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WESTERN WATER AGENCIES AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCE GRANTS FOR INNOVATIVE PROJECTS TO SAVE WATER

A dozen innovative water-saving technologies received a financial boost today from the federal government and water agencies across the Southwest with the announcement of this year’s Innovative Conservation Program grant recipients.

From a drone that uses thermal imagery to detect leaks in water distribution pipelines to a tool that estimates how much water a home can save by switching to native and California Friendly™ plants, the grant recipients all offer new ways to potentially permanently reduce water use in the region. Through the program, they will receive grants of up to \$50,000 to evaluate that water-savings potential.

The grant funding comes via a partnership between the Bureau of Reclamation, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Western Resource Advocates, Southern Nevada Water Authority, Central Arizona Project and Southern California Gas Company.

“Every day we get more and more reminders that increased water efficiency and conservation are fundamental to ensuring the people and economy of the Southwest have the water they need to thrive in the future,” said Terry Fulp, Lower Colorado Regional Director of the Bureau of Reclamation. “Simply put, we have to use less water. And these technologies and devices will help us do it.”

A total of \$570,000 was awarded to the 12 recipients—which include private businesses, public agencies and universities—during this two-year ICP cycle. Awardees were chosen from among 55 proposals evaluated through a competitive review process based on project innovation, research plan, market impact potential and project preparedness.

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“Water providers are constantly looking for new and better ways to save water and use it more efficiently. While we foster innovation internally, we’re also counting on startups, entrepreneurs and university researchers to help produce and test the next generation of water-saving devices and technologies,” said Metropolitan General Manager Jeffrey Kightlinger.

In addition to leak detection through drones and assessing the water-saving value of certain plants, this year’s ICP grants also fund research into technology to reuse brewery wastewater for irrigation; a device to monitor real-time household water use and automatically shut-off leaks and water waste; a water-efficient commercial dishwasher; a financial mechanism to drive greater adoption of graywater systems; a system to save water by monitoring water-use by fixture, multiple technologies to improve the water-saving potential of using compost and hydrogel on grass, smart irrigation technologies; and soil moisture-based control technologies.

“We’re looking for water savings everywhere—inside and outside the home, in agriculture, and across a broad range of industries,” said Drew Beckwith of Western Resource Advocates. “We’re in the 18th year of drought in the Colorado River Basin—a key water supply for 40 million people across the Southwest—and there is every indication climate change is only going to make things worse. Every drop counts.”

John Entsminger, Southern Nevada Water Authority General Manager, agreed.

“Southwestern communities need to find ways to use less water and adapt to our changing climate, and this program is one more tool in that tool box,” he said.

Since ICP was launched in 2001, the program has awarded 67 grants totaling \$2.4 million during six two-year funding cycles. The program has funded research into a diversity of water-saving technologies and devices, including technologies that: cut the water needs of grass, use solar power to treat graywater in single-family homes, increase the water efficiency of various appliances in commercial kitchens, improve the efficiency of drip irrigation, use drones to optimize irrigation on golf courses, decrease water use in cooling towers, and improve sensor-based irrigation for vineyards and other crops.

“We’re working together in the West to invest in innovative technologies that will help ensure we use our water supplies as efficiently as possible for years to come,” said Ted Cooke, general manager of the Central Arizona Project.

More information on the Innovative Conservation Program, including lists of past projects, is available at <http://mwdh2o.com/ICP>.

2018 Innovative Conservation Program awardees

Aquam Technologies (San Diego, CA)

Brewery wastewater reuse for landscape irrigation

Evaluation of the “BioElectrochemical Sanitation Technology” (BEST) as a modular and low-cost high-strength industrial wastewater treatment for water reuse.

Advanced Research in Government Operations (Los Angeles, CA)

Project California-Friendly Plant Calculator

Develop an online tool to estimate how much water a homeowner can save by converting to California-friendly plants.

Arizona State University (Tempe, AZ)

Water conservation potential of compost in parks

Evaluate the water savings potential of compost applications as opposed to fertilizer in multi-use turf grass areas in the city of Phoenix.

Cal State Northridge (Northridge, CA)

Testing methods to conserve irrigation water

Evaluate the water savings potential of compost and hydrogel in turf grass areas.

Flo Technologies (Culver City, CA)

Real time water use data and leak detection

Evaluate the water savings achieved using “Flo System” a real-time water use monitoring and water shut-off system in single family homes.

Frontier Energy (San Ramon, CA)

Pumped rinse commercial dishwasher

Evaluate the water savings of pumped rinse, high-temperature sanitizing, door-type commercial dishwasher.

ManageWater (Redwood City, CA)

Detecting water leaks using drone technology

Evaluate the use of drone-acquired thermal imagery in detecting leaks in distribution pipelines.

Pasadena Water and Power (Pasadena, CA)

Innovative financing to increase greywater systems

Analyze financial mechanisms that could drive larger scale adoption of greywater systems.

Project Green (Highlands Ranch, CO)

Water consumption monitoring

Evaluate water savings by monitoring water consumption based on fixture type.

Rain Systems (Los Angeles, CA)

Precision injection machine

Evaluate the use of a precision injection machine to install hydrogel into turf at root level.

University of California Riverside (Riverside, CA)

Smart irrigation technologies

Develop efficient landscape irrigation management strategies using smart irrigation technologies.

University of Florida (Gainesville, FL)

Soil moisture-based control technology testing

Evaluate performance of commercially available soil moisture-based control technologies.