



COLORADO
**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**
Department of Natural Resources

1313 Sherman Street, Room 718
Denver, CO 80203

P (303) 866-3441
F (303) 866-4474

Jared Polis, Governor
Dan Gibbs, DNR Executive Director
Lauren Ris, CWCB Director

TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Joshua Godwin, P.E., Project Manager
Kirk Russell, P.E., Finance Section Chief

DATE: July 16-17, 2025 Board Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: 7a. Water Project Loans
Fox Fire Subdistrict of the La Plata Archuleta Water District
Water Distribution Construction

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board approve a loan not to exceed \$1,212,000 (\$1,200,000 for project costs and \$12,000 for the 1% service fee) to the Fox Fire Subdistrict of the La Plata Archuleta Water District for costs related to the Water Distribution Construction, from the Construction Fund. The loan term will be 30 years at an interest rate of 3.75% per annum. Security for the loan shall be in compliance with CWCB Financial Policy #5.

Introduction

The Fox Fire Subdistrict (Subdistrict) of the La Plata Archuleta Water District is applying for a loan at the municipal middle-income interest rate to fund the Water Distribution Construction (Project). Residents of the Fox Fire Subdivision receive domestic water either from individual wells or by hauling water. The extended drought that has affected southwest Colorado for the past 25 years has had a negative effect on the local aquifers that many of the Subdistrict members' wells pump from. Eight of the 14 developed lots now haul their domestic water due to lower groundwater levels. Both hauling water and pumping groundwater for domestic use have increased water quality concerns for these residents. In 2021, residents of the Fox Fire Subdivision voted to form the Subdistrict to finance the construction of a potable water distribution system for the Fox Fire Subdivision. The District applied for a DOLA grant of \$400,000 on behalf of the Subdistrict and the award of the grant will be determined by August 1, 2025. If the DOLA grant is not awarded, the Subdistrict will evaluate the next steps necessary to advance the Project with adequate funding. The total Project cost is estimated to be \$1,251,000. See attached Project Data Sheet for a location map and Project summary.



Borrower - Fox Fire Subdistrict of the La Plata Archuleta Water District

The Subdistrict was formed in July 2021 in accordance with §32-1-1101(1)(f), C.R.S., which authorizes the District to divide into one or more areas consistent with the services, programs, and facilities to be furnished therein managed by the District's board. The Subdistrict can take on debt through a property tax mill levy to service the debt. The Subdistrict is located approximately four miles west of the Town of Bayfield and north of US Highway 160 and is comprised of 14 developed and two undeveloped lots in a large lot subdivision, approximately 35 acres per lot.

The Subdistrict is within the service area of the La Plata Archuleta Water District (District). The District was formed in 2008 as a Colorado Special District to finance, construct, operate, and maintain a rural domestic water system in southeast La Plata County. The District currently serves 234 individual taps and two master meter taps, one to a 56 lot mobile home park and the other to a fourteen lot subdivision with an existing water distribution system. The District's annual water delivery has averaged about 95 AF over the past four years. The District's board of directors consists of five members that represent different areas within the District. Board members are elected, by simple majority, for four year terms every odd year alternating between two and three members elected at a time. The Subdistrict's Board is composed of the same members as the District

Background

The Subdistrict was formed so that the property owners in the Fox Fire Subdivision could self-fund a potable water distribution system. The District has previously used the subdistrict model to construct a water distribution system into three subdivisions in 2019. Similar to the current Project, that Subdistrict also voted to incur debt by obtaining a loan through the Drinking Water Revolving Fund (DWRF) with a maturity date of May 1, 2029 and to service that debt via a mill levy. The Subdistrict did not apply for the DWRF because it does not meet the criteria of being a disadvantaged community and the timing of the award would delay the Project's intended construction schedule.

