

**COLORADO**Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	Ducks Unlimited
Name of Water Project	Loveland East Big Thompson Corridor Planning
Grant Request Amount	\$62,615.00
Primary Category	\$62,615.00
<i>Watershed Health & Recreation</i>	
Total Applicant Match	\$11,725.00
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$11,725.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$0.00
Total Other Sources of Funding	\$9,150.00
<i>City of Loveland</i>	\$9,150.00
Total Project Cost	\$83,490.00

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: Ducks Unlimited	
Mailing Address: 2114 Midpoint Dr. Suite 1 Fort Collins CO 80525	
Organization Contact: Courtney Massey	
Position/Title: Biologist	Email: cmassey@ducks.org
Phone: 971-791-1379	
Organization Contact - Alternate: John Denton	
Position/Title: Colorado Manager of Conservation Programs	Email: jdenton@ducks.org
Phone: (308) 258-4682	
Grant Management Contact: Courtney Massey	
Position/Title: Biologist	Email: cmassey@ducks.org
Phone: 971-791-1379	
Grant Management Contact - Alternate: John Denton	
Position/Title: Colorado Manager of Conservation Programs	Email: jdenton@ducks.org
Phone: (308) 258-4682	

Description of Grantee/Applicant

Wetland conservation and restoration agency

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	40.231374
Longitude	-105.225540
Lat Long Flag	Stream location: Coordinates based on general location on stream
Water Source	Big Thompson River
Basins	South Platte
Counties	Denver; Larimer
Districts	4-Big Thompson River

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type

Type of Water Project Design / Engineering

Scheduled Start Date - Design 6/1/2025

Scheduled Start Date - Construction

Description

The Loveland East Big Thompson River Corridor Planning & Design Project, led by Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU) and the City of Loveland, seeks funding to develop a comprehensive conservation plan for key sites along the Big Thompson River corridor. Targeting an area identified as a community priority through past planning efforts, including the 2021 Big Thompson River Envisioning Project (Stream Management Plan), this initiative transitions from broad recommendations to specific, prioritized actions.

This project will assess over 400 acres of land across 4 neighboring sites to guide the identification and design of

high-impact habitat restoration and water conservation. Deliverables will include detailed site assessments, prioritized conservation plans, preliminary construction designs, and cost estimates. The plan will also provide a framework for permitting, site management, and recreation planning, ensuring alignment with community values through stakeholder collaboration.

By building on the 2021 Envisioning Project, this effort will refine strategies into actionable plans that support waterfowl and wildlife habitat, promote efficient water use, and enhance recreational opportunities, setting the foundation for future implementation and long-term ecosystem health within the urban corridor.

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
Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity

Other

This planning and design project will yield key outcomes that set the stage for future measurable impacts. By assessing over 400 acres across 4 sites and developing detailed site-specific plans, we will identify at least 2-3 priority habitat restoration projects that can be implemented in the future. Due to the early stage we are in, we cannot quantify how many acres will be restored upon implementation of our planned work. The project will produce comprehensive design frameworks, cost estimates, and permitting strategies that will facilitate smoother implementation and reduce delays in future work. Enhanced coordination with local stakeholders and partners will strengthen collaborative efforts, leading effective and community-aligned projects. The past studies and plans our work is based on have engaged many Coloradoans, and we plan continue in this vein. Additionally, the project will lay the groundwork for long-term site management and monitoring plans that will measure and ensure the success of future conservation and recreation initiatives, a crucial deliverable that cannot be effectively quantified as an outcome.

Water Project Justification

This project supports the 2023 Colorado Water Plan and 2022 South Platte-Metro Basin Implementation Plan, with a focus on protecting and enhancing watershed function, environmental attributes, and recreation opportunities.

2023 Colorado Water Plan:

- Thriving Communities Vision Partner Actions:

- o Holistic planning for urban landscapes that improve quality of life (pg. 180)

- Thriving Watersheds Vision Partner Actions:

- o Nature-based solutions (pg. 205)

- o Rehabilitate streams to improve habitat, reduce erosion, and meet needs (pg. 205)

- o Increase access to recreational opportunities (pg. 206)

- o Create greater drought, fire, and flood resilience (pg. 206)
- o Reconnecting floodplains and nature-based solutions (pg. 206)
- o Improving riparian and aquatic habitat (pg. 206)

