



Colorado Water Conservation Board

## Water Plan

### Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	American Whitewater
Name of Water Project	Taylor River Access Improvement Project
Grant Request Amount	<b>\$162,564.00</b>
Primary Category	\$162,564.00
<i>Watershed Health &amp; Recreation</i>	
Total Applicant Match	<b>\$17,488.00</b>
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$0.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$17,488.00
Total Other Sources of Funding	<b>\$147,210.00</b>
<i>United States Forest Service</i>	\$62,300.00
<i>United States Forest Service</i>	\$16,836.00
<i>United States Forest Service</i>	\$68,074.00
Total Project Cost	<b>\$327,262.00</b>

### Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: American Whitewater	
Mailing Address: PO Box 1540 Cullwhee NC 28779	
Organization Contact: Kestrel Kunz	
Position/Title: S. Rockies Protection Director	Email: kestrel@americanwhitewater.org
Phone: 970-456-8533	
Grant Management Contact: Kestrel Kunz	
Position/Title: S. Rockies Protection Director	Email: kestrel@americanwhitewater.org
Phone: 970-456-8533	

### Description of Grantee/Applicant

No description provided

### 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	38.748721
Longitude	-106.702838
Lat Long Flag	Precise coordinates: Project coordinates are readily definable and precisely define the location of the project
Water Source	There is no water quantity or water rights involved in this project. The project will benefit the Taylor River and the Gunnison River upstream from Blue Mesa Reservoir.
Basins	Gunnison
Counties	Gunnison
Districts	62-Upper Gunnison River

### Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type

Type of Water Project                      Construction / Implementation

Scheduled Start Date - Design              3/1/2024

Scheduled Start Date - Construction      4/1/2025

Description

The goal of the Taylor River Access Improvement Project is to improve river recreation opportunities and river health on the Taylor River. "The Slot" access site is the primary point of access for guided and self-outfitted river trips on the Upper Taylor River. In 2022, the Taylor River had 12,974 commercial user days and contributed \$4,821,469 to the local economy. The river was also designated as a Gold Medal trout fishery in 2023. Despite its popularity, a boat ramp was never constructed at The Slot and a makeshift route down the steep embankment has led to significant erosion and public safety concerns.

The current access area includes a parking lot, a toilet, and a foot path to the river. While original design plans in 2004 included stairs and boat slides from the parking area to the river, this component was never funded or constructed. This project includes the design and construction of stairs, raft slides, erosion control, and improved

staging areas and signage. The design and implementation of the project is a partnership effort between American Whitewater, the Gunnison Ranger District of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests (Forest Service), river outfitters, and the public.

### 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)
168,960	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
23,500	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity
Other	
The 168,960 feet is the length of stream that will benefit from upstream erosion mitigation at the project site; additionally, the improved recreation access site will provide access to up to 168,960 feet of stream from The Slot to Blue Mesa Reservoir.	

### Water Project Justification

Water-related recreation contributed \$19 billion to Colorado's economy in 2019 (Business for Water Stewardship, 2020). This figure is highlighted on page 42 of the 2023 Colorado Water Plan (Water Plan) and page 9 of the Water Plan addresses how Thriving Watersheds is one of the four components of the Water Plan's vision. Thriving Watersheds includes the environment and recreation, river health, watershed health, forest health, wildfire mitigation, wildlife and aquatic species protection, among other components. American Whitewater's project, Taylor River Access Improvement Project, helps support the robust river recreation economy in the Gunnison River Basin and helps to improve watershed health.

The Taylor River between Taylor Park Reservoir and Almont and the Gunnison River from Almont to Blue Mesa have been identified as key boating and fishing segments by the 2022 Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan (p. 30) and in the 2021 river recreation flow assessment completed by American Whitewater for the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District's Watershed Management Planning process for the Taylor and Gunnison Rivers (Assessment of streamflow preferences for supporting recreational water uses on the Taylor and upper Gunnison Rivers, 2021, p. 4) The project location at The Slot is the farthest upstream developed access area on the Taylor River and is upstream of 6 major recreational boating and fishing reaches ending at Blue Mesa Reservoir.

This project meets 3 of the 9 Gunnison Basin Roundtable Goals including to quantify and protect environmental and recreational uses; maintain or, where necessary, improve water quality throughout the Gunnison Basin; and create and maintain active, relevant, and comprehensive public education, outreach, and stewardship processes involving water resources in the six sectors of the Gunnison Basin (Colorado Water Plan, p. 97; Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan, p. 13). Additionally, page 96 of the Water Plan indicates that in the Gunnison Basin,

specifically, there is a need for better water management tools to mitigate sedimentation in streams. This project is an example of how to enhance recreational opportunities while simultaneously ensuring improvements for watershed health.

#### **Related Studies**

In 2021, American Whitewater published a report for the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District's Watershed Management Planning process for the mainstem Upper Gunnison and Taylor Rivers. The study, 'Assessment of Streamflow Preferences for Supporting Recreational Water Uses on the Taylor and Upper Gunnison Rivers', identified priority recreational river segments, the flow ranges that support different recreational river uses and how often those flows are met under historical hydrological conditions. The current proposed project is complementary to the 2021 recreational assessment as it ensures long-term sustainable access to one of the priority river segments and access points identified in the study.

#### **Taxpayer Bill of Rights**

There are no relevant TABOR issues for this project.