

Turf Removal Rebate Expansion Program

WaterSMART Grants: Small-Scale Water Efficiency
Projects for Fiscal Year 2022

Bureau of Reclamation NOFO No. R22AS00195

Applicant:

City of San Buenaventura
(Ventura)
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Ventura, CA 93001

Project Manager:

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List of Acronyms

AF	Acre-feet
AFY	Acre-feet per year
BMP	Best Management Practices
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CIP	Capital Improvement Plan
CMWD	Casitas Municipal Water District
CUWCC	California Urban Water Conservation Council
CWRR	Comprehensive Water Resources Report
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
GSP	Groundwater Sustainability Plan
IRWMP	Integrated Regional Water Management Plan
mg	million gallons
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOAA	Fisheries National Oceanic Administration, National Marine Fisheries
sf	Square feet
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
UWMP	Urban Water Management Plan
WCVC	Watershed Coalition of Ventura County
WSECP	Water Shortage Event Contingency Plan
WEP	Water Efficiency Plan

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Date: April 20, 2022

Applicant Name: City of San Buenaventura (Ventura)

Applicant City: Ventura, CA 93001

Project Manager: Management Analyst II, Stephen Glenn

Applicant Category: Category A

Grant Funding Request: \$100,000

Non-Federal Matching Funds: \$125,000

Total Project Cost: \$225,000

Project Duration: 1 year

Estimated Project Start Date: April 2023

Estimated Project Completion Date: April 2024

Located on Federal Facility: No

Unique Entity Number: MNM1UJ1DMCX8

Project Summary

The City of Ventura (the City), located in Southern California, is requesting funds to support outdoor water conservation through turf removal and replacement with low water, water wise landscapes. The City will use these funds to increase the amount of the existing Turf Removal rebate for residential and commercial landscapes to \$2.50 per square foot of turf removed. Cost sharing with Reclamation would increase program capacity and incentivize additional landscape transformations, thereby saving water while reducing demand and stress on local water supply sources.

PROJECT LOCATION

The City of Ventura is located 62 miles north of Los Angeles and 30 miles south of Santa Barbara along the California coastline. The City's planning area is bounded by the Ventura River on the west, Foster Park and the Ojai Valley to the north, Franklin Barranca and the Santa Clara River to the east, with the Pacific Ocean as the southern boundary. The total planning area encompasses approximately 40 square miles. All rebated turf conversions will take place within the City's service area (see Figure 1).

Latitude: 34° N 16' 56.56"

Longitude: -119° 17' 35.28"

Figure 1 – City of Ventura Service Area



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

For over 30 years, Ventura has steadily decreased water consumption levels and has met state water reduction standards. This has been accomplished in part by Ventura Water’s award-winning water efficiency program, which has transformed water conservation into a Ventura way of life.

In 2015, The City of Ventura established the \$2 per square foot Water Wise Incentive Turf Removal Rebate program to incentivize both residential and commercial customers to remove turf areas and replace them with low water landscapes. To qualify for the rebate, participants are required to submit an application, “before” photos, and a landscape site plan that includes low water use ground cover and/or plants, to cover a minimum of 50% of the project area. Additionally, all converted surfaces must be permeable, to avoid runoff and encourage onsite stormwater capture. Participants are required to agree to these criteria, as detailed in the Terms and Conditions, in order to receive the rebate. To date, approximately 738,000 square feet of turf has been removed, resulting in an estimated program water savings of 30 AFY.

Although the Water Wise Incentive Turf Removal Rebate program has proven successful in achieving intended water savings, participation in recent years has consistently decreased. One of the identified reasons for the lack of program participation has been increased landscape project costs since the program’s implementation in 2015. Additional funding through this grant would allow the City to offer a \$2.50 per square foot incentive, reducing the cost burden of turf

removal projects on customers. An expanded turf removal rebate program would result in an additional 63,600 square feet or high water use turf being removed from the City.

To promote program participation, the project manager will collaborate with the City's Communications team to develop revised messaging for website pages, billing inserts, social media campaigns, monthly newsletter, print and video material, as well as implementing a communications plan to reach key stakeholder groups. Additionally, two staff positions dedicated to water conservation will continue to administer the City's highly successful outreach campaigns to help advertise the program. Ventura Water staff will also continue to disseminate program information at the monthly Gardening Series events, which reaches approximately 500 residents per year.

Participants will be required to create landscape that include reasonable ground cover, plants, permeable surfaces limiting concrete and not allowing turf areas to be left as bare dirt. Participants will be required to agree to these as detailed in the terms and conditions in order to receive the rebate. The intent is to avoid property owners converting large turf areas to concrete and increasing runoff, and to also ensure removed turf is not left as bare dirt. Participants will also have the opportunity to attend workshops and access free online resources to assist with the design, turf removal techniques, acceptable plants, and proper planting and drip irrigation techniques.

Prequalification assessments and post installation inspections will be carried out by the City's consultant, WaterWise Consulting Inc. WaterWise Consulting Inc. has administered the City's Water Wise Turf Removal Rebate program since 2015 and is familiar with all program procedures. Rebate checks are issued directly by WaterWise Consulting Inc. upon project completion. Project rebates are only approved if all program requirements are met by the applicant. Please see Attachment A for the City's current program requirements or click [here](#) to see information on the City's website.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

E.1.1 Evaluation Criterion A – Project Benefits

- *Describe the expected benefits to the Category A applicant's water delivery system. Address the following:*
 - *Clearly explain the anticipated water management benefits to the Category A applicant's water supply delivery system and water customers.*

The City of Ventura currently relies on 100% local water sources including surface water from Lake Casitas and Ventura River, groundwater from the Oxnard Plain, Mound, and Santa Paula Basins, and recycled water. In recent years, the City has faced consecutive years of persistent drought conditions. The local water supplies are impacted by rainfall, environmental factors, regulatory factors, operational factors, and legal constraints. Based on the 2020 Urban Water Management Plan, if customers do not continue conserving at current levels and drought conditions continue, without additional supplies Ventura's water demand could outpace its supply before 2030.

