



COLORADO

Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed
Name of Water Project	Phase 2- Engaging Stakeholders & Communities in the Poudre through Art, Citizen Science, and Outreach
Grant Request Amount	\$77,229.00
Primary Category	\$77,229.00
<i>Engagement & Innovation Activities</i>	
Total Applicant Match	\$15,755.00
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$0.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$15,755.00
Total Other Sources of Funding	\$33,041.90
<i>Might Arrow Family Foundation</i>	\$2,962.40
<i>National Forest Foundation</i>	\$11,655.60
<i>USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station</i>	\$15,423.90
<i>Cache la Poudre River National Heritage Area</i>	\$3,000.00
Total Project Cost	\$126,025.90

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed
Mailing Address: 320 E Vine Drive, Ste 317 Fort Collins CO 80524
FEIN: 462,850,042

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Grant Management Contact: Hally Strevey
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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	40.585300
Longitude	105.084400
Lat Long Flag	Other: Coordinates based on other boundaries or locations
Water Source	Cache la Poudre River
Basins	South Platte
Counties	Weld; Larimer
Districts	3-Cache La Poudre River

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type

Type of Water Project Education

Scheduled Start Date - Design 10/1/2023

Scheduled Start Date - Construction

Description

This project is the second phase of our Engaging Stakeholders & Communities in the Poudre through Citizen Science, Collaboration & Outreach that was funded by a CWCB Water Plan Grant in 2019/2020. Phase 2 will build upon tasks from the first phase through three major goals: engage landowners/ditch boards, and communities around watershed health and basin-wide resiliency issues/concerns and to maintain momentum around identified priority projects; launch our Poudre River Community Mural project to connect the diverse communities to the river through a collaborative, community-based art project; expand our citizen science water

quality monitoring program to collect post-fire data in the Cameron Peak Fire burn to track adaptive management needs.

To achieve these goals, we will:

1. Recruit ~10 new citizen science volunteers.
2. Work with 3-5 landowners and 2-4 ditch boards in priority areas to secure buy-in for future projects.
3. Launch our Poudre River Mural Project to empower the community to share their diverse stories about the river and its significance.
4. Engage our Poudre stakeholder groups to maintain momentum in collaborative decision making.
5. Increase awareness and understanding of watershed issues in the Poudre basin through community engagement & participation in collaborative groups.

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)
Length of Stream Restored or Protected (linear feet)
Length of Pipe, Canal Built or Improved (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)
Number of Coloradans Impacted by Incorporating Water-Saving Actions into Land Use Planning
10,000 Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity

Other

No additional measurable results provided

Water Project Justification

Our Phase 2 proposal supports many of the goals articulated in Colorado's Water Plan (both the 2015 and updated 2023 version), the Statewide Water Supply Initiative, the South Platte Roundtable Basin Implementation Plan, and the South Platte Roundtable Basin Education Action Plan. Specifically, our project will contribute measurable outcomes to those goals that relate to public outreach, engagement, and education and those related to protecting the health, stewardship, and resiliency of water resources.

Colorado Water Plan Alignment (v 2015):

Section 6.2 (pg 15): "Colorado's Water Plan uses a grassroots approach to formulate projects and methods that avoid some of the undesirable outcomes of the supply-demand gaps. The plan addresses the gaps from multiple perspectives—such as water storage, reuse, recycling, integrated water management, restoration, and conservation."

This section acknowledges the goals and measurable outcomes of the Basin Implementation Plans, including:

- Meet Colorado's environmental and recreational water needs.
- Meet Colorado's water quality management needs.
- Protect and restore watershed health.
- Continue participation, education, outreach, and communication.

2023 Colorado Water Plan (pg 8) also identifies the four action areas for the state. Our proposal meets the following:

- VIBRANT COMMUNITIES: counties, municipalities, utilities, cities, towns, businesses, large industries, large

and small urban and rural communities, etc.

- **THRIVING WATERSHEDS:** environment and recreation, river health, watershed health, forest health, wildfire mitigation, wildlife and aquatic species protection, etc.
- **RESILIENT PLANNING:** climate adaptation, planning for climate extremes, embracing EDI (equity, diversity, inclusivity), education, outreach and engagement, supportive government, etc.

