



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

1313 Sherman Street, Room 718
Denver, CO 80203

P (303) 866-3441
F (303) 866-4474

Jared Polis, Governor

Dan Gibbs, DNR Executive Director

Lauren Ris, CWCB Director

TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Jenna Battson and Kat Weismiller, Water Supply Planning Section

DATE: May 21 - 22, 2025, Board Meeting

CONSENT AGENDA ITEM: 2a-d Turf Replacement Grant Program

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends Board action on three (3) Turf Replacement Grant Program applications between \$50,000 and \$100,000, and one (1) application not recommended for funding as described in the following summary tables.

Background

The 2024 Water Projects Bill (SB24-1435) appropriated \$2M for the Turf Replacement Grant Program, with \$1,680,000 in awards available beginning in fiscal year 2025. When funding is available, the Turf Replacement Grant Program awards are made in two cycles during the fiscal year. After the CWCB Board's decisions at the January Board Meeting, \$501,391.09 remained available for the second application cycle. The due date for applications for the second review cycle of the 2025 fiscal year was February 28, 2025. By that date, CWCB had received twelve (12) applications requesting \$1,123,945.27. All applications are available for public viewing online at <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/turf>

The process of reviewing applications consisted of qualification checks based on criteria, dialogue with the applicants, and consideration by a CWCB staff review committee. Of the 12 applicants, 11 qualified during the process, resulting in 11 staff recommendations for consideration of partial grant funding and one (1) recommendation to decline funding. All of the recommended applications are for amounts below what was requested by the applicant due to funding limitations and individual project characteristics. The result of the review is a portfolio of recommendations representing qualifying individual projects that collectively best advance the goals of the Turf Replacement Grant Program. \$501,391.09 in awards are recommended, which equals the funding unobligated in the Turf Replacement Grant Program.

Per CWCB Policy #25, grant recommendations are considered for approval in three separate groups depending on the recommended amount. Those awards exceeding \$100,000 will be placed on the full agenda for consideration by the Board. Those between \$50,000 and \$100,000 and those not recommended for funding will be placed on the consent agenda. The CWCB Director will consider awards of less than \$50,000. This consent agenda item recommends approval of 3 applications, each with a value between \$50,000 and \$100,000, totaling \$212,844.09, as shown in Table 1. This consent agenda item recommends declining one application, totaling \$93,845.77, as shown in Table 1. See the attached Data Sheets for additional project details.



Table 1: Award Recommendations between \$50,000 and \$100,000

Category	Number of Applications	Recommended
Site-specific	4	\$212,844.09
Total:	4	\$212,844.09

Project Issues/Additional Needs:

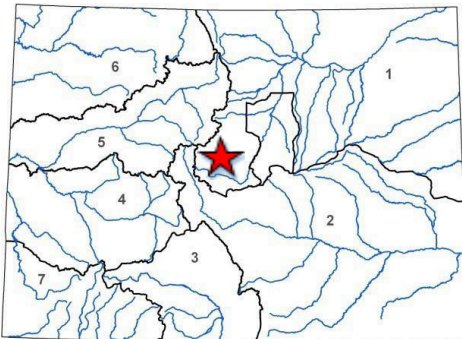
- All funding awards are contingent upon the applicants' ability to secure match funding.
- Grantees should adequately address CWCB staff comments to scopes of work and engineering designs (when applicable). Staff will contact each successful applicant to discuss comments and contracting procedures prior to contracting.
- All grantees should adhere to their organizational procurement policies when hiring contractors and consultants. CWCB recommends that State procurement policies be used as a guide if an organization does not have procurement policies.
- Projects should comply with the CWCB's Rules and Regulations for Regulatory Floodplains in Colorado, when applicable.

Site-Specific

	Applicant	Project Name	Request	Recommendation	Total Project Cost	Match	Basin
2.a	Denver Parks and Rec	Denver Parks and Rec	\$150,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$500,000.00	70%	South Platte
2.b	Denver Water	Denver Water	\$200,000.00	\$70,000.00	\$186,333.00	62%	South Platte
2.c	City of Lamar	City of Lamar	\$93,845.77	\$0.00	\$187,691.54	50%	Arkansas
2.d	Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority	Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority	\$78,000.00	\$67,844.09	\$208,550.00	67%	South Platte
Total Recommendation for Approval:				\$212,844.09			



Turf Replacement Grant Program



LOCATION	
Counties:	Denver
Basin:	South Platte

DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	\$500,000
Turf Replacement Grant Program Request:	\$150,000
Recommended amount:	\$75,000
Applicant Match:	\$350,000 (70%)
Project Type:	Implementation
Project Category:	Site-Specific

MEASURABLE RESULTS	
Water Savings:	2,500,000 gallons (7.7 acre-feet annually)
Converted Area:	230,000 square feet (5.3 acres)

The Turf Replacement Grant Program funding will help Denver Parks and Rec convert 5.3 acres of non-functional, water-intensive bluegrass turf to low-maintenance native vegetation across four (4) sites, including three (3) parks and 4 road medians. The project includes redesigning spaces, removing non-native vegetation, updating irrigation systems, amending soil, and seeding with native mixes.