This project aligns with the 2023 Colorado Water Plan by establishing a foundation for restoring wetlands, improving wildlife habitat, and enhancing ecosystem function while preserving and expanding recreational opportunities. Through a detailed and integrative planning process, the project will implement nature-based solutions to rehabilitate streams, reconnect floodplains, and improve riparian and aquatic habitat, contributing to greater resilience against drought, fire, and flooding (pg. 205-206). By addressing multiple urban sites within the Big Thompson River corridor, the plan ensures that restoration efforts collectively achieve significant ecological impact while meeting community needs for enhanced recreational access and quality of life (pg. 180, 206). This approach aligns with the Water Plan's emphasis on sustainable, multi-benefit strategies that support thriving communities and watersheds.

2022 South Platte Basin Implementation Plan:

- Goal 2: Maximize development of native South Platte supplies
 - o Strategy 2.A. Collaboratively develop multi-purpose projects (pg. 26)
- Goal 6: Protect and enhance watershed function
 - o Strategy 6.A.: Protect and improve water quality throughout the watershed
 - * 6.A.2: Control erosion and sedimentation (pg. 32)
 - * 6.A.3: Consider holistic impacts to water quality and watershed health during project development and implementation (pg. 32)
 - * 6.A.4: Identify, assess, and implement actions, programs, and measures that aim to minimize the adverse effects on wetlands, lakes, streams/rivers, and associated ecosystems from water pollution, nutrient overload, reduced streamflows, and filling or dredging (pg. 33)
 - * 6.A.6: Conduct restoration projects and promote innovative strategies to improve water quality in impaired areas and downstream impacts (pg. 34)
 - o Strategy 6.C.: Through education and community collaboration, identify, prioritize, and develop SMPs within the South Platte Basin
 - * 6.C.2.: Encourage implementation of projects and programs identified within these stream management plans (pg. 35)
- Goal 7: Protect and enhance environmental attributes (pg. 36)
- Goal 8: Protect and enhance recreational attributes (pg. 37)

In line with the items identified above, this project advances the goals of the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan by developing a conservation plan for key sites along the Big Thompson River corridor that addresses both environmental and recreational needs. It supports Goal 2 by fostering collaboration to develop multi-purpose projects that integrate habitat restoration, water quality improvement, and recreational enhancements. In alignment with Goal 6, the plan prioritizes erosion control, water quality improvements, and restoration strategies that mitigate adverse effects on wetlands, streams, and downstream ecosystems (6.A.2, 6.A.4, 6.A.6). It also considers holistic impacts on watershed health during project design and implementation (6.A.3), ensuring projects meet ecological and community goals. Through its collaborative approach with the City of Loveland and other key stakeholders, the project aligns with Strategy 6.C by promoting education, community engagement, and the implementation of stream management plan priorities (6.C.2). Finally, this work directly supports Goals 7 and 8 by enhancing environmental attributes and recreational opportunities within the urban corridor, addressing the unique challenges and opportunities of urban watershed conservation.

Related Studies

City of Loveland Parks and Recreation 2023 Master Plan

<https://www.lovgov.org/home/showpublisheddocument/60015/638349453100270000>

Highway 402 Corridor Plan (2019)

<https://www.lovgov.org/home/showpublisheddocument/50198/637073545277930000>

Highway 287 Flood Mitigation Project <https://www.letstalkloveland.org/highway-287-flood-mitigation>

Additional Highway 287 Flood Mitigation Information

<https://www.letstalkloveland.org/23092/widgets/85988/documents/57597>

Big Thompson River Envisioning Project (Stream Management Plan)

https://bigthompson.co/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/BigT_EnvisioningReport_PDF_with-Appendices_final.pdf

Big Thompson River Corridor Master Plan (2017)

<https://www.lovgov.org/home/showpublisheddocument/52388/637279172579270000>

Big Thompson River Restoration Master Plan (2015)

https://bigthompson.co/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/BTWC_Master_Plan.pdf

While many plans have outlined strategies for the Big Thompson River corridor, there remains a critical gap between broad recommendations and deliverable, on-the-ground projects. This initiative uniquely addresses that gap by turning strategic concepts into detailed, prioritized plans that guide future conservation and recreation efforts. By building on existing studies, this project provides the necessary groundwork—site assessments, design frameworks, and cost estimates—to ensure that implementation is efficient, effective, and aligned with both ecological and community goals.

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

DU is not aware of any TABOR issues that affect this application.