Our existing collaborative lower and upper Poudre stakeholder groups address multiple perspectives as they include municipal utilities, federal, state, and regional natural resources agencies, community groups, researchers, non-profits and members of the public.

In early 2020, both our upper and lower Poudre stakeholder groups met less frequently due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After the Cameron Peak Fire (CPF) ignited in August 2020, our upper Poudre stakeholder group shifted to assist with the emergency response. CPRW began coordinating multiple partners as a part of the CPF watershed recovery sub-committee and our upper Poudre Stakeholder group went on hiatus until 2023. After several years where we had to shift many of our efforts to address the CPF and associated post-fire restoration needs, our aim is to reconvene upper and lower Poudre steering committees to maintain the momentum of our work across the basin. The Phase 2 project will allow us to keep our stakeholders working together on critical next steps for planning water quality monitoring & forest restoration work to protect water quality, and engaging landowners and ditch boards around our river resiliency and fish passage projects along the river corridor east of I-25.

Our Phase 1 project enabled our involvement in groups like the Poudre Runs Through It and the Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse Site Conservation Team for the North Fork of the Cache la Poudre. Phase 2 will continue to facilitate our participation in these groups, and several others including the Northern Integrated Supply Project adaptive management committee. Our participation ensures that the environmental needs of the river and watershed are included in these collaborative dialogues about water resources and infrastructure planning & ensure that our master plan priorities & citsci data are incorporated into basin wide water resources planning where relevant. This will help meet the goals outlined in CWP 2015, Section 6.2, which identifies the South Platte Goals and Measurable Outcomes (pg. 25) that recommend projects "take into consideration environmental and recreational attributes when considering storage and other infrastructure projects and methods."

CWP 2015-Section 6.6 Goals (pg 157): "Understand, protect, maintain, and improve conditions of streams, lakes, wetlands, and riparian areas to promote self-sustaining fisheries and functional riparian and wetland habitat to promote long-term sustainability and resiliency".

In the wake of the CPF and the post-fire impacts the watershed experienced during the 2021/2022 monsoon season, it is ideal timing to continue directly engaging the community about the critical connection between forest health and water quality, as well as increasing the resilience of the river and watershed. Our outreach program will continue to directly address this Section 6.6 goal.

Since late 2017, we have used our Lower Poudre Resiliency Master Plan to help identify priority reaches of the river corridor for design/implementation to increase river resiliency. The Master Plan identifies threats to critical infrastructure including the Poudre River Trail, roads/bridges, state & local parks etc. During Phase 2, we will continue to hold conversations and build relationships with local landowners, ditch boards, community leaders, and the public with the goal of increasing river resiliency. We are currently working with three landowners in our "Reach 13" priority area to complete the design of a river resiliency project (currently funded by another Colorado Water Plan grant). In addition, we are in the early planning phases with two ditch boards on the Poudre to incorporate fish passage into their diversion structures (currently funded by Water Supply Reserve fund). This project will provide the necessary support to expand these important conversations to other priority river reaches, which will include dedicated time to build relationships with other landowners and ditch boards. This directly addresses the CWP 2015 Section 6.6 objective to "Maintain watershed health by protecting or restoring watersheds that could affect critical infrastructure and/or environmental and recreational areas". This project also addresses the 2023 CWP Action Area to Enhance Watershed Health, specifically these Partner Actions 1)

Rehabilitate streams to improve habitat, reduce erosion, and meet needs and 2) Improving fish passage through replacement of agricultural headgates.

One of our main outreach projects continues to be coordinating the annual Poudre RiverFest, that celebrates the river, educates the public, and directly supports restoration projects. Through engaging interactive booths & workshops, participants can learn about the ecology of the river, watershed health, the history of water law and current water law issues, river safety, and opportunities to help restore and protect the Poudre. This event directly supports all aspects of Section 6.6 goals. The festival tracks attendance and distributes post event surveys to capture participant experiences. In 2018 and 2019, we had in-person participation between 1,000-3,000 people. Due to the pandemic, the festival went virtual in 2020 and we adapted a hybrid version in 2021. We had a large in-person celebration again in 2022 with attendance of ~3,000 people. Over the next 1-3 years, Poudre RiverFest volunteers will be assisting with restoration projects across the basin. CPRW will be leading Poudre RiverFest volunteers to assist with our CPF reforestation efforts.