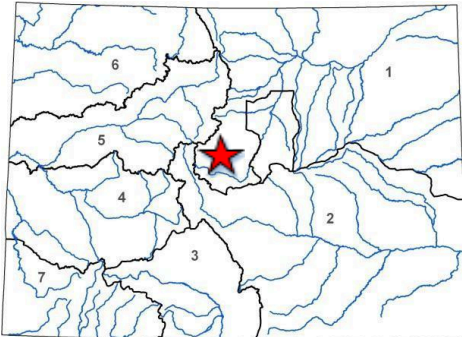
Desktop analysis of satellite imagery was used to determine square footage. Anticipated project costs were estimated based on past project costs for similar projects managed by Denver Parks and Recreation, with adjustments for rising costs in the Denver metropolitan area's general construction industry. Denver Parks and Rec will conduct some design work internally and hire a third party for additional design. An external contractor will handle turf removal, irrigation, and native seeding. Denver Parks and Rec will also conduct community engagement to share project goals and specific site information.

The existing site conditions will be thoroughly analyzed by the Denver Parks and Recreation project team and contracted design consultants. This analysis will include an evaluation of the current vegetation, soil, trees, irrigation systems, and general public usage. Any site-specific constraints that could impact the project's success will also be identified. The project team will upgrade the irrigation systems currently supporting the non-functional bluegrass turf within the project areas to more water-efficient components, thereby increasing their operational efficiency. This work may involve separating irrigation zones to achieve greater consistency with different vegetation types and tree species. Consequently, once the native vegetation is installed, the upgraded irrigation systems will support continued decreased water usage while still meeting the water consumption needs of other plant materials provided by the system, such as existing mature trees.

Funding Recommendation:

Staff recommends partial funding of \$75,000 to Denver Parks and Rec due to limited budget for the Turf Replacement Grant Program.

Turf Replacement Grant Program



LOCATION	
Counties:	Denver
Basin:	South Platte

DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	\$186,333
Turf Replacement Grant Program Request:	\$200,000
Recommended amount:	\$70,000
Applicant Match:	\$116,333 (62%)
Project Type:	Implementation
Project Category:	Site-Specific

MEASURABLE RESULTS	
Water Savings:	720,000 gallons (2.2 acre-feet annually)
Converted Area:	85,000 - 110,000 square feet (2 - 2.5 acres)

The Turf Replacement Grant Program funding will help Denver Water support projects under its existing Landscape Transformation Program, accelerating and expanding the replacement of nonfunctional, water-thirsty turf lawns with water-wise landscape projects throughout the Denver metro area.

The original project cost for the submitted application was \$411,952. However, due to a limited grant program budget and staff recommendations, the project scope and total project cost were amended and reduced to \$186,333 from \$411,952, which is why the *Turf Replacement Grant Program Request* is higher than the *Total Project Cost* listed in the above details. The following description reflects the amended project scope and budget.

Denver Water's projects will replace unused turf with biodiverse landscapes, supporting the 2023 Colorado Water Plan. The projects will focus on Denver Water Properties and Disproportionately Impacted Communities, and funding will be used for design, planning, contractor support, turf removal, irrigation upgrades, and native plant replacement.

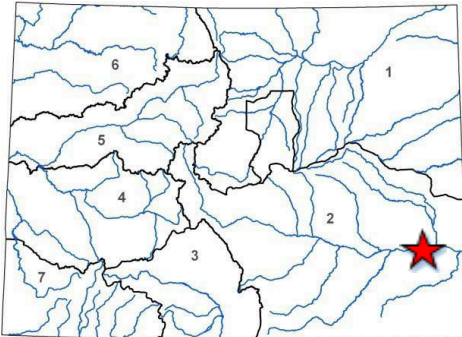
1. Denver Water identified its Foothills Water Treatment Plant as a top priority for water savings. The plant's nonfunctional turf will be replaced with Colorado native grasses that use less water. The Foothills Water Treatment Plant will be an Experimental Site to test the effectiveness of various non-chemical turf replacement methods. The findings will increase knowledge across the industry and aid future land management decisions. Denver Water aims to be a role model by showcasing the removal and replacement of turf with water-wise landscapes.
2. Denver Water's Landscape Transformation Program seeks to address the imbalance of resources by investing in community projects in areas that have been disproportionately impacted. Denver Water will partner with local organizations to complete at least two landscape transformation projects in DI communities over the next few years. The project locations will be identified in the coming year, and the planning, design, and implementation will occur in phases from July 2025 through June 2028. Denver Water hopes these projects will gain momentum for future landscape transformation projects in disproportionately affected communities across the Denver metro area.

