

**COLORADO**Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan**Water Project Summary**

Name of Applicant	Town of Pagosa Springs
Name of Water Project	Pagosa Gateway Project: San Juan River Recreational and Ecological Enhancements
Grant Request Amount	\$292,222.17
Primary Category	\$292,222.17
<i>Watershed Health & Recreation</i>	
Total Applicant Match	\$54,000.00
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$54,000.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$0.00
Total Other Sources of Funding	\$1,197,160.00
<i>Trout Unlimited</i>	\$1,700.00
<i>Friends of the Upper San Juan</i>	\$750.00
<i>Pagosa Area Tourism Board</i>	\$24,210.00
<i>San Juan Water Conservation District</i>	\$7,500.00
<i>The Nature Conservancy</i>	\$9,840.00
<i>Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART</i>	
<i>Environmental Water Resources</i>	\$361,160.00
<i>Program Grant</i>	
<i>SW Water Conservation District</i>	\$17,000.00
<i>Colorado Water Conservation Board</i>	\$775,000.00
Total Project Cost	\$1,543,382.17

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: Town of Pagosa Springs
Mailing Address: PO Box 1859 Pagosa Springs CO 81147

Organization Contact: David Hilborn
Position/Title: Project Manager
Phone: 757-286-9296

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Organization Contact - Alternate: James Dickhoff
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Grant Management Contact: David Hilborn
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Grant Management Contact - Alternate: James Dickhoff
Position/Title:

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Phone: 970-264-4151 x225

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	37.251725
Longitude	107.010138
Lat Long Flag	
Water Source	San Juan River
Basins	Southwest
Counties	Archuleta
Districts	29-San Juan River Basin

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type	
Type of Water Project	Construction / Implementation
Scheduled Start Date - Design	2/28/2024

Scheduled Start Date - Construction

9/1/2025

Description

The Pagosa Gateway Project will enhance a 2-mile stretch of the San Juan River upstream of Pagosa Springs, addressing declining flows and warming temperatures to preserve aquatic habitat and recreation. As a key driver of Pagosa Springs' tourism-based economy, the river faces challenges highlighted in a recent environmental and recreational (E&R) water supply needs assessment, which identified reduced aquatic habitat and recreational days due to late summer and fall low flows.

The project includes creating low-flow channels, bank stabilization, riparian vegetation enhancement, fish passage improvements, and mitigating hazardous streambank materials to boost the river's resilience and recreational value. Initial funding included a \$775,000 WSRF grant and \$476,160 in matching funds secured by the Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership (WEP) and the Town of Pagosa Springs.

Progress milestones include engaging a design-build contractor, conducting public outreach for 30% and 60% design phases, and incorporating feedback from 18 property owners and the recreation community. Community input prompted revisions to enhance recreational opportunities and increase navigable days for boaters and anglers. Due to inflation and expanded scope, the project seeks an additional \$304,340, including funds to develop a vegetation monitoring plan and implement community-driven improvements.

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)
12,000	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)
6	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
14,189	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity
Other	
No additional measurable results provided	

Water Project Justification

The upper San Juan River, located in Colorado's Southwest Basin, originates in the San Juan Mountains. Tourism and river recreation are increasingly important in the region, underscoring the need to manage environmental and recreational water demands. According to the 2023 Colorado Water Plan, drought and warming trends reduce river recreation days, impacting businesses and aquatic habitats, particularly cold-water fisheries, due to rising stream temperatures.

The Pagosa Gateway Project aims to enhance a two-mile stretch of the river through interventions such as creating low-flow channels, stabilizing banks, promoting riparian vegetation and fish passage, and removing hazardous materials. These improvements will boost the river's resilience, support aquatic life, and increase recreational days. The project directly addresses challenges outlined in the 2023 Colorado Water Plan, including

balancing community water needs with environmental protection and adapting to climate impacts. It also aligns with three Southwest Basin goals: promoting healthy watersheds, meeting recreational water needs, and reducing conflict among water users (2023 Colorado Water Plan, P. 128).

Related Studies

Pagosa Springs' tourism-based economy depends on the ecological health and recreational appeal of the San Juan River. An environmental and recreational (E&R) water supply needs assessment by the Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership (WEP) highlights significant hydrological changes and challenges for aquatic life caused by prolonged drought and climate change. Reduced late-summer and fall flows threaten aquatic habitats and limit days for recreational navigation on the river (Lotic 2021).

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

The Town of Pagosa Springs is debt-free and does not have any TABOR related issues that will affect this application.