The District and Subdistrict were formed to address the declining aquifers in the area caused by changes in agricultural irrigation practices, moving from flood irrigation to sprinkler irrigation, and growth in the area. Additionally, many of the wells in the area have poor water quality with high levels of total dissolved solids, fluoride, salinity, and some areas also have selenium. Furthermore, some residents have to haul their water because there is no viable aquifer in their area. In late 2020 the District completed a 12-inch water main in the US Highway 160 right-of-way; a 4-inch lateral water main was installed to the Subdistrict subdivision boundary. The design and engineering for the Subdistrict's water distribution system is complete and awaiting funding for construction. Once the Project is completed, the District will operate and maintain the distribution system, using water rates from users and tap fees from new connections.

Loan Feasibility Study

Edward Tolen, P.E., General Manager of the La Plata Archuleta Water District, supported by Harris Water Engineering, prepared the Loan Feasibility Study titled, "Loan Feasibility Study for Fox Fire Subdistrict Water Distribution Project", dated May 2025. The feasibility study is in accordance with CWCB guidelines and includes an analysis of alternatives, estimated costs, and audited financial statements prepared by Haynie & Company, a public accounting firm.

Water Rights

The District operates under multiple water rights depending on which subdistrict is being serviced. The Subdistrict will receive water via a District contract with the Pine River Irrigation District (PRID) and a conditional water right that the District is currently in due diligence to perfect. The long-term lease agreement with PRID is for 200 AF from Vallecito Reservoir on an annual basis. The conditional water right (23CW3035) allows for up to 5.0 cfs between two diversions. The District may use up to 6.25 cfs if in combination with 03CW103, and is authorized up to 12.5 cfs in combination with 03CW102 and 03CW103, but not to exceed a volume of 4,940 AF in aggregate in any water year.

TABLE 1: PROJECT WATER RIGHTS

Name	Amount (cfs or AF)	Appropriation Date	Adjudication Date	Case No.
Vallecito Reservoir	129,674.7 AF	11/13/1935	03/07/1966	W0563
Pine River Basin Diversion (Conditional)	5.0 cfs	12/01/2003	N/A	23CW3035

Project Description

The purpose of this Project is to construct a potable water distribution system for the Subdistrict.

Alternative 1 - No Action: Taking no action is the least expensive option. However, this is considered unacceptable because it does not meet the needs to provide safe, reliable domestic water to the residents of the Subdistrict. Those relying on wells would still have to deal with declining aquifers by lowering their pumps and eventually by hauling water as a permanent source. While hauling is more costly, those hauling their water are also more susceptible to lower quality or even contaminated water because of the increased risk when loading and unloading the water.

Selected Alternative 2 - Construction of Distribution System: This option is to construct approximately 12,800 linear feet of 2-inch and 3-inch water pipeline, 1,250 linear feet of 4-inch C900 PVC water pipeline, two pump stations, and a water meter pit at each lot line. This alternative will provide treated water directly to the resident’s properties, which eliminates the chances of contamination from hauled water and is more reliable long term than individual wells. Detailed engineering designs and construction specifications are complete for this alternative and the estimated cost for the Project is \$1,251,000.

TABLE 2: ESTIMATED PROJECT COST

Tasks	Cost
Mobilization and Permitting	\$203,000
Meter Pit Purchase and Installation	\$40,000
PVC Pipe, Fittings, and Installation	\$291,000
Pump Stations Purchase and Installation	\$120,000
Earthwork	\$240,000
Connection, Testing, and Disinfection	\$47,000
Project Management and Administration	\$110,000
Contingency (-20%)	\$200,000
TOTAL	\$1,251,000

Permitting: An environmental assessment was completed for the Project in June 2024. No 404 Permit is required. A stormwater/dewatering permit from Colorado Department of Health and Environment and county road permits will be obtained by the selected contractor.

Schedule: The District anticipates advertising the request for bid by mid-August 2025, with contractor selection at the end of August, and construction to begin by late September. Construction is estimated to take three to four months with completion of the Project in late 2025.

