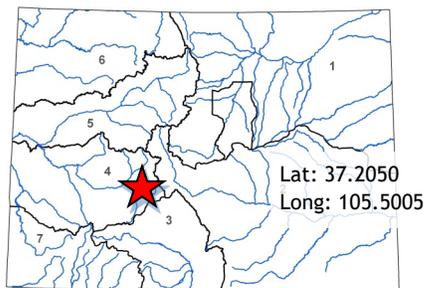




**Water Plan Grant Application**



L O C A T I O N	
County/Countries:	Costilla
Drainage Basin:	Rio Grande

D E T A I L S	
Total Project Cost:	\$470,000
Water Plan Grant Request:	\$45,000
Recommended Amount:	\$45,000
Other CWCB Funding:	\$0
Other Funding Amount:	\$395,000
Applicant Match:	\$30,000
Project Type(s):	Identified Projects and Processes
Project Category(Categories):	Agricultural
Measurable Result:	Agricultural efficiency (500 acre-feet), soil health, land preservation

The San Luis Valley is home to the oldest and longest continually occupied non-native indigenous communities in the state of Colorado. These communities, centered in and the Culebra watershed, established the first community ditches, known as *acequias*, along the Rio Culebra. Acequia communities treat water as a communal resource, distributing it partially based on equity and need. Among the customary norms of acequia, governance is the principle of “shared scarcity”. In a time of drought, every farmer uses less water so that all can share in the limited resource. Today, many acequia communities are still in operation and continue to employ principles of water sharing that have their origins in Arabic and Mesoamerican traditions.

These working agricultural landscapes are culturally important to the State of Colorado, the Rio Grande Basin, and the Culebra watershed. Acequias also provide a wide range of ecosystem services including wildlife habitat and preserving open space. Colorado Open Lands (COL), in recognition of the critical role of acequias in the region, launched the Acequia Conservation Initiative (ACI) to help historically underserved acequia landowners create stability and sustainability in their agricultural operations. The initiative seeks to accomplish this goal through the placement of conservation easements on acequia properties to protect and secure senior water rights and providing financial and technical assistance to promote practices benefiting soil health and enhancing water quality and quantity. COL received a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant through the United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service to continue implementation. The RCPP project will provide cost-share to acequia members to implement a wide range of conservation practices. Colorado Water Plan funds will complete the cost-share to ensure that underserved agricultural community members can participate in the initiative.

This project furthers several Colorado Water Plan critical action goals relating to agriculture including encouraging agriculture efficiency and resiliency while promoting agricultural productivity. The project also supports collaboration; bringing a diverse group of stakeholders together to leverage public dollars. Finally, this project will provide multiple benefits including helping to preserve the acequia community, improve water quality and quantity, promote soil health, and enhance drought resiliency.

Last Updated: June 2020

<b>Colorado Water Conservation Board</b>
<b>Water Plan Grant Application</b>

Instructions		
<p>To receive funding for a Water Plan Grant, applicant must demonstrate how the project, activity, or process (collectively referred to as “project”) funded by the CWCB will help meet the measurable objectives and critical actions in the Water Plan. Grant guidelines are available on the CWCB website.</p> <p>If you have questions, please contact CWCB at (303) 866-3441 or email the following staff to assist you with applications in the following areas:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water Storage Projects</li> <li>Conservation, Land Use Planning</li> <li>Engagement &amp; Innovation Activities</li> <li>Agricultural Projects</li> <li>Environmental &amp; Recreation Projects</li> </ul> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matthew.Stearns@state.co.us</li> <li>Kevin.Reidy@state.co.us</li> <li>Ben.Wade@state.co.us</li> <li>Alexander.Funk@state.co.us</li> <li>Chris.Sturm@state.co.us</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table> <p><b>FINAL SUBMISSION:</b> Submit all application materials in one email to <a href="mailto:waterplan.grants@state.co.us"><u>waterplan.grants@state.co.us</u></a> in the original file formats [Application (word); Statement of Work (word); Budget/Schedule (excel)]. Please do not combine documents. In the subject line, please include the funding category and name of the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water Storage Projects</li> <li>Conservation, Land Use Planning</li> <li>Engagement &amp; Innovation Activities</li> <li>Agricultural Projects</li> <li>Environmental &amp; Recreation Projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matthew.Stearns@state.co.us</li> <li>Kevin.Reidy@state.co.us</li> <li>Ben.Wade@state.co.us</li> <li>Alexander.Funk@state.co.us</li> <li>Chris.Sturm@state.co.us</li> </ul>
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Water Project Summary	
Name of Applicant	Colorado Open Lands
Name of Water Project	Acequia Conservation Initiative - Protecting Colorado's Oldest Agricultural Communities Phase II
CWP Grant Request Amount	\$ 45,000.00
Other Funding Sources <u>NRCS - RCPP</u>	\$ 385,000.00
Other Funding Sources <u>Acequia Landowners</u>	\$ 10,000.00
Other Funding Sources _____	\$
Applicant Funding Contribution	\$ 30,000.00
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$ 470,000.00</b>



