

## EBMUD LAC Project Committee Meeting Notes

DATE: Monday, December 12, 2022

TIME: 2:00 pm – 3:30pm

LOCATION: Teams and EBMUD Admin

Attendees in-person: Ann-Marie Benz, Dona Wessells, Jerri McNair, Helmut Winkelhake, Kristin Bowman, Geneva Gondak, Sundong Kwong, Yuet Lee

Attendees online: Chris McNairy, Dave Phelps, Doug Anthony, J. Richards, Karly Behncke, Lou Bendon, Rebecca Pollon, Nicolle Miller, Jolene Bertetto

### AGENDA

2:00 p.m. Welcome  
2:05 Drought update/water restrictions/non-functional turf (State Water Board).  
Ebmud.com/drought reservoirs slightly above average. Board will revisit drought status April 2023.  
2:10 Low-water ground covers discussion (lawn-look-alikes and other). The list below does not necessarily indicate approval of plants for EBMUD rebates.

#### **Buffalo Grass – (“UC Verde Buffalo grass”)**

- General experience with it:
  - Watered 2x in summer (goes brown), 1x week for it to look like a grass
    - Easily bounces back after 1 time water
  - Tolerates foot traffic
  - Good for dogs/pets; turns yellow from urine
  - Goes dormant and turns brown in winter (Dec – April); some people have dyed green in the winter – not recommended.
- Irrigation:
  - Rebecca used subsurface inline (but do not necessarily recommend – hard to find leaks); could use spray
  - Water deeply for deep roots (up to 6ft); Deep roots support low-water requirements
- Maintenance:
  - Mow 1x a month
  - When longer it gets soft meadow-like
  - Grows more slowly than traditional lawn
- Establishment:
  - Weeds strong at installation, need to be vigilant against weeds during installation/establishment
  - 12” on-center; fills in very quickly – within a season

#### **Kurapia cultivar (sterile)**

- UC Davis drought studies: low
- Compatible with drip
- Good foot traffic tolerance
- Rossmoor- Kurapia
  - HE nozzles
  - Looks good, doing okay
  - Sheet mulch before to make sure not too many weeds
  - Maintenance issue: people cutting it too short
- Downsides:
  - can get a little “woody” looking in colder part of year; very aggressive; bees
- Recommendation for irrigation: 20% ET

**Phyla nodiflora native species**

- Very aggressive – although native, tends to be more invasive the sterile from seed dispersal.

**Clover – Trifolium repens**

- WUCOLS: Moderate
- Concern: people using invasive oxalis species

**Carex pansa (Asilomar)**

- Moderate water use
- Compatible with drip
- Moderate for establishment; pretty-low after established
- Not a good idea to mow

**Agrostis pallens (CA Bentgrass)**

- Moderate water use
- Available as a sod at delta bluegrass
- Maintenance - mow 1x a month or every 2 months; Issues with dead patches as meadow

**Festuca rubra**

- CNPS is recommending as a low water use native grass alternative
- Holds up well to traffic and pets
- Low water (may want a bit extra in summer)

**Dymondia**

- On EBMUD plant list low
- Low water
- EBMUD customers have been installing in rebate projects – report that it can take some foot traffic

**Creeping Thyme / Woolly Thyme**

- Some success noted with thymes as a low water groundcover

**Tradescantia**

- Some success noted as a low water groundcover — Ruth Bancroft garden designers reportedly sometimes recommend

**Polygonum**

- Some success noted as a low water groundcover

2:50

**Project Updates**

- Biodiversity spotlight - EBMUD water conservation focusing on biodiversity with Super rebate
- Landscape Design Assistance Program launches Jan. 2023 (18 Designers)
- Payback calculator in progress - In the process of peer review, likely demo for next meeting. Found reducing maintenance cost significantly brings down the payback period.
- Meeting with Irrigation only large account holders - “sparked a movement” for one city
- Demonstration Gardens
  - Placemaking of East Bay Demonstration Gardens: Factors that support and hinder development of gardens - Kristin completed her thesis. May present at some point. Thank you to Lou, Ann-Marie, Geneva, Jessica, Jolene.
  - Climate Discovery Garden (Heather Farms); Irrigation, plants, sheet mulched – finalizing signage. Team includes Chris McNairy, Tom Bressan, Loren McIrvine, Lori Palmquist, Judy Dale, Julie Lienert, Sharon Gibson, Joan Lucchese, Jere Peck, Kristin Bowman
- Low-water Trees at Devil Mountain Nursery -Stew Winchester, Jolene Bertetto 55 attendees. See attachment for trees covered.
- Bloom campaign and RFQ for Native plant landscaper training
  - 11 Genus of plants highlighted at 100 CA nurseries
  - Social media ads and influencers to market these species
  - Provided point of sale materials to nurseries
  - Gathering ideas for phase 2 of this campaign

- RFQ: looking for trainers for Native plant landscaper training, currently have grant to run 5 this year. See attachment.
- Plant list updates- The goal is to update the EBMUD plant list with more specificity to climate zones and biodiversity
  - Reviewed the eco-region zones listed on new Bay Area Garden Planner: <https://bayarea.calscape.org/>
  - APLD Slow the Burn – Dona noted APLD will likely be doing a presentation series on grasses/groundcovers and will share info. Also noted recent success of APLD “slow the burn” presentation. Emphasis on using native plants to reduce fire hazards.

- 3:00 Upcoming event
- Jan 4 – APLD offering webinar on replacing lawn with a winning design. Sign up [here](#).
- New Business
- Possible future meeting with some of the groundcover/lawn substitute growers?
- 3:15 Adjourn

## DROUGHT STAGE 2

- Mandatory 10% water reduction District-wide
- 8% drought surcharge on water used (starts in July)
- Section 28 water use restrictions found on **[ebmud.com/drought](http://ebmud.com/drought)**
- Excessive use penalty in effect – above 1646 gallons/day residential. Fine \$2/unit above threshold (unit = 748 gallons)
- State Water Resources Control Board – ban on watering non-functional turf. Does not apply to residential. Started June 16, 2022  
[https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/conservation\\_portal/regs/docs/emergency-reg-faq-june-22.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/conservation_portal/regs/docs/emergency-reg-faq-june-22.pdf)