

Caterpillar Mini Excavator with 2' auger attachment readying a newly drilled hole for planting.



Heritage Custom Landscapes, Inc.

Building Custom Landscapes with an Emphasis on Advanced Technology Water Conservation Practices

By Brian Hoover

Water is an essential, finite resource that must be managed properly in order to meet the demands of future generations. The demand for fresh water has never been greater, making it perhaps potentially even more valuable than gold here in California. Heritage Custom Landscapes, Inc. (Heritage) specializes in water conservation through the utilization of weather-based irrigation controllers, drip irrigation systems and retrofitting existing systems with high efficiency spray nozzles, in conjunction with the appropriate use of native plant design and selection. Dan Peters is the CEO and President of Heritage Custom Landscapes, as well as a certified landscape smart water manager. "Educating customers with acceptable irrigation practices and appropriate plant selection is what sets us apart from your average landscape contractor," says Peters. "We specialize in landscape irrigation water

conservation for residential, commercial and various state and federal agencies. Depending on their water usage, we have customers that have experienced water savings ranging from 20 percent to as much as 300 percent by upgrading to a more efficient system."

Heritage Custom Landscapes, Inc. is leading the way to better water conservation practices, by using a combination of high efficiency spray nozzles coupled with an EPA certified weather based irrigation controller. Dan and his team of landscape irrigation experts consult with their clients and are even able to retrofit existing systems, saving the customer thousands of dollars in the process. "Many homeowners, commercial and public works water consumers overwater their grass and landscape," says Peters. "Most native California plants have fairly low water demands that require much less water if applied properly."



Above Left (L-R):
 Dan Peters, CEO,
 Casey Peters, VP, Bill
 Kelley, not shown, A.J.
 Hensley.

Above Right:
 Caterpillar backhoe
 setting palm trees at
 the custom home.

Below:
 Water conservation
 in the landscape is
 Heritage's key focus
 and they achieves
 this by utilizing smart
 irrigation design and
 implementation
 through the use of higher
 technology products.

Dan Peters points out that water demands during the summer are much different from those in the winter months due to increased evaporation from the intense heat, with as much as 1/3 to 1/2 inch of evaporation per day. "We first make an irrigation assessment for each unique individual customer and site. In most cases we install a weather based controller with site specific settings that allow for programming of soil type, plant type, irrigation device type, slope of ground and specific micro climate," explains Peters. "These systems are so precise they'll apply water in minimal amounts to keep the plant/grass alive without overwatering. In so doing, that which is being irrigated will appear lush green, but the surrounding ground will appear dry."

According to Peters, conserving water is not only environmentally necessary to the sustainability of our environment, but it also saves money. "Investing in this technology

is a long term investment that will not only show a return from the water savings alone, but also guarantee zero runoff," says Peters. "If you have a slight slope, you code that into the controller and it will break a an irrigation segment into multiple small water applications with a 20-minute rest in between. You may have 3-5 irrigations cycles for one valve with numerous days of skipped irrigation based on evaporation (ET)."

Dan Peters knows firsthand and from an early age about just how critical water can be. He grew up on and has owned several family farms and part of his experience involved an education on irrigation from the ground up. "We grew everything from citrus and grapes to palm and Christmas trees





Left & Below: Caterpillar 259B Skidsteer back dragging sloped grade prior to installing jute and fiber webbed erosion control. This versatile machine may also be equipped with an auxiliary auger, trencher, rototiller, landscape rake, and numerous other implements.



here in California and making sure that everything was watered properly was one of my duties," says Peters. "I learned the basics of horticulture as a kid and what may seem difficult to some, but for me it eventually became second nature."

Dan was also good friends with Dr. Joseph Hung, who served as the head of the Water Science Program at Cal Poly for many years. The two men would talk for hours about worldwide water concerns. "I remember well a conversation I had with Dr. Hung, where he foresaw a time in the not so distant future where water production would become so critical that prices would skyrocket," says Peters. "I think we may be seeing the beginning of this in San Diego County right now where water was going for \$1,000 per acre foot and now the San Diego Water Authority just recently made a purchase at \$2,000 an acre foot and this may just be the beginning of higher prices statewide."