Water conservation measures, in addition to other policies, assist the City in reducing its water demands. Through this project, customers will greatly reduce irrigation, which is estimated to be approximately 50% percent of monthly consumption, benefiting the City's threatened supplies.

- *Explain the significance of the anticipated water management benefits for the Category A applicant's water delivery system and customers. Consider:*
 - *Are customers not currently getting their full water right at certain times of year?*

Effectively, all of the City's sources of water are under restrictions, increasing the need for the City to implement outdoor water conservation measures that will have short-term and long-term benefits.

The Ventura River watershed, the smallest of Ventura County's three major watersheds, covers an area of about 227 square miles (144,970 acres). This entire watershed drains into the Ventura River, either directly or through creeks and tributaries, each of which has its own smaller drainage area - a sub watershed. Major tributaries include Matilija Creek, North Fork Matilija Creek, San Antonio Creek, and Canada Larga. The Ventura River watershed, like the county's other major watersheds—Santa Clara River and Calleguas Creek—ultimately drains to the Pacific Ocean.

The Ventura River watershed is a remarkable watershed for several reasons. Unlike most watersheds in Southern California, no imported water is used; residents rely entirely on local water supplies. Lake Casitas, fed by diverted Ventura River water and Coyote Creek, is the primary supplier of water from the watershed. The City of Ventura also diverts surface and subsurface water from the Ventura River in the Foster Park area. Groundwater, provided by individual wells or small water companies, is another important water source in the watershed, particularly for farmers. Aquifers in the watershed tend to drain relatively quickly, but also recharge quickly with sufficient rain. However, with successive drought years, the aquifers are not recharging, causing the groundwater manager to restrict pumping, and increasing reliance on surface water (Lake Casitas and Ventura River water) and imported water sources.

The dramatic increase in reliance on Lake Casitas due to the climate variation (drought) is causing the lake to be depleted more quickly as more communities turn to this water source as their primary water supply.

The City also has access to groundwater resources, which allows the City to have some flexibility to adjust draws from surface water and use more groundwater to sustain supplies. However, the groundwater basins are also managed, and pumping restrictions are currently in place due to the persistent drought conditions. Removing turf areas will greatly reduce the use of potable water for irrigation purposes thereby reducing stress on all of the City's water sources.

- *Does this project have the potential to prevent lawsuits or water calls?*

In September 2014, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, a local environmental NGO, filed a lawsuit against the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the

City, alleging that the City had been over-pumping water from the Ventura River. In September 2018, the City filed an amended cross-complaint bringing into the litigation all water users in the Ventura River watershed to ensure that all parties are at the table and involved in developing solutions.

On September 30, 2019, the City of San Buenaventura and Santa Barbara Channelkeeper entered into a settlement agreement regarding the pumping and diversion of water from the Ventura River watershed. As part of the settlement, the City agreed to begin a pilot program to reduce its pumping and diversion of water from the river when flows drop during dry times, to help protect species that depend on the river. The City also agreed to install two monitoring gauges to better evaluate water levels in the river. The gauges were installed in early September 2019 and calibration was completed in December 2019.

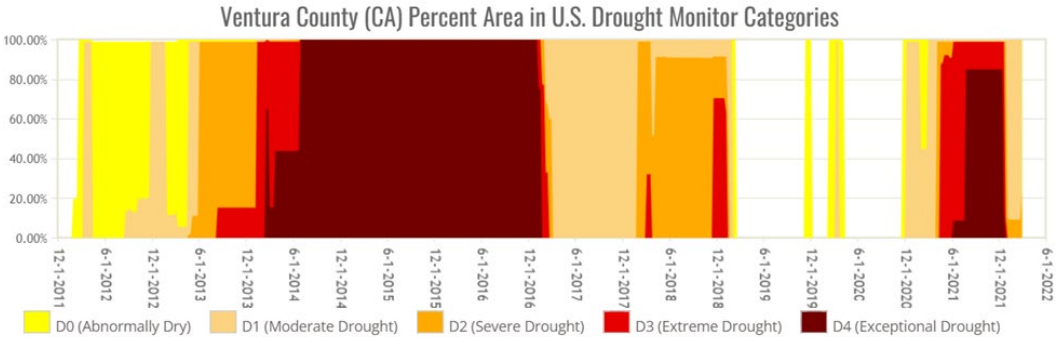
The City’s goal is to develop a long-term solution with local water interests to protect the watershed and those who depend on it in a comprehensive and enforceable way. This project will reduce outdoor water use, decreasing overall demand on the potable system and increase stream flows.

- *What are the consequences of not making the improvement?*

The City currently depends entirely on local surface and groundwater supplies which are becoming increasingly impacted, posing grave reliability concerns for the future. Recent severe and long-lasting drought conditions significantly strained local water supplies and drought risks are anticipated to increase in the future.

The vulnerability of the City’s existing local supplies to drought has been especially evident over the past decade during which Ventura County has experienced among the most severe drought conditions across the state and nation. Drought conditions persisted across the entire county over a 7-year period, starting in 2012 and again in 2021. For most of the period from 2014 - 2017 and in 2021, exceptional drought was the most prevalent condition across the county, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2 -Ventura County Drought Time Series (2012-2022)



Additionally, use restrictions intended to protect local water resources will further limit the availability of supplies needed to reliably meet community demands.

