

ASU's water conservation efforts in Tempe make a big impact

Landscaping projects that will save millions of gallons of water completed just in time for Earth Day

By Marshall Terrill , ASU News
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A pair of Arizona State University landscaping projects are making a significant impact in the Valley and have dramatically transformed each site into a beacon of sustainability thanks to the collaborative efforts fueled by the [Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona](#).

The [ASU Research Park](#), which recently wrapped up a new low-water landscaping project along the one-mile stretch of River Parkway between Elliot and Warner roadways covering 4.8 acres, is now expected to save approximately 5.6 million gallons of water per year. That's almost equal to the amount of water used annually by 52 Valley homes. According to the state, Phoenix households consume about 109,000 gallons per year.

The savings in water comes courtesy of WIFA's [Water Conservation Grant Fund](#), which was created in 2022 and allocated \$200 million in funding by the state of Arizona from the American Rescue Plan. The mission of the fund is to facilitate projects that reduce water use, increase water use efficiency and improve water supply reliability.

The news couldn't come at a more appropriate time, according to [Marc Campbell](#).

"ASU has become synonymous with sustainability in higher education," said Campbell, assistant vice president in the University's Sustainability Practices office. "The conclusion of this project around Earth Day demonstrates the university's commitment to water conservation in recognition of our sustainability goals and the persistent drought conditions impacting the state's water supplies."

Earth Day events

ASU is celebrating Earth Day this week with a slew of events. [Find out how to participate.](#)

ASU submitted a combined application to support turf removal at Tempe's ASU Research Park and Phoenix's [Papago Golf Club](#), home of the ASU golf teams, and was selected in December 2023 as one of 42 turf removal projects selected for funding.

The 29.2-acre Papago Golf Club project covers a much larger area than ASU Research Park and will save nearly 23.5 million gallons per year — equivalent to the water use of 215 homes. The project is currently in progress and will be finished by the end of May.

The projects support ASU's water optimization goal, which is focused on using the right quantity and quality of water for the right purpose at the right time.

"We are transforming our landscapes to better reflect our desert environment," said [Alex Davis](#), who serves as an assistant director in the University Sustainability Practices office. "The Papago Golf Club is irrigated with Colorado River Water and being able to conserve that water for another need around the Phoenix area is one way of supporting the community."

The project's value goes beyond water savings, Davis said.

"We're grateful for the chance to work with our partners at ASU Research Park and the Papago Golf Club to deliver high value, cost-effective projects," Davis said. "Everyone benefits when we collaborate with sustainability as a top priority."

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Desert plants and decomposed granite ground line the banks and median along River Parkway at the ASU Research Park in south Tempe as part of a newly completed low-water landscaping project, which is expected to save approximately 5.6 million gallons of water annually. Photo by Charlie Leight/ASU News