



Researching, Qualifying, and Promoting Water Conservation in the Turfgrass Industry

Contact: Jack Karlin
Phone: (541) 971-4418
Email: jack.karlin@tgwca.org

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TWCA® teams up with Mountain Meadows and the City of Ashland to reduce water footprint

Turfgrass Water Conservation Alliance® is teaming up with the City of Ashland and Mountain Meadows of Ashland on a pilot project aimed at reducing outdoor water consumption in the region. TWCA® qualified grass can reduce water consumption by up to 30% while providing all the benefits of turfgrass. One of the goals of the Mountain Meadows project is to preserve common space for gatherings and social events and the best ground cover to fulfill this need is turfgrass.

The Mountain Meadows Owner Association (MMOA) is a 55 + community in Ashland, Oregon consisting of 226 houses and condominiums built over a 27 acre area. It is owned and run by the resident owners through an elected Board of Directors. The area is well landscaped with trees, plants and lawns. Lawns are located throughout the community in parkways, front and back yards, and in a large park where outdoor events and celebrations are held. Included in this landscaping is 66,000 sq. ft. of lawn, which is expensive to irrigate. In 2013, the Board of Directors decided to reduce the amount of irrigation water being used, which would also assist in reducing costs due to the rising cost of water. A task force chaired by Gideon Wizansky was established to study and implement these goals. Driving this study is the fact that Mountain Meadows is one of the largest water users in the Ashland utility district with up to 60% of that consumption outdoor use.

City of Ashland (COA) Conservation Specialist and TWCA member Julie Smitherman has been working with MMOA to reduce water consumption. One of the approaches is a Lawn Replacement rebate to replace hard to irrigate, hard to maintain areas of turf with more water efficient landscaping. "Julie approached us about working with Mountain Meadows in the fall of 2014," says TWCA Program Administrator, Jack Karlin, "she set up the initial meeting with Mountain Meadows and has really just done a ton of the legwork to make this project happen."

Local contractor Bill Bumgardner, owner of Bumgardners Landscape and past Chair of the Southern Oregon Landscapers Association (SOLA) will be doing all of the site preparation in advance of the seeding. The TWCA is donating approximately 1000 square feet of water efficient grass seed to the Mountain Meadow community for this pilot project. Focused on demonstrating the overall turf quality of water efficient grasses to the entire community the grass will be a spring plant 20th April 2015. If this pilot project is successful Mountain Meadows plans on replacing all their turf with TWCA qualified grass in the fall of 2016.

Turfgrass Water Conservation Alliance
33725 Columbus Street N.E. Albany, Oregon 97322
Phone: (541) 971-4418 | Email: info@tgwca.org
Twitter: https://twitter.com/_tgwca | Website: <http://www.tgwca.org>
Facebook: www.facebook.com/TurfgrassWaterConservationAlliance