



COLORADO

Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	City of Steamboat Springs
Name of Water Project	Steamboat Springs Smart Irrigation Central Control System Phase III
Grant Request Amount	\$250,000.00
Primary Category	\$250,000.00
<i>Conservation & Land Use Planning</i>	
Total Applicant Match	\$300,000.00
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$300,000.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$0.00
Total Other Sources of Funding	\$0.00
Total Project Cost	\$550,000.00

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: City of Steamboat Springs
Mailing Address: PO Box 775088 Steamboat Springs CO 80477

Organization Contact: Tom Leeson
Position/Title: City Manager Email: tleeson@steamboatsprings.net
Phone: 9708718249

Organization Contact - Alternate: Ginger Scott
Position/Title: Email: gscott@steamboatsprings.net
Phone: 970-871-8215

Grant Management Contact: Tom Leeson
Position/Title: City Manager Email: tleeson@steamboatsprings.net
Phone: 9708718249

Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Johannes Thorsen
Position/Title: Parks Supervisor Email: jthorsen@steamboatsprings.net
Phone: 970-871-7043

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 40.480890
 Longitude -106.830560
 Lat Long Flag Default/Proponent headquarters: If the location cannot be defined with flags above, use location of project proponent headquarters
 Water Source Fish Creek and Yampa River
 Basins Yampa/White/Green
 Counties Routt
 Districts 58-Upper Yampa River

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type Municipal
 Type of Water Project Construction / Implementation
 Scheduled Start Date - Design
 Scheduled Start Date - Construction 3/1/2026

Description

Phase III of the Steamboat Springs Smart Irrigation Central Control System project will complete the final irrigation improvements needed to provide efficient water distribution to all of the City's parks, greenbelts, open space, medians, facilities, and right of ways. The City completed Phase I of the project in 2024, which included installing the central control system and upgrades to 8 of 10 of our largest irrigated sites. Phase II is underway for completion this summer and will make improvements to the remaining 2 large sites. Phase III will include materials and installation costs to provide the improvements at 12 additional areas in the community.

Annual water savings are estimated to be 22-25% or approximately 1,750,000 to 1,860,000 gallons (5.4-5.7

acre-feet per year), while also reducing costs, energy, and staff call out time. The 2020 Water Conservation Plan identifies reducing irrigation water use in city parks as a high priority conservation activity. More efficient water use improves the reliability of water supplies, enhances community resilience to drought and wildfire in the watershed, and helps sustain a healthy river and ecosystem.

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)
 6 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

No additional measurable results provided

Water Project Justification

Phase III of the Steamboat Springs Smart Irrigation Central Control System project will complete the final irrigation improvements needed to provide efficient water distribution to all of the City's parks, greenbelts, open space, medians, facilities, and right of ways. See attached map in attachments for locations of the 12 sites.

This project implements goals and actions identified in State, regional, and local water plans:

Colorado Water Plan 2023 – The project furthers the vision for Vibrant Communities in the Colorado Water Plan and exemplifies a key partner action by a local community to implement strategies for Meeting Future Water Needs, Wise Water Use, and Healthy Lands (Chpt.6, P175). The Smart Irrigation Central Control System invests in water efficiency technology and infrastructure to realize long-term water savings in outdoor use in the municipal sector (p.20). "Municipal Water Conservation" is key to our State becoming more drought resilient (p.39) and reduce the amount of needed expensive system expansions in the future (p. 167), and the City is committed to planning for resilient water supplies and demonstrating waterwise landscapes.

The City has updated landscaping regulations in the Community Development Code to integrate water efficiency requirements, including incorporating xeriscape principles and practices like installing and maintaining automatic irrigation systems. This achieves another partner action highlighted in the water plan for addressing low water use landscapes in local land use codes. Addressing outdoor water use at City parks and facilities is necessary to show the public that we are "practicing what we preach" and applying the same types of waterwise landscaping and irrigation practices that we encourage and require of the private sector.

Yampa-White-Green Basin Implementation Plan (BIP, 2022) – Key concerns for the Yampa Basin are population growth and meeting future water needs. Strong municipal conservation measures are noted as an important way to help address this situation (p.20). The BIP Goal 5 to 'Identify and address municipal and industrial water shortages' identifies the specific objective to 'Encourage municipal entities to meet some future municipal water

needs through water conservation and efficiency.’ The project also creates opportunities for demonstration projects that can be used as an educational tool for smart irrigation systems and waterwise irrigation practices (p.16 Objective 9). Overall, reducing the City’s consumptive outdoor water usage during peak irrigation season demand leaves more water in the river for other beneficial uses, advancing many of the goals of the BIP.

Yampa Integrated Water Management Plan Final Report - The IWMP Final Report states that “Unlike many waterways in the American West, the Yampa River remains one of the best examples of a western river in balance. Residents, water users, and local government have an opportunity to maintain the balance in the face of drought, climate uncertainty, and a rapidly growing population.” Amid threats to the quantity and quality of water in the river, conserving water is an important piece of the puzzle and “upgrading irrigation operating procedures” is noted as an Opportunity for Action.

Related Studies

The City of Steamboat Springs and Mt Werner Water and Sanitation District completed a Water Supply Master Plan adopted in 2019. The first recommendation of the Water Supply Master Plan is that the City and District focus on implementing conservation to achieve water savings as well as other community and environmental benefits.

The City and District then applied for and received a grant in from the CWCB in 2019 to update the city’s water efficiency plan. The subsequent Water Conservation Plan adopted in 2020 identifies the need to develop a plan for reducing irrigation on City parks and facilities that includes water audits of parks, implementing recommendations for improving irrigation efficiency with consideration of the latest technology for smart controlled systems, prioritizing areas for turf replacement, and promoting new low water use landscaping.

The Water Conservation Plan has a goal to capitalize on the opportunity for the City and District to lead by example, conserving water and demonstrating responsible stewardship of the environment. This includes improving efficiency of the water distribution systems and maximizing efficient use of water at City and District facilities and parks. This project also advances the goals of the Water Conservation Plan for educating the community, saving treated water, reducing costs and water use at City facilities, and ensuring a reliable water supply.

The Water Conservation Plan identifies reducing irrigation water use in city parks as a high priority conservation activity. At the Steamboat Springs City Council work session on water conservation on April 12, 2022, Council agreed with staff’s recommendation that improving efficiencies in the irrigation of parks is one of three highest priorities for the City’s water conservation program to focus on.

Communities across the Colorado River system must reduce their water usage to mitigate the current water crisis. The Yampa River provides about one-third of Colorado’s contribution to the Colorado River. The City of Steamboat Springs has a variety of decreed water rights that are used to meet their customers’ water demands. These rights include a mix of pre- and post-Colorado River Compact water rights. City parks and facilities are high water users and improving our water efficiency is an impactful action that we can take now to help meet Colorado River Compact obligations. Outdoor irrigation is our opportunity for the greatest water savings.

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

The City of Steamboat Springs “debruced” in 1997, so TABOR will not affect this project or grant.