For Phase 2, we plan to create several unique education and outreach events/projects. One of our planned projects is to launch our Poudre River Mural Project, starting in the lower watershed. For the first mural, we have partnered with Greeley-Weld District 6, Chappelow K-8 Arts Magnet school, and local muralist, Armando Silva, to plan a collaborative mural project to share the perspectives and experiences of the students. The overall goal of the mural project is to tell the story of the Poudre community by connecting to their history and values around the river through art. Our aim is that the Poudre River Mural Project will help cultivate partnerships, increase collaboration and bring the community together around one common theme - the Poudre River and its importance to our region.

The Poudre Mural Project and our participation in the Poudre RiverFest addresses the 2023 CWP Action Areas of Vibrant Communities and Resilient Planning, especially regarding equity, diversity, and inclusivity, and education. Further, these projects/events also address the 2023 South Platte Basin Roundtable goal to Broaden South Platte communications, outreach, and education programs.

CWP 2015-Section 6.2 also identifies the South Platte Goals and Measurable Outcomes (pg 25) that recommend projects that “monitor, protect and improve watershed water quality and identify and document progress and improvements”.

In 2022-2023, our citizen science program expanded to meet the increased monitoring needs following the CPF. We will engage our stakeholders, local upper watershed residents and community members to volunteer as citizen scientists, aligning directly with the South Platte Section 6.2 goal. With our partners at the RMRS and CSU, we will build communication tools to communicate our monitoring results to track our progress towards increasing the resiliency of the watershed.

CWP 2015, Chapter 6 recognizes that the Cache la Poudre River is the only river in Colorado that is designated as a Wild and Scenic River (Pg 166 Wild and Scenic Rivers). Our monitoring work includes multiple sites in the Wild & Scenic corridor, providing a unique opportunity for community members to learn about this highly valued section of our river. Several drainages to the Wild & Scenic corridor were severely burned in the CPF and are the focus of restoration work like aerial mulching and post-fire BMPs to protect water quality. Our citizen science monitoring program will help track impacts from the fire and progress following post-fire restoration.

CWP 2015 Section 7.1 Watershed Health & Management Goal to “[Promote] watershed health and [support] the development of watershed coalitions and watershed master plans that address the needs of a diverse set of local stakeholders through identified actions such as:

- Identify watersheds that are critical to water supply.
- Monitor projects to ensure that objectives are met and maintained.
- Conduct adaptive management as necessary.
- Coordinate statewide watershed-coalition and partnership plans, projects, monitoring, and adaptive management strategies.

Our stakeholder-driven collaboratives have helped to develop both our 2016/2017 upper and lower Poudre

Master Plans. After the 2020 pandemic and CPF, we have started meeting regularly (bi-monthly or quarterly) with both groups again. Our upper and lower Poudre stakeholder groups will help guide our monitoring/adaptive management, updates to our master plans, and priority projects implementation across the basin. Our citizen science water quality monitoring program will also help monitor post-fire projects and speak to adaptive management in our watershed. These collaboratives and our focus on implementing our master plans also addresses two of the 2023 CWP Action Areas, Thriving Watersheds and Resilient Planning, and the South Platte Goal of Encouraging the implementation of projects (pg 122).

CWP 2015 Section 7 specifically articulates that “successful watershed management necessitates collaborative discussions on managing forests to benefit water supply...And that watershed health largely focuses on forest-health concerns (Section 7.1 pg 7). Our work in the upper Poudre is driven by restoring and protecting forested headwaters to protect our water supplies, communities, and river ecosystems. We will continue to work with our stakeholders to further this goal. Our project will also help residents understand these critical watershed connections by engaging them directly in citizen science monitoring in the headwaters, and the impacts from severe wildfire on water quality. This work will support adaptive management of CPRW’s work in the basin and other agencies (US Forest Service) adaptive management needs. We will also provide learning opportunities at outreach events such as the Poudre RiverFest, panel discussions, and other forums specific to the Poudre and Front Range watersheds.

