

**COLORADO**Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan**Water Project Summary**

Name of Applicant	RiversEdge West
Name of Water Project	Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative – Master Planning and Floodplain Restoration Project
Grant Request Amount	\$315,228.00
Primary Category	\$315,228.00
<i>Conservation & Land Use Planning</i>	
Total Applicant Match	\$10,000.00
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$10,000.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$0.00
Total Other Sources of Funding	\$102,500.00
<i>City of Fruita</i>	\$2,500.00
<i>City of Grand Junction</i>	\$2,500.00
<i>Colorado Parks & Wildlife</i>	\$1,500.00
<i>American Rivers</i>	\$7,500.00
<i>Wash Water Engineering</i>	\$4,500.00
<i>River Network</i>	\$7,500.00
<i>Mesa County</i>	\$1,500.00
<i>City of Grand Junction</i>	\$36,000.00
<i>City of Fruita</i>	\$12,500.00
<i>Town of Palisade</i>	\$2,500.00
<i>Colorado Parks & Wildlife</i>	\$5,000.00
<i>Western Colorado Community</i>	\$5,000.00
<i>Foundation</i>	
<i>One RiverFront</i>	\$10,000.00
<i>US Fish & Wildlife Service</i>	\$1,500.00
<i>Town of Palisade</i>	\$2,500.00
Total Project Cost	\$427,728.00

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: RiversEdge West

Mailing Address: PO Box 1907 Grand Junction CO 81502

Organization Contact: Erin McDermott

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Organization Contact - Alternate: Rusty Lloyd

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Grant Management Contact: Erin McDermott

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Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Kate Hampson

Position/Title:

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Description of Grantee/Applicant

RiversEdge West restores riparian ecosystems through education, collaboration, and technical assistance. We accomplish this by replacing invasive plants with native plant species along thousands of riverside acres across the Southwest, educating thousands of community members and youth to foster long-term river stewardship, training river restoration professionals through our training series and annual conference – including education and outreach about the tamarisk beetle, and researching and developing new restoration techniques to effectively restore riparian ecosystems.

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 39.055333

Longitude -108.568500

Lat Long Flag	Precise coordinates: Project coordinates are readily definable and precisely define the location of the project
Water Source	River
Basins	Gunnison; Colorado
Counties	Mesa
Districts	72-Lower Colorado River; 42-Lower Gunnison River

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type Environmental

Type of Water Project Planning

Scheduled Start Date - Design 5/1/2025

Scheduled Start Date - Construction

Description

The Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative (RCI) spans the Colorado River from De Beque, Colorado, to the Utah state line, including the Gunnison River from Bridgeport to its confluence with the Colorado. As the community's lifeblood, the river corridor supports key industries like agriculture, recreation, and tourism, which rely on a healthy river ecosystem. RCI is completing a two-year CWCB Water Plan Grant (through May 2025), which has funded quarterly Advisory Committee meetings, river flow and riparian and floodplain restoration studies, and planning workshops to establish a multi-jurisdictional framework for river corridor planning. Previous CWCB funding supported the development of a fluvial hazard zone (FHZ) for the river corridor.

The proposed two-year grant will implement the planning framework by carrying out a multi-jurisdictional Grand Valley River Corridor Master Plan and, in tandem, develop floodplain restoration projects. This phase will build upon previous outreach and engagement by developing a river corridor governance framework among local jurisdictions. The RCI Core Team will lead floodplain project development, focusing on multi-benefit projects integrating flood mitigation, habitat restoration, infrastructure safety, recreational access, and open space. This grant will support the RCI Core Team's project management, facilitation, and outreach for the above through April 2027. This project will set actionable goals and strategies to preserve and restore the corridor's ecological and economic vitality, preparing the community for sustainable growth and resilience in future environmental challenges, including droughts and floods.

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

82,500 Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity

Other

*Numbers of river miles under new RCI planning/management - 61 river miles

*Development of restoration plans for three river corridor project sites/reaches - 412 acres

Water Project Justification

This project responds to key themes in the Colorado Water Plan and is well aligned with the Colorado and Gunnison Basin Implementation Plans and Basin Education Action Plans.

Colorado Water Plan

The river corridor created by the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers as they pass through the Grand Valley provides access to irrigation water, critical riverine and riparian habitat for endangered species, recreational opportunities, and both opportunities and hazards for development and infrastructure. This project addresses all four of the action areas in the 2023 Draft of the Colorado Water Plan:

-Vibrant Communities: A key element of this project is outreach and education to raise awareness of the river corridor's vital role in supplying water to local agriculture and homes, enhancing our quality of life, and how our collective decisions impact this vital community resource. The proposed River Corridor Master Plan will develop guidance and policies for river corridor access, development, and management, ensuring a healthy and vibrant river that supports community values of recreation, safety, mobility, and the economy.

