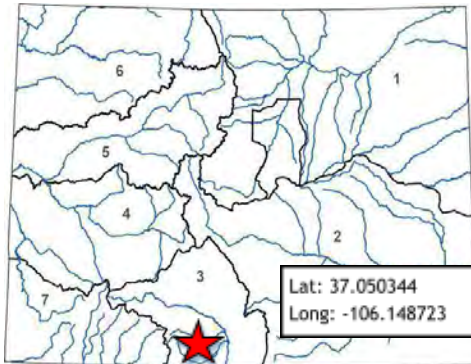




Water Plan Grant Application



DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	\$137,132
Water Plan Grant Request:	\$101,179
Recommended Amount:	\$101,179
Other CWCB Funding:	\$0
Other Funding Amount:	\$16,500
Applicant Match:	\$19,453
Project Type:	Design & Engineering
Project Category:	Watershed Health & Restoration
Measurable Result:	20,000 feet of stream restored; 25 Coloradoans impacted by engagement activity

LOCATION	
County:	Conejos
Drainage Basin:	Rio Grande

Colorado Water Plan Grant funding will support Phase II of the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory's Conejos River Restoration project to comprehensively improve streambank stabilization, floodplain connectivity, agricultural irrigation water delivery, and habitat for fish and wildlife for 3.8 miles of the Conejos River west of Mogote .

Specifically, this project will lead to improved habitat for Colorado Parks and Wildlife Tier 1 Wetland Species of Concern: Southwest Willow Flycatcher (federally endangered), Yellow-billed Cuckoo (federally threatened), and beaver. Instream habitat will also be improved for wild Brown Trout.

Success of the project will include the completion of all Phase II tasks, specifically 1) preliminary design, 2) its subsequent consideration by stakeholders, 3) final design after approval, 4) construction permitting, and 5) site preparation. Phase I, which focused on community outreach and consensus building, has been completed. Phase III will be construction and implementation.

The Colorado Water Plan grant request is 74% of the total project cost and the other project funding is 26%, all of which has been secured.

The Conejos River Restoration project demonstrates a strong commitment to collaboration and broad-based involvement by building upon community outreach in Phase I to prioritize their efforts and securing the commitment of thirteen landowners thus far who steward a total of 430 acres through livestock grazing, hay production and outdoor recreation. Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project, and the U.S. Forest Service have informed the effort as well. The needs addressed by the project are identified in the Conejos River stream management plan's assessment of "CR08" or reach 8. The project also has the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable's support.

Funding Recommendation:

Staff recommends full funding of \$101,179 to Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory for Phase II of the Conejos River Restoration Project.



Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory dba Bird Conservancy of the Rockies
Name of Water Project	Conejos River Restoration
Grant Request Amount	\$101,179.00
Primary Category	\$101,179.00
<i>Watershed Health & Recreation</i>	
Total Applicant Match	\$19,453.00
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$7,953.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$11,500.00
Total Other Sources of Funding	\$16,500.00
<i>Trout Unlimited</i>	\$1,500.00
<i>Rio Grande Water Conservation District</i>	\$10,000.00
<i>Colorado State Land Board</i>	\$2,500.00
<i>Conejos Water Conservancy District</i>	\$2,500.00
Total Project Cost	\$137,132.00

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory dba Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

Mailing Address: 14500 Lark Bunting Ln Brighton CO 80603

FEIN: 841,079,882

Organization Contact: Rob Fenwick

Position/Title: Program Manager - Watershed Health

Phone: (970) 482-1707

Email: rob.fenwick@birdconservancy.org

Organization Contact - Alternate: Brittany Leslie

Position/Title:

Phone: 970-482-1707

Email: brittany.leslie@birdconservancy.org

Grant Management Contact: Rob Fenwick

Position/Title: Program Manager - Watershed Health

Phone: (970) 482-1707

Email: rob.fenwick@birdconservancy.org

Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Elinda Dennis

Position/Title: Chief Administrative Officer

Phone: (303) 659-4348

Email: elinda.dennis@birdconservancy.org

Description of Grantee/Applicant

No description provided

Type of Eligible Entity

- ☐ Public (Government)
- ☐ Public (District)
- ☐ Public (Municipality)
- ☐ Ditch Company
- ☐ Private Incorporated
- ☐ Private Individual, Partnership, or Sole Proprietor
- ☒ Non-governmental Organization
- ☐ Covered Entity
- ☐ Other