Similarly, this work also aligns with the State Water Supply Initiative Section 8 Recommendation (pg. 8-1): 1. “Support meeting Colorado’s non-consumptive water needs by working with Colorado’s water stakeholders to help: (1) Protect or enhance environmental and recreational values that benefit local and statewide economies; and (2) Encourage multipurpose projects that benefit both water users and native species.

CWP 2015 Section 7.3 Goals “Colorado’s Water Plan promotes waters that fully support their classified uses by 2050 through strategies designed to meet Colorado’s current and future consumptive, recreational, and environmental water needs. These strategies incorporate the protection and restoration of water quality as a key objective”.

Our Citizen Science Program continues to be focused on water quality monitoring. After the CPF, our program has expanded to include three objectives: 1) develop a baseline data set of water quality in high priority reaches (based on CPRW’s Resiliency Plan); 2) collect water quality data to measure the impact of prescribed fire, an increasingly important forest management tool, on our waterways; and 3) monitor the impacts from the CPF and track outcomes from post-fire restoration. This program will provide critical data to help the public better understand the link between forest health, rivers and water quality. It will also provide support to our partners at the USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station and City of Fort Collins Utilities by expanding our capacity to collect critical post-fire water quality data.

Finally, the data collected through our program will help state water managers and stakeholders monitor current water quality conditions and evaluate the status of surface-water quality in the CLP headwaters to assess whether water bodies are meeting regulatory standards and provide additional data for evaluating baseline conditions into the future.

Our CitSci program also addresses the 2023 CWP Action Area, Thriving Watersheds, specifically in the Partner Action section on page 207: Non-governmental organizations: Critical partners in watershed planning like NGOs can often help with efforts such as data collection, project implementation, analysis, and education. They can often form strong, trust-based relationships with communities.

CWP 2015 Section 7.3 D 1. Stakeholder and Public Outreach (pg 33) “Stakeholder and public outreach is critical to meeting the water quality and quantity integration goal. 1. Use a watershed approach for outreach and community engagement around water quality, ways to protect water quality, and solutions to water quality issues”.

AND

Section 9.5 Outreach, education, and public engagement (pg 1) “Colorado’s Water Plan provides technical and financial assistance for high-quality, balanced, and grassroots water education and outreach efforts that inform

Coloradoans about issues so that they may engage in determining Colorado's water future".

With Phase 2 funding from the Colorado Water Plan, CPRW can continue to act as the organizing chair of the Poudre RiverFest, giving CPRW and our partners a strategic opportunity to increase opportunities for the community to learn about the varied water resource and watershed issues in a fun, meaningful, and engaging way. Our outreach program also includes developing community meetings/tours/events to increase people's understanding of these issues and to create communication tools (videos, website, StoryMap, etc) to support these outcomes. We will also be targeting specific landowners in the lower watershed that own property in our priority reaches from the Lower Poudre Master Plan.

Our role on the Preble's Meadow Site Conservation Team (SCT) for the North Fork Poudre meets the intent of the 2023 CWP, Partner Actions for Thriving Watersheds (pg 206), Improving riparian and aquatic habitat: Resilient river systems require seasonal flow fluctuations and provide complex and connected aquatic and riparian habitats that sustain stable, diverse, abundant, and reproducing populations of aquatic and riparian species. Efforts to improve riparian and aquatic habitat are important to the recovery of native and imperiled species. As a member of the SCT, we manage the outreach and communications committee which aims to educate landowners along the North Fork Poudre about the upcoming Conservation Plan, ways to adapt land management practices that are better suited for PMJM and to secure buy-in for future riparian restoration. The long-term goal of the SCT is to delist PMJM from the Endangered Species List. This can only be achieved through the buy-in and support of local landowners and through restoration work along an estimated ~52 miles of the N Fork.