While the City's planned State Water Interconnection Project and Ventura WaterPure projects will help to create new, locally owned supplies, reducing outdoor water use remains a primary goal toward reducing impacts on existing supply and meeting future demands.

- *Are customer water restrictions currently required?*

In 1989, the City adopted Ordinance 89-6 prohibiting activities and authorizing penalties to be imposed for violations. The ordinance prohibits, watering landscape in a manner which allows water to run to waste, non-recirculating fountains, customer plumbing leaks, hosing of hard surfaces, and serving of water by a restaurant to its customers without first being requested by the customer. (San Buenaventura Municipal Code Chapter 22.170). Ventura Water customers are required to follow water waste prohibitions.

Additionally, the City of Ventura updated the Water Shortage Event Contingency Plan (WSECP) in 2021 to provide guidance when a drought stage is declared — whether from reduced supply, increased demand, or an emergency declaration — and identified corresponding actions to be taken during the various stages of a water shortage. The plan includes voluntary and mandatory stages which are intended to be fair to all water customers and users while having the least impact on business, employment, and quality of life for residents. The City continues to enforce water waste prohibitions, regardless of the declared drought stage set by the WSECP.

- *Broader Benefits: Describe the broader benefits that are expected to occur as a result of the project. Consider: Will the project improve broader water supply reliability at sub-basin or basin scale?*

The Ventura River watershed, the smallest of Ventura County's three major watersheds, covers an area of about 227 square miles (144,970 acres). The entire watershed drains into the Ventura River, either directly or through creeks and tributaries, each of which has its own smaller drainage area - a sub watershed. Major tributaries include Matilija Creek, North Fork Matilija Creek, San Antonio Creek, and Canada Larga. The Ventura River watershed, like the county's other major watersheds—Santa Clara River and Calleguas Creek—ultimately drains to the Pacific Ocean.

The Ventura River watershed is remarkable for several reasons. Unlike most watersheds in Southern California, no imported water is used; residents rely 100% on local water supplies. Lake Casitas, fed by diverted Ventura River water and Coyote Creek, is the primary supplier of water from the watershed. The City of Ventura also diverts surface and subsurface water from the Ventura River in the Foster Park area. Groundwater, provided by individual wells or small water companies, is another important water source in the watershed, particularly for farmers. Aquifers in the watershed tend to drain relatively quickly, but also recharge quickly with sufficient rain. However, with successive drought years, the aquifers are not recharging causing the

groundwater manager to restrict pumping and increasing reliance on surface water (Lake Casitas and Ventura River water) and imported water sources.

The dramatic increase in reliance on Lake Casitas due to the climate variation (drought) is causing the lake to be depleted more quickly as more communities turn to this water source as their primary water supply.

The water from Lake Casitas is managed by Casitas Municipal Water District (CMWD). CMWD has the responsibility to manage this water supply and the rates of distribution to the water utilities and mutual water companies who rely on it. Thus, the City works closely with CMWD. The City also has access to groundwater resources, which allows the City to have some flexibility to adjust draws from surface water and use more groundwater to sustain supplies. However, the groundwater basins are also managed, and pumping restrictions are currently in place due to the persistent drought conditions. Effectively, all of the City's sources of water are under restrictions, increasing the need for the City to implement water conservation measures that will have short-term and long-term benefits. Removing turf areas will greatly reduce the use of potable water for irrigation purposes reducing stress on all of the City's water supply sources.

- *Will the proposed project increase collaboration and information sharing among water managers in the region? Please explain.*
- The water that the City receives from Lake Casitas is managed by the Casitas Municipal Water District (CMWD). CMWD has the responsibility to manage this water supply and the rates of distribution to the water utilities and mutual water companies who rely upon it. Thus, the City works closely with the CMWD.

Additionally, the City of Ventura is a key participant in the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County (WCVC), a primary group of stakeholders within the county, that come together to address solutions to regional and watershed-based challenges. Collectively, the stakeholders that make up the WCVC collaborate on the formation and implementation of the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP). The WCVC has been very successful in bringing diverse interests together to manage water resources on a regional level.

The Water Wise Incentive Program addresses all six of the goals and objectives outlined in the IRWMP. The IRWMP is a living document and information from this project will be available for future updates and planning purposes. Additionally, this project will help the City reduce its demand on shared resources and help other regional stakeholders to comply with current and potential future curtailments.

- *Will the proposed project positively impacts/benefit various sectors and economies within the applicable geographic area (e.g., impacts to agriculture, environment, recreation, and tourism)? Please explain.*

Ventura's economy has evolved over the years from one dependent on agriculture and natural resources to one that draws on a diverse range of businesses, nonprofits, and public agencies. Travel, tourism, hospitality, agriculture, healthcare, technology, retail, distribution, and manufacturing are all important parts of Ventura's industrial mix.

Reliable water supply is vital to continued economic health, particularly for tourism and agriculture.

Ventura is a destination for tourists and is popular for people living in Southern California. Ventura's beaches are some of its chief tourist attractions, and the coastal neighborhoods include many hotels and vacation rental homes. Visitors come to swim, surf, sail, hike, or just enjoy the beautiful scenery and temperate climate. The region typically enjoys an economic boost during summer months due to visitor spending at hotels, restaurants, and the county's many shopping centers. Summer months result in nearly 90% occupancy in hotels. In 2012, Ventura's income from tourism through the Transient Occupancy Tax, levied on hotel rates, exceeded \$4 million. Arts and culture, another source of tourism activity, has an estimated economic impact of \$18.5 million annually. Water shortage requiring severe cutbacks and restrictions could impact tourism.