Financial Analysis

Table 3 provides a summary of the Project’s financial aspects. The Company qualifies for a middle income municipal interest rate of 3.75% for a 30-year loan. All interest rate evaluations are per CWCB Financial Policy #7 (Lending Rate Determination). The District has applied for a \$400,000 DOLA Energy/Mineral Impact Assistance Fund Grant (Grant) which will be decided after the July CWCB meeting. Should the Grant be awarded, the District will administer the Grant funds for the Subdistrict to avoid disruption of the Subdistrict’s enterprise status.

TABLE 3: FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Project Item	Loan	Loan w/ DOLA Grant
Project Cost	\$1,251,000	\$1,251,000
Subdistrict Match	\$51,000	\$51,000
DOLA Energy/Mineral Impact Assistance Fund Grant	-	\$400,000
CWCB Loan Amount	\$1,200,000	\$800,000
CWCB Loan Amount (Including 1% Service Fee)	\$1,212,000	\$808,000
CWCB Annual Loan Payment	\$67,305	\$44,870
CWCB Annual Loan Obligation (1 st Ten Years)	\$74,036	\$49,357
Annual Cost per Lot to Service Debt	\$4,627	\$3,085

Creditworthiness: The Subdistrict has no existing debt and no expenses. The Subdistrict exists for the sole purpose of constructing a water distribution system for the Fox Fire Subdivision. On November 2, 2021 an election was held where the eligible voters authorized the Subdistrict to incur debt not to exceed \$850,000 and authorized an increased mill levy to service the debt up to \$54,600 per year. If the District does not receive the DOLA Grant and if the Subdistrict is unable to fully fund the Project, then the Subdistrict will have to receive approval from voters to increase their debt - and thereby increase their mill levy - before borrowing above \$850,000. Once the loan for the Project has been paid off, the Subdistrict will dissolve having served its purpose. Once the Project is complete, the District will begin serving water to the Fox Fire Subdivision at the rates shown below in Table 4.

TABLE 4: District Water Rates (excluding Subdistrict debt service)

Water Usage 0 to 2,000 gallons per month	Base Rate \$33.00
2,001 to 5,000 gallons per month	\$6.60 per 1,000 gallons
5,001 to 8,000 gallons per month	\$11.00 per 1,000 gallons
8,001 or more gallons per month	\$16.50 per 1,000 gallons

TABLE 5: FINANCIAL RATIOS

Financial Ratio	Past Years ¹	Future w/ Project	Future w/ Grant and Project
Operating Ratio (revenues/expenses) weak: <100% typical: 100% - 120% strong: >120%	### (N/A) \$74K/\$0K	100% (typical) \$74K/\$74K	100% (typical) \$49K/\$49K
Debt Service Coverage Ratio (revenues-expenses)/debt service weak: <100% typical: 100% - 125% strong: >125%	### (N/A) \$74K/\$0K	100% (typical) <u>(\$74K-\$0K)</u> \$74K	100% (typical) <u>(\$49K/\$0K)</u> \$49K
Cash Reserves to Current Expenses weak: <50% typical: 50% - 100% strong: >100%	### (N/A) \$108K/\$0K	146% (strong) \$108K/\$74K	220% (strong) \$108K/\$49K

1. The Subdistrict does not currently have expenses and the only expenses in the future will be to service the debt.

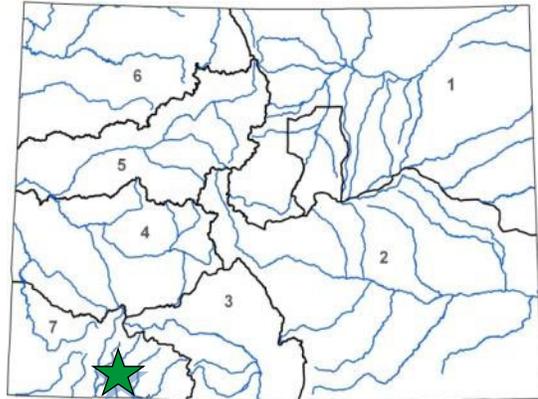
Collateral: Security for this loan will be a pledge of ad valorem tax revenues and annual financial reporting. This security is in compliance with the CWCB Financial Policy #5 (Collateral).

