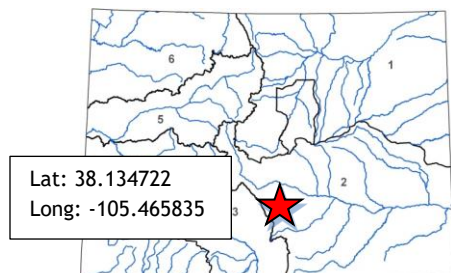


September 2023 Board Meeting

Water Plan Grant Program Application



L O C A T I O N	
County/Countries:	Custer
Drainage Basin:	Arkansas

D E T A I L S	
Total Project Cost:	\$91,700.00
E&I Program Request:	\$68,400.00
Recommended amount:	\$68,400.00
Other Funding Amount:	\$0.00
Applicant Match:	\$23,300.00
Project Type(s):	Planning
Project Category(Categories):	Engagement and Innovation
Measurable Result:	2,500 Coloradans impacted by wildfire planning, irrigation infrastructure assessments and pond-compliance mitigation measures.

The Custer County Conservation District Water Stakeholder Engagement Project (Project) is intended to support the Custer County Conservation District's (applicant) thoughtful approach to future planning for the county's variable water needs and uses. This project advances the Arkansas Basin Roundtable's Basin Implementation Plan's goals of ensuring adequate water quality and quantity to meet future needs as well as preservation of irrigated agriculture within the Basin. The Project also supports the Colorado Water Plans goals of Thriving Watersheds and Robust Agriculture and Vibrant Communities through taking a proactive approach to wildfire preparedness, irrigation infrastructure assessment and illegal pond compliance. Match funding for this project is being provided partially by the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

To accomplish the applicant's variable goals, the Project will include three distinct tasks. Task 1 will include a review of available information pertaining to past and present forest health and wildfire risk assessment planning and implementation work in Custer County. This task will also include outreach to local, federal and state partners and the development of a strategy for future wildfire preparedness planning.

Task 2 will focus on performing on-site irrigation infrastructure assessments at numerous sites throughout Custer County in cooperation with other assessment team members from the Colorado Cattlemen's Association's Ag Water NetWORK and staff from the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Upon completion of these site assessments, the applicant will work with interested Custer County irrigators to pursue funding for the implementation of improvements and complete the identified improvements to their irrigation infrastructure system.

Task 3 includes a Pilot Project in which the applicant will lead outreach efforts to educate pond owners in Custer County on the Division of Water Resources (DWR) Division II requirements for non-compliant ponds. The applicant will facilitate meetings with pond owners and the DWR Division 2 Engineer's office staff to provide a forum for questions and answers. The applicant also anticipates providing pond owners with information on design options, funding opportunities and DWR/NRCS standard best management practice information to achieve compliance. The applicant expects that this effort in Custer County will serve as a Pilot project and example for other Conservation Districts in the Arkansas River Basin - all of which have non-compliant ponds.

Funding Recommendation: Staff recommends Board approval of \$68,400.00 to the Custer County Conservation District through the Engagement and Innovation category.



COLORADO

Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	Custer County Conservation District
Name of Water Project	Custer County Conservation District Water Stakeholder Engagement
Grant Request Amount	\$68,400.00
Primary Category	\$68,400.00
<i>Engagement & Innovation Activities</i>	
Total Applicant Match	\$20,800.00
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$9,150.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$11,650.00
Total Other Sources of Funding	\$2,500.00
<i>Custer County Conservation District</i>	\$0.00
<i>Custer County Conservation District</i>	\$0.00
<i>USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service</i>	\$2,500.00
Total Project Cost	\$91,700.00

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: Custer County Conservation District
Mailing Address: 10 Hermit Ln Westcliffe CO 81252
FEIN: 6,000,162

Organization Contact: Josh Wingfield
Position/Title: Project Coordinator Email: josh.custercounty@outlook.com
Phone: 719-360-6286

Organization Contact - Alternate: Robert Miller
Position/Title: Email: custercountycd@gmail.com
Phone:

Grant Management Contact: Josh Wingfield
Position/Title: Project Coordinator Email: josh.custercounty@outlook.com
Phone: 719-360-6286

Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Robert Miller
Position/Title: Email: custercountycd@gmail.com
Phone:

Description of Grantee/Applicant

District - Water conservancy or water conservation district

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	38.134722
Longitude	105.465835
Lat Long Flag	Municipal centroid: Coordinates based on centroid of municipal boundary
Water Source	Grape Creek and Texas Creek watersheds, including tributaries, lakes and reservoirs.
Basins	Arkansas
Counties	Custer
Districts	13-Wet Mountain Valley

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type	Education
Type of Water Project	Education
Scheduled Start Date - Design	1/1/2024
Scheduled Start Date - Construction	
Description	This project will engage water stakeholders representing agricultural and other water stakeholder interests around local water topics that affect Custer County land and residents. Issues will include forest and watershed health and wildfire threats to water supplies, irrigation infrastructure needs, and water quality.

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
2,500 Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity

Other

A review of the existing forest health and wildfire risk assessment, planning and implementation work that has been or is currently being accomplished in Custer County. Also, a review of existing watershed and stream management planning work being accomplished in Custer County. Outreach activities around Custer County (meetings, forums, workshops, field days, one-on-one meetings). Five or more no-cost irrigation infrastructure assessments will be conducted, and at least two grant proposals will be prepared. We will also coordinate with the DWR Division 2 to help non-compliant pond owners in Custer County find solutions to achieve compliance with DWR's requirements.

Water Project Justification

Colorado's Water Plan supports robust agriculture, vibrant communities, and healthy tourism and recreational industries - all of which are crucial in supporting Custer County's economy, culture and natural environment. Healthy watersheds and stream systems provide essential water for area ranches, towns, wildlife and recreational interests. Priorities listed by the Arkansas Basin Roundtable include ensuring adequate water quality and quantity to meet future needs, including municipal, agricultural, environmental and recreational. These goals align with the Custer County's goals. The proposed Water Plan grant will be leveraged by the District to jumpstart collaborative stakeholder engagement around water-connected topics that support Custer County's economy and way of life - including forest health and wildfire risk assessment and potential impacts to water supplies, agricultural irrigation infrastructure, and stream water quality. The project will also assist both pond owners and the Division of Water Resources Division 2 by facilitating public meetings and other outreach focused on raising awareness and understanding about illegal ponds and land owner compliance options.

Regarding irrigated agriculture, the Arkansas Basin Roundtable has a policy statement about agriculture in the state Water Plan: "The preservation of irrigated agriculture in the Arkansas Basin shall be given a high priority in the state water plan. It is too important to tourism, the preservation of food production, recreation, the environment and the health and well-being of our citizens as well as the economy of the State of Colorado to be ignored."

Related Studies

No Related Studies provided

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

No issues. Custer County Conservation District is not supported by a mill levy.