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<b>Applicant &amp; Grantee Information</b>	
Name of Grantee(s)	Colorado Open Lands
Mailing Address	1546 Cole Boulevard #200, Lakewood, CO 80401
FEIN	84-0866211
Organization Contact	Judy Lopez
Position/Title	San Luis Valley Conservation Project Manager
Email	jlopezlct@coloradoopenlands.org
Phone	(719) 580-5300
Grant Management Contact	Judy Lopez
Position/Title	San Luis Valley Conservation Project Manager
Email	jlopez@coloradoopenlands.org
Phone	(719) 580-5300
Name of Applicant (if different than grantee)	Same as Above
Mailing Address	
Position/Title	
Email	
Phone	
<b>Description of Grantee/Applicant</b>	
Provide a brief description of the grantee's organization (100 words or less).	
<p>COL is a 501(c)3 nonprofit land trust that exists to protect Colorado's land and water resources. Led by a full-time staff of fifteen and governed by a Board of Directors with wide ranging expertise, Colorado Open Lands operates efficiently and effectively. Our staff has an equally wide range of expertise that spans fundraising, non-profit management, environmental education, community outreach and engagement, and event management, to geographic information systems (GIS), rangeland ecology, agricultural stewardship and systems management, conservation easement negotiations and stewardship, ecosystem science and water rights law. Founded in 1981, Colorado Open Lands holds over 500 easements in 44 Colorado counties where we have conserved 560,000 acres and over 358 miles of Colorado's waterways. The local contact for COL will be Conservation Project Manager, Judy Lopez.</p>	



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Type of Eligible Entity (check one)	
	<b>Public (Government):</b> Municipalities, enterprises, counties, and State of Colorado agencies. Federal agencies are encouraged to work with local entities. Federal agencies are eligible, but only if they can make a compelling case for why a local partner cannot be the grant recipient.
	<b>Public (Districts):</b> Authorities, Title 32/special districts (conservancy, conservation, and irrigation districts), and water activity enterprises.
	<b>Private Incorporated:</b> Mutual ditch companies, homeowners associations, corporations.
	<b>Private Individuals, Partnerships, and Sole Proprietors:</b> Private parties may be eligible for funding.
X	<b>Non-governmental organizations (NGO):</b> Organization that is not part of the government and is non-profit in nature.
	<b>Covered Entity:</b> As defined in <a href="#">Section 37-60-126 Colorado Revised Statutes</a> .

Type of Water Project (check all that apply)	
	Study
	Construction
X	Identified Projects and Processes (IPP)
	Other

Category of Water Project (check the primary category that applies and include relevant tasks)	
	Water Storage - Projects that facilitate the development of additional storage, artificial aquifer recharge, and dredging existing reservoirs to restore the reservoirs' full decreed capacity and Multi-beneficial projects and those projects identified in basin implementation plans to address the water supply and demand gap.. <i>Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):</i>
	Conservation and Land Use Planning - Activities and projects that implement long-term strategies for conservation, land use, and drought planning. <i>Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):</i>
	Engagement & Innovation - Activities and projects that support water education, outreach, and innovation efforts. Please fill out the Supplemental Application on the website. <i>Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):</i>
X	Agricultural - Projects that provide technical assistance and improve agricultural efficiency. <i>Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):</i>
	Environmental & Recreation - Projects that promote watershed health, environmental health, and recreation. <i>Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):</i>
	Other      Explain:



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<b>Location of Water Project</b>	
Please provide the general county and coordinates of the proposed project below in <b>decimal degrees</b> . The Applicant shall also provide, in Exhibit C, a site map if applicable.	
County/Countries	Costilla
Latitude	37.2050° N
Longitude	105.5005° W

<b>Water Project Overview</b>
<p>Please provide a summary of the proposed water project (200 words or less). Include a description of the project and what the CWP Grant funding will be used for specifically (e.g., studies, permitting process, construction). Provide a description of the water supply source to be utilized or the water body affected by the project, where applicable. Include details such as acres under irrigation, types of crops irrigated, number of residential and commercial taps, length of ditch improvements, length of pipe installed, and area of habitat improvements, where applicable. If this project addresses multiple purposes or spans multiple basins, please explain.</p> <p>The Applicant shall also provide, in Exhibit A, a detailed Statement of Work, Budget, Other Funding Sources/Amounts and Schedule.</p>
<p>This project will develop, implement, and steward a variety of EQIP practices that will be used throughout the Culebra Watershed to ensure farm and ranch sustainability. This will be accomplished using funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Services – Regional Conservation Partnership Program as the primary funding source and the Colorado Water Plan Grant, which will be used to complete the cost share of this underserved agricultural community. This project brings together a variety of partners and insures the implementation of a variety of water efficiency projects tailored to land owner needs. These practices promote soil health and productivity, water quality and quantity, in ways that align with and are guided by the heritage and traditions that shape the acequia community. Water quality and quantity will be addressed by implementing best use practices from the NRCS EQIP program that include planning and installation of water structures specifically designed to meet the need of these smaller acreages, such as, turn out structures, head-gates, and gated pipe systems. Installation of solar livestock tanks and fencing will address water quality issues by reduced livestock impact on riparian areas. The prime soil found in the watershed will benefit from cross-fencing for rotational grazing and limited land leveling to reduce the ponding, nutrient leaching and erosion, supported by NRCS technical assistance.</p>

