ECOLIFE Conservation Opens Model Aquaponics System, Demonstrating That California Can Conserve Water and Thrive

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Escondido, CA--On October 17, 2018 farmers, civic leaders, educators, restaurateurs and home-enthusiasts are invited to tour ECOLIFE Conservation's new, state-of-the-art aquaponics system in North San Diego County. Aquaponics – hailed as the future of agriculture in a land- and water-starved world -- is a sustainable method of food production combining aquaculture (raising aquatic animals) and hydroponics (soilless cultivation of plants in water with added nutrients).

At its test and research facility in Escondido, ECOLIFE designed and built a 900 ft^2 system capable of growing 333 lbs. of tilapia, 1,600 heads of lettuce or a combination of lettuce and high-value tomato and cucumber crops in a recirculating system. The innovative design features solar powered mechanical filtration, mineralization tanks, and back up power to keep water circulating in the event of a power outage.

ECOLIFE partnered with Calsense®, a leader in high-tech resource management to add state-of-the-art monitoring allowing ECOLIFE to monitor water use and quality in real-time. "With this system, we will be able to track in real-time, exactly how much water is needed to grow protein and vegetables. We anticipate a 90 percent or more savings on water when compared to conventional agriculture. Systems like this can be built anywhere, under any hydrological conditions. Aquaponics truly could be a game-changer for drought-stricken California," says A.J. van de Ven, President of Calsense®.

California's water woes are never over, and a changing climate demonstrates that even very wet years, such as the 2017-2018 water year, are often followed by very dry years. While local authorities have successfully built infrastructure to ensure that San Diego has a reliable water supply in a variety of conditions, it's clear there's still a great need for innovative thinking on water conservation, particularly in agriculture. San Diego's population is projected to grow, and per capita water use must continue to decline in order to meet the region's water needs.

"This system features state-of-the art filtration, cloud-based real-time monitoring, and is designed to grow 1,100 heads of lettuce and 30 tomato plants simultaneously. We're proud to be able to demonstrate that you don't need a lot of water to grow quality produce. And on top of that, it tastes great. Aquaponics is the future of food," says Martin Niwinski, the Aquaponics Technician for ECOLIFE who designed and built the system with a team of interns and volunteers.

ECOLIFE has been growing vegetables and designing aquaponic systems for 15 years, including the desktop ECO-Cycle® Aquaponics Kit, a tool for STEM education that fits on top of a fish tank. In addition to placing the ECO-Cycle® Aquaponics kit in 641 classrooms the team

has built nine systems in San Diego Title 1 schools, and will now begin designing a community-sized system in partnership with the Bayside Community Center in Linda Vista to provide fresh produce to underserved areas of San Diego.

ECOLIFE Conservation® is an international organization providing solutions to mutually benefit underserved communities and imperiled wildlife around the world.

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Calsense® is a resource management company that creates ways to help customers manage resources, build innovative products that are easy to use, and maintain a high level of service so that long-term value is achieved.
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Note to media: You are invited to attend our open house event on October 17, between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. Available for interview will be representatives of ECOLIFE Conservation and Calsense®, as well as attendees and volunteers. For those who cannot attend, we can provide video b-roll, photographs and phone or email interviews.

RSVP Here