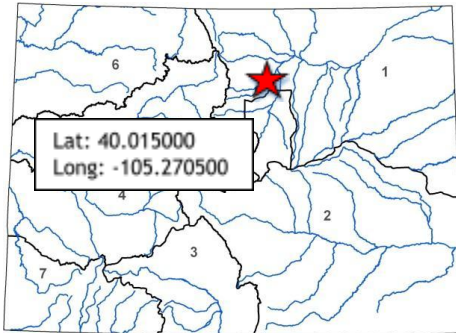


Water Plan Grant Program Application



LOCATION	
Counties:	Statewide
Drainage Basin:	Statewide

DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	\$247,630.52
Water Plan Grant Request:	\$153,697.00
Recommended amount:	\$153,697.00
Other CWCB Funding:	\$0
Other Funding Amount:	\$71,142.78
Applicant Match:	\$22,790.74
Project Type:	Capacity Building
Project Category:	Watershed Health & Recreation
Measurable Result:	100 Coloradans impacted by engagement activities

Colorado Water Plan Grant funding will help The River Network, Colorado Water Trust, and Western Resources Advocates launch an “environmental flows cohort” training program. The inaugural session would empower river management planning practitioners (initially 10) with the skills, peer and technical support, resources, and understanding of local stakeholder processes to “increase the number of rivers that have locally driven environmental flow recommendations.”

The River Network’s 2021 report notes that only seven percent of stream management plan (SMP) project recommendations statewide included environmental and recreation flow targets. In 2022 workshops co-hosted by the CWCB and the River Network, participants pointed to an opportunity to increase the number of flow recommendations within SMPs. Further outreach indicated an interest from SMP stakeholders to receive education, training and technical assistance to assess flow needs, develop recommendations, or identify other strategies to meet flow goals.



Success of this innovative project would result in curriculum design, a “cohort” application process, program design for three in-person training sessions, associated homework, and execution of the program’s first year. Initial program design would be guided by a Steering Committee including two CWCB staff representatives. From this foundation, the partners hope to build a replicable and scalable training program.

Funding partners include the River Network, Colorado Water Trust, Western Resource Advocates, Mighty Arrow Foundation, with a pending request to the Colorado River Water Conservation District. CWCB dollars would go toward costs such as hiring a hydrology consultant and facilitator.

This project aims to advance Colorado Water Plan’s Agency Actions 2.3 to “Expand the scale of collaborative water sharing agreements” and 4.1 to “Create a capacity-building hub to provide accessible educational opportunities” especially for river health methodologies and water sharing agreements. This project demonstrates a commitment to collaboration by including diverse perspectives on environmental flows such as municipal, industrial, and ag users to explore strategies to build trust and consider how flow recommendations may satisfy multiple needs.

Funding Recommendation:

Staff recommends full funding of \$153,697 to the River Network for the Environmental Flows Cohort Pilot Training Program.

**COLORADO**Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	River Network
Name of Water Project	Environmental Flows Cohort Pilot Training Program
Grant Request Amount	\$153,697.00
Primary Category	\$153,697.00
<i>Watershed Health & Recreation</i>	
Total Applicant Match	\$22,790.74
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$2,500.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$20,290.74
Total Other Sources of Funding	\$71,142.78
<i>Colorado River Water Conservation District</i>	\$27,028.50
<i>Western Resource Advocates</i>	\$7,500.00
<i>Mighty Arrow Foundation</i>	\$10,000.00
<i>Western Resource Advocates</i>	\$14,876.08
<i>Colorado Water Trust</i>	\$11,738.20
Total Project Cost	\$247,630.52

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: River Network
Mailing Address: PO Box 21387 Boulder CO 80308
FEIN: 930,969,979

Organization Contact: Chelsea Silva
Position/Title: Healthy Rivers Program Associate Email: csilva@rivernetwork.org
Phone: 208-577-0256

Organization Contact - Alternate: Brian Murphy
Position/Title: Email: bmurphy@rivernetwork.org
Phone:

Grant Management Contact: Chelsea Silva
Position/Title: Healthy Rivers Program Associate Email: csilva@rivernetwork.org
Phone: 208-577-0256

Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Brian Murphy
Position/Title: Email: bmurphy@rivernetwork.org
Phone:

Description of Grantee/Applicant

No description provided

Type of Eligible Entity	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public (Government)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public (District)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public (Municipality)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ditch Company
<input type="checkbox"/>	Private Incorporated
<input type="checkbox"/>	Private Individual, Partnership, or Sole Proprietor
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-governmental Organization
<input type="checkbox"/>	Covered Entity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

Category of Water Project	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agricultural Projects <i>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.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conservation & Land Use Planning <i>Activities and projects that implement long-term strategies for conservation, land use, and drought planning.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Engagement & Innovation Activities <i>Activities and projects that support water education, outreach, and innovation efforts. Please fill out the Supplemental Application on the website.</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Watershed Restoration & Recreation <i>Projects that promote watershed health, environmental health, and recreation.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Water Storage & Supply <i>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>

Location of Water Project	
Latitude	40.015000
Longitude	105.270500
Lat Long Flag	Default/Proponent headquarters: If the location cannot be defined with flags above, use location of project proponent headquarters
Water Source	
Basins	Arkansas; Colorado; Gunnison; Metro; Yampa/White/Green; Rio Grande; South Platte; Southwest; Nort...
Counties	
Districts	

