



Turf Buy Back Program Requirements

The Turf Buy Back Program supports water conservation by replacing lawn with Tahoe-friendly native and adaptive vegetation that supports soil conservation, water quality, defensible space, and wildlife habitat. Through this program, the District strives to achieve water conservation, functionality, and beautiful aesthetics. Applicants must work in good faith with the District in meeting these program goals.

REBATE

All rebates are subject to availability of funds. The Turf Buy Back and Irrigation Efficiency Rebate cannot be issued for the same treated area. Rebate amounts:

Residential: \$1.50/sq. ft. up to a max of 2,000 sq. ft. or **\$3,000.00 per fiscal year**

Non-Residential: \$1.50/sq. ft. up to a max of 3,333 sq. ft. or **\$5,000.00 per fiscal year**

CONVERSION DEADLINE: October 15th of the following year

WHO CAN APPLY?

1. To be eligible for the Turf Buy Back rebate, your lawn must be within the South Tahoe Public Utility District (District) boundaries and be a District water customer.
2. If you are not the property owner or account holder, the property owner needs to provide the District written consent to issue you the rebate.
3. Lawn must be established, irrigated, and maintained turf. Lawn can be dying in place when emergency drought regulations are in effect.
4. Beginning the project without District staff approval makes the conversion ineligible for the rebate.
 - a. Before removing any turf, the following actions need to take place:
 - i. Application must be received by the District
 - ii. Lawn needs to be verified by Water Conservation Program staff.
 - iii. Sign Participant Agreement and submit
5. You commit to maintain the turf conversion while you own the property for a minimum of 5 years. If lawn is reinstalled during that time, the entire or partial rebate amount must be refunded to the District. District staff may conduct a follow-up inspection to ensure program conditions are being met.
6. You agree to participate in an irrigation efficiency evaluation for remaining turf areas when applicable.

STEPS TO PARTICIPATE

1. Submit application at mywater.stpod.us.
2. Call 530-543-6268 or email conservewater@stpod.us to schedule and complete a site visit with District staff to confirm eligibility (May 1 through October 31).
3. Project requirements:
 - a. Lawn may be physically removed or covered by sheet mulching (herbicide is not recommended).
 - b. Lawn must not be reinstalled or relocated.
 - c. Only **mulched** permeable landscapes are allowed (mulch, rock, decomposed granite, flagstone, etc.)
 - i. The converted area must be completely covered by a layer of mulch permeable to air and water. Common mulching materials include rock, gravel, bark, pine needles, wood chips and small areas of coarsely textured compost.
 - ii. The use of permeable landscape fabric is only recommended under rocked landscape areas and paths, not in planting bed areas.
 - iii. Patios and/or walkways constructed of materials such as sand or soil set pavers/stones/bricks/flagstones, and/or decomposed granite (DG) should not exceed 25% of the rebate area.

- iv. Areas landscaped with solid plastic sheeting, artificial turf, concrete/asphalt, mortared patios and paths do not qualify for the rebate.
- d. At completion, converted areas must contain **15% living plant cover** at 5 year plant maturity.
 - i. What plants count toward the 15% living plant cover requirement?
Native or climate adapted plants with low to moderate water use requirements.
 - ii. What plants don't count?
Annual plants that don't survive the winter, seeded areas that are not grown in yet, existing plants, federally and locally listed invasive plants and potted plants.
 - iii. Make sure that the plants you choose are appropriate for the site, such that receive enough light and water.
- e. If you have an existing **irrigation system** in the project area, you must choose one of the following options:
 - i. Cut off irrigation valve, remove it and cap the pipes.
 - ii. Remove and cap all sprinkler heads.
 - iii. Remove and cap all but select sprinkler heads and convert remaining heads to a drip system which include pressure regulation and a filter that meet manufacture specifications.
 - iv. Cut the output side of the irrigation valve and convert to a drip system with a pressure regulator and filter at the source.
- f. If you do not have an existing irrigation system you may do the following:
 - i. Install a new irrigation valve with backflow prevention, a pressure regulator, filter and drip irrigation system.
 - ii. Install a new above ground irrigation system at the hose bib with anti-syphon valve, a pressure regulator, filter and drip irrigation system.
 - iii. Hand water.
- 4. Once project is finished based on above requirements and before the rebate deadline date, contact Water Conservation Program staff to set up a turf conversion inspection.
 - a. District staff will meet with you at the site to verify that program requirements have been met. Upon rebate approval:
 - i. District staff collects a plant list with the number of each plant indicated and verifies plant cover requirement.
 - b. If not approved, you'll be informed of what modifications need to be made.
- 5. Please allow 30-60 days after District staff approves the conversion and all paperwork has been submitted to receive the rebate check. Checks are issued only to the property owner or owner's appointed representative.

OTHER APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. The District only verifies that the requirements of the Turf Buy Back program are met. You're responsible for complying with all laws, policies, codes, and covenants that may apply.
- 2. Always consider defensible space, erosion control practices, and land coverage allowances in your conversion as we live in an environmentally sensitive and extremely high-risk fire zone.
 - a. For information on the Best Management Practices Retrofit Ordinance, please visit TahoeBMP.org or call 775-589-5282.
 - b. For information on California Defensible Space law, please visit LivingWithFire.info/Tahoe or contact Lake Valley FPD at 530-577-2447.

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