Agriculture is also an important industry to the City of Ventura and the region. Ventura County's agriculture industry had \$1.98 billion in revenue in 2020 according to the County Agricultural Commissioner's latest Crop Report. The City of Ventura has over 6,800 acres designated as agricultural land, and the industry employs about 500 people. The biggest crop was strawberries, followed by raspberries, lemons, nursery stock, and celery. Over drafting the groundwater basin (which could happen if no other supplies are available) would have a significant detrimental impact on agriculture.

Additionally, increasing the instream flows and retaining water in Lake Casitas due to reduced draws, will bring additional recreational benefits for those boating or fishing in Lake Casitas, the Ventura River, and the Santa Clara River. These types of activities provide significant social benefits for people/families coming together to enjoy the natural beauty of such resources. Lake Casitas serves a diverse recreation area and supports activities including sport fishing, camping, boating, concessions, bike trails, picnicking, bird watching, disc golf, and commercial filming.

○ *Will the project complement work being done in coordination with NRCS in the area (e.g., the area with a direct connection to the districts water supply)? Please explain.*

This project will not be done in coordination with NRCS.

○ *Will the project help address drought conditions at the sub-basin or basin scale? Please explain.*

Local surface water supplies were particularly hard hit by the recent drought conditions. Prolonged drought conditions severely reduced available Lake Casitas supplies, and by January 2019, Lake Casitas had reached a historic low of 30% of its capacity. The current Water Services Agreement between the City and CMWP indicates that Casitas may adjust the City's allocation consistent with the percentage reduction of an enacted Water Efficiency Allocation Program stage. In 2019, the reduced lake levels resulting from the drought triggered a Stage 3 water supply condition declaration under which CMWD reduced the City's supply by 30% in accordance with the Agreement. While the City will continue to rely on Casitas supplies, with the prospect of increased drought risk in the

future, Casitas supplies are anticipated to become less reliable. Currently, the Stage 3 condition is still in place and lake capacity is only at 35%, indicating continued challenges with this surface water supply.

Similarly, the reliability of the Ventura River is also decreasing. Water supplies from the Ventura River generally make up about 10-20% of the City's supplies, but as noted above, supplies have been severely impacted by extended drought. During that period, Ventura River water production was reduced to less than one third of normal year supply availability, and recent drought conditions temporarily suspended the City's ability to draw water from the Ventura River. Future droughts, which are projected to occur with greater frequency and intensity, could result in similar or even more significant reductions to those supplies. And finally, pending litigation initiated by the Santa Barbara Channelkeeper has the potential to restrict City usage of Ventura River water. Combined, these conditions could significantly limit the City's ability to rely on Ventura River supplies in the future, and the project will help the City make up for a large portion of surface water supply reductions.

While groundwater supplies are generally more drought resistant, reductions in surface water supplies during droughts typically lead to increased reliance on local groundwater sources. During the recent drought this led to declines in groundwater levels in local basins. Overall, the reliability of local groundwater resources has been greatly impacted by drought conditions and this resource will be increasingly restricted in the interest of maintaining sustainable water levels in the future.

The Mound Basin is a designated high-priority basin by the Department of Water Resources which required development of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) by January 2022; the GSP was adopted by the Mound Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency's Board of Directors in November 2021. Historical use has been documented to exceed the basin yield and in recent years has resulted in groundwater level declines of several feet.

The Oxnard Plain Basin is designated a high priority basin in critical overdraft. The GSP completed for this basin in January 2020 suggests a linear ramp down from current pumping to the estimated sustainable yield by 2040. Based on related estimates, the City expects its allocation from the Oxnard Plain Basin to decrease by 45% by 2040.

Reducing demand is the fastest and most economical method of increasing and sustaining water supplies. If funded, this project would result in an estimated 2.6 acre-feet per year (AFY) savings.

E.1.2 Evaluation Criterion B – Planning Efforts Supporting the Project

- *Plan Development: Describe how your project is supported by an existing planning effort. Identify the planning effort and who developed it. If the planning effort was not developed by the Category A applicant, describe the Category A applicant's involvement in developing the planning effort.*

The City of Ventura's 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) provides the framework to help guide Ventura's water supply management and conservation actions for the future.

In September 2011, City Council adopted a five-year Water Efficiency Plan (WEP) which outlined existing programs and potential programs to engage customers in the pursuit of greater water efficiency. The Water Efficiency Plan focused on efforts including customer and student outreach, reducing outdoor landscape watering, optimizing operational practices, and expansion of recycled water usage. In 2021, staff updated the WEP building upon the goals and objectives established in the 2011 plan, while detailing potential opportunities for new and existing water efficiency programs.

Additionally, Ventura Water's Comprehensive Water Resources Report (CWRR) is prepared annually to provide updates on the City's projected water supply and demand while considering challenges, uncertainties, and reliability associated with Ventura's water sources. The CWRR is used along with the City's Water Shortage Event Contingency Plan (WSECP) to evaluate the current water shortage stage and helps guide the implementation practices identified in the WEP to meet water demand.

- *Support for the Project: Describe to what extent the proposed project is supported by the identified plan. Address the following:*
 - *Is the project identified specifically in the planning effort?*

The City of Ventura's Water Efficiency Plan was updated in 2021. This plan was developed by Water Efficiency Task Force that included water, wastewater, and stormwater staff to evaluate various potential water efficiency programs that should be implemented within the next five years. Programs included in the plan were expansion of the recycled water system, public outreach, stormwater, customer conservation measures, and commodity rate pricing. This Plan sought to evaluate the Best Management Practices (BMPs) as identified by the California Urban Water Conservation Council (CUWCC) and assign costs, identify estimated benefits, assign tasks to City departments/divisions, and a proposed schedule of implementation.

