



## COLORADO

Colorado Water  
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Jared Polis, Governor

Dan Gibbs, DNR Executive Director

Rebecca Mitchell, CWCB Director

TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Elizabeth Schoder, Water Supply Planning

DATE: May 15, 2024 CWCB Board Meeting

ITEM: Agenda Item #17 Water Education Colorado (WEco)'s- Annual Allocation

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**Staff recommendation:** Staff recommends the Board approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Scope of Work for Water Education Colorado (WEco).

### Background

The CWCB has supported WEco since its inception in 2002. This support has included serving on the WEco board, providing guidance, partnering on numerous outreach and educational efforts, and financial support from the CWCB Construction Fund as well as from other various CWCB grant programs and funding sources.

From Fiscal Year 2002 to Fiscal Year 2020 the CWCB supported WEco (formerly known as Colorado Foundation for Water Education) with an annual \$150,000 grant from the Construction Fund through a legislative mechanism known as a “continuous appropriation.” During the 2020 legislative session this appropriation was removed indefinitely through the 2020 CWCB Projects Bill (HB 20-1403), but was reinstated during the 2021 legislative session as an amendment to the 2021 Projects Bill (SB 21189). The Board approved the Fiscal Year 2024 WEco Scope of Work in May 2023.

As such, the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 WEco Scope of Work (Scope) is presented for Board review and approval. As in past years, the proposed Scope supports WEco’s annual operations, water education, and outreach programs. The Scope covers numerous efforts that align with both organizations’ missions in the form of four overarching tasks: Operational Support, Public Outreach, Water Education & Leadership Programs, and Content Programs. The subtasks within each section allow the CWCB and WEco to strategically prioritize work related to various aspects of the Colorado Water Plan.

Elizabeth Schoder and Katie Weeman currently serve as the CWCB representatives on WEco’s Board, along with Kelly Romero-Heaney serving as the DNR representative. Jayla Poppleton, WEco’s Executive Director, will be present at the meeting to make a presentation and answer questions. The proposed Scope and summary table are attached.



## Proposed FY2025 WEco-CWCB Scope of Work

This Scope of Work identifies how the state legislative annual allocation via the CWCB Construction Fund, in sum of \$150,000, will be used to support Water Education Colorado (WEco) operations and programs in Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025).

### Operational Support

#### 1.1 Strategic Plan Implementation

##### *Overview*

In January 2020, the WEco Board of Trustees adopted a strategic plan to guide our work from 2020-2025. The plan identifies both internal-facing and external-facing goals for long-term sustainability and expanded impact. The plan, importantly, includes a strong emphasis on achieving equity in educational programs and improved access and reach to underrepresented audiences, whether geographic, ethnic or socioeconomic.

In order to continue to activate the plan in its final stages to accomplish its goals, WEco will fine-tune a one-year work plan for FY25 and another looking ahead to FY26. The FY25 plan will be used to guide and measure progress against the strategic plan's goals during the coming year.

##### *Work Plan*

- Working with WEco Board and Committees, fine-tune and implement FY25 work plan.
- Develop FY26 work plan.

##### *Schedule and Budget*

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2025	\$25,000	\$8,000

#### 1.2 Financial Management and Reporting

##### *Overview*

Every year WEco completes a financial review, and once every three years undergoes a more thorough financial audit. The last audit was conducted for FY21 and the next one will be conducted during the coming year, looking back at FY24. In addition, WEco produces an annual report to provide transparency in financial information, acknowledge donors, and share out on impact. This helps us stay connected to our supporters and convey the value of our work, as well as to build additional capacity through fostering ongoing membership and donation support.

#### ***Work Plan***

- Engage and work with accounting firm to perform FY24 financial audit.
- Complete and distribute FY24 year-end annual report.

#### ***Schedule and Budget***

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
June 2025	\$17,500	\$7,000

### **1.3 Maintain and Update Web Platform**

#### ***Overview***

WEco developed and launched a new website in 2017 to vastly improve our digital presence and availability of our digital resources. The site serves as a hub for all things WEco, including archives of all past publications, radio programs, webinars, and more. The site requires regular maintenance in order to maintain functionality, improve Search Engine Optimization so that interested learners can readily find our information, and improve the user experience.

#### ***Work Plan***

- Engage web developer in annual maintenance contract.
- Review google analytics to understand how viewers are interacting with the site and evaluate opportunities for improvement.
- Prioritize and implement improvements.

