



# Water Conservation Incentive Programs

Becky Zusy  
Conservation Coordinator  
Environmental and Sustainability Department

# Residential Grass-to-Xeriscape Landscape Incentive

- In 2007, staff created this program to promote water conservation and to reduce the amount of grass in Mesa
- \$500 for removing at least 500 square feet of living, healthy grass
- Required a minimum of 50 percent coverage by low water use plants in the grass conversion area



**mesa·az** **GRASS-to-XERISCAPE**  
**Landscape Rebate Program**

*Did you know that more than half of the water used by homeowners can be spent on outdoor watering?*  
If you currently have a landscape consisting of grass, converting it into an attractive low-water using landscape is one of the best ways to conserve water and energy, save money on your water bill, and create a landscape that is much easier to maintain. To assist our customers with this water-saving alternative, the City of Mesa is offering a Grass-to-Xeriscape rebate.

**ABOUT THE REBATE PROGRAM**  
The purpose of the Grass-to-Xeriscape program is to help our single-family residential customers reduce their landscape water use by half or more by replacing their water-thirsty lawns with landscape plants appropriate to our Sonoran Desert climate. When you remove 500 square feet or more of established grass and replace it with a water-thrifty landscape, you will receive a \$500 rebate from the City of Mesa.

**WHAT DOES XERISCAPE MEAN?**  
Xeriscape (~~scap~~-a-scape) is a term that defines a creative approach to landscaping that includes the use of well-adapted plants, efficient irrigation, careful design, and proper maintenance. When used together, these principles produce superior landscapes that save both water and energy. Xeriscape also creates or replaces habitats needed by wildlife, and helps to create shade for people, our homes, and our communities.

**REQUIREMENTS AND ELIGIBILITY TO QUALIFY**  
Read these guidelines prior to filling out your application.

1. The applicant must be the current owner of a single-family home and a City of Mesa water customer.
2. Contact us before you start! The rebate is not retroactive prior to the approval date, and is not applicable to conversion projects that take place without the approval of the City of Mesa.
3. Grass must be relatively healthy. Under this program 'healthy' shall be defined as routinely irrigated and manicured with an average coverage of 70 percent.



# 2019 Update #1 – Trees are Cool



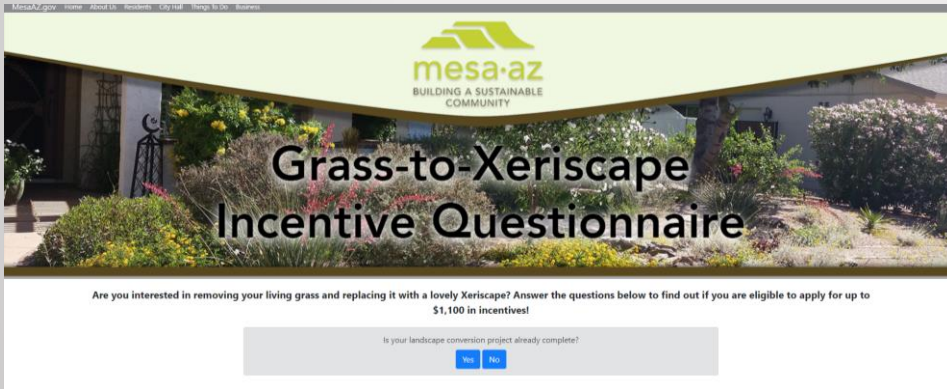
- Many participants were not including trees in their conversion designs
- Trees are Cool was created as an additional incentive to participants in the Grass-to-Xeriscape program for adding trees
- One tree was an additional \$50 or \$75 for two trees
- Low water use trees save water compared with grass
- Trees could be anywhere on the property to receive the incentive
- Supports the new citywide tree planting initiative

# 2019 Update #2 – Enhanced Concepts



- Not a “rebate” anymore – it is now an “incentive,” designed to encourage certain requirements for environmental benefits
- Promotion of sustainability goals
  - Creating shade
  - Improving air quality
  - Provide wildlife habitat
- Added survey to discover motivations to better tailor promotion

# 2019 Update #3 – Online Questionnaire



The screenshot shows the top of a web browser with the URL 'MesaAZ.gov' and navigation links: 'Home', 'About Us', 'Residents', 'City Hall', 'Things to Do', and 'Business'. Below the navigation bar is a green banner with the 'mesa·az' logo and the tagline 'BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY'. The main heading is 'Grass-to-Xeriscape Incentive Questionnaire'. Below the heading is a paragraph: 'Are you interested in removing your living grass and replacing it with a lovely Xeriscape? Answer the questions below to find out if you are eligible to apply for up to \$1,100 in incentives!'. At the bottom, there is a question: 'Is your landscape conversion project already complete?' with two buttons: 'Yes' and 'No'.