The South Platte BIP defines facilitating "effective South Platte communications and outreach programs that complement the State's overall program" as one of the 11 Key Plan Elements. In Chapter 4, Projects & Methods, section 4.1 Education, Participation, and Outreach includes the following Suggested Activities (4.1.3 pg 193) 'Develop Messages' and 'Develop and Maintain Basin-Specific Outreach Tools and Approaches'. As part of the Phase 2 project, we will continue to refine key watershed and river resiliency messages, especially as we aim to secure buy-in from key landowners for future resiliency projects. We will create specific data visualization tools, factsheets, blogs and other products to educate landowners and community members on what river resiliency means. We will organize field trips with landowners and ditch boards to other completed nearby project sites to provide examples of what river restoration and fish passage projects can look like.

The Poudre River Mural project will also provide a unique opportunity to facilitate communication and outreach about the river by engaging a wide range of the local community including the Chappelow K-8 Art School, Greeley-Weld District 6, municipalities, and a local artist. We aim to involve these stakeholders in the entire planning, design and creation of the mural. The mural will provide an opportunity for the community to share their stories and history around the river and express what is important to them about the watershed through art. Our intent is to expand the mural project across the watershed to showcase the diverse voices of our local communities.

Our proposed activities are all in line with activities and outreach tools described in the South Platte BIP Table 4-3 (pg 192), Engagement Tools and Intended Audiences.

Additionally, our proposed activities all support the following other SP BIP goals through education and outreach:

1. S.5.5 Protect and enhance environmental and recreation attributes. Recommendation: Fill existing data gaps regarding protection of environmental and recreational attributes in order to better understand the adequacy of existing and future protections.

2. S.5.9 Facilitate effective South Platte communications and outreach programs that complement the state's overall program. Recommendation: Design and implement an intensive education, participation and outreach program designed to generate a lasting baseline of public awareness and support.

Our citizen science data will help fill data gaps regarding environmental attributes and post-fire impacts to contribute to a data set that will be communicated to the public through our reports, presentations, and future web portal.

The South Platte Basin Roundtable Education Action Plan includes “II. Educational Priorities & Implementation: Overall goals of the Education and Outreach Committee of the South Platte Basin Roundtable include a focus on educating and engaging the public, decision-makers and elected officials on the scope and purpose of the BIP and the State Water Plan, with an over-arching theme of focusing on solutions-oriented water supply planning”. By engaging residents directly in the development of high-quality water data, we will empower volunteers by facilitating their direct participation in watershed science. Our citizen science volunteers gain hands-on knowledge of the Poudre’s water resources, the connection between healthy forests, fires, and water quality, and how restoring our headwaters protects downstream water users. Our program will continue to provide a venue for the community to learn more about the impacts from the CPF and outcomes from post-fire restoration through our reporting of the data, trends and outcomes. This information is available through our newsletter, website, blogs and social media. It will also be uploaded into statewide water quality databases for use by decision makers on baseline conditions in our basin to help track outcomes from both forest mitigation work (like prescribed fire) versus high severity wildfire like Cameron Peak.

Related Studies

Upper Poudre Watershed Resiliency Plan, December 2016. Prepared for CPRW by JW Associates, 119 pgs.
Lower Poudre River Recovery & Resilience Master Plan, January 2017. Prepared for CPRW by Lynker Associates. 139 pgs.
State of the Poudre River Assessment City of Fort Collins, 2017. 125 pgs
City of Fort Collins Source Water Protection Plan. 60 pgs.
City of Fort Collins. Upper Cache la Poudre (UCLP) Collaborative Water Quality Monitoring Program. Standard Operating Procedures
Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report, 2018. Colorado Water Quality Control Board, Department of Public Health & Environment. 519 pgs
Cache la Poudre River Watershed- Based Plan, April 2020. Prepared for CPRW by LRE Water, Inc. 131 pgs.
State of the Upper Poudre, May 2020. Prepared for CPRW by Stillwater Sciences.
Watershed Hazards, Treatments and Targeting Prioritization, 2021. Prepared for City of Greeley by JW Associates.

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

As a non-profit entity, we are not affected by TABOR.