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<b>Measurable Results</b>	
To catalog measurable results achieved with the CWP Grant funds, please provide any of the following values as applicable:	
	New Storage Created (acre-feet)
	New Annual Water Supplies Developed or Conserved (acre-feet), Consumptive or Nonconsumptive
	Existing Storage Preserved or Enhanced (acre-feet)
	Length of Stream Restored or Protected (linear feet)
500	Efficiency Savings (indicate acre-feet/year OR dollars/year)
	Area of Restored or Preserved Habitat (acres)
	Quantity of Water Shared through Alternative Transfer Mechanisms
	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Incorporating Water-Saving Actions into Land Use Planning
	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity
4500	Other Explain: Acres affected by the installation of these projects

<b>Water Project Justification</b>
<p>Provide a description of how this water project supports the goals of <a href="#">Colorado's Water Plan</a>, the most recent <a href="#">Statewide Water Supply Initiative</a>, and the applicable Roundtable <a href="#">Basin Implementation Plan</a> and <a href="#">Education Action Plan</a>. The Applicant is required to reference specific needs, goals, themes, or Identified Projects and Processes (IPPs), including citations (e.g. document, chapters, sections, or page numbers).</p> <p>The proposed water project shall be evaluated based upon how well the proposal conforms to Colorado's Water Plan Framework for State of Colorado Support for a Water Project (CWP, Section 9.4, pp. 9-43 to 9-44;)</p> <p>The Rio Grande Basin Plan has identified the following resource issues: prolonged and systemic drought, lack of a diverse economy, at-risk wildlife habitats, compact obligations to downstream states and aging irrigation and municipal water infrastructure. Additionally, the State Water Plan (Section 9.4) identified the need for collaboration and the involvement of a variety of community stakeholders, bringing technical expertise and monetary resources to address these needs. Not only does this project address those outcomes, it also addresses SWSI Section 8, pp 8.1), by speaking directly the plans second recommendation to "Identify and utilize existing and new funding opportunities to assist in implementing projects and methods to meet Colorado's consumptive and non-consumptive water supply needs."</p> <p>The project outcome is to improve water efficiency and farm viability on the regions acequia farms. Landowners on these properties are 4th and 5th generation descendants of the original Sangre de Cristo Spanish Land Grant. The majority of these small farms and ranches are owned, yet there is still hardship when you consider that the Costilla County median income is \$17,200 annually. Funding from this grant will be used to pay the cost share for these farmers and ranchers for EQIP projects that will be completed using NRCS technical assistance and engineering and COL oversight, engagement and reporting. Colorado has held many stakeholder outreach sessions to gauge the interest in improving irrigation water efficiencies and to understand their ability to meet NRCS basic requirements. The</p>

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response was overwhelming. This project will improve water efficiency allowing the shared water resource to go further thus increasing yields for more farming/ranching operations.

### Related Studies

Please provide a list of any related studies, including if the water project is complementary to or assists in the implementation of other CWCB programs.

This project is complementary to agriculture water projects throughout the Rio Grande Basin, the State of Colorado and across the U.S. This project complements larger water conservation projects within the CWCB portfolio.

An article in the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation, Principles and policies for soil and water conservation, 2018 73(4):96A-99A; doi:10.2489/jswc.73.4.96A found that “The eight conservation principles that protect soil, water, and ecosystem resources include the implementation of practices such as structures for water control, these include pipelines, turn out structures, head-gates, and gated pipe systems. Installation of off stream livestock watering facilities and fencing will address water quality issues by reduced livestock impact on riparian areas. Prime soils benefit from cross-fencing for rotational grazing and limited land leveling to reduce ponding, nutrient leaching and erosion on irrigated lands. These practices have been implemented in a variety of locations across the world and have repeatedly shown increased water efficiency, aquifer sustainability, crop viability and overall soil viability.”

### Previous CWCB Grants, Loans or Other Funding

List all previous or current CWCB grants (including WSRF) awarded to both the Applicant and Grantee. Include: 1) Applicant name; 2) Water activity name; 3) Approving RT(s); 4) CWCB board meeting date; 5) Contract number or purchase order; 6) Percentage of other CWCB funding for your overall project.