- To improve efficiency and create greater understanding, staff created an online questionnaire that must be answered **before applying**.
- New analytics on how many people are filling out the questionnaire, and what their responses are



# 2023 Update – Increased Incentive

- Two participation levels
  - ✓ 500 – 999 sq ft of grass removed = \$750
  - ✓ 1,000+ sq ft of grass = \$1,000
- Trees are Cool - \$50 for one tree, \$100 for two



# Resources for Customers

## Online assistance

- Low water use plant selection
- Understanding Xeriscape
- Tree installation
- Watering schedules
- Design tips
- Grass removal

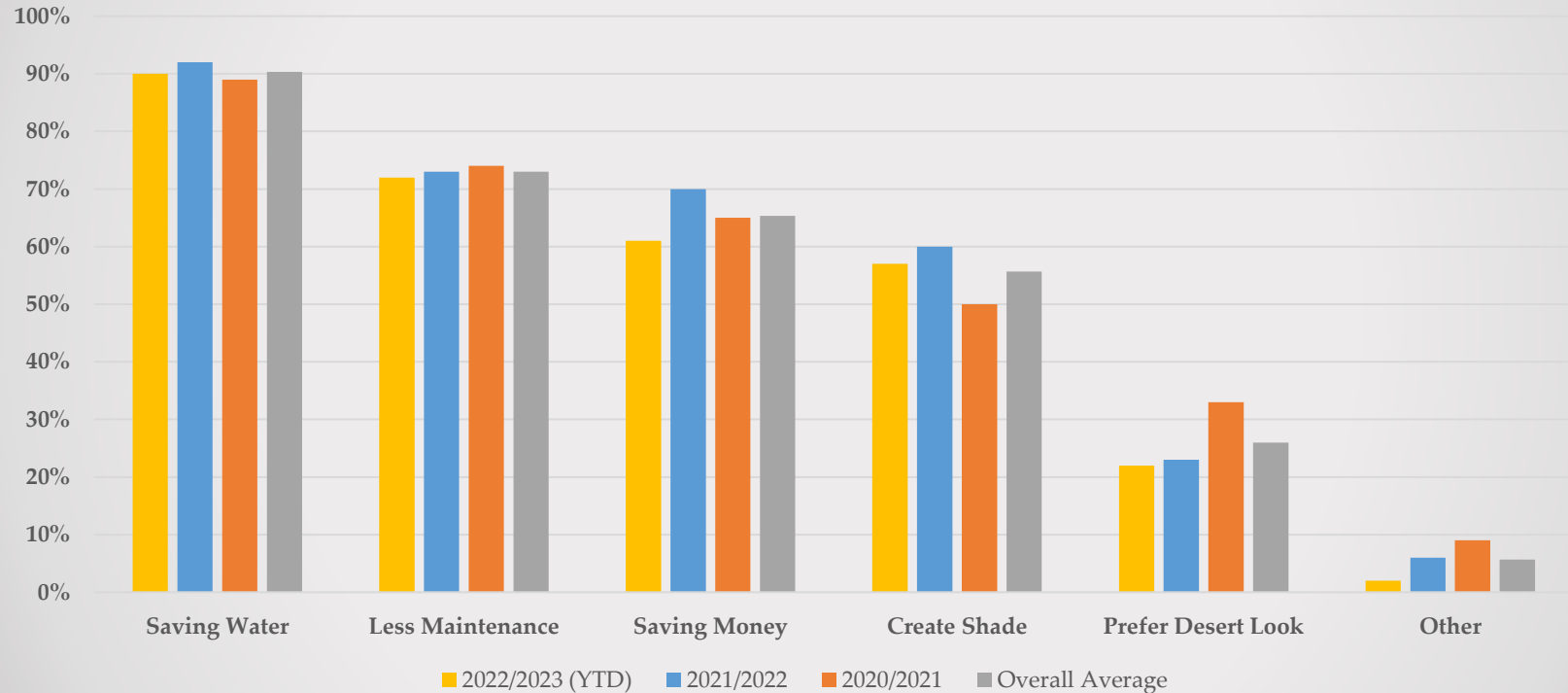


## Personalized email to every customer at every stage

- New application received
- First inspection complete
- Responding to customer questions (there are generally many!)
- Final inspection and payment information



