



Lower Colorado Basin water-saving xeriscape project

The Lower Colorado Basin Region is replacing the lawn and associated turf surrounding its headquarters office and training facility in Boulder City, Nevada, with water-saving xeriscaping. Xeriscaping is the practice of designing and installing landscapes that reduce the need for irrigation as these desert-focused landscapes often need little or no water beyond what the natural climate provides. This \$4.5 million project, funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, replaces the original landscaping with low water usage vegetation, including drought-tolerant and native trees, shrubs, and plants.

The Colorado River Basin has been experiencing drought for more than 20 years. Reclamation is working with water users throughout the West to identify and fund water savings projects. As a leader in water management and conservation, Reclamation looks internally for opportunities to make its own cuts. This water-saving xeriscape project will continue Reclamation's commitment to protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

A new design for the future

Reclamation recognizes the significance of these historic spaces and their significance to the residents of Boulder City. The new design maintains visual continuity and mirrors the desert landscape from the surrounding area; incorporates many style elements and artifacts that were used or displayed at Hoover Dam; and will feature interpretive signs that showcase and document the history of the area.

When completed, the area in front of the Regional Headquarters building will feature a meandering composite path surrounded by small groves of native plants, trees, and shrubs. Other amenities will include:

- Areas along the new path for small community gatherings.
- Interpretive signs profiling the native vegetation and historic artifacts placed at the site.
- A new paved path with additional access from the existing sidewalk and parking lot located east of the Administration Building.



Image of initial design concept art with meandering path and gathering areas.

In addition to replacing its turf with xeriscape landscaping, Reclamation is upgrading the irrigation systems to provide drip and low-pressure irrigation which will improve site maintenance. The new irrigation system at the Administration Building won't use municipal water; instead, it will connect to the existing raw water lines.

Advantages of xeriscaping

- The new water-saving landscape design will save an estimated two-million gallons of Colorado River water annually and align the spaces with Nevada state law requiring removal of all non-functional grass by 2027.
- Xeriscaping uses native vegetation to retain water and minimize supplemental irrigation.
- Xeriscaping has the potential to reduce water use and maintenance, improve biodiversity, lower pollution, and mitigate heat within urban areas. Recent studies indicate that within arid

desert climates, such as Arizona and Nevada, 75% of potable water is used to water residential and urban lawns.



Images of example proposed native plants, shrubs, and trees for the xeriscape project.

Project features

Pictured are artistic concepts of the major features of the new xeriscaping design that is being integrated around the Regional Office grounds. Examples of low water usage vegetation and related topography. Meandering path with elevated community gathering spots. Interpretive signs profiling the native vegetation and historic artifacts placed at the sites.

History of the Administration Building

Completed in 1932, the Administration Building was among the first of several buildings constructed by Reclamation in Boulder City, Nevada, during the construction of Hoover Dam. Built to house the lead construction engineers and managers overseeing construction of the dam, the building now serves as Reclamation's Lower Colorado River Basin Regional Headquarters.



Government Administration Building and dormitory on August 27, 1932. / USBR

The Administration Building was among the first buildings constructed embodying characteristics of a “modified Spanish” architectural style modeled on a design by Los Angeles-based architect T B. Kaufmann.

For more information

Construction of the new water-saving landscape is anticipated to be completed by fall 2023. During construction, city streets surrounding these facilities may be temporarily closed or limited to one-way traffic to accommodate construction equipment or material staging. Should you have any questions about the construction process, please email ReclamationXeriscapeBC@usbr.gov.

###