#### WSRF

[Colorado Open Lands] Education & Outreach Implementation in RG Basin  
POGG1 PDAA 201700000375 Rio Grande Basin RT Completed 2016  
Anderson Lazy EA Conservation Easement POGG1 PDAA November 2017  
South Platte River ATM & South Platte River Basin Conservation Easement – South Platte Basin  
November 2017  
Jackson and Schaefer Conservation Easements Jan 2020

#### CWP

[Colorado Open Lands] – [Enhancing the Colorado Water Plan through Comprehensive Education and Outreach] [POGG1 PDAA 2018000] Rio Grande Basin RT- PEPO Project  
Acequia Conservation Initiative - Protecting Colorado’s Oldest Agricultural Communities 2018  
San Luis Valley River & Aquifer Recovery & Enhancement (RARE) Partnership March 2019  
Educating for Understanding of Critical Resource Issues 2020

#### ATM Grants:

[Colorado Open Lands] River View Farms

### Taxpayer Bill of Rights

The Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) may limit the amount of grant money an entity can receive. Please describe any relevant TABOR issues that may affect your application.

We have no Tabor restrictions.

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<b>Submittal Checklist</b>	
X	I acknowledge the Grantee will be able to contract with CWCB using the <a href="#">Standard Contract</a> .
Exhibit A	
X	Statement of Work <sup>(1)</sup>
X	Budget & Schedule <sup>(1)</sup>
	Engineer's statement of probable cost (projects over \$100,000)
X	Letters of Matching and/or Pending 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Commitments <sup>(1)</sup>
Exhibit C	
X	Map (if applicable) <sup>(1)</sup>
	Photos/Drawings/Reports
X	Letters of Support (Optional)
X	Certificate of Insurance (General, Auto, & Workers' Comp.) <sup>(2)</sup>
X	Certificate of Good Standing with Colorado Secretary of State <sup>(2)</sup>
X	W-9 <sup>(2)</sup>
	Independent Contractor Form <sup>(2)</sup> (If applicant is individual, not company/organization)
Engagement & Innovation Grant Applicants ONLY	
	Engagement & Innovation Supplemental Application <sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Required with application.

(2) Required for contracting. While optional at the time of this application, submission can expedite contracting upon CWCB Board approval.

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## 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)?
N/A
Who is/are the target audience(s)? How will you reach them? How will you involve the community?
N/A
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?
N/A

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Overview (answer for both tracks)
Describe how you plan to measure and evaluate the success and impact of the project?
N/A
What research, evidence, and data support your project?
N/A
Describe potential short- and long-term challenges with this project.
N/A

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

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N/A
Describe how the project achieves the basin roundtable's PEPO Education Action Plans.
N/A

Innovation Track
Describe how the project enhances water innovation efforts and supports a water innovation ecosystem in Colorado.
N/A
Describe how the project engages/leverages Colorado's innovation community to help solve our state's water challenges.
N/A
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?
N/A
Describe how this project impacts current or emerging trends; technologies; clusters, sectors, or groups in water innovation.
N/A

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<b>Colorado Water Conservation Board</b>
<b>Water Plan Grant - Exhibit A</b>

<b>Statement Of Work</b>
--------------------------

<b>Date:</b>	<b>November 27, 2020</b>
<b>Name of Grantee:</b>	<b>Colorado Open Lands</b>
<b>Name of Water Project:</b>	<b>Acequia Conservation Initiative - Protecting Colorado's Oldest Agricultural Communities Phase II</b>
<b>Funding Source:</b>	<b>Colorado Water Plan Grant</b>

**Water Project Overview:**

The project *Acequia Conservation Initiative - Protecting Colorado's Oldest Agricultural Communities Phase II* - Will develop, implement, and steward a variety of EQIP practices that will be used throughout the Culebra Watershed to ensure farm and ranch sustainability. This will be accomplished using funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Services – Regional Conservation Partnership Program (EQIP set aside) as the primary funding source and the Colorado Water Plan Grant, which will be used to complete the cost share of this underserved agricultural community. This project brings together a variety of partners and insures the implementation of a variety of water efficiency projects tailored to land owner needs. These practices promote soil health and productivity, water quality and quantity, in ways that align with and are guided by the heritage and traditions that shape the acequia community. Water quality and quantity will be addressed by implementing best use practices from the NRCS EQIP program that include planning and installation of water structures specifically designed to meet the need of these smaller acreages, such as, turn out structures, head-gates, and gated pipe systems. Installation of solar livestock tanks and fencing will address water quality issues by reduced livestock impact on riparian areas. The prime soil found in the watershed will benefit from cross-fencing for rotational grazing and limited land leveling to reduce the ponding, nutrient leaching and erosion, supported by NRCS technical assistance.

