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Colorado Cattlemen's Association

Date:	July 22, 2020
Name of Grantee:	Colorado Cattlemen's Association (incorporates CAWA as a subcontractor)
Name of Water Project:	Agriculture Water Collaborative- Year 2
Type of Report:	Final Report

Tasks

Task 1- Ag Education Programming

Deliverable	<p>Seven (7) regional workshops around the state for producers. The focus is on irrigation improvement projects, stream management plans and conservation. Seven (7) or more Colorado agricultural industry conference attendance and tradeshow participation.</p> <p>Completion of two (2) high-quality, succinct and easy-to-understand videos covering ag water topics of interest and importance to ag water stakeholders.</p>
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Progress to date:

Workshops (7 of 7 completed)

Event	Date	Attendees (#)	Total Cost	Cost per Attendee	Survey Results*
Gunnison Workshop	11/12	34	\$1,471	\$43	4.1
Monte Vista Workshop	11/20	66	\$1,326.19	\$20	3.8
Greeley Workshop	1/23	50	\$1,003.31	\$20	4.5
Johnstown Workshop	2/5	18	\$963.49	\$53	4.2
Brush Workshop	2/23	22	\$596.13	\$27	4.0
Walden Workshop	3/13	64	\$210	\$3	4.5
Rifle Workshop (digital)	6/11	55	\$0	\$0	4.6

*Average rating to the question "Overall, this was a helpful and informative event." 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

Colorado Agricultural Industry Conference Attendance (7 of 7 completed)

Event	Date	Attendees (#)
Colorado Cattlemen's Association Water Committee	6/17/19	50
Colorado Association of Conservation Districts	11/19	100
Rio Blanco County Stockgrowers	9/17/19	32
Highland Ditch Company	11/25/19	23
Uncompahgre Water Users Association	2/4/20	165
Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association	2/24/20	210
Governor's Ag Forum	2/26/20	25

Videos (2 of 2 completed)

Event	Date	Views (#)	Total Cost
5 Ditches Project	11/1	436	2,500
Ditch Inventory	12/1	238	2,800

Task 2 – Outreach

Deliverable	<p>Three (3) Multi-Stakeholder ag water field days for legislators, city council members, conservationists, water resource specialists, and other people outside the agricultural community to learn firsthand how water is used in agriculture.</p> <p>Field days are based in certain regions on topics pertaining to ag water use. Key groups in and outside the ag community are targeted to attend to learn more about the value of irrigated agriculture.</p> <p>Field days include a tour of a working farm/ranch, education and outreach on ag water topics of relevance and networking opportunities for individuals from a different water stakeholder group.</p>
Progress to date	<p>8/14/19- Eagle Rock Ranch, Jefferson, CO located on the Tarryall Creek, participants had the chance to tour the operation, learn about water improvements made and enjoy the evening with fellowship on a picturesque ranch. (52 participants)</p> <p>9/14/19- Jeffries Jay Slash Bar Ranch, Durango, CO located on the Florida River, the Jeffries ranch is an irrigated hay farm and cattle ranch. (85 participants)</p> <p>9/26/19- Moffat County Fall Gathering, Craig, CO learned and conversed about water topics. (64 participants)</p>



Colorado Ag Water Alliance

"Committed to the preservation of agriculture through the wise use of Colorado's water resources"

Agriculture Water Collaborative – Year 2: Final Report

Over the past year, the Colorado Ag Water Alliance (CAWA) has been conducting extensive outreach throughout the state to engage farmers and ranchers on issues relating to water and agriculture. In order to meet with producers, our outreach has been a combination of workshops, presenting at tradeshow and conferences within the agricultural industry, and creating videos that can then be viewed online and shown at other events.

The focus of this outreach has been tailored to the regional needs of producers, but there are some common themes. Stream Management Planning (SMP) has been one of the main themes of our outreach. Instead of presenting these projects as a process aimed at improving stream health and meeting environmental and recreational goals, we focus on identifying projects and process that provide a benefit to an agricultural producer's operation and have a positive environmental impact. We highlight the potential of ditch inventories and specific projects implemented throughout the state that highlight this synergy.

Another issue we have focused on that overlaps with SMP and ditch inventories, was educating producers about the options for grants related to water and agriculture. This involved talking about the various state, federal, and private sources of funding, what it takes to prepare for the grant process, and how to "bundle" multiple sources of funding. We also discuss how multi-beneficial projects can provide more leverage for funding and attract other organizations that can provide financial or other resources for a project.

Another topic we focused on, especially in the South Platte Basin, was Reg 85 and Water Quality. Right now, the state is nearing the end of a 10-year period where farmers and ranchers are encouraged to voluntarily adopt Best Management Practices (BMP) in terms of nutrient management. We discuss Reg 85 and what efforts are being done around the state to measure the positive impact of current BMPs and what practices are compatible with an agricultural operation.