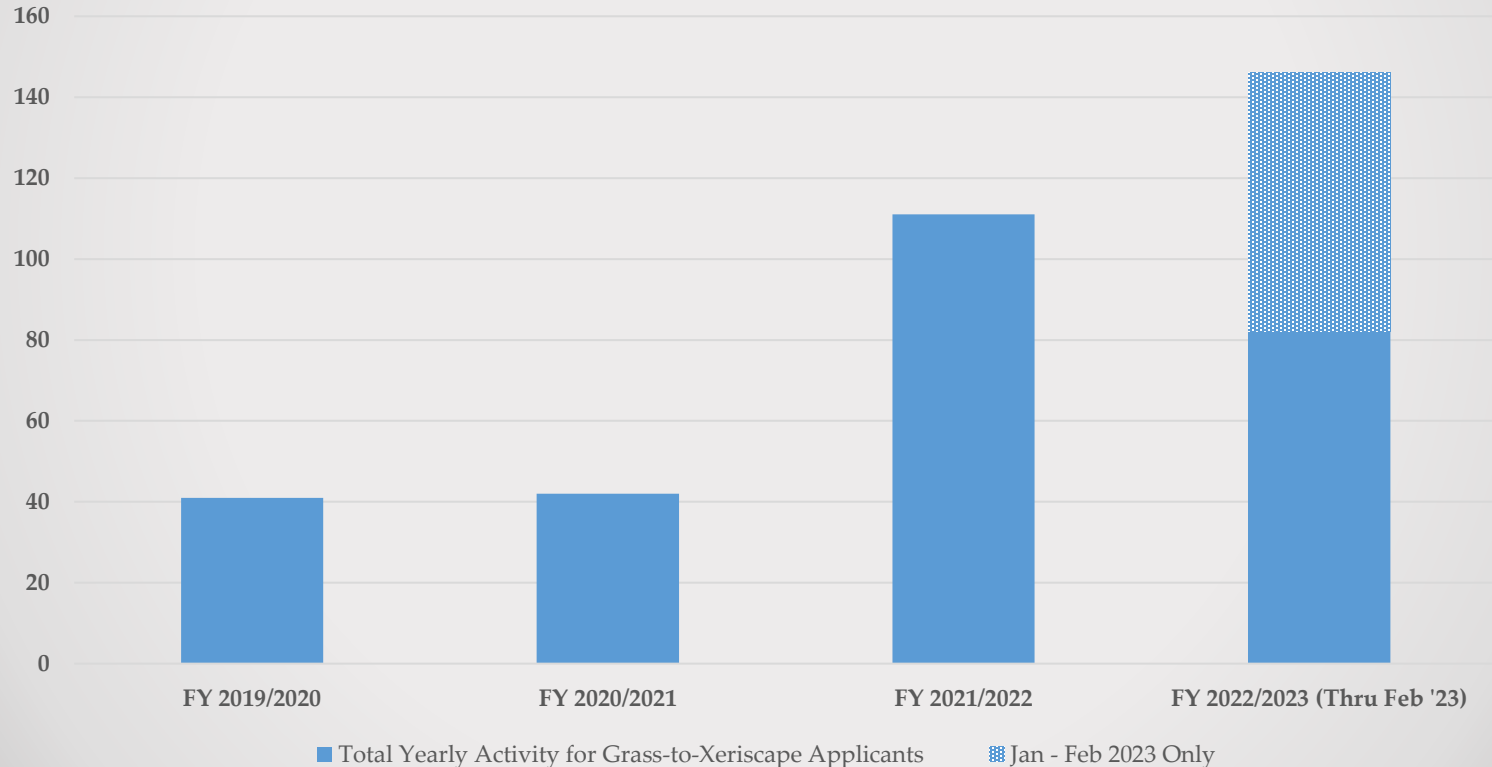
# Motivations for Applying for Grass-to-Xeriscape Landscape Incentive





