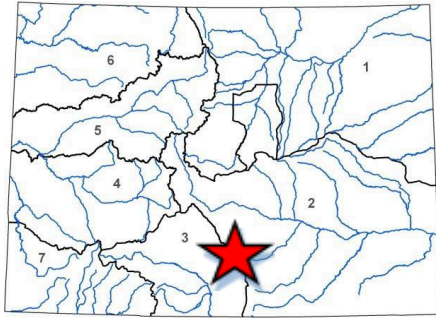




Water Plan Grant Program



LOCATION	
Counties:	Saguache, Otero
Basins:	Arkansas; Rio Grande

DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	\$354,715.00
Water Plan Grant Request:	\$264,965.00
Recommended amount:	\$264,965.00
Match Commitment:	\$89,750.00
Grant to Match Ratio	75/25
Project Type:	Study
Primary Project Category:	Agriculture
Measurable Result: 10 acre-feet/year of efficiency savings, 100 Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity	

The Center Conservation District, a special district focused on promoting soil health practices through education, outreach, and producer support, is seeking a Colorado Water Plan grant to support the Southern Colorado Wool Pellet Project. The project will be conducted on farms across Southern Colorado, with a focus on the Rio Grande Basin and the Arkansas Valley.

This project would trial the efficacy of wool pellets as a soil amendment to increase soil moisture retention and provide organic fertilizer benefits in agricultural operations. The goal is to determine if wool pellets are a useful amendment for improving plant-soil-water dynamics. Center Conservation District applied for and was awarded a grant for \$223K for this project in a previous grant cycle. However, the project as previously awarded did not move forward and the applicant reapplied with a slightly revised scope and change in geographic location. Where the previous grant application focused entirely on the Rio Grande basin, this updated application includes an extended reach into the Arkansas basin.

The