

**COLORADO**Colorado Water  
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

## Colorado Water Conservation Board

**Water Plan****Water Project Summary**

Name of Applicant	Western Resource Advocates	
Name of Water Project	Implementing Turf Limits in Landscape Codes	
Grant Request Amount		<b>\$150,260.63</b>
Primary Category		\$150,260.63
<i>Conservation &amp; Land Use Planning</i>		
Total Applicant Match		<b>\$0.00</b>
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>		\$0.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>		\$0.00
Total Other Sources of Funding		<b>\$50,086.88</b>
<i>Mighty Arrow Foundation</i>		\$35,641.00
<i>Western Resource Advocates</i>		\$14,445.88
Total Project Cost		<b>\$200,347.51</b>

**Applicant & Grantee Information**

Name of Grantee: Western Resource Advocates

Mailing Address: 2260 Baseline Road, Suite 200 Boulder CO 80302

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Position/Title:

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Organization Contact - Alternate: Lindsay Rogers

Position/Title: Water Policy Analyst

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Grant Management Contact: James Larson

Position/Title:

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Grant Management Contact - Alternate: 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 39.999800  
 Longitude -105.264090  
 Lat Long Flag  
 Water Source  
 Basins Arkansas; Colorado; Southwest; Gunnison; Yampa/White/Green; Metro; Rio Grande; South Platte; Nort...  
 Counties  
 Districts

### Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type Municipal  
 Type of Water Project Education  
 Scheduled Start Date - Design 12/1/2024  
 Scheduled Start Date - Construction  
 Description  
 On March 15, 2024, Governor Polis signed into law SB5: Prohibit Landscaping Practices for Water Conservation which prohibits the installation of non-functional turf, artificial turf and invasive plant species on new, non-residential properties statewide. By January 1, 2026, cities and counties must update or establish new landscaping codes or standards that meet or exceed this statute. Western Resource Advocates' (WRA) research suggests that most Colorado communities will need to modify their codes and development review processes to comply with SB5. Water savings from SB5 – along with all the environmental and social benefits of water wise

landscapes – can only be realized if cities and counties have the tools, resources, and guidance they need to adopt, implement, and enforce strong water wise landscaping codes. The proposed project will enable WRA and our partners at Brendle Group (BG) (collectively, “the project team”) to develop these needed resources and tools and to conduct extensive education and outreach to support successful SB5 implementation. This project will be highly collaborative with resource development informed by engagement with cities and counties and through the formation of a Landscape Code Technical Advisory Group.

### 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)  
 9,658 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  
 Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity  
 Other  
 No additional measurable results provided

### Water Project Justification

Colorado Water Plan 2023

(Pg.188) Action 1.7 in the Vibrant Communities section relates to this project as it is focused on opportunities for the replacement of non-functional turf throughout the state. This project will help to prevent new non-functional turf from being installed in new non-residential development, and addresses this portion of the action, “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.” The project will be coordinated with municipalities, counties, developers, and landscape professionals.

(Pg. 167) In the “Tools” segment of the plan under Municipal Conservation and Efficiency, the plan states “The CWCB recognizes municipal water conservation and efficiency will be an important tool for reducing water use.” It says that an effective tool the CWCB has seen to reduce municipal use is to limit turf to functional areas, stating one tool is, “Reducing non-functional turf – establishing turf buy-back programs and enacting comprehensive landscape ordinances that limit new turf to functional spaces.” This project is directly aligned with this strategy as it will limit turf to functional spaces in new non-residential development and redevelopment.

(Pg.155) The plan addresses legislation related to turf replacement. This project takes turf replacement one step further by supporting communities to comply with SB24-005 by limiting the amount of non-functional turf that will be installed across the state moving forward, thus reducing the need for turf replacement in the future.

(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.”

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”. Reducing non-functional turf areas in new development is a strong water conservation measure and ties directly to these themes.

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 goal to:

- o “Maintain and promote municipal and industrial conservation and efficiency”

(pg.28) Particularly sub goal 3.F to “Support and promote water efficient landscaping”, which includes:

“(Supporting) updated landscaping standards that promote water efficient landscaping and include elements such as limits on non-essential turf in new development”.

CWCB Water Plan Grant Guidelines Criteria and Considerations (p. 16)

- The project is intended to reduce overall future water needs through cost-effective water efficiency measures.
  - o This project will support communities to adopt codes that limit the installation of non-functional turf in new non-residential development and instead promote the installation of water wise plants and landscaping practices. This will prevent the need for turf replacement projects in the future which can be costly, saving both money and water in the long run.
- The project promotes a water efficiency ethic throughout Colorado
  - o As SB-5 is a statewide policy, this project to help implement it will help Colorado communities to better prepare for Colorado’s water future and to choose climate appropriate landscapes instead of non-functional turf, saving water and promoting water conservation and efficiency ethic.
- The project reduces impacts and prepares for the impacts of climate change
  - o The impacts of this project will be reduced water demand for outdoor landscapes in new non-residential development across the state. As climate change limits our available water supplies, this will help communities do more with less water. The alternative, water wise plants installed will also be far more climate resilient, and drought-tolerant than cool season turfgrass.

## Related Studies

WRA projects that SB5 will result in savings of 9,658 acre-feet per year by 2030 and 48,292 acre-feet per year by 2050 (approximately the water demand of 145,000 Colorado households in a year). By 2050, these savings will represent 36% of Colorado's estimated outdoor municipal water use gap. The estimates are based on data from the 2023 Colorado Water Plan, 2019 Colorado Water Plan Technical Update, and WRA's own assumptions.

### Governor's Urban Landscape Taskforce Report

This project is applicable to the recommendations made in the 2024 Urban Landscape Conservation Task Force Final Report released by Governor Polis' office. In the recommendations, adopting turf policy is highlighted as a top recommendation.

(Pg.ii.) "Support legislation prohibiting installations of nonfunctional water-intensive turf as defined by the task force in new and redevelopment and support local adoption of turf limitations".

This project directly supports this recommendation, as SB5 prohibits nonfunctional turf in new non-residential development and redevelopment, and this project will help communities integrate the turf limitation into their landscape codes.

### DOLA Model Land Use Code

The DOLA Model Land Use Code will provide example language for communities to use in their landscape codes. It will include language compliant with SB24-005 requirements and will be reference material for this project once published.

### South Metro Water Supply Authority Model Regional Water Efficient Landscape and Irrigation Ordinance

The SMWSA model water efficient ordinance contains example language that communities can use to update their landscaping codes to include water-efficient elements beyond SB24-005 requirements.

### Landscape codes compliant with SB24-005

In the state there is only one municipal landscape code currently in full compliance with the requirements of SB24-005; the City of Edgewater's code. The codes from the Town of Castle Rock and City of Aurora address the non-functional element of the SB24-005 requirements and can also be a reference for this project.

#### City of Edgewater

Edgewater's landscaping code fully complies with the requirements of SB24-005. It prohibits installation of nonfunctional turf, invasive species, and artificial turf on non-residential development and redevelopment. Its code language can be used as reference material for communities aided through this project.

#### City of Castle Rock

Castle Rock's landscaping code complies with elements of the SB24-005 legislation requirements. The code prohibits the installation of nonfunctional turf on non-residential development. Its applicable code language can be pointed to as a reference for communities as part of this project.

#### City of Aurora

Similar to Castle Rock, the City of Aurora's landscaping code complies with the prohibition of nonfunctional turf on non-residential properties component of the SB24-005 requirements and can be used as a reference material for communities during their code updates.

## Taxpayer Bill of Rights

N/A