This project promotes soil health and productivity, water quality and quantity, in ways that align with and are guided by the heritage and traditions that shape this unique community. The project seeks to build on work that has been outlined in readily accessible studies and data sets that outline the needs and offer remedies to these concerns. This project will focus on placing conservation easements on farms and ranches with senior water rights or prime soils and build on those landowner relationships to develop, implement, and steward a variety of EQIP practices that will be used throughout the watershed. to ensure landscape sustainability. We believe that by the end of the project term, this initiative will permanently preserve key landscape values and address the resource concerns as outlined above.

Phase one of this Project was an overwhelming success! It helped 37 irrigators improve the sustainability of their farms/ranches well into the future.

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<p><b>Project Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To engage area farmers and ranchers and to build on those landowner relationships to develop, implement, and steward a variety of EQIP practices that will be used throughout the watershed. to ensure landscape sustainability. This work will be done by Colorado Open Lands who has spent over a decade investing heavily in working with the local community on landscape conservation.</li> <li>• To provide cost share payments to farmers and ranchers for the implementation of water efficiency and ag sustainability projects on their farms. These practices can include land leveling, gated pipe installation, check structures, head gates, and pipelines. This cost share is on a small part of the bigger RCPP project which has brought together a myriad of partners that include Colorado Open Lands, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Trout Unlimited, The Sangre De Cristo Acequia Association, the Costilla County Water Conservancy District and the Costilla Conservation District. Together these partners are bringing 1.6 million dollars in cash and in-kind to the table.</li> <li>• Contract with acequia agricultural producers to develop, design, contract and install a suite of water efficiency and ag sustainability practices.</li> </ul>
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<b>Tasks</b>
<p><b>Task 1 - Colorado Open Lands will work with partners to develop a ranking tool to define a suite conservation practice that can be implemented to meet watershed goals as defined by producers.</b></p>
<p>Description of Task:</p> <p>Colorado Open Lands (COL) will serve as the lead for the project and will work with the area Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff and partners to enlist producers and help them develop comprehensive conservation plans that help sustain their agriculture operations water, soil and livestock thru long-term conservation improvements on acequia properties within the Culebra Basin</p>
<p>Method/Procedure:</p> <p>COL opened a satellite office in the Upper Rio Grande Watershed, this has helped deepen and expand local relationships and built the momentum to manage and implement this larger-scale RCPP project that will secure water rights on the Culebra watershed's most critical acequias and implement agricultural conservation throughout the watershed to ensure long-term sustainability. Colorado Open Lands, San Luis Valley Conservation Manager, Judy Lopez, has spent the past 1 ½ years conducting stakeholder outreach sessions and engaging funding partners to develop a Regional Conservation Partnership Program</p> <p>Colorado Open Lands (COL) has partnered with many organizations to develop this critical project. The Natural Resources Conservation Service(NRCS) local San Luis office, has helped to identify and map area acequias and explore the utilization and implementation of key EQIP practices that local producers would utilize benefiting their agricultural operations. Partners in this 4.6 million dollar project include COL, NRCS, Trout Unlimited, Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association (SdCAA), Costilla Conservation District, Costilla County Conservancy District (a local water entity), Costilla County Commissioners, The Gates Family Foundation, The LOR</p>

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Tasks
<p>Foundation, The Colorado Conservation Partnership, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area and participating landowners.</p> <p>COL will manage the project and develop a method to distribute and track cost share funds to producers upon completion of the contract on a reimbursable basis.</p>
<p>Deliverable:</p>
<p>Sign up of between 16 and 25 producers to install \$300,000 dollars of EQIP practices for average contract prices of between \$6,000 and \$15,000.</p>

Tasks
<p><b>Task 2 – – Contract with acequia agricultural producers to develop, design, contract and oversee installation of a suite of water efficiency and ag sustainability practices and pay landowner cost share</b></p>
<p>Description of Task:</p> <p>COL will liaison between eligible landowners and NRCS to develop, engineer, contract, track and install approved practices.</p>
<p>Method/Procedure:</p> <p>These resource concerns were identified through a variety of stakeholder studies. As part of the 8-Digit Watershed Planning process, area conservation districts highlighted the need to preserve water quantity and quality by integrating healthy soil practices. During landscape planning conducted by the USFWS, it was recognized that portions of the Rio Culebra provide key habitat for the federally endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and noted the need to conserve this habitat. Studies from the University of New Mexico have shown that acequias provide substantial emergent freshwater wetlands and serve key groundwater recharge functions. The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area designation study identified the unique historical and water resource features as key part of the federal designation process. The Costilla County Economic Development Council 2012 report named the local agriculture as the number one economic driver in the region; noting that the areas small farms and ranches (averaging 63 acres in size) support the areas schools, health care systems and small businesses.</p> <p>Finally, Colorado recently adopted its first statewide water plan, which is built on the local and regional planning efforts done by each of its river basins. The Rio Grande Basin plan has identified the following resource issues: prolonged and systemic drought, lack of a diverse economy, at-risk wildlife habitats, compact obligations to downstream states and aging irrigation and municipal water infrastructure. The plan further identified the need for collaboration, bringing technical expertise and monetary resources to address these needs. The</p>

