

ENGAGEMENT & INNOVATION GRANT FUND SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION

Introduction & Purpose

Colorado's Water Plan calls for an outreach, education, public engagement, and innovation grant fund in Chapter 9.5.

The overall goal of the Engagement & Innovation Grant Fund is to enhance Colorado's water communication, outreach, education, and public engagement efforts; advance Colorado's water supply planning process; and support a statewide water innovation ecosystem.

The grant fund aims to engage the public to promote well-informed community discourse regarding balanced water solutions statewide. The grant fund aims to support water innovation in Colorado. **The grant fund prioritizes measuring and evaluating the success of programs, projects, and initiatives. The grant fund prioritizes efforts designed using research, data, and best practices. The grant fund prioritizes a commitment to collaboration and community engagement. The grant fund will support local and statewide efforts.**

The grant fund is divided into two tracks: engagement and innovation. The Engagement Track supports education, outreach, communication, and public participation efforts related to water. The Innovation Track supports efforts that advance the water innovation ecosystem in Colorado.

Application Questions

*The grant fund request is referred to as "project" in this application.

Overview (answer for both tracks)
In a few sentences, what is the overall goal of this project? How does it achieve the stated purpose of this grant fund (above)?
The goal of this project is to expand our current outreach efforts within the upper Rio Grande Basin by incorporating key topics from the State Water Plan and or Basin Implementation Plan. The education and Outreach will compliment what the basin is currently but will be targeted to specific group need and where they fit in the state/basin water plans.
Who is/are the target audience(s)? How will you reach them? How will you involve the community?
We have identified these key stake holders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students (K-College) and Teachers (Statewide) • General Community Members • Agricultural Producers • Water Users (Consumptive and Non-Consumptive) • Government Officials (Town/City, State and Federal) • Roundtable Members
Describe how the project is collaborative or engages a diverse group of stakeholders. Who are the partners in the project? Do you have other funding partners or sources?
The Rio Grande Basin Roundtable has a strong outreach plan and has had since 2011. These plans have been developed by a variety of stakeholders from our roundtable and at large community members. This project has been developed in collaboration with that group. Member stakeholders are: Heather Dutton , San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District, Nathan Coombs, Conejos Water Conservancy District, Emma Reesor and Andrea Bachman , Rio Grande Restoration Foundation, Rio de la Vista , Rio Grande headwaters Land Trust, Bethany Howell , Rio Grande Watershed



Overview (answer for both tracks)
<p>Conservation and Education initiative, Helen Smith, Rio Grande Basin Roundtable Outreach Intern, Christi Bode, Moxicran Productions and Judy Lopez, Colorado Open Lands and RGBRT PEPO Liaison who will serve as the fiscal agent and program manager for the project.</p> <p>These participants have put the project together and consulted a variety of stakeholders to better understand their needs, these stakeholders are: Rio Grande Water Conservation District (RGWCD), San Luis Valley Irrigation District (SLVID), The five area Conservation Districts -CD (Conejos, Costilla, Center, Mosca-Hooper and Rio Grande), Platoro, Santa Maria and Continental Reservoir Companies, Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association, County Commissioners (all seven Counties), Town Councils (Alamosa, Monte Vista, Creede) Teachers from across the state, Ag producers Through the following boards: RGWCD, SLVID, CD's and Students.</p> <p>Our funding partners include: Cash: Colorado Open Lands(COL), Rio Grande Watershed Conservation and Education Initiative, San Luis Valley Water Conservancy, Intern Entities. In kind: COL, RGWCD, Trinchera Ranch, Trout Unlimited, SLVWCD, SLVID, Continental and Santa Maria Reservoirs, SLVCD's, RG Restoration Foundation, SdCAA, CPW, USFWS, USFS, various ditch companies, Alamosa River Keepers, Rio Grande Headwaters land trust.</p>
Describe how you plan to measure and evaluate the success and impact of the project?
<p>Success of the project will be measured in a variety of ways, each seminar, tour, and teacher workshop will have an evaluation that participants will fill out upon completion. Students visit will be evaluated by attendance and program utilization. We will also be at the level of information received pre-and post-event series through an on line poll. Finally, since the basin has attendance data from past events and this utilization will be compared to current project utilization and then be analyzed for trends. We hope to be able to quantitatively understand what was and was not successful. These will be shared with CWCD in our final report.</p>
What research, evidence, and data support your project?
<p>The Rio Grande Basin Roundtable has always valued education and seen it as the path to closing the water gap, both here in the basin and throughout state. Early on the RGBRT developed and has maintained a robust education and outreach program. The roundtable as a collective has taken the view that all uses deserve a place at the table, a forum where they will be listened to and heard. We believe that this sense of collaboration is evidenced in both the quality and variety of the projects that are moved forward for funding. We did an extensive data gathering as of the formation our basin implementation and found that of 987 folks surveyed 72% knew who the RGBRT and its purpose, 22% had no idea and 6% were indifferent. We asked folks what water concerns they had, of the respondents 61% noted supply, 47% had quality concerns, 34% environmental concerns, 82% felt they lacked knowledge, 91% noted the economic ties to water (noting the loss of Ag, costs to business, and recreation/tourism). Finally the survey asked if you had to put your waters future in to some ones had who would it be: 44% said children, 34 % said agriculture, 15% said communities and 7% said elected officials. From that point in 2012, we have directed our education to meet the needs of these groups: Ag producers, community members, students and teachers, and elected officials. (this study was conducted in 2012, by Judy Lopez, former Executive Director of the Rio Grande Watershed Conservation and Education Initiative). We have also used data from the 2008 Water Education Task force that noted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support a statewide public education initiative. 2. Develop information and communication tools that can be used statewide. 3. Establish long-term funding for intrastate and interstate collaboration opportunities.