#### ***Schedule and Budget***

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2025	\$30,000	\$10,000

## **General Public Outreach**

### **2.1 General Public Outreach**

#### ***Overview***

Colorado continues to welcome thousands of new residents every month who are unfamiliar with the water resource constraints and concerns in our state. WEco has also consistently heard from members and the wider water community that more general public education and outreach is needed in order to raise awareness, promote sustainable water behaviors, and inform decision making. Additionally, WEco staff members are regularly asked to give presentations to community groups and conferences, recommend resources, and to promote resources and opportunities through the Headwaters PULSE newsletter, the WEco website and social media.

In addition, WEco conducts various outreach activities to legislators throughout the legislative session, as well as to county commissioners. In 2024, WEco held two 201-level water workshops at the Capitol, distributed publications to legislators, and delivered a welcome letter highlighting other opportunities to learn about water. In FY24, WEco also held two trainings for county commissioners and distributed publications to county commissioners. In 2025, WEco will pursue similar opportunities.

#### ***Work Plan***

- Provide presentations as requested for community groups.
- Present at conferences to promote educational opportunities and resources
- Identify relevant resources for community groups as requested.
- Promote educational opportunities and resources through newsletter and events calendar.
- Offer educational opportunities to legislators.
- Offer educational opportunities to county commissioners.

#### ***Schedule and Budget***

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2025	\$48,250	\$20,000

## **2.2 Participation in Collaborative Groups**

#### ***Overview***

WEco staff are regularly invited to participate in and advise on educational opportunities and resources through various collaborative forums and other community and educational groups.

#### ***Work Plan***

- Participate and support collaborative forums including the Basin Roundtables, the Public Education, Participation and Outreach work group, the Water and Land Use Alliance, the Colorado Water Congress Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee, advise on Water in the West with CSU Spur, and respond to other miscellaneous opportunities and requests from organizations for support on outreach activities.

#### ***Schedule and Budget***

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2025	\$25,000	\$8,000

## Water Education & Leadership Programs

### 3.1 Water Fluency Program

#### *Overview*

In its tenth year, WEco's Water Fluency Program offers elected officials, appointed water board members, students and members of the public immersion in the language and concepts of water as well as tools for navigating the culture, complexity and future of water management and policy issues. Topics covered include an orientation to basic hydrology, water law and administration, interstate issues, water quality protection, funding opportunities for projects (including CWCB grants and loan programs), the Basin Roundtables and Colorado Water Plan, land use and water efficiency, watershed health and protection, stream management planning, and more.

This in-depth curriculum consistently receives strong positive feedback, and has filled or exceeded the 35-class-member capacity every year. WEco is offering the 2024 program featuring case studies from the Upper Colorado River Basin. The second half of the program will be completed in FY25. WEco will also prepare to hold the 2025 program with a focus tentatively in Northern Colorado, including the North Platte River Basin, pending local partner support.

Additionally, because of the program's popularity and effectiveness, WEco will develop a self-guided digital option of Water Fluency that will run in parallel to the main program in order to double the number of participants who can benefit.

#### *Work Plan*

- Hold second half of the 2024 program between July and September.
- Collect and analyze feedback, adjust the curriculum based upon that feedback.
- Plan, market and open registration for the 2025 program.
- Develop and open registration for a self-guided digital option.

#### *Schedule and Budget*

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2025	\$65,600	\$12,000

### 3.2 Water Leaders Program

#### *Overview*

The Water Leaders Program is a highly regarded professional development program for water professionals who have demonstrated a sincere commitment to Colorado water as well as strong leadership potential. The curriculum instills leadership and management principles in a

select group of water professionals each year and grows their peer network so that they can be more effective in charting a path toward innovative and collaborative water solutions. Since 2006, more than 240 graduates have completed the program, including a number of CWCB staff and current board members, as well as other prominent leaders in the Colorado water community. In FY23, WEco increased the class size for Water Leaders to 20 participants, up from 16, in order to support more leaders in up-leveling their skills, and has maintained that size.

CWCB's contribution through the Scope of Work keeps tuition for the Water Leaders Program affordable. Combined with other sponsorship support, CWCB funding keeps tuition 13% lower than it would otherwise be.

In addition to the annual Water Leaders Program offering, WEco provides an annual Water Leaders 2.0 training opportunity for alumni to continue to improve their skills.