Some of our outreach also focused on subjects that have been of interest in specific regions. One workshop we held focused entirely on groundwater management programs in Colorado and the throughout the arid West. This took place in Center, CO and was intended to look at the strategies of various program and if they would have relevance to the groundwater issues in the San Luis Valley. Another workshop in Greeley was entirely on reservoir dredging. We had a panel of presenters talk about various dredging projects and then a few speakers who discussed what reservoir companies need to know and think about in terms of Colorado Water Law and Federal Law, specifically what would trigger having to file a 404 permit.

Besides providing information for agricultural producers, these meetings give us a great opportunity to listen to our constituents on agricultural water issues.

In terms of SMPs and agricultural participation, we summarized the general feedback:

- There is a perceived unfairness with the SMP process as it stands, especially with its emphasis of meeting only environmental and recreational goals despite calling for the participation of other stakeholder groups. This is something we have had to recognize in every conversation. We have

had the most success with beginning with this point and then describing how the most effective of these plans have had significant involvement from the agricultural community. Still, there is a desire to at least acknowledge that those with water rights are shouldering the majority of the risk in these projects.

- There seems to be a general lack of awareness and understanding of what a stream management plan is and how it stands out in comparison to a watershed plan or past plans done in a region.
- The issues that seem to cause the most frustration among producers are not even related water, but more related to the stream management planning process. Not adequately engaging producers at the beginning of the process and scheduling meetings when producers cannot attend and significant issues.
- In terms of water, there is definitely a need to understand and recognize the potential benefits of existing uses.
- The discussion of the ditch inventory on the Middle Colorado received a lot of positive responses. It is a process that producers understand and are mostly comfortable with. The only questions were around implementation and how groups of individual producers can find the funding and the staff to implement such an inventory.

In terms of grants and funding, we had the following feedback:

- Many producers seem to be unaware of CWCB funding or how to even manage the grant process. The application process, due dates, and presenting proposals to a basin roundtable is second nature to many of us familiar with the process, but intimidating and confusing to those who have no experience with the system.
- There are quite a few agricultural water projects out there that would be eligible for funding. However, producers have a limited timeframe (the winter) to apply for grants and don't have the capacity to keep with grants year-round.

On the issue of Regulation 85 and water quality, we received the following input:

- Many producers seemed unaware of Regulation 85, or that the state is in a 10-year period where producers are encouraged to voluntarily adopt Best Management Practices for managing nitrogen and phosphorus.
- The majority of producers have been adapting and improving their farming practices over the years, and many show a willingness to show off and demonstrate the progress they have been making in terms of nutrient management. There were offers to use their operations for tours, and some producers have also been keeping their own water quality data that they are willing to share.

On the issue of reservoir dredging, we received the following feedback:

- The costs associated with dredging are far too expensive for many reservoir companies to handle on their own, especially if they are agricultural producers. It was brought up several times that the only way for producers to undergo a dredging project would be to partner with a municipal water providing looking for more water supplies that could shoulder a lot of the costs.
- The most difficult aspect of a dredging projects seems to be what to do with the sediment, the dredged material. This can be a significant obstacle but there have been some collaborative and

ingenious solutions from applying the sediment to an irrigated field, to making bricks out of the sediment.

On the videos we developed, we received the following feedback:

- We have only received positive responses on the videos. They have not only been shown at our events and through CAWA's social media, but other organizations (conservation districts, nonprofits, environmental, and special districts) have asked to play the videos at events.

On speaking to producers at agricultural conferences and tradeshow, we received the following feedback:

- Attending and speaking at annual meetings and small regional events related to agriculture went very well over producers. It allowed a lot of conversation, especially when we had display table set up before and after the presentation. People were grateful that we took the time and effort to travel and engage them in their own backyard.

The main obstacle we had to deal with is that the end of our outreach coincided with the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Quarantine. We were able to deal with this by making our last workshop digital and it had a decent turnout (55 attendees). It was a good learning exercise in the benefits and limitations in doing a digital event. It is likely the video conference workshop will be a format we use in the future, but it would work better if we can do it in conjunction with small group outreach.

Overall, CAWA completed the following under this grant:

- We completed 7 of 7 workshops for agricultural producers. The total number of attendees for these workshops was over 300 and the average survey rating was 4.2 (on a scale from 1 to 5).
- We produced 2 of 2 videos on ag water topics. These videos have over 500 views each on our website and have been shown at multiple events.
- We participated and presented at 7 of 7 Colorado Agricultural Industry Conferences. There were over 600 attendees at the events.

A total of \$60,000 match funding has been provided by CCA and CAWA in the form of cash match and in-kind contributions for this project.