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Tasks
<p>implementation of key NRCS EQIP programs by producers throughout the watershed will add sustainability to this economically and ecologically endangered area.</p> <p>COL will use its significant stakeholder outreach to advertise a sign-up period for vetted landowners in the Culebra Watershed. These producers will then work with NRCS personnel to develop a comprehensive conservation plan, design/engineer projects specific to their ag operation, contract and oversee installation of a suite of water efficiency and ag sustainability practices</p>
<p>Deliverable:</p>
<p>Work with between 16 and 25 producers to install \$300,000 dollars of EQIP practices for average contract prices of between \$6,000 and \$15,000.</p>

Budget and Schedule
<p>This Statement of Work shall be accompanied by a combined Budget and Schedule that reflects the Tasks identified in the Statement of Work and shall be submitted to CWCB in excel format.</p>

Reporting Requirements
<p><b>Progress Reports:</b> The applicant shall provide the CWCB a progress report every 6 months, beginning from the date of issuance of a purchase order, or the execution of a contract. The progress report shall describe the status of the tasks identified in the statement of work, including a description of any major issues that have occurred and any corrective action taken to address these issues.</p>
<p><b>Final Report:</b> At completion of the project, the applicant shall provide the CWCB a Final Report on the applicant's letterhead that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarizes the project and how the project was completed.</li> <li>• Describes any obstacles encountered, and how these obstacles were overcome.</li> <li>• Confirms that all matching commitments have been fulfilled.</li> <li>• Includes photographs, summaries of meetings and engineering reports/designs.</li> </ul> <p>The CWCB will pay out the last 10% of the budget when the Final Report is completed to the satisfaction of CWCB staff. Once the Final Report has been accepted, and final payment has been issued, the purchase order or grant will be closed without any further payment.</p>

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### Payment

Payment will be made based on actual expenditures and must include invoices for all work completed. The request for payment must include a description of the work accomplished by task, an estimate of the percent completion for individual tasks and the entire Project in relation to the percentage of budget spent, identification of any major issues, and proposed or implemented corrective actions.

Costs incurred prior to the effective date of this contract are not reimbursable. The last 10% of the entire grant will be paid out when the final deliverable has been received. All products, data and information developed as a result of this contract must be provided to CWCB in hard copy and electronic format as part of the project documentation.

### Performance Measures

Performance measures for this contract shall include the following:

(a) Performance standards and evaluation: Grantee will produce detailed deliverables for each task as specified. Grantee shall maintain receipts for all project expenses and documentation of the minimum in-kind contributions (if applicable) per the budget in Exhibit B. Per Water Plan Grant Guidelines, the CWCB will pay out the last 10% of the budget when the Final Report is completed to the satisfaction of CWCB staff. Once the Final Report has been accepted, and final payment has been issued, the purchase order or grant will be closed without any further payment.

(b) Accountability: Per Water Plan Grant Guidelines full documentation of project progress must be submitted with each invoice for reimbursement. Grantee must confirm that all grant conditions have been complied with on each invoice. In addition, per Water Plan Grant Guidelines, Progress Reports must be submitted at least once every 6 months. A Final Report must be submitted and approved before final project payment.

(c) Monitoring Requirements: Grantee is responsible for ongoing monitoring of project progress per Exhibit A. Progress shall be detailed in each invoice and in each Progress Report, as detailed above. Additional inspections or field consultations will be arranged as may be necessary.

(d) Noncompliance Resolution: Payment will be withheld if grantee is not current on all grant conditions. Flagrant disregard for grant conditions will result in a stop work order and cancellation of the Grant Agreement.





Alexander Funk  
Colorado Water Conservation Board  
1313 Sherman St., Room 718  
Denver, CO 80203

November 10, 2020

Dear Mr. Funk

The Rio Grande Basin Roundtable has been actively involved in the development and now the implementation of both our Basin and the State Water Plans. As a basin Roundtable we encourage our members to reach out to constituents in their communities look for projects that meet the goals of the State and Basin Water Plans.

To this end, the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable enthusiastically supports this application for the Colorado Water Plan Grant program for *Acequia Initiative Phase II* by Colorado Open Lands. The project is designed to pay a portion of the landowner cost share for irrigation projects in the Culebra Basin. These projects will ensure the upgrade and installation of irrigation management structure to help insure the long-term sustainability of these acequia farms and ranches.

