



Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	Western Resource Advocates	
Name of Water Project	Advancing Water Wise Landscaper Certification	
Grant Request Amount		\$152,157.60
Primary Category		\$152,157.60
	<i>Conservation & Land Use Planning</i>	
Total Applicant Match		\$0.00
	<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$0.00
	<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$0.00
Total Other Sources of Funding		\$50,719.20
	<i>Mighty Arrow Foundation</i>	\$19,621.50
	<i>Lincoln Institute-Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy</i>	\$20,000.00
	<i>Colorado State University</i>	\$11,097.70
Total Project Cost		\$202,876.80

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: Western Resource Advocates
 Mailing Address: 2260 Baseline Road, Suite 200 Boulder CO 80302
 FEIN: 841,113,831

Organization Contact: Lindsay Rogers
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Organization Contact - Alternate: Laura Belanger
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Grant Management Contact: Lindsay Rogers
 Position/Title: Water Policy Analyst Email: lindsay.rogers@westernresources.org
 Phone: 720-927-3055

Description of Grantee/Applicant

Western Resource Advocates (WRA) protects the West's land, air, and water to ensure vibrant communities exist in balance with nature.

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 39.999733
 Longitude -105.263979
 Lat Long Flag
 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 Municipal
 Type of Water Project Planning
 Scheduled Start Date - Design 6/1/2024
 Scheduled Start Date - Construction
 Description

For three years, WRA has led an initiative to explore policy options for expanding landscape and irrigation professional training and certification in Colorado. WRA has identified that state-required licensing of landscape and irrigation professionals would have the largest impact on water conservation. Further, in 2023 WRA surveyed 266 landscape professionals and found that 62% support statewide certification or licensure. Currently, there is a critical research gap that needs to be addressed before moving forward with a state-level policy proposal. WRA will complete the following objectives to pursue the best path forward for landscape certification:

- Explore landscape and/or irrigation professional licensure programs in the 10 states with existing programs in order to inform recommendations in Colorado.
- Learn about certification programs currently available in Colorado to better understand how these trainings could be incorporated into a state-level program.
- Foster active engagement with a diverse set of stakeholders in the landscape and irrigation industry to understand their perspectives on how certification programs and/or a state licensing program would affect their efforts.
- Synthesize all research and input from stakeholders into a publicly available report that will provide a roadmap for Colorado to expand landscape and irrigation certification or licensing.

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)
740,000	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)
5,812,000	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Incorporating Water-Saving Actions into Land Use Planning
	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity
Other	
	No additional measurable results provided

Water Project Justification

Colorado's Water Plan (2023)

- (Pg. 188) Perhaps most relevant to the goals outlined in this application, the project will assist in meeting Agency Action 1.7 - Identify turf replacement options that support transformative landscape change. In particular, the project will research and evaluate the role, capacity, and expertise of the landscape and irrigation professional industry with the objective of expanding water wise landscape and irrigation professional certification in Colorado:
 - o "The CWCB will coordinate with key partners to find pathways for achieving effective outcomes that explore both retrofit and new construction standards. This will include evaluating the role and capacity of landscapers as well as contractors, developers, municipalities, and other groups to support this transformation."
- (Pg. 9) The project's focus on landscape and irrigation professionals that are trained and certified in sustainable Colorado landscapes and efficient water management addresses the Vibrant Communities action area:
 - o "Holistic water management is essential for creating vibrant communities that balance water supply and demand needs to create a sustainable urban landscape. Colorado communities need resilient water supplies, water conscious and attractive urban landscapes, planning that integrates land use and water solutions, and residents who understand the importance of water to their lives and economy. An integrated One Water ethic is

necessary to create the transformative change needed to meet the moment and the future.”