Water Project Overview	
Major Water Use Type	Environmental
Type of Water Project	Capacity Building
Scheduled Start Date - Design	1/1/2024
Scheduled Start Date - Construction	
Description	

In 2022, River Network and the Colorado Water Conservation Board co-hosted workshops to gain insight on the barriers and opportunities for utilization and/or development of environmental & recreational flow recommendations within stream management plans. Among the ideas documented in the resulting white paper were to:

- Convene a cohort of river management planning practitioners that are navigating the flows recommendations process, providing skills growth and a place for peer and technical support as they advance their flow recommendations processes.
- Bolster education and training resources for coalitions on the technical aspects of the flow needs assessment and recommendations process.
- Enhance education and resources for coalitions on the stakeholder-driven aspects of the flow recommendations process to bolster collaboration skills and ensure diverse perspectives are included.

Through jointly offering trainings, as well as developing a deeper learning cohort, to assess flow needs and to develop and meet environmental flow recommendations, River Network, Colorado Water Trust and Western Resource Advocates hope to grow local knowledge and capacity, connect coalitions working on similar challenges, and ultimately increase the number of rivers that have locally-driven environmental flow recommendations. The result of this project will be a replicable and scalable training program that can meet the needs of local coalitions for years to come.

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
 100 Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity
 Other
 No additional measurable results provided

Water Project Justification

The 2023 Colorado Water Plan includes several recommendations that this proposal would support, including:

- *Agency Action 3.7 "Reduce barriers to participation in the Instream Flow Program" by enhancing public understanding of the ISF Program, sharing examples of successful collaborative projects, providing guidance for initiating and navigating the process, and providing support and technical expertise for interested entities.
- *Agency Action 2.3 "Expand the scale of collaborative water sharing agreements" by convening conversations, increasing knowledge sharing between current and potential CWSA participants, and attracting new and diverse CWSA participants.
- *Agency Action 4.1 "Create a capacity-building hub to provide accessible educational opportunities" especially collaborative water sharing agreements and river health methodologies.
- *Partner Actions for Thriving Watersheds (pgs. 205-206), including: Increasing the amount of stored water that augments or re-time stream flows in ways that enable water managers to provide recreational or environmental

flows to communities; Developing flow enhancement projects that reconnect streams with their floodplains to improve habitat and water quality ; Support stream and integrated water management plans' efforts to identify needed flows; and Identify voluntary water acquisitions to improve stream flows.

In addition, many Basin Implementation Plans or Stream and Integrated Water Management Plans include goals and projects to restore flows that require deeper analysis and planning before implementation, including this small sampling from across the state:

*Projects in the Colorado BIP like "CO-2015-0015 Map of places where reservoir releases could help maintain minimum instream flows" and "CO-2015-0342 Coordinated flushing flows releases from upstream reservoirs".

*Projects in the Rio Grande BIP like "RG-2020-0066 Alamosa River Instream Flow Restoration"

*Projects in the Yampa IWMP like "Coordinate reservoir operations to meet irrigation and environmental shortages" and "Meet existing environmental flow targets & water rights".

*Strategies in the St. Vrain & Lefhand SMP like "Maintain baseflows and peak flushing flows in the creeks necessary to support ecological function and connectivity for native and sport fish, recreation, and diversions for beneficial use through filling data gaps and developing the framework for enhancing stream flows and establishing reservoir operation agreements."

This proposal will support the education and technical assistance needs of practitioners as they strive to implement these important projects.

Related Studies

In 2018, River Network formally launched a Peer Learning Network for those working on SMPs to improve planning outcomes through collecting and sharing best practices and connecting practitioners to each other. Through annual surveys and interviews of the SMP leads in 2017, 2019 and 2020, River Network has collected best practices and innovative approaches (coloradosmp.org), and tracked the progress of SMPs throughout the state. In 2020 River Network launched an outcome tracking tool to begin collecting data on the various outcomes that SMPs have achieved and documented the findings in the 2021 report Stream Management Plans in Colorado: Progress at Five Years. One finding of this work is that only 7% of SMP project recommendations to date include environment and recreation flow targets, a number that does not align with the original intended outcome of the SMP program.

River Network and the Colorado Water Conservation Board then co-hosted workshops in 2022 to gain insight on the barriers and opportunities for utilization and/or development of environmental & recreational flow recommendations within stream management plans. Workshop participants agreed an opportunity exists to increase the number of E&R flow recommendations that are produced within individual stream management plans. River Network documented these findings in the 2023 white paper: Flow Recommendations in SMPs –Opportunity Analysis.

In 2023, River Network conducted outreach and a follow up survey of coalitions to gauge interest in the idea of an Environmental Flows Cohort that would receive education and technical assistance to assess flow needs, develop new environmental flow recommendations, or identify strategies to meet existing environmental flow recommendations on their local rivers. Twenty practitioners responded and their ideas, desires and limitations were the backbone of this proposal. In addition, River Network recently completed an external evaluation of the SMP Peer Learning Network, and findings indicate that network members want us to consider ways to go deeper on topics, and the environmental flows cohort idea was mentioned several times as an example of how we could do that.

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