This project has been planned by a variety of partners who include the Natural Resources Conservation Service (\$385,000), Colorado Open Lands (\$30,000), and Acequia Landowners (\$10,000), Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association, Costilla County Conservancy District and the Costilla Conservation District who have committed not only financially to the project, but to the ethic of keeping working agriculture working in our rural communities. The Colorado Water Plan recognizes the "the increasing pressure to dry up agriculture, as Municipal and Industrial need expands is real and that Coloradans will continue to increase their consumption of a variety of locally grown agricultural products that ranches and farms across the state provide." The IBCC continues to work with agricultural producers and recognizes the economic benefit that agriculture brings to the state and the value the water they use provides to all Coloradans. This is the tenant of this proposal.

The Rio Grande Basin Roundtable has long recognized that in all communities the core social, political and economic institutions are supported by water and that when we protect the water rights and uses we will ensure the viability of these communities and their rich ecology,

heritage and food production for generations to come. We hope that Colorado Conservation Board will help us by supporting this application.

Finally, we are lending our wholehearted support to their application. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Finally, we are lending our wholehearted support to their application for this important outreach project. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nathan Coombs".

Nathan Coombs  
Chairman, Rio Grande Basin Roundtable



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Denver Federal Center  
Bldg. 56, RM. 2604  
P.O. Box 25426  
Denver, CO 80225-0426

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April 10, 2020

Dear Colorado Open Lands,

Congratulations! Your proposal has been selected to receive a fiscal year 2019 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) award from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. NRCS has tentatively reserved RCPP funding in the amount of \$1,948,052.00 to support eligible RCPP activities in this project. The final funding amount committed to the project will be determined through a negotiation (see below) as we work with you to formalize how RCPP funding and partner contributions will be co-invested to address natural resources challenges in the project area.

The full list of 2019 RCPP awards is scheduled to be announced by NRCS Chief Matthew Lohr on Thursday, April 16th at 1 p.m. We are notifying you ahead of the award announcement so that awarded entities may prepare their own press releases and associated media products to amplify the April 16th NRCS announcement.

**Until the official announcement, which will occur through a press release posted to the [NRCS website](#), the information in this email and the fact that you've received an award is EMBARGOED. Please do not share this information beyond the individuals required to help develop press releases and other media products.**

A national webinar has been scheduled for all new RCPP awardees. Please tune in on Tuesday, April 28th at 3 p.m. Eastern. The webinar will be recorded and made available to awardees that are unable to participate on the 28th. Coordinates for tuning into the webinar are below my signature.

Attached to this email are some key documents:

1) A projected timeline to help you understand how RCPP program development activities will impact the start of your project through the remainder of calendar year 2020. **This email does not authorize your entity to begin project activities for which you intend to charge against the NRCS funding.** Randy Randall ASTC-Partners will be reaching out to you soon to begin the partnership agreement negotiation process. He can help answer any questions you may have about the timeline.

NRCS  
Helping People Help the Land

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- 2) A communications toolkit to help with development of partner press releases and associated media products. It contains the following:
- General messaging for your materials
  - Quote from NRCS Chief Matthew Lohr
  - Social media examples
  - Additional ideas for communication

So, key takeaways from this notification:

- 1) Don't tell anyone (other than necessary individuals) about this notification until April 16th.
- 2) Begin developing partner releases to amplify the announcement on the 16th or on following days.
- 3) Kick back and celebrate a bit! We know these are stressful times for a lot of people and partners. At NRCS, it's been helpful to think about the innovative and impactful conservation activities that will be put on the ground in the next five years, making meaningful connections with producers, landowners, communities and other partners.

Please respond with any questions. Welcome to RCPP!

James Sperry  
Colorado RCPP Coordinator

**RCPP National New Awardee Webinar**  
**April 28th 3-4:30 p.m. Eastern**

Join ZoomGov Meeting

<https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1602969397?pwd=WTdQaHorOEVjWlVxR0hvVzhZaDBYZz09>

Meeting ID: 160 296 9397

Password: 106736

One tap mobile

+16692545252,1602969397# US (San Jose)

+16468287666,1602969397# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 669 254 5252 US (San Jose)

+1 646 828 7666 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 160 296 9397

Find your local number: <https://www.zoomgov.com/u/acE5b2DX7>

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Contact**

Leslie Volkar  
303.988.2373 ext. 213  
lvolkar@coloradoopenlands.org

## **SAN LUIS VALLEY “ACEQUIA INITIATIVE” PROJECTS RECEIVE NATIONAL FUNDING**

**April 16, 2020 (Lakewood, Colo.)** Colorado Open Lands announced today that its Acequia Initiative Phase II has been awarded \$1,948,052 in funding from the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The money will advance the permanent conservation of privately owned farm and rangeland along the Rio Culebra River in Costilla County, as well as providing targeted Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds specifically allotted for use acequia irrigators. This is in addition to \$1,722,000 that NRCS awarded to Colorado Open Lands (COL) in Phase I of the project. When combined with other government and private funding sources, this represents nearly \$9 million dollars raised for conservation in Costilla County by COL.