- (Pg. 153) The project utilizes 8 tools and solutions to meet water needs:
 - o Public Outreach and Education: The project will rely on significant education, input and engagement from the landscape and irrigation professional industry to help determine the most effective path forward for certification and licensing.
 - o Funding: WRA is requesting Colorado Water Plan funds – with both cash and in-kind support from WRA and project consultants - to conduct the research and stakeholder engagement tasks identified in this application.
 - o Policy and Regulatory Changes: The project will explore the effectiveness and feasibility of updating state-level policy to either incentivize or require landscape and irrigation professional licensing.
 - o Collaboration Groups: This project will be reliant upon significant collaboration between the project team members – WRA, CSU Extension, and the Colorado Water Center – as well as members of WRA’s existing Landscape Professional Certification Steering Committee and other entities included in the stakeholder process.
 - o Climate Adaptation: Expanding water wise landscape and irrigation professional education and certification is critical to ensure that our landscapes in Colorado are climate-appropriate, drought-tolerant, and irrigated efficiently.
 - o Equity: This project will strive to reach and include underrepresented voices from the landscape industry including but not limited to: Spanish speakers, individuals from rural areas outside the Front Range, and landscape and irrigation technicians in the field. We will achieve this through targeted outreach, translation and interpretation services, participant stipends, and meetings and events outside the Front Range.
 - o Land Use and Water Planning Integration: This project will help to ensure that landscapes in new development and redevelopment are designed, installed and maintained by landscape professionals with the training and skills necessary to reduce the water demand of the landscape while maintaining critical landscape benefits.
 - o Water Efficiency and Conservation Programs: Landscape and irrigation professional certification presents a critical municipal conservation tool by ensuring that professionals have the knowledge and skills needed to conserve water.

- (Pg. 176 - 181) The project is consistent with the Water Plan’s Vibrant Communities and Resilient Planning Visions and specifically partner actions towards:

- o Meeting Future Water Need
- o Wise Water Use
- o Healthy Lands

- (Pg. 180) Under the Healthy Lands partner action section, this project will support the transition towards water wise, climate-appropriate landscapes and efficient irrigation:

- o “Colorado must start building the landscapes of the future today by identifying and planting the types of vegetation that are reflective of local natural landscapes, can thrive under warmer and drier conditions, and potentially only need irrigation one day per week or less. Irrigation efficiency should be maximized on existing and new water-wise landscapes.”

Arkansas Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) (2022, Volume 1)

- (Pg. 14) The project will help meet the basin’s Municipal and Industrial Goals to meet the projected municipal supply gap in each Arkansas Basin subregion, specifically by:
 - o (Pg 17) Supporting projects within and outside the Arkansas Basin that will help meet the M&I water supply gap, maintain existing supplies, better manage vulnerable supplies, and maximize use of water users’ entitlements.

Colorado BIP (2022, Volume 1)

- (Pg. 13) The project will help address the basin’s theme to “Encourage a high level of basin conservation” and

goal to (Pg. 20) “Pursue continued municipal and industrial (M&I) conservation”.

South Platte – Metro BIP (2022, Volume 1)

- (Pg. 3) The project helps realize the BIP Strategic Vision and Strategies to meet the municipal supply gap.
- (Pg. 24) The project is consistent with the following BIP Themes:
 - o “The South Platte Basin Will Continue its Leadership Role and Performance in Efficient Use and Management of Water”
 - o “The South Platte Basin Must Sustain its Economy, Culture, and Environment”
- (Pg. 25) The project supports the BIP goals to:
 - o “Maintain and promote municipal and industrial conservation and efficiency”
 - o “Protect and enhance environmental attributes”
 - o “Broaden South Platte communications, outreach, and education programs”