-Robust Agriculture: This project addresses the needs of agriculture by including agricultural stakeholders in discussions about the implications of different river flow levels for water supply availability and infrastructure. The RCI also provides a framework for developing collaborative, multi-benefit projects.

Thriving Watersheds: This project builds on a recently completed riparian and floodplain study, which has identified conservation and restoration opportunities to improve riverine and riparian habitats. In this current phase, we will develop priority multi-benefit floodplain restoration projects.

-Resilient Planning: By developing a framework for integrating planning across jurisdictions within the river corridor in the Grand Valley, as well as enhancing our understanding of potential flow scenarios and implications for watershed health and infrastructure sustainability, this project will greatly enhance our community's capacity to plan and implement river compatible development as well as multi-benefit solutions that will enhance resilience to a variety of potential water supply and flow challenges.

Colorado Basin Implementation Plan

The assessments and community conversations facilitated by this project align with the goals of the Colorado Basin Implementation Plan (BIP), and the project, listed as "River Corridor Plan, Grand Valley," is included as a Tier 1 project in the BIP project list. Specific goals the project addresses within their respective BIP themes include:

-Protect and restore healthy streams, rivers, lakes, and riparian areas:

*Protect and maintain healthy, self-sustaining aquatic and riparian ecosystems and rehabilitate damaged ones.

*Support and provide for quality river and stream recreational opportunities with appropriate flows.

-Sustain agriculture:

*Engage, educate, learn from, and collaborate with the agricultural community on Colorado River Basin Issues and increase awareness among the broader community about the importance of agriculture.

-Develop local water-conscious land use strategies:

*Support, preserve, and promote local authorities' management of stream health, development, and conservation efforts.

This project also aligns with the Education Action Plan within the BIP, particularly the vision to "Encourage

awareness and development of holistic locally driven collaborative solutions supported by best available hydrologic and watershed data.” This project will provide an excellent example of locally driven collaboration supported by the best available hydrologic and watershed data.

Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan

This project is particularly responsive to the Gunnison BIP's goals by bringing together diverse stakeholders to enhance stewardship of the Grand Valley River Corridor.

- Encouraging relationships among agricultural and environmental recreational water uses.
- Continuing public education, outreach, and stewardship.

This project also aligns with the Education Action Plan in the Gunnison BIP, in particular the element to “Continue and expand efforts to develop and distribute water resources information related to the Gunnison Basin, including, but not limited to, regional and basin-specific water supplies and demands, related hydrology and watershed information, water quality influences, and challenges and opportunities facing citizens.”

Related Studies

*US Fish & Wildlife Service Final Biological Opinion on Bureau of Reclamation’s Operations and Depletions, other Depletions, and Funding and Implementation of Recovery Program Actions in the Upper Colorado River Above the Confluence with the Gunnison River (1999). The Recovery Program is a key partner in the RCI, and the RCI uses the Program’s studies to inform project activities.

*Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative Stakeholder Outreach and Workshops (2020-2021): The RCI conducted individual interviews and held four community workshops to identify issues and prioritize strategies for river corridor management.

*Desert Rivers Collaborative Implementation Plan (2015 - 2020): Guidelines for riparian restoration along the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers in Mesa and Delta Counties.

*Grand Valley River Corridor Fluvial Hazard Zone Mapping Project (2022): The CWCB and the RCI funded an FHZ study of the river corridor to serve as a foundation and tool for future river corridor planning, conservation, and restoration efforts.

*Two Rivers Regional Partnership Initiative (2022-2024): A recreation and conservation planning effort funded by GOCO and CPW and led by Colorado Canyons Association. This project aligns with the community connectivity and recreation values identified in previous RCI stakeholder engagement.

*Grand Valley Outdoor Coalition Recreation Planning (2022-2023): An outdoor / recreation business planning effort focusing on river corridor recreation.

Upper Colorado Endangered Fish Recovery Program hydrology and habitat study (2025-2030): An in-depth flow (current and future) and in-channel habitat analysis to be conducted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service within the Grand Valley.

*Two Rivers Wildfire Coalition (ongoing): ongoing studies and restoration work related to riparian restoration and fuels management within the Grand Valley River Corridor

*Grand Valley Watershed Plan (2022): A comprehensive assessment of water quality issues in the Grand Valley with recommendations for additional data collection and development of an implementation plan.

*Grand Valley River Corridor Initiative (RCI) Flow Preferences Study (2023): Report on outcomes and flow trend analysis on a series of water user and river corridor stakeholders conducted by the RCI in partnership with River Network and The Nature Conservancy.

*Grand Valley Riparian and Floodplain Restoration Study (2024): Riparian health assessment and floodplain restoration implementation plans.

*Grand Valley River Corridor Multi-Jurisdictional Planning Framework (2024): report on outcomes of multi-jurisdictional planning workshops and framework for river corridor planning in the Grand Valley

Taxpayer Bill of Rights
N/A