The NRCS Award came through the agency’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). RCPP is a partner-driven approach to conservation that funds solutions to natural resource challenges on agricultural land. In this funding round, NRCS is investing \$206 million in 48 partner-driven conservation projects across 29 states through its Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Partners are making nearly \$300 million in contributions.

“I’m excited to announce the first RCPP awards under the 2018 Farm Bill,” said NRCS Chief Matthew Lohr. “Through collaboration and aligning our resources toward a common goal, we’re making an impact for natural resource conservation that could never have been realized on our own.”

The project received attention from statewide funders as well. In 2017 and 2018, Great Outdoors Colorado contributed \$1.2 million through its Open Space Initiative. Other funding for the project was contributed from the Gates Family Foundation, LOR Foundation, and the Trinchera Blanca Foundation.

The Acequia Initiative aims to strategically protect private land irrigated by acequias – shared irrigation canals and ditches – along the Culebra watershed. The acequias often represent the oldest water rights in Colorado, and their protection is critical to preserving our heritage and way of life in the San Luis Valley. Communal water use is critical in the area – without these historic water-sharing agreements, the region’s agricultural way of life would not be possible. Many acequia properties have been in the same families since the mid-1800s, and the acequias form the agricultural, social, and ecological foundation of the communities. In Phase II of the Initiative, Colorado Open Lands is able to expand the Initiative to include more landowners, conserving

even more land and water rights.

COL President Tony Caligiuri added, “This is a community-led project. Colorado Open Lands is proud to be a facilitator, convener, and fundraiser for this community, which represents everything that makes Colorado special – a rich agricultural heritage, incredible scenic value, and people who place great value on preserving their land and water.”

The land included in this conservation initiative also features several miles of Culebra Creek, providing important habitat to several sensitive species including the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, and Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout. The properties lie at a narrow point in the Culebra floodplain, funneling wildlife onto the lands.

This Initiative is a grassroots conservation effort built from the community’s interest and determination to preserve their historical agricultural heritage and is a direct result of the relationships developed since COL began working in Costilla County a decade ago, and the investments that key partners have provided. The success of this project combined with the long-term investment in this landscape will provide security and sustainability to the acequia community, so that they continue to support agricultural production and ecological services, to the benefit of all Coloradoans.

###

### **About Colorado Open Lands**

Colorado Open Lands is a private, nonprofit land trust that works to enhance Colorado’s quality of life by protecting its most treasured asset: open lands. Since 1981, COL has helped landowners conserve more than 500,000 acres around the state and fostered partnerships responsible for critical innovations in conservation funding, conservation easement defense and more. In 2015, COL adopted an ambitious strategic plan to help interested landowners protect a total of 800,000 acres across Colorado by 2025.

Colorado Open Lands 1546 Cole Blvd #200  
Lakewood Colorado 80401

November 28, 2019

RE: RCPP Acequia Conservation Initiative Phase II: Protecting Colorado's Oldest Agricultural Communities  
Project ID #: 2028

Dear Project Leader:

I am writing to express Colorado Open Lands commitment to The Acequia Initiative RCPP Project. As the San Luis Valley Project Manager for Colorado Open Lands we are pleased to be the lead partner on this project. We understand that role requires administration, partner coordination, fiscal agent responsibilities and grant management for the project. COL has invested deeply in the acequia community and truly understands the needs of this historically underserved group of agricultural producers.

As part of that partner commitment we ask that all landowners through their Conservation Easement transaction donate a portion of their easement value. We feel like this emphasizes their commitment to the landscape. Colorado Open Lands expects this cash donation amount to be \$985,000 match for conservation easements, \$60,000 for COL technical assistance and \$25,000 for EQIP projects over the course of this project.

I hope that you will consider this proposal and the broad-based conservation and outreach that it will provide to the acequia producers in the Culebra Watershed.



Judy Lopez  
SLV Conservation Project Manager  
Colorado Open Lands

*Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association*



November 28, 2019

RE: RCPP Acequia Conservation Initiative Phase II: Protecting Colorado's Oldest Agricultural Communities Project ID #: 2028

Dear Project Leader:

I am writing to express the Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association's commitment to The Acequia Initiative Phase II RCPP Project. The SdCAA is pleased to be a partner on this project. We understand our role requires the association to do significant outreach with Acequia Landowners, along with partner coordination, fiscal responsibilities and grant management over our portion of the project. The association has invested deeply in the acequia community and truly understand the challenges faced by this historically underserved group of agricultural producers.

We are pleased to have the opportunity to work with our long-time partner Colorado Open Lands. The Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association will be contributing \$20,000.00 in-kind work to the project as part of the project's outreach efforts.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Delmer Vialpando".

Delmer Vialpando  
President  
Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association