



## **Leading Green Spa Goes Grey Osmosis Day Spa Sanctuary – The First Sonoma County Spa to Build Permitted Greywater System**

Freestone, CA For over two decades, Osmosis has served as a national pioneer in redefining the spa experience from one of merely personal pampering, to a holistic journey connecting the wellbeing of guests with that of Mother Nature. This month, the leading green spa further raises the bar with the completion of their new greywater system and constructed wetlands. With water becoming as prized as gold, Osmosis is striving for efficiency, recycling its greywater, while creating a spa-like sanctuary for nearby Northern California wildlife. Over fourteen months in the making and considered a landmark project, the new Osmosis constructed wetlands is the first of its kind completed in Sonoma County.

Saving nearly one thousand gallons of water per day, Osmosis' latest green milestone also paves the way for other local businesses seeking to transform used water into sustenance for thriving gardens and a better, more beautiful earth. "Greywater is water that flows down sinks, shower, and washing machine drains that can actually be a safe, even beneficial source of irrigation water," says Heather L. Shepherd, the spa's consulting environmental expert. "Consider it 'gently-used' water," she says. If released to garden plants, the treated greywater's nutrients nourish plant life as valuable fertilizer.

Osmosis is the first to seek permission to construct wetlands for cleaning the greywater before it can be used for irrigation. "While not legally required, Osmosis Founder Michael Stusser wanted to return good quality water to the soil," says Ms. Shepherd. Constructed wetlands have been used extensively in the wine industry over the last decade, but to date have not been used for domestic water. Combining technology with natural processes, constructed wetlands have wide and varied implications.

Not relying on concrete and steel, constructed wetlands such as Osmosis' usually can be built at less expense than other treatment options. Furthermore, with low tech, natural treatment methods in place, no new or complex technological tools are needed. Plants and microorganisms are the active agents in the treatment process. Another advantage of the wetlands is that operations and maintenance costs are likely to be less than a conventional treatment plant.

According to Sonoma County's Well & Septic Division Supervisor, Bob Swift, "Osmosis' new constructed wetlands and greywater system is a more responsible reuse of water. Rather than dispose of the greywater, the treated greywater will be reused and replace potable water for irrigation purposes. This will improve water quality by decommissioning an existing leach field that is within the flood plain of Salmon Creek."

In addition to being beautiful water gardens in and of themselves, constructed wetlands are considered the most biologically diverse of all ecosystems. Essentially an organic water treatment facility, the Osmosis constructed wetlands serves as a naturally healing home for thriving plant and animal life alike, including Northern California's abundant native birds, reptiles, water lilies, and more. The constructed wetlands is a complex, integrated system in which water, plants, animals, microorganisms and the environment – sun, soil, and air – interact to improve water quality.

“Re-using our greywater for irrigation reconnects spa guests and staff and the gardens to the natural water cycle,” says Stusser. “Our guests are well aware of the potent powers of water for their own bodies’ benefit. Now the Osmosis wetlands will enhance their spa experience with a renewed respect for water’s equally powerful and precious properties in the service of healing the earth,” says Stusser.

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