All of the City's conservation programs are detailed in the WEP, included the Water Wise Turf Removal Rebate Incentive Program. Additionally, the WEP examines the steady decline in participation and opportunities to expand the program to achieve greater water savings.

- *Explain whether the proposed project implement a goal or address a need or problem identified in the existing planning effort?*

One of the four long-term water efficiency goals identified in the 2021 WEP focused on efforts to continue to reduce outdoor water use. Review of customer water use estimates indicate that residents already have relatively low indoor water use. Therefore, opportunities for decreasing water use must focus on outdoor water demand. Reducing outdoor water use for residential and commercial customers is a primary goal of Ventura Water. The majority of residential customer water use is from outdoor use and landscaping.

- *Explain how the proposed project has been determined as a priority in the existing planning effort as opposed to other potential projects/measures.*

Ventura's recently adopted 2020 Urban Water Management Plan provides a framework to help guide Ventura's water supply management and conservation actions for the future. The City faces increased risks to water supply from drought, potential environmental restrictions, groundwater quality concerns, and litigation actions. Ventura will utilize water conservation as a means to improve supply reliability despite these challenges. In addition, the City would also like to continue to rely on local water supplies rather than imported water supplies. To this end, the City adopted the updated Water Use Efficiency Plan in September 2021. In its Water Use Efficiency plan adopted in September 2011, the City of Ventura lays out a roadmap to maintain and further reduce per capita water use levels and increase water and energy efficiency through greater conservation efforts. In addition, the City not only faces increased risks to our water supply from drought, but also from potential environmental restrictions, groundwater quality concerns, and litigation actions. In response staff has developed this Water Efficiency Plan to provide a road map to buffer the City from these potential impacts and improve the reduction targets we have already attained.

E.1.3. Evaluation Criterion C – Implementation and Results

- Describe the implementation plan for the proposed project. Please include an estimated project schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work, including major tasks, milestones, and dates.

Table 1 – Project Schedule

SCHEDULE	Jan-Mar 2023	Apr-Jun 2023	Jul-Sept 2023	Oct-Dec 2023	Jan-Mar 2024	April 2024
Milestone/Task						
Develop New Marketing Materials						
Sign Financial Assistance Agreement						
Advertise Program						
Approve Rebate Applications						
Fund Completed Projects						
Square Feet Removed (Thousands)		15	30	45	63.6	
Submit Final Report						

- Describe any permits that will be required, along with the process for obtaining such permits.

No permits are required to implement the proposed project.

- Identify and describe any engineering or design work performed specifically in support of the proposed project.

No engineering or design work is required for this proposed project. Rebated projects will be done on customer owned properties.

- *Describe any new policies or administrative actions required to implement the project.*

The WaterWise Incentive Program has been in place since 2015 and will not require any new policies or administrative actions.

- *Describe the timeline for completion of environmental and cultural resource compliance. Was the timeline for completion of environmental and cultural resource compliance discussed with the local Reclamation office?*

Work associated with this project is occurring only within previously developed areas and additional environmental or cultural resources compliance is not anticipated. It is anticipated that the proposed scope of work qualifies for a categorical exemption.

E.1.4. Evaluation Criterion D – Nexus to Reclamation

- *Is the proposed project connected to a Reclamation project or activity? If so, how? Please consider the following:*

- *Does the applicant receive Reclamation project water?*

Ventura receives 3,000 to 5,000 AFY of water from Lake Casitas formed under the Reclamation's Ventura River Project.

- *Is the project on Reclamation project lands or involving Reclamation facilities?*

The Water Wise Incentive Program will be implemented by individual homeowners and businesses to improve water use efficiency. The project would not directly involve Reclamation project lands or involve Reclamation facilities.

- *Is the project in the same basin as a Reclamation project or activity?*

The proposed project is in the same basin as Reclamation's Ventura River Project.

- *Will the proposed work contribute water to a basin where a Reclamation project is located?*

The proposed project will reduce demands for water in the Ventura River Basin. Some of the conservation savings will be realized as reduced demands on Ventura River Project water ultimately resulting in water savings within the Lake Casitas Reservoir.

E.1.5. Evaluation Criterion E – Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities

- *Please provide specific details and examples on how the project will address the impacts of climate change and help combat the climate crisis.*

Precipitation and temperature influence water demand for outdoor landscaping and irrigated agriculture. It is typical that about half of the water used by residential development is for outdoor use and therefore it is assumed that outdoor water use is a large component of the City of San Buenaventura water demands. Additionally, as examined in the 2021 SECURE Water Act

Report, the Bureau of Reclamation recognized that turfgrass is one of the largest irrigated crops in the United States. Increasing temperatures have steadily accelerated evapotranspiration, further adding to the increase in irrigation requirements to satisfy turfgrass evapotranspiration needs.

This project would directly address the impacts of climate change by eliminating up to 63,600 square feet of turfgrass and greatly reducing water demand for irrigation.

- *Does this proposed project strengthen water supply sustainability to increase resilience to climate change? Does the proposed project contribute to climate change resiliency in other ways not described above?*

This project will strengthen water supply sustainability to increase resilience to climate change by reducing demand for irrigation purposes. Reducing demand is the fastest and most economical method of increasing and sustaining water supplies. If funded, this project would result in an estimated 2.6 AFY savings, helping to reduce demand and addressing supply vulnerabilities caused by climate change.