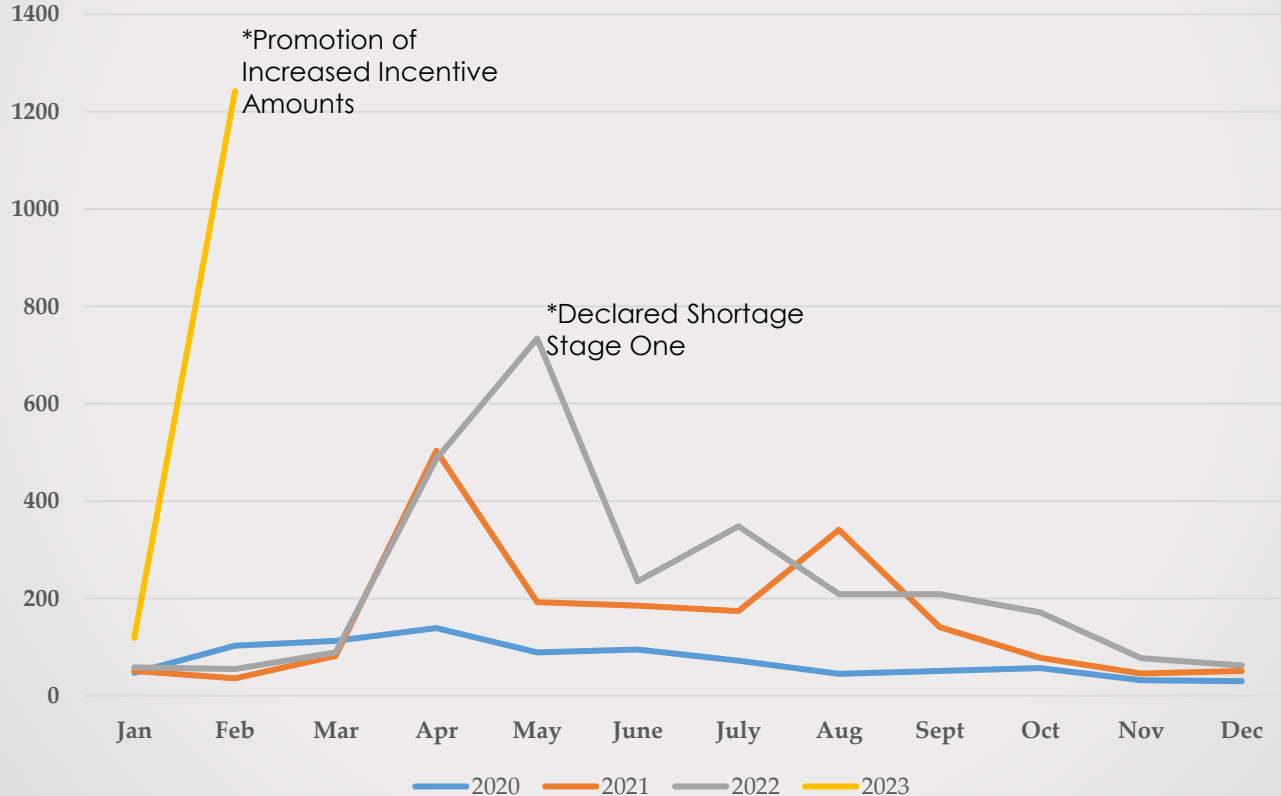
# Increased Participation

Total Grass-to-Xeriscape Landscape Incentive Activity  
(Residential)



# Increased Participation

Number of People Participating in Online  
Questionnaire



# Residential Results By the Numbers

- Since 2007, more than **500 homes** have completed their conversions
- More than **466,000 square feet** of grass have been removed (10.7 acres)
- Estimated cumulative savings of **71,000,000 gallons** of water
- Since 2019, **120 trees** have been planted





# Commercial/HOA/Non-Residential Incentive Options

- Up to **\$12,500**
- Grass-to-Xeriscape Landscape Incentive
- Irrigation Equipment Incentive



**\$12,500**  
Commercial





# Commercial/HOA Grass Removal

- Minimum of 10,000 sq ft of grass
- Similar requirements to residential program



**Use our incentive to remove grass in those non-functional areas.**

# Commercial/HOA/Non-Residential Irrigation Efficiency



- Smart Controllers
- Flow Sensors
- Rain Sensors
- High Efficiency Nozzles
- Valve Pressure Regulators
- Pressure Regulating Heads

# Commercial/HOA/Non-Residential Results By the Numbers

- 2010 – 2018: federal grant money
  - 351,000 square feet of grass removed
  - 7 participants in the irrigation equipment program
  - 20 HOAs, 2 non-profits, 6 apartment communities, 3 businesses participated
- 2019 – present: City budget
  - 58,000 square feet of grass removed
  - 2 participants in the irrigation equipment program
  - 4 HOAs participated
  - Estimated annual water savings: 928,000 gallons
- Increased interest in 2023
  - Since January, inquiries from more than 20 non-residential customers
  - 4 active applications





# Questions?

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**Conservation Coordinator**  
**Environmental and Sustainability Department**  
**[Mesaaz.gov/conservation](https://mesaaz.gov/conservation)**