Funding Recommendation:

Staff recommends partial funding of \$70,000 to Denver Water due to limited budget for the Turf Replacement Grant Program.



Turf Replacement Grant Program



LOCATION	
Counties:	Prowers
Basin:	Arkansas

DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	\$187,691.50
Turf Replacement Grant Program Request:	\$93,845.77
Recommended amount:	\$0.00
Applicant Match:	\$93,845.77 (50%)
Project Type:	Implementation
Project Category:	Site-specific

MEASURABLE RESULTS	
Water Savings:	30-40%; A baseline volume was not provided
Converted Area:	85,473 square feet (2 acres)

The City of Lamar is requesting funding for the Turf Replacement Grant Program to support the revitalization of the Escondido Park sports field, which has been affected by wear and tear. The project would replace the existing turf with new, durable, high-performance turf, improving safety and performance. This upgrade will enhance athletes' safety and enjoyment of the playing surface while increasing the park's capacity for a broader range of events. The new grass will enable a higher level of play, reduce water usage, lower maintenance costs, and extend the park's usability year-round, ensuring that Escondido Park remains a vibrant and accessible resource for our city and its surrounding areas. The goal is to create a modern and sustainable field supporting various sports and events.

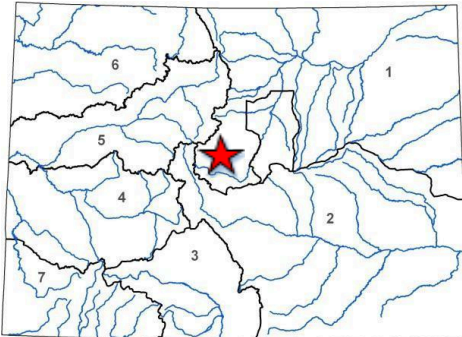
The municipality would contract with a qualified third-party contractor specializing in the construction and repair of soccer fields. The proposed project details from the third-party contractor included in the application indicates the project components are limited to removing existing grass, laser grading, ground prepping, and installing new Yeti Kentucky bluegrass sod. Irrigation renovation is not included in the proposal. The scope does not include repairing existing irrigation system components or any components damaged in the processing of hauling material on and off the field.

Funding Recommendation:

Staff does not recommend funding the City of Lamar for the proposed Escondido Park sports field project. The project application did not adequately demonstrate a reduction in high-water-use turf, nor did it incorporate irrigation updates to reduce outdoor irrigation use. Cool-season bluegrass was indicated as a replacement material in a submitted project proposal estimate, which is not permitted according to the Guidelines and has not been validated as likely to achieve irrigation use reductions.



Turf Replacement Grant Program



LOCATION	
Counties:	Arapahoe
Basin:	South Platte

DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	\$208,550
Turf Replacement Grant Program Request:	\$78,000
Recommended amount:	\$67,844.09
Applicant Match:	\$140,705.91 (67%)
Project Type:	Implementation
Project Category:	Site-Specific

MEASURABLE RESULTS	
Water Savings:	400,000 gallons (1.2 acre-feet annually)
Converted Area:	20,000 square feet (0.5 acres)

The Turf Replacement Grant Program funding will help the Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority implement a project on its campus to replace 20,000 square feet (0.5 acres) of Kentucky bluegrass with native grasses, water-wise plants, and xeric shrub beds. This project aims to reduce irrigation needs and improve water quality, demonstrating that water conservation and water quality can be achieved simultaneously.

Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority's turf conversion project will emphasize water conservation in landscaping and maintain compliance with the Colorado Department of Health and Environment water quality standards. Stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces, such as roofs and parking areas, is typically directed into concrete curb and gutter systems in traditional commercial or office properties, as seen in the existing parking lot at the project site. This project will incorporate crosspans to redirect stormwater into vegetated areas, enhancing water quality treatment opportunities. The landscape design will feature a diverse and attractive selection of low-water and no-water plants, serving as a model for community members undertaking living-to-living turf conversion projects. The design will also feature enhanced pollinator beds to attract butterflies, birds, and other pollinators. The project will also include educational outreach through signage, website content, annual reports, and social media to inform the community about sustainable landscaping practices. Grant funding will support the removal of turf, earthwork, plantings, and the installation of educational signage.

In addition to turf conversion, the project goals include the following:

1. Demonstrate collaboration between water conservation and water quality, with bilingual messaging targeting the Disproportionately Impacted Community within SEMSWA's service area.
2. Educate on Phosphorus-Free landscaping to reduce phosphorus and comply with Control Regulation 72 for the Cherry Creek Basin.
3. Model runoff reduction practices by redirecting flow through a water quality swale, demonstrating infiltration-based stormwater control measures to the development community.

Funding Recommendation:

Staff recommends partial funding of \$67,844.09 to the Southeast Metro Stormwater Authority due to limited budget for the Turf Replacement Grant Program.