



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Sustainability & Climate Action Plan

Hire a Dedicated Water Manager

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENT(S) THIS INITIATIVE SUPPORTS

- **2 - Water Reduction**
- 7 – Sustainable Literacy

INITIATIVE DETAILS

Initiative Summary

This initiative proposes to hire a full-time Water Manager at the University of Arizona to oversee water conservation efforts and implement the One Water program to achieve a Net Zero Water Campus. The Water Manager will track water usage, coordinate with departments on conservation projects, and act as a liaison with municipal partners. This role is essential for managing campus water infrastructure, developing demand-side reduction programs, and enhancing data collection and reporting methods. Actionable items include:

- Appoint a dedicated professional to manage and oversee water conservation efforts, One Water program implementation, and Net Zero Water Campus goals.
- Improve tracking methods and reporting structures for water usage across campus, ensuring detailed and consistent data collection.
- Implement water conservation initiatives in high-water-use areas like labs and dorms, in collaboration with student groups and departments.
- Act as a community liaison to align the university's water conservation goals with the City of Tucson's One Water 2100 Master Plan and explore funding opportunities.
- Engage in integrative design processes for new construction and major renovations to ensure water efficiency and sustainability.

Proposed Initiative & Background

The University of Arizona should hire a full-time Water Manager within the University Facility Services department, to actively track and manage water conservation efforts that align with the goal of becoming a Net Zero Water Campus through the implementation of a One Water program. The Water Manager would be the key steward of overseeing the implementation of the One Water program and the related net zero water plan, while overseeing campus water infrastructure-related projects and maintenance. A Water Manager should also be involved in developing demand-side reduction programs in labs, dorms, and other high-water-use areas while collaborating with student groups and other departments on water conservation-related projects. As mentioned above, the University should invest in expanding its water utility tracking methods. This Water Manager should be responsible for the collection, tracking, and reporting of water usage data. They should identify areas for improvement and coordinate with responsible departments to address any excessive water use. This position should be a collaborative role, engaging with various departments and groups across campus to advance water

conservation goals. This person should also be involved in any integrative design processes when UFS is planning any new construction or major renovations.

A Water Manager should also act as a community liaison to coordinate with municipal and utility partners. The University of Arizona sits in the Santa Cruz watershed, and the decisions around water resource management ultimately impact the resilience of our entire community. Greater coordination of efforts and project outcomes should occur with these municipal partners to identify potential funding opportunities or areas for collaboration. The City of Tucson recently approved its One Water 2100 Master Plan to plan for the long-term health and resilience of the Tucson area watershed. The University should be an active partner as our water conservation goals should align with those of the City of Tucson.

University Facility Services, which is responsible for the operation of water utility services on campus, regularly tracks and monitors water use on campus, but the level of detailed data available is not always consistent, nor regularly reported. Similarly, many buildings on campus have only received digital water meters to actively track water use in the last few years and many still do not have meters to track water use. If the University is to meet the recommended goal of becoming a Net Zero Water Campus, steps need to be taken, such as establishing a One Water program and improving water data collection methods and reporting structures. These activities require a dedicated Water Manager for the University water system.

The University has employed an Energy Manager for several years now, who monitors campus-wide energy use and provides recommendations and active intervention for increasing operational efficiencies to reduce our emissions and energy-related expenses. A similar position does not exist for the handling of water utilities on campus.

Feasibility & Anticipated Challenges

While there are no anticipated challenges beyond finding the appropriate funding to hire a Water Manager, there may be challenges to the success of this position if there is not sufficient support from administration and leadership to implement the One Water program and the Net Zero Water Campus plan. The Water Manager should receive appropriate support that allows them to work effectively with other campus groups to share information, data, and opportunities for collaboration.

Data Analyses to Support Initiative

This is a position that is commonly filled at an institution of our size and the implementation of recommendations 2.2 and 2.3 will be strongly influenced by the creation of this dedicated position. Further analysis of the efficacy of this position would come from the tracking of data and information that the Water Manager would do once hired. Annual reports should be generated to measure water savings or conservation efforts year-over-year.

Resource Requirements & Return on Investment

Resource Requirements

- Salary for the new employee position.

Return on Investment

- A Water Manager for campus could implement water saving practices that save enough water and related utility expenses to offset their salary.
- The Water Manager could also participate in designing and planning new capital projects, to ensure projects meet water conservation goals while helping to improve the overall project process.

Potential Funding Sources

- Funding should come from stable long-term administrative or operational budgets within UFS, but a grant could be used to help pilot the position in the beginning. Grant funding could include funds from the Campus Sustainability Fund, or the Arizona Water Infrastructure Finance Authority Conservation Grant Program.

Accountable Division(s) & Department(s)

- University Facility Services

Partners & Collaborators

- Office of Sustainability
- Auxiliary units such as Housing, Arizona Unions, Athletics, etc.
- Tucson Water
- Pima County Wastewater Reclamation

Implementation

Length of Time to Implement

- Less than one year
- One to five years
- More than five years

Difficulty of Implementation

- Low
- Medium
- High
- Extremely High

Relative Timing

- **Begin within two years**
- Begin in three to five years
- Begin in six years or later

Metrics for Success

- Once a Water Manager is hired, an annual water audit should be conducted along with (near) real-time water monitoring. The success of this position would be based on campus water use trends and the successful implementation of the Net Zero Water Campus Plan and the One Water program.