Overview (answer for both tracks)

4. Coordinate efforts across state agencies. 5. Increase coordination with the Colorado Department of Education on K-12 water resource content. Finally, we have used the results of the 2014, basin wide water user survey conducted by the Subdistrict #1 board of managers. These findings have helped develop this group of stakeholders who have come together to support the outcomes that are outlined in the Colorado State Water Plan and the Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan.

Describe potential short- and long-term challenges with this project.

The challenges with any education/outreach program in the short and long-term are funding. All most all the initial educational projects are developed with little to no funding. The real funding needs come into play when implementation begins and as programs grow and develop. It is always a challenge to evaluate education and outreach projects because they tend to be subjective as opposed to quantitative, we have worked hard to develop a mechanism to allows to evaluate so that we can develop future programs on what has been learned.

Please fill out the applicable questions for either the Engagement Track or Innovation Track, unless your project contains elements in both tracks. If a question does not relate to your project, just leave it blank. Please answer each question that relates to your project. Please reference the relevant documents and use chapters and page numbers (Colorado's Water Plan, Basin Implementation Plan, PEPO Education Action Plan, etc.).

Engagement Track

Describe how the project achieves the education, outreach, and public engagement measurable objective set forth in Colorado's Water Plan to "significantly improve the level of public awareness and engagement regarding water issues statewide by 2020, as determined by water awareness surveys."

We have designed a set of education and outreach mechanisms designed for the specific target audience. Youth, Educators, Community, Ag Producer and Elected officials. By having educational and outreach programs designed for each audience we believe and studies show that we can "significantly improve the level of public awareness and engagement regarding water issues statewide by 2020".

Web Page

- Youth Education will consist of instructional mechanisms built into existing, well attended and received programs: the Youth Conservation Camp for students 8-13 years old, State Envirothon competition and class room visits that target water and water issues using the Riparian and River Study Center and Ground Water Model and will be offered to students in the six counties in the upper Rio Grande Basin but are easily replicated for other areas in the state.
- Educator education will be offer teachers from across the state and opportunity to attend week long workshops that look intensively at water and watersheds in terms of the human role, sustainability, the role of watersheds and food and food production.
- Internship opportunities for students ages 16 - 22 years of age, who are partnered with private organizations who work in natural resources and resource management, where the earn while they learn.
- Community education and outreach will engage community members on a set of tours of projects across the basin and state that meet Colorado Water Plan outcomes. This will also include time in workshops designed to address key water issues.



- Elected officials will have the opportunity to engage water leaders regarding key question and concerns. They will also be introduced to the collaborative community of the roundtable process and its mission to protect and sustain Colorado water resources.
- Ag Producers both farmers and ranchers, will engage in a collaborative set of tours and workshops both here in the Rio Grande and across the state. They become a part of “The Water Story” series that will be a part of the basin website and upload to the CWCB website.

Describe how the project achieves the other measurable objectives and critical goals and actions laid out in Colorado’s Water Plan around the supply and demand gap; conservation; land use; agriculture; storage; watershed health, environment, and recreation; funding; and additional.

Each target audience as outlined above, will be a part of a project that addresses the supply and demand gap; conservation; land use; agriculture; storage; watershed health, environmental and recreation, funding needs and gaps and long-term sustainability

Describe how the project achieves the education, outreach, and public engagement goals set forth in the applicable Basin Implementation Plan(s).

This project addresses the 14 Rio Grande Basin Goals that address four key user groups Ag, Municipal and Industrial, Recreation and Environmental and Water Administration and use the thread of outreach and public engagement to weave them together. These projects employ the objectives that the Rio Grande Basin plan identifies: Outreach, Education and Participation through collaboration across demographics and audiences. They also use the RGBIP goals to engage, educate and call participants to action.

Describe how the project achieves the basin roundtable’s PEPO Education Action Plans.

These projects augment the outcomes of the Basin’s EAP by: building communication and engagement around the State and Basin Water Plan; developing water education that is delivered in a variety of ways to a diverse group of stakeholders using a variety of mechanisms and by developing and an engaging delivery platform that is accessible.

Innovation Track

Describe how the project engages/leverages Colorado’s innovation community to help solve our state’s water challenges.



Innovation Track
Describe how the project helps advance or develop a solution to a water need identified through TAP-IN and other water innovation challenges. What is the problem/need/challenge?
Describe how this project impacts current or emerging trends; technologies; clusters, sectors, or groups in water innovation.