PROJECT BUDGET

FUNDING PLAN AND LETTERS OF COMMITMENT

All water conservation programs, and staff time are already budgeted in the City’s Fiscal Year 2023 budget. This grant would allow a significant expansion of the existing conservation program and would increase the high-water use turf removal by 63,600 sq. ft. feet resulting in 2.6 AFY saved. This grant would allow the City to leverage these existing assets to achieve an increased impact commensurate with rebate expansion. With these funds, program participation will increase in the residential and commercial sectors. There are no sources of funding provided by third parties and we do not anticipate any costs incurred prior to award.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

Table 2 – Project Funding

FUNDING SOURCES	AMOUNT
Non-Federal Entities	
1. City of Ventura	\$125,000.00
Non-Federal Subtotal	\$125,000.00
REQUESTED RECLAMATION FUNDING	\$100,000.00
TOTAL	\$225,000.00

Table 3 – Total Project Cost

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Costs to be reimbursed with the requested Federal funding	\$100,000.00

Costs to be paid by the applicant	\$125,000.00
Value of third-party contributions	\$0
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$225,000.00

Table 4 – Budget Proposal

BUDGET ITEM DESCRIPTION	COMPUTATION		Quantity Type	TOTAL COST
	\$/Unit	Quantity		
Salaries and Wages				
Not applicable	-	-	-	\$0
Fringe Benefits				
Not applicable	-	-	-	\$0
Equipment				
Not applicable	-	-	-	\$0
Supplies and Materials				
Not applicable	-	-	-	\$0
Contractual/Construction				
WaterWise Consulting Inc	\$5,500.00	12	month	\$66,000.00
Third-Party In-Kind Contributions				
Not applicable	-	-	-	\$0
Other				
Turf Removal Rebate	\$2.50	63,600	Sq.ft.	\$159,000.00
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS				
Indirect Costs				
Not applicable	-	-	-	\$0
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS				\$225,000.00

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Salaries and Wages

The City will not be seeking reimbursement for City staff time spent on the project as it is considered to fall under normal staff activity. Fringe benefits are not included in the overall project budget.

Equipment

No equipment costs.

Materials and Supplies

None.

Contractual/Construction

Water Wise Consulting, Inc. is Responsible for conducting residential water surveys/audit pre- and post- turf removal and provide customers with estimated water savings. They are additionally responsible for validating completion of installation and report to the City for issuance of rebates.

Third-Party In-Kind Contributions

There are no third-party in-kind contributions related to the project.

Other

The turf removal rebate will serve as an incentive for customers to remove existing lawn areas and convert them into drought tolerant landscapes. Additional funding would allow the City to increase the existing \$2.00 per square foot rebate amount to \$2.50 per square foot.

Indirect Costs

No indirect costs are included in the proposed budget.

Total Costs

The total cost of the proposed project with this application is \$225,000. The City is requesting \$100,000 in federal cost share from the Bureau of Reclamation. Accordingly, the City's cost share is \$125,000.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

- *Will the proposed project impact the surrounding environment (e.g., soil [dust], air, water [quality and quantity], animal habitat)? Please briefly describe all earth-disturbing work and any work that will affect the air, water, or animal habitat in the project area. Please also explain the impacts of such work on the surrounding environment and any steps that could be taken to minimize the impacts.*

The proposed project is a government administrative program. Any ground disturbing activity will be limited to customer properties and will limited to landscaping.

- *Are you aware of any species listed or proposed to be listed as a Federal threatened or endangered species, or designated critical habitat in the project area? If so, would they be affected by any activities associated with the proposed project?*

The southern California Steelhead has critical habitat designated for the Ventura and Santa Clara River Watersheds. However, the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect the steelhead, or any other species listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act. All of the proposed work will occur on existing infrastructure. In fact, completing the proposed improvements may benefit these two watersheds and this endangered species by potentially reducing the City's water extractions.

- *Are there wetlands or other surface waters inside the project boundaries that potentially fall under CWA jurisdiction as "Waters of the United States"? If so, please describe and estimate any impacts the proposed project may have.*

Yes, there are surface waters and wetlands located inside the project boundaries that potentially fall under CWA jurisdiction as “waters of the United States”. The Ventura River, Ventura River Estuary and the Santa Clara River Estuary are within the project boundaries. The proposed activities will not impact any of these waters, as the improvements are limited to the retrofit of existing pumping and pipeline infrastructure to improve efficiency and does not include an expansion or destruction of infrastructure and will not result in an increased draw from or discharge to these waters.

- *When was the water delivery system constructed?*

The Spanish Fathers for the Mission San Buenaventura developed the first water system for the City. It consisted of an aqueduct (that is now abandoned) to convey water from the Ventura River, near San Antonio Creek, to a reservoir located behind the Mission. During subsequent development around the Mission, additional groundwater was obtained from wells in the Ventura and Santa Clara River basins. Water facilities were developed and operated for the City by several individuals and companies over the period of 1869 to 1923. In 1923, the City acquired the water system, along with its water rights from the Ventura River, from the Southern California Edison Company and assumed the responsibility of providing water to City residents. In years following, the City developed additional sources of surface and groundwater, including wells and improvements to the surface water diversion from the Ventura River. Also, since 1960, the City has purchased surface water from Casitas Municipal Water District to supplement its water supplies. As development occurs on the east side of the City, additional groundwater facilities have been completed to meet increasing demands.

- *Will the proposed project result in any modification of or effects to, individual features of an irrigation system (e.g., headgates, canals, or flumes)? If so, state when those features were constructed and describe the nature and timing of any extensive alterations or modifications to those features completed previously.*

No modifications are being made to an irrigation system.

- *Are any buildings, structures, or features in the irrigation district listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places? A cultural resources specialist at your local Reclamation office or the State Historic Preservation Office can assist in answering this question.*

No buildings, structures, or features associated with the proposed project are listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

- *Are there any known archeological sites in the proposed project area?*

There are no known archeological sites that would be affected by the proposed project.

- *Will the proposed project have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations?*

The proposed project will have no impact on low or minority populations. The proposed improvements are intended to offer customer incentives to help them achieve water savings.