#### ***Work Plan***

WEco will engage in the following:

- Complete the second half of the 2024 Water Leaders Program.
- Collect and analyze feedback; adjust the curriculum based upon that feedback.
- Market the 2025 program, select applicants and run the first half of the 2025 Water Leaders Program.
- Hold a 2.0 training opportunity for program alumni.

#### ***Schedule and Budget***

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2025	\$146,150	\$15,000

### **3.3 Annual River Basin Tour**

#### ***Overview***

WEco's annual river basin tours are an opportunity for decision makers, water professionals and interested citizens to see water management in action and to get an up-close look at the challenges and opportunities currently before the industry. Tours regularly hit capacity, and generally one-half of tour attendees are individuals new to WEco.

#### ***Work Plan***

- WEco will produce one multi-day Annual Basin tour, tentatively in the Upper South Platte River Basin. The South Platte Basin Roundtable will be invited to provide input in tour planning in order to focus a portion of the agenda on their Basin Implementation Plan. The CWCB will receive a seat on the tour free of charge.

#### ***Schedule and Budget***

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2025	\$48,500	\$10,000

## Content Programs

### 4.1 Headwaters Fall 2024 issue: Water 101

#### **Overview**

WEco has published Headwaters magazine since 2003 and now boasts more than 60 issues in its archives, all of which are available online. The magazine continues to tackle tough issues in an accessible, engaging way, highlighting diverse perspectives, case studies and human interest stories from across Colorado and the west, and providing opportunities for engagement and further learning.

Coverage highlights recent innovations, collaborations, policy developments, and challenges/opportunities on the given topic in order to inform the statewide water community, decision makers, and interested citizens from a non-advocacy perspective.

The first issue in FY25 will focus on the basics of Colorado water resources management and protection as a Water 101 for diverse audiences.

#### **Work Plan**

WEco will produce the following:

- Produce and distribute Fall 2024 issue of *Headwaters* magazine on Water 101.
- CWCBC will receive 15 copies of the *Headwaters* magazine free of charge and be invited to serve on the peer review work group.

#### **Schedule and Budget**

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
July-November 2024	\$48,175	\$15,000

### 4.2 Headwaters Spring 2025 issue: Topic TBD

#### **Overview**

The topic for the second issue in FY25 will be selected by WEco's Publications Committee.

#### **Work Plan**

WEco will produce the following:

- Half-day gathering of experts to identify the issues, current research, challenges and opportunities that WEco should focus on related to the topic
- Produce and distribute Spring 2025 issue of *Headwaters* magazine.
- CWCBC will receive 15 copies of the *Headwaters* magazine free of charge and be invited to serve on the peer review work group.

#### **Schedule and Budget**

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
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August 2024-April 2025	\$48,175	\$15,000
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#### 4.3 Headwaters Summer 2025 issue: Topic TBD

##### **Overview**

The topic for the third issue in FY25 will be selected by WEco’s Publications Committee.

##### **Work Plan**

WEco will produce the following:

- Hold half-day gathering of experts to identify the issues, current research, challenges and opportunities that WEco should focus on related to the topic.
- Produce and distribute Summer 2025 issue of *Headwaters* magazine.
- CWCB will receive 15 copies of the *Headwaters* magazine free of charge and will be invited to serve on the peer review work group.

##### **Schedule and Budget**

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
November 2024-June 2025	\$48,175	\$15,000

#### 4.4 Companion content

##### **Overview**

Following the publication of each issue of Headwaters magazine, WEco produces companion content in other non-print channels, including webinars and the Your Water Colorado blog, to further expose audiences, deepen understanding and facilitate dialogue around the issues covered in the magazine.

##### **Work Plan**

- Publish series of related blog articles authored by WEco staff and experts following each issue of Headwaters.
- Host one webinar following each issue of Headwaters, based on selected content.

##### **Schedule and Budget**

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2025	\$22,000	\$5,000

#### 4.5 Citizen’s Guide/Community Guide Update, Translation and Distribution

##### **Overview**

WEco has built its Citizen’s Guide series over time, and currently offers 10 reference guides, which serve as comprehensive primers on key aspects of water management, history, law and



quality. Many of these guides have been updated to new editions in recent years, and the Citizen’s Guide library is currently well stocked. Identifying new opportunities for distribution to reach new audiences is a high priority.

