

# Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission

## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** April 26, 2018

**TO:** Chairman and Members, Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission (“NNWPC”)

**FROM:** Chris Wessel, Water Management Planner  
Pam Bedard, Certified Landscape Technician Program Administrator  
Laine Christman, Resource Economist, Truckee Meadows Water Authority

**SUBJECT:** Review and possible approval of a scope of work and budget, not to exceed \$12,500 per year for two years from the Regional Water Management Fund (“RWMF”), for the Nevada Landscape Association (“NLA”) Certified Landscape Technician program; and, if approved, authorize the NNWPC Program Manager to execute an agreement with the NLA for that purpose.

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### SUMMARY

The NLA is submitting the attached proposal and requesting partial funding for the Certified Landscape Technician (“CLT”) testing program (the “CLT Program”) for fiscal years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. The CLT Program has historically been funded, in part, through the RWMF, and is described in the 2016-2035 Regional Water Management Plan, *Chapter 7 - Water Conservation Plan - Efficient Use of Water; Section 7.5.10 Public Education* element. The request for funding, not to exceed \$12,500 per year for two years, is based on a two-year budget that reflects past program expenses since 2004.

The CLT Program provides best-practices landscaping training in 5 designated areas – irrigation (installation and maintenance), softscape (planting of trees), hardscape (installation of pavers, drainage, etc.), turf grass maintenance, and non-turf grass maintenance. The current CLT Program’s primary focus is on upkeep of existing systems, without specific emphasis on efficiency. This year, however, the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (“UNCE”) and the NLA, with the support of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (“TMWA”), will be offering the Qualified Water Efficient Landscaping program (the “QWEL Program”), which is slated to receive financial assistance under the Landscape Retrofit fund.

The QWEL Program is a step up from the CLT Program and is certified by the Environmental Protection Agency WaterSense Program. The QWEL Program’s focus is on how to design and install landscapes that are water-efficient, and the use of different kinds of irrigation systems. Landscapers learn about new irrigation technologies, how to calculate landscape water requirements based on ET rates, and how to schedule irrigation properly for different landscape zones (based on hydrozoning). Furthermore, the QWEL Program covers different kinds of irrigation controllers, how they work, and how to read water meters. Additionally, the course covers soils, mulches, proper plant selection, and landscape designs that work with the hydrology of the landscape. Finally, QWEL Program participants learn and must perform a landscape water audit. The participants complete their training with a 4-hour closed-book exam that is independently moderated and scored.

Pam Bedard, CLT Program Administrator, and Laine Christman, Resource Economist for TMWA, will provide a presentation on the CLT Program proposal and the QWEL Program at the May 2 meeting of the NNWPC.

**BACKGROUND**

The NLA brought the CLT Program to the region in 2003, through its association with the Professional Landscape Network (formerly Associated Landscape Contractors of America), as a way to raise the standards of the local landscape industry. Regional water planning support for the program began in 2005, based on a recommendation from the Regional Water Planning Commission's Advisory Committee on Conservation. The multi-module, practical exam is administered in a number of states and internationally. The CLT Program is widely accepted by the local industry, as shown by the long list of individuals and companies that have donated time and funding to support the program.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Funding for the CLT Program was included in the RWMF budget for FY 2018-2019. Budget authority is located in Fund 7066, Account Number 710100, (WP310103).

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends approval of the request for \$25,000 from the RWMF to support the CLT Program in fiscal years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, and authorization for the Program Manager to execute an agreement with the NLA for that purpose.

CW:jp

Attachments: Nevada Landscape Association Proposal

## EXHIBIT “A”

### Landscape Industry Certified- Technician Exam Nevada Landscape Association Scope of Work

The Landscape Industry Certified- Technician exam is a hands-on testing program administered in Nevada by the Nevada Landscape Association (NLA). NLA has joined forces with the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) formerly, Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) to offer the Certification exam in Nevada. The exam was initially developed and organized by the California Landscape Contractors Association Certification Committee, and first administered in 1983. In 1984, PLANET’s predecessor, the Associated Landscape Contractors of America, purchased the rights to the exam and offered it to state associations. NLA purchased the rights to administer the exam in 2002 and conducted its first exam in 2003.

A critical component of the Certification exam is the Irrigation Module. This comprehensive module covers plan reading, automatic controller programming (including Evapotranspiration and water budgeting), troubleshooting and wiring, automatic and mechanical valve assembly, proper piping selection and fitting, drip systems, sprinkler selection and adjustment and more.

Certification ensures that industry personnel understand water use and efficiency, water conservation and proper techniques for installation and maintenance of irrigation components with an emphasis on responsible water resource management.