Water Plan Grant Criteria and Guidelines

- (Pg. 4) Letters from Basin Roundtables – Letters of support are pending from the following Roundtables:
 - o South Platte – Pending January 9, 2024 meeting
 - o Metro – Pending January 11, 2024 meeting
 - o Colorado – Pending January 29, 2024 meeting
- (Pg. 4) Evaluation Criteria – As documented above, the project conforms well to the goals of the Colorado Water Plan and the Basin Implementation Plans. The project has multiple benefits including water supply, water efficiency, and education among others. The project involves multiple stakeholders including landscape and irrigation technicians and managers, municipal water providers, representatives from current landscape certification programs, state agencies, professional associations, Western Resource Advocates, Colorado State Extension, Colorado Water Center, and many others. The project team is prepared to start as soon as the contracting process is complete, which is anticipated to be in late Spring/early summer 2024.
- (Pg. 8) Conservation & Land Use Project Grants Criteria and Considerations – The project’s ultimate goal is to help Colorado achieve 400,000 acre-feet of M&I water conservation by 2050. Approximately half of municipal water is currently used outdoors. Currently, most landscape and irrigation professional’s knowledge and practices do not prioritize efficient water management. The project is designed to research and identify a path forward for needed efficient water management training and associated certification/licensure. The project will result in reduced overall future water needs through cost-effective water efficiency measures. The project integrates water efficiency planning and projects into overall water resource management. It also advances conservation and drought planning efforts by increasing outdoor efficiency and water supply sustainability. The project is a direct result of Western Resource Advocates ongoing initiative to explore scaling-up landscape professional certification and the implementation actions identified by the project’s steering committee of landscape professionals, municipal water providers, state agencies, universities, and professional associations. The project is designed to advance conservation efforts, and drought mitigation, and to respond to the impacts of climate change on water supplies and supplemental irrigation needs.

Related Studies

Exploring Policy Options for Expanding Landscape & Irrigation Professional Certification in Colorado, January 2023, Western Resource Advocates. (
<https://westernresourceadvocates.org/publications/exploring-policy-options-for-expanding-landscape-irrigation-prof>
)

Survey of Water Providers in Colorado on Landscape and Irrigation Professional Certification, 2021, Western Resource Advocates. (
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/f3acz3al0apra00ijzbqg/2021-Water-Provider-Survey-results.pdf?rlkey=swn7bvil5tdh>
)

Survey of Landscape and Irrigation Professionals in Colorado on Certification, 2023, Western Resource Advocates. (
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/f3acz3al0apra00ijzbqg/2021-Water-Provider-Survey-results.pdf?rlkey=swn7bvil5tdh>
)

Green Industries of Colorado (GreenCO), Best Management Practices, 2015. (
<http://www.greenco.org/best-management-practices.html>)

This project is complimentary to the following CWCB initiatives:

- CWCB Water Plan Grant Project CMS 168113/CTGG1 2021-3240 Enabling Large Scale Replacement of Non-Essential Turf. Applicant: Western Resource Advocates. One outcome from this project has been recognition of the need for green industry transition, including expanding the pool of available landscape and irrigation professionals trained in water efficiency best practices.
- CWCB Water Plan Grant, Colorado Native Grass Manual Website. Applicant: Colorado WaterWise. This manual identified the need for stronger education and training associated with native grass installation and maintenance.
- CWCB Water Plan Grant, Colorado WaterWise Update to the 2010 Guidebook of Best Practices for Municipal Water Conservation in Colorado. This guidebook (still under development) will include a section on landscape professional certification in Colorado and how to encourage, incentivize or require training and certification.
- CWCB's Urban Landscape Water Conservation Task Force which is working to "identify practical ways to advance outdoor water conservation through state policy and local initiatives, to meet the pressing challenges of urban water conservation in Colorado".
- Colorado Springs' December 2023 CWCB Water Plan Grant Application "Colorado Landscape Industry Education Plan for Water Conservation". This initiative – which will work with stakeholders to identify the necessary components of water conservation and landscape transformation focused education and trainings – is complimentary to WRA's grant proposal and we will work together closely to ensure findings from each initiative are reviewed and compared. More detail about this collaboration is provided in the scope of work.

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

N/A