The project could actually benefit all populations, with the greatest benefit to low/fixed income or minority populations, by improving water management and reducing losses, which reduces the need for the City to seek more expensive imported water supplies and increase water rates.

- *Will the proposed project limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites or result in other impacts on tribal lands?*

The proposed project will not limit access to or ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites or result in other impacts on tribal lands as the infrastructure to be improved are not located within such areas.

- *Will the proposed project contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area?*

No, the proposed project will not contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of, noxious weeds or non-native invasive species.

REQUIRED PERMITS OR APPROVALS

No permits or approvals are anticipated for the proposed project.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Four letters of support are attached that indicate that this project is well supported. Letters of project support from the following individuals and entities are included in Attachment C.

1. Congresswoman Julia Brownley
2. Assemblymember Steve Bennet
3. Ventura River Watershed Council
4. Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program

OFFICIAL RESOLUTION

On April 25, 2022, the City Council adopted a resolution authorizing the City to apply for a WaterSMART grant, to execute an agreement with Reclamation for implementation of the Project and verifying the City's funding capability. A copy of the adopted resolution is provided as Attachment B.

UNIQUE ENTITY IDENTIFIER

The City has an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM). Its unique entity identifier (DUN) is: 039974761 and CAGE Code is 4PE94. The City's Unique Entity Identifier is MNM1UJ1DMCX8. The City will maintain an active SAM registration with current information at

all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

JULIA BROWNLEY
26TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE
2262 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: 202-225-5811
FAX: 202-225-1100

HOUSE VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
CHAIRWOMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
CHAIRWOMAN, WOMEN VETERANS TASK FORCE

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT

HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER, OCEANS, AND WILDLIFE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON
THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

OXNARD, CA OFFICE
201 EAST FOURTH STREET, SUITE 209B
OXNARD, CA 93030
PHONE: 805-379-1779
FAX: 805-379-1799

THOUSAND OAKS, CA OFFICE
223 EAST THOUSAND OAKS BOULEVARD, SUITE 220
THOUSANDS OAKS, CA 91360
PHONE: 805-379-1779
FAX: 805-379-1799

April 15, 2022

The Honorable Camille Calimlim Touton
Commissioner
U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street, NW
Washington DC 20240-0001

Dear Commissioner Touton:

I am writing to express my support for the City of Ventura's Water Wise Incentive Program and the application for funding assistance through the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects.

The City of Ventura's proposed expansion of the Water Wise Incentive Program is critical to the city's response to the region's persistent drought conditions. Ventura is the largest city in Southern California to rely solely on local water supplies which are becoming increasingly impacted, posing grave water supply reliability concerns for the future. Recent severe and long-lasting drought conditions have significantly strained local water supplies and drought risks are anticipated to increase in the future. Water conservation measures are an important element in the City of Ventura's long-term strategy for reducing water demands on existing supplies and meeting future needs.

While the City of Ventura's current award-winning conservation programs have proven successful in achieving intended water savings, continued conservation is necessary to ensure that local water supplies remain resilient through drought periods, emergencies, potential water supply project delays, and regulatory, operational, and legal constraints. Additional funding support will allow the city to expand the existing turf removal rebate through the Water Wise Incentive Program to continue efficiency and ensure reliability of Ventura's water supply.

For these reasons, I am respectfully requesting that the Bureau of Reclamation give full and fair consideration to the City of Ventura's WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects application for the expansion of the expansion of the Water Wise Incentive Program, consistent with all relevant rules and regulations.

Sincerely,

JULIA BROWNLEY
Member of Congress

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0037
(916) 319-2037
FAX (916) 319-2137

E-MAIL
Assemblymember.Bennett@assembly.ca.gov



DISTRICT OFFICE
101 WEST ANAPAMU STREET, SUITE A
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93101
(805) 564-1649
FAX (805) 564-1651
89 SOUTH CALIFORNIA STREET, SUITE F
VENTURA, CA 93001
(805) 641-3700
FAX (805) 641-3708

April 22, 2022

Commissioner M. Camille Calimlim Touton
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: City of Ventura's Water Wise Incentive Program

Dear Commissioner Touton,

As the State Assemblymember representing the 37th Assembly District, which includes the proposed projects service area, I am writing in support of the application submitted by the City of Ventura for federal funding for the expansion of their Water Wise Incentive Program, a program that incentivizes residents to remove existing lawns and replace them with water wise landscapes.

The City of Ventura is one of the largest in Southern California to rely solely on local water supplies. Water conservation programs such as the Water Wise Incentive Program are an important element in the City of Ventura's long-term water supply strategy. Ventura's long-standing water conservation program has transformed water conservation into a Ventura way of life. Since 2015, residents have removed more than 730,000 square feet of turf under the program, greatly reducing stress on the City's supplies. Additional funding will allow the City to expand the Water Wise Incentive Program by increasing the rebate amount, promoting the City's commitment to continued water conservation.

With the uncertainty of climate impacts on water resources in the future, the expansion of the City's Water Wise Incentive Program will help ensure the reliability of Ventura's water supply. I strongly support the City of Ventura's application for federal funding and look forward to learning of USBR's review and decision on the proposed project's request for funding.

If you have any questions, please contact Patricia Quiroz in my office at (805) 641-3700.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Bennett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Assemblymember Steve Bennett
37th Assembly District



Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program

Participating Agencies

April 22, 2022

Camarillo

Commissioner M. Camille Calimlim Touton
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

County of Ventura

Subject: City of San Buenaventura (City of Ventura)'s WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects Program Expansion Grant Application

Fillmore

Dear Commissioner Touton,

Moorpark

The Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program (VCSQMP) is pleased to offer this letter of support for the City of San Buenaventura (City of Ventura)'s WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects application for federal funding for its expansion on the Water Wise Incentive Program. VCSQMP is a collaboration of the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, the County of Ventura and the cities of Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Ventura, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks, who operate the municipal storm drain system in Ventura County and discharge stormwater and urban runoff pursuant to a Countywide stormwater permit.