cc: Edward Tolen, General Manager, Fox Fire Subdistrict of the La Plata Archuleta Water District
 Jennifer Mele, Colorado Attorney General's Office

Attachments: Water Project Loan Program - Project Data Sheet



LOAN DETAILS	
Project Cost:	\$1,251,000
CWCB Loan (with 1% Service Fee):	\$1,212,000
Loan Term and Interest Rate:	30 Yrs @ 3.75%
Funding Source:	Construction Fund
BORROWER TYPE	
Agriculture	Municipal Commercial
0%	0% Low - 100% Mid - 0% High 0%
PROJECT DETAILS	
Project Type:	Municipal Water Supply System
Average Annual Delivery:	0 AF



The Fox Fire Subdistrict (Subdistrict) of the La Plata Archuleta Water District (District) was formed in 2021 to allow property owners in the Fox Fire Subdivision to self-fund construction of a domestic water distribution system. The Fox Fire Subdivision, consists of 14 developed lots. Of these, more than half currently rely on hauled water as either their primary water source or as an important supplement.

LOCATION	
County:	La Plata
Water Source:	Animas & Los Pinos Rivers
Drainage Basin:	Southwest
Division:	7 District: 31

The area has been experiencing an extended drought over the last 25 years that has impacted the local aquifer that the wells pump from. Municipal water in the area is delivered via the District’s 12-inch water main in highway 160. The Project ties into the District’s main and includes approximately 1,250 linear feet of 4-inch water line, 12,800 linear feet of 2-inch and 3-inch water line, and two pump stations, with a water meter pit installed at each lot line. The project is anticipated to be funded in part by a DOLA grant to the District, and the Subdistrict’s cash reserves. The grant decision is scheduled for July 2025. Design and engineering for the distribution system are complete. Construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2025, with an estimated completion by late 2025.

**LA PLATA ARCHULETA WATER DISTRICT
 FOXFIRE ROAD WATERLINES
 LA PLATA COUNTY, COLORADO**

SHEET DESCRIPTION

01...TITLE SHEET
 02...GENERAL NOTES

START FOXFIRE WATERLINE

- 04...PLAN AND PROFILE STA. 00+00 TO STA. 11+00
- 05...PLAN AND PROFILE STA. 11+00 TO STA. 22+00
- 06...PLAN AND PROFILE STA. 22+00 TO STA. 33+00
- 07...PLAN AND PROFILE STA. 33+00 TO STA. 44+00
- 08...PLAN AND PROFILE STA. 44+00 TO STA. 55+00
- 09...PLAN AND PROFILE STA. 55+00 TO STA. 66+00
- 10...PLAN AND PROFILE STA. 66+00 TO STA. 77+00
- 11...PLAN AND PROFILE STA. 77+00 TO STA. 79+49

START HILCREST WATERLINE

- 12...PLAN AND PROFILE STA. 00+00 TO STA. 11+00
- 13...PLAN AND PROFILE STA. 11+00 TO STA. 22+00
- 14...PLAN AND PROFILE STA. 22+00 TO STA. 33+00
- 15...PLAN AND PROFILE STA. 33+00 TO STA. 35+12

START HOLMAN CANYON

- 16...PLAN AND PROFILE STA. 00+00 TO STA. 11+00
- 17...PLAN AND PROFILE STA. 11+00 TO STA. 24+90
- 18...PLAN AND PROFILE STA. 24+90 TO STA. 34+90

DETAILS

- 19...PUMP HOUSE DETAILS

PROJECT KEY MAP
 N.T.S.