Dan served in the Coastguard, Navy and Air force for around 24 years. His Air Force career began in 1983 and concluded in 2002 and Dan spent much of his time inspecting military base construction sites worldwide. His grandfather was a general contractor, as were many of his cousins and somehow Dan knew that he would join their ranks one day. Dan had a break in his service in order to earn his

B.A. in English/Speech and Physical Education from Cal State University, Long Beach and his M.A. in English/Speech from the University of La Verne. He eventually rejoined the Air Force for a period before leaving to become a full-time English teacher. He would leave his teaching job each day and go straight home to work his agricultural business from his property in Rancho Cucamonga & Madera. Then in 2007, Dan decided to pursue his love of plants and construction and start his own landscape business, along with his son Casey Peters. Casey had recently graduated from California State Polytechnic University in Pomona with a B.S. in Landscape Irrigation Design and Water Management. He accepted a position with HydroPoint Data Systems, where he worked closely with multiple local municipalities in water conservation for the better part of five years. Both Dan and Casey became certified in Landscape Smart Water Management and also earned their certification as irrigation auditors, installers, repair technicians and backflow testers. In addition, Heritage Custom Landscapes, Inc. applied for and was accepted as a Service Disable Veteran Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) and a California Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE). "We do a lot of work with HydroPoint Data Systems out of Petaluma. They are the leading weather based irrigation

control manufacturer in the world and we act as a subcontractor for them on jobs for various cities like Laguna Beach and Barstow, as well as the California Water Authority, Caltrans District 12 and all of Orange County," says Peters. "We have been on some pretty high profile projects, like the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, which was initiated and completed in August 2014. Not all of our jobs are big and many times we find ourselves helping homeowners change out their antiquated systems and that is every bit as rewarding."

Dan points out that while it is true that any landscape contractor can attempt to install and program this advanced technology, you may be hard pressed to find one that is as thoroughly educated and experienced in water based systems. "For example, your run of the mill landscape contractor is typically not familiar with the types of coefficients for irrigation, and if they don't have spec manuals at their fingertips, they could be in for a world of trouble," says Peters. "They need to know things like gallons per minute of a particular device being used and if they don't understand the components and engineering associated with an irrigation program things could go from bad to worse in a hurry."

Dan also understands the importance of support equipment in his day-to-day operations. "When we first started out, we did much of the trenching by hand or rented skid steers and compact excavators as needed. Eventually we began to see the benefits of owning our own heavy equipment and for this we turned to Caterpillar and Johnson Machinery,"

says Peters. "Having Caterpillar equipment is a force multiplier. It is like having 20 extra boots on the ground, without the Worker's Comp, hospitalization and overtime. Johnson Machinery has been just great to deal with and you just can't beat Caterpillar with it comes to performance and return on investment. With Johnson Machinery and Caterpillar quality is inherent, intact and in place at all times."

Heritage Custom Landscapes, Inc. is licensed as a California Contractor's (#886931), a General Contractor (B), a Landscape Contractors (C27), a SDVOSB (DUNS#826333374), Federal CCR & ORCA Registered and a California Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise – DVBE (CA #50807). Whether you are in need of a landscape construction consultant, a new irrigation construction design or a retrofit to an existing irrigation system, Heritage is the smart choice in landscape water conservation. Water conservation in the landscape is their key focus and Heritage achieves this by utilizing smart irrigation design and implementation through the use of higher technology products. For more information, visit their website at www.heritagecustomlandscapes.com or call their Alta Loma office at (951) 966-4499 or (951) 966-5090. **Cc**



Above and Below: Drought resistant landscape installations accompanied with the installation of weather based irrigation systems installed by Heritage Custom Landscapes, Inc.