Ojai

Oxnard

Port Hueneme

The Bureau should carefully review and consider approval of the City of Ventura's application, and any other applications from Ventura County agencies, for funding. This project will conserve water and reduce stormwater pollution. One source of pollutants into our watersheds comes from the non-stormwater runoff associated with landscape irrigation. Over irrigated lawns and overspray often runoff into storm drains, picking up contaminants such as oil, fertilizers, and trash along the way to streams, lakes, and beaches. With additional funding, the City of Ventura can further incentivize residents to replace inefficient lawns with climate appropriate landscapes, ultimately reducing pollution from runoff.

San Buenaventura

Santa Paula

Simi Valley

I want to thank you for time and again, the VCSQMP strongly supports the City of Ventura's application for federal funding. If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Thousand Oaks

Sincerely,

Ventura County
Watershed Protection
District

Arne Anselm, Chair

On Behalf of the Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program

cc. Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program
Representatives





Ventura River Watershed Council c/o
Ventura County Resource Conservation District
Physical: 3380 Somis Road, Somis, CA 93066
Mailing: PO BOX 147, Somis, CA 93066
www.venturawatershed.org
venturawatershed@gmail.com
(805) 764-5135

April 20, 2020

Commissioner M. Camille
Calimlim Touton
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

SUBJECT: City of San Buenaventura (City of Ventura)'s WaterSMART Small-Scale Water
Efficiency Project - Letter of Support

Dear Commissioner Touton,

On behalf of the Ventura River Watershed Council, I am writing in support of the City of San Buenaventura (City of Ventura)'s WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects application for federal funding for its expansion on the Water Wise Incentive Program. The Ventura River Watershed Council was formed to better address the Ventura River watershed's many complex and cross-jurisdictional issues, this effort works to accomplish this goal and further the mission of the Watershed Council, which is:

"To facilitate and support efforts by individuals, agencies, and organizations to maintain and improve the health and sustainability of the Ventura River watershed for the benefit of the people and ecosystems that depend upon it."

It is the Council's recommendation that the Bureau review and approve the City of Ventura's application for funding. This project will not only help the City to meet long-term water demands for Ventura but also benefit others within the watershed it shares its water resources with.

Within the Ventura River Watershed, a watershed that relies 100% on local water resources, there have been many discussions about the urgent need to expand water conservation efforts. According to data compiled by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Ventura County is warming faster than any other county in the continental United States. With the uncertainty of these climate impacts on water resources in the future, stakeholders throughout the watershed must establish a path to achieve greater water use efficiency and ensure the water supply's reliability. With additional funding, the City of Ventura can further incentivize residents to replace lawns that use excessive water with climate-appropriate landscapes, ultimately reducing stress on local water resources.

On behalf of the Ventura River Watershed Council, we urge the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to consider funding this important proposal to reduce and mitigate the threat of a changing climate.

Sincerely,

Ventura River Watershed Coordinator

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-__

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA, CALIFORNIA, AUTHORIZING THE VENTURA WATER GENERAL MANAGER, OR DESIGNEE, TO APPLY FOR, RECEIVE FUNDS, ENTER INTO A COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT, AND ADMINISTER A GRANT FOR THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION WaterSMART FISCAL YEAR 2022 SMALL-SCALE WATER EFFICIENCY PROJECTS GRANT

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Interior WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is issued under the authority of Section 9504(a) of the Secure Water Act, Subtitle F of Title IX of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, Public Law (P.L.) 111-11 (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 10364), as amended; and

WHEREAS, applicants for grant funding from the 2022 Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) WaterSMART Grant Program are required to adopt a Resolution pursuant to the provisions of the grant application and cooperative agreement; and

WHEREAS, there is a potential opportunity to increase participation in the City's WaterWise Incentive Program and promote water conservation; and

WHEREAS, an application will be submitted to the BOR by the application deadline of April 28, 2022.

NOW, THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of San Buenaventura does hereby resolve, find, determine and order as follows:

SECTION 1: The Ventura Water General Manager, or designee, on behalf of the City, is hereby authorized and directed to apply for, receive, and appropriate grant funds from the 2022 BOR WaterSMART Fiscal Year 2022

Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects grant in the amount not-to-exceed \$100,000. The match by the City is \$125,000. The City will only enter into a cooperative agreement with the BOR if an award is made. The grant will provide funding assistance for the expansion of the WaterWise Incentive Program turf removal rebate.

SECTION 2: The Ventura Water General Manager, or designee, on behalf of the City, will conduct all negotiations and execute and submit all documents, including, but not limited to, a grant contract and any amendments or change orders, and to work with the BOR to meet established deadlines for entering into a cooperative agreement.

SECTION 3: The Ventura Water General Manager, on behalf of the City, has both reviewed and supports the application submitted to the BOR for their consideration. The Ventura Water General Manager has confirmed that the City has the capability to provide the amount of funding and/or in-kind contributions as specified in the funding plan of the application. The City will work with BOR to meet established deadlines for entering into a grant or cooperative agreement.

SECTION 4: This Resolution will take effect immediately upon adoption.

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PASSED AND ADOPTED this 25th day of April, 2022.

Sofia Rubalcava, Mayor

ATTEST:

Michael MacDonald
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM
Andrew Heglund, City Attorney

By: *Miles Hogan* 4/11/2022
Miles Hogan Date
Assistant City Attorney II