WEco has also identified a need to provide more educational resources in Spanish in order to increase access and equity in water education. In FY23, we published the Community Guide to Where Your Water Comes From and the Community Guide to Colorado Water Law in Spanish. We are also changing the names of the guides as they are updated or translated to Community Guides to be more inclusive.

In FY24, WEco updated the Citizen’s Guide to Colorado Water Conservation to a 3<sup>rd</sup> edition to reflect the latest advances and priorities for water conservation in the municipal, agricultural and industrial sectors. In FY25 we will translate the guide into Spanish, as the third guide in the library to be available in Spanish. We will also produce a complimentary fact sheet summarizing the guide, in both English and Spanish.

***Work Plan***

- Continue to increase distribution of existing Citizen’s Guide library to reach new audiences.
- Continue working on new distribution channels for Spanish guides and monitor/evaluate demand for the product.
- Complete the Conservation guide update in Spanish.
- Produce Conservation guide fact sheet in English and Spanish.

***Schedule and Budget***

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2025	\$43,425	\$10,000

## WEco Construction Fund Allocation FY2025 Scope of Work Summary Table

### Task #1: Operational Support

Subtask		Time of Deliverable	Description of Deliverable	Budget	Scope Allocation
1.1	Strategic Plan Implementation	June 2025	Develop and implement FY25 work plan and track progress on strategic plan; develop FY26 work plan	\$25,000	\$8,000
1.2	Financial Management and Reporting	June 2025	Complete FY2024 financial audit and annual report to share with members and supporters	\$17,500	\$7,000
1.3	Maintain and update web platform	June 2025	Maintain website functionality and identify opportunities to improve user experience and viewer metrics	\$30,000	\$10,000
Task 1 Total				\$72,500	\$25,000

### Task #2: Public Outreach

Subtask		Time of Deliverable	Description of Deliverable	Budget	Scope Allocation
2.1	General Public Outreach	June 2025	Provide presentations to various community groups and conferences, promote educational opportunities and resources through newsletter and events calendar, offer educational opportunities to legislators and county commissioners	\$48,250	\$20,000
2.2	Participation in Collaborative groups	June 2025	Participate in collaborative groups (e.g. Basin Roundtables, Public Education, Participation and Outreach workgroup, Water and Land Use Alliance), support EDI work with Colorado Water Congress, advise on Water in the West with SPUR, and support organizations with requests for other miscellaneous opportunities	\$25,000	\$8,000
Task 2 Total				\$73,250	\$28,000

### Task #2: Water Education & Leadership Programs

Subtask		Time of Deliverable	Description of Deliverable	Budget	Scope Allocation
3.1	Water Fluency Program	June 2025	Deliver 2024 program and plan, market and open registration for 2025 program, develop and open registration for self-guided, digital option	\$65,600	\$12,000
3.2	Water Leaders Program	June 2025	Complete second half of 2024 program and first half of 2025 program with 20 participants; offer a 201-level "shore-up" for alumni	\$146,150	\$15,000
3.3	Annual River Basin Tour	June 2025	Host multi-day bus tour, tentatively focused on Upper South Platte River Basin	\$48,500	\$10,000
Task 3 Total				\$260,250	\$37,000

### Task #4: Content Programs

Subtask		Time of Deliverable	Description of Deliverable	Budget	Scope Allocation
4.1	Headwaters Fall '24 - Water 101	November 2024	Publish and distribute fall issue	\$48,175	\$15,000
4.2	Headwaters Spring '25 - Topic TBD	April 2025	Publish and distribute spring issue	\$48,175	\$15,000
4.3	Headwaters Summer '25 - Topic TBD	June 2025	Publish and distribute summer issue	\$48,175	\$15,000
4.4	Complimentary content including webinars and blog posts tied to Headwaters topics	June 2025	Produce one webinar and 1-2 blog posts following publication of Summer '24, Fall '24, and Spring '25 issues of Headwaters, digging deeper into the same topic focus area	\$22,000	\$5,000
4.5	Citizen's Guides / Community Guides Series	June 2025	Produce Spanish-language edition of the Community Guide to Colorado Water Conservation and related fact sheet in Eng./Sp., focus on distribution and evaluation of demand for first three Community Guides	\$43,425	\$10,000
Task 4 Total				\$209,950	\$60,000

<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$615,950</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>
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