb appeal, catch the attention of the general public, and have the ability to transform and redefine design and site planning practices. Healthy landscapes, responsibly irrigated, can create aesthetic oasis, and can contribute to broader conservation efforts. This session is geared to design professionals, home owners, policy makers, and sustainability consultants interested in joining the conversation - we have set up a public Facebook group to share ideas and continue the conversation. Greenbuild 2012 is just the start.

SB: It is the one green technology that pays for itself quickly and returns a huge profit over the decades to come, increasing in value as water, wastewater, and energy rates continue to climb.

What's the most interesting experience you've had in the green building/sustainability world?

TK: I coordinated the design and installation of the first commercial grade greywater system in Los Angeles County. I was also Project Architect for the first LEED for Homes Platinum multi-family project in Southern California.

SB: That slogging through countless studies on our systems over the decades has proven beyond any doubt that the financial and environmental savings from these usually small little systems are truly phenomenal.

What's the most interesting non-green building related fact about yourself?

TK: I umpire girls fast-pitch softball.

SB: I love doing aerobatics.

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