#### **Objectives:**

The objectives of the Landscape Industry Certified- Technician exam are to:

1. Promote responsible resource management including water conservation. **According to Truckee Meadows Water Authority, irrigation accounts for 53% of ALL water use from their customers.**
2. Enhance and recognize proficiency in the landscape professional workforce.
3. Provide the public a means of identifying qualified landscape professionals.

#### **Project Evaluation:**

Post-exam critique with Certification Committee and review of NALP Test Evaluator report.

#### **Deliverables:**

Prepare and deliver post-exam reports to Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission (NNWPC) by September 30, 2018. NLA will provide the NNWPC with a report and budget accounting for the 2018 Certification exam, and projections for the 2019 exam. This would include budget figures and give detail on what NNWPC Funds were used for and the number of candidates that tested, retested, passed or failed. A list of committee members, judges and sponsors will also be included for each test.

## **2018 - 2019 Exam Timeline and Activities:**

### **December 2018**

Prepare 2018 brochure and test application. Register test dates with Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC), our test site, and NALP.

### **January 11, 2018 - NLA Conference and Trade Show / Written Test**

Administrator will present an educational seminar at the Conference outlining the values of Certification and how to best prepare for the exam. Display booth at the Trade Show will display promotional videos, literature and test applications.

### **February 2018 – Training Seminars every Saturday**

Classroom seminar to help potential Candidates prepare for the written portions of the exam. Practice test will allow potential Candidates to familiarize themselves with the hands- on exam components. Administer written exams.

### **March**

Continue advertising campaign by distributing brochure and videos via email and fax. Initial contact with test sponsors. Meet with TMCC staff to plan practice test and deliver Liability Insurance form. Contact re-test Candidates.

### **April**

April/ May edition of Landscape Nevada will include Certification stories as well as the brochure and application. Promotional videos will continue via email.

### **May / June– Certification Test Planning**

Contact and secure sponsors, judges and volunteers. Order supplies, equipment, arrange for services (security, first aid, etc.) for test day. Continue advertising campaign.

### **July 28– Mock Field Test training offered**

Classroom seminar to help potential Candidates prepare for the field portions of the exam. Practice test will allow potential Candidates to familiarize themselves with the hands- on exam components.

### **August 10- Test Site set- up**

Certification trailer, rental units, equipment and refreshment area are delivered. Judge and Candidates Orientation held. Committee and Judges set up Hands- on testing modules to guarantee all the proper tools and materials are available. Candidates take written exam.

### **August 11– TEST DAY and test follow up**

Committee arrives at 5:30 A.M., Judges 6:00 A.M. Candidate Registration begins at 6:15 A.M. Testing begins when all Candidates are registered and Judges are ready at their problems;

normally 7:00 A.M. Testing continues through the day until Candidates have completed all of their assigned problems. Several breaks are provided, along with refreshments and lunch. Test Evaluation forms filled out by Candidates and Judges. Committee debriefs. Record and verify test scores, notify candidates, mail certification cards, etc. Prepare and send report to NALP. Announce new Landscape Industry Certified- Technicians in association newsletter, invite to award event. Thank sponsors, judges, volunteers and committee.

### **September**

Debrief with Certification Committee, determine if an additional test will be offered in 2018, and begin planning for 2019. Review budget changes, select new committee members, evaluate and report problems that would require test revision by NALP. Prepare deliverables for NNWPC.

### **October**

Administrator attends NALP Certification Meeting.

### **November**

New Certificates will be presented at the NLA Awards Banquet.

### **December**

Prepare 2019 brochure and application.

### **Future of certification program:**

The NLA is coordinating with TMWA and UNCE to provide a Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL) certification. It's function is to certify individuals in Irrigation Audit. QWEL is approved by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) WaterSense. At this time, there is no defined funding that the NLA may need for the program. The NLA Board of Directors have been anxiously waiting to announce the launch of the program. The hope is that we will have our first training, testing and QWEL certified individuals by the end of 2018.

**EXHIBIT “B”  
Expenses/ Budget**

**Landscape Industry Certified- Technician Exam  
Nevada Landscape Association**

Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission Funds will assist with overall expenses in the following program categories;

- Module supplies will need some increase; the test site needs some repairs.
- Additional training classes and a practice test, effectively doubling our costs for meals, supplies, rentals and staff.

<b>Income</b>	<b>Projected 2018</b>	<b>Projected 2019</b>
Candidates and Study Guides	\$ 6,500	\$ 7,000
Sponsorships and Donations	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,815
NNWPC Funding	\$ 12,500	\$ 12,500
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 29,000</b>	<b>\$ 30,315</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 29,000</b>	<b>\$ 31,315</b>
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>