Category of Water Project

- ☐ Agricultural Projects
Developing communications materials that specifically work with and educate the agricultural community on headwater restoration, identifying the state of the science of this type of work to assist agricultural users among others.
- ☐ Conservation & Land Use Planning
Activities and projects that implement long-term strategies for conservation, land use, and drought planning.
- ☐ Engagement & Innovation Activities
Activities and projects that support water education, outreach, and innovation efforts. Please fill out the Supplemental Application on the website.
- ☒ Watershed Restoration & Recreation
Projects that promote watershed health, environmental health, and recreation.
- ☐ Water Storage & Supply
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.

Location of Water Project

Latitude	37.050344
Longitude	-106.148723
Lat Long Flag	Precise coordinates: Project coordinates are readily definable and precisely define the location of the project
Water Source	Conejos River
Basins	Rio Grande
Counties	Conejos
Districts	20-Rio Grande

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type	Environmental
Type of Water Project	Design / Engineering
Scheduled Start Date - Design	4/15/2023
Scheduled Start Date - Construction	
Description	Bird Conservancy of the Rockies is leading a multi-phased river restoration project along approximately 3.8 stream miles of the Conejos river west of Mogote, CO. Phase I: Community Outreach and Consensus Building

has been completed and we are preparing to move to the next phase. During Phase II, Southwest River Engineering (SRE) will conduct a reach-long assessment to comprehensively identify opportunities for riparian, in-stream, and/or irrigation improvement projects (mainly headgate and/or levee repairs on the La Vega, Canon 22, and Mesitas ditches). Grant deliverables will be a comprehensive design plan produced by SRE to guide activities in Phase III: Project Implementation. We request \$101,179 for Phase II: Reach Survey and Project Design to comprehensively assess and identify issues regarding the condition, functionality, and/or resiliency of riparian and in-stream habitat, floodplain connectivity, and irrigation infrastructure within the project area, to be completed in 2023. These funds will support the reach-long field survey, final engineering designs, associated staff time and travel expenses, US Army Corps of Engineers permitting requirements, and any necessary boundary surveys.

Measurable Results

	New Storage Created (acre-feet)
	New Annual Water Supplies Developed or Conserved (acre-feet), Consumptive or Nonconsumptive
	Existing Storage Preserved or Enhanced (acre-feet)
	New Storage Created (acre-feet)
20,000	Length of Stream Restored or Protected (linear feet)
	Efficiency Savings (dollars/year)
	Efficiency Savings (acre-feet/year)
	Area of Restored or Preserved Habitat (acres)
	Quantity of Water Shared through Alternative Transfer Mechanisms or water sharing agreement (acre-feet)
25	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Incorporating Water-Saving Actions into Land Use Planning
Other	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity

With this plan, we will make significant improvements toward streambank stabilization, floodplain connectivity, irrigation infrastructure, and habitat for wildlife and fish. In particular, this project will lead to improved habitat for Colorado Parks and Wildlife Tier 1 Wetland Species of Concern: Southwest Willow Flycatcher (federally endangered), Yellow-billed Cuckoo (federally threatened), and beaver. Instream habitat will also be improved for wild Brown Trout.

Water Project Justification

Project objectives are directly informed by the three primary guiding documents for water and watershed management in the San Luis Valley: the Conejos River Stream Management Plan (2020), the Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan (2015; updated 2021), and the Colorado Water Plan (2023 DRAFT). A table illustrating detailed Conejos River project alignment with these documents is attached to this application as Appendix A.

Related Studies

The primary focus of this project is to improve river functionality and resilience (watershed health) through channel and streambank restoration and revegetation. However, the project will also address the integrity and functionality of multiple diversion headgates and ditches to protect and improve the delivery of water for agricultural purposes.

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

N/A