



COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Andy Moore, Water Resources Engineer
Interstate, Federal and Water Information Section

DATE: July 15-16, 2015 Board Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: 16c. Consideration of Town of Gilcrest Emergency Dewatering Grant Application

Introduction

There have been increased occurrences of high groundwater issues since about 2008 in several areas in the lower South Platte Basin. HB12-1278 resulted in a report on these groundwater issues. The South Platte Basin Roundtable formed a groundwater technical committee (Technical Committee) in 2014 to review recommendations from the HB12-1278 report, the first of which concerns mitigation of localized high groundwater conditions.

HB15-1178 (Saine & Humphrey—Marble) established an emergency dewatering grant program for the purpose of lowering the water table in areas of Gilcrest and Sterling. The Town of Gilcrest has been particularly hard hit, with damaging high groundwater affecting basements, nearby agricultural fields, and the wastewater treatment plant.

Background

HB15-1178 was signed by the Governor on June 5, 2015, and it went into effect on July 1, 2015. Knowing that the issues in Gilcrest were going to worsen during the summer with ongoing irrigation activities in the area, CWCB Staff worked to get the criteria and guidelines in place as soon as possible. They were presented to the Board in Agenda Item #16b. With the advent of summer and the irrigation season, the already high groundwater levels in the area are rising, and more structures are expected to be impacted.

Gilcrest has work planned on their wastewater treatment plant this fall and later in 2016. They have already secured a \$1,090,000 loan from the State Revolving Fund to get the upgrades completed, and they are concerned about proceeding, because of the rising groundwater that is likely to complicate that work and increase the costs.

The highest groundwater levels are expected to occur through September, and Gilcrest is interested in the Board considering their application at this Board meeting, in order to facilitate action on the high groundwater issues as soon as possible. If the application is not approved until the September 2015 Board meeting, Gilcrest may miss an opportunity to address some of the high groundwater issues when they may be at their most damaging high levels.

The Technical Committee has discussed the Gilcrest issues extensively over the last several months. Options for dewatering have been proposed, and CWCB provided \$20,000 to Gilcrest to get the dewatering initiated; DOLA has matched this with \$15,000. The initial option proposed has not yet been successful, but there are still efforts to make it work. Another option is being planned that looks more likely to succeed. This second option will be the focus of their grant application.



The Town of Gilcrest has been working on an application for a grant from this program, but it was not ready at the time of the July Board Meeting deadlines. Staff will provide the application to the Board as soon as it is received and reviewed. The plan for dewatering the area has already been discussed at several Technical Committee meetings, so Staff is already aware of many of the details that will be in the application.

Staff Recommendation

This grant will allow the Town of Gilcrest to move forward on dewatering in the area to avoid further damage to structures in the town. CWCB staff asks that the Board consider for approval, with conditions if necessary, the Town of Gilcrest emergency dewatering grant application.