

USU Extension and Partners Receive Grant for Water-wise Demonstration Garden

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Thanksgiving Point Institute in Lehi, in cooperation with Utah State University Extension, was recently awarded a \$136,186 Museums of America grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the federal agency that funds museums and libraries in the United States. The grant will allow for the creation of a water-wise demonstration garden at Thanksgiving Point and offer educational programming on how to be water wise in a desert climate.

Michael Caron, USU Extension horticulturist at Thanksgiving Point and principal investigator for the grant, said a partnership in place with Jordan Valley Water District's Conservation Garden Park and Central Utah Water District's Central Utah Gardens in Orem will help support the project with additional expertise on water-wise demonstration gardens and educational outreach.

"It really is a four-way partnership, and we are excited about the opportunities this will provide in education to the public," he said. "The best way for us to be successful is to collaborate. We need to partner and share resources instead of trying to do it all on our own. Each of the four organizations has great experience and knowledge that can be brought to the table for this project."

Caron said Extension's main role will be to develop educational programming, which will be provided through classes on water-wise landscapes and interpretive signage at the gardens.

"We will be able to reach out to the 180,000 visitors who come through Thanksgiving Point Gardens each year and share the message in a larger way than each single garden can," he said. "Thanksgiving Point can be the springboard to show how beautiful water-wise gardens can be and help direct patrons to other community resources on water-wise gardening."

Caron said the water-wise garden will be installed the first part of next year, and then partners will begin work on planting the garden and providing educational programming.

"This is a very exciting time, since one of my initial goals upon coming to Thanksgiving Point was to help the gardens become more integrated into the educational programs we offer and will offer in the future," Caron said. "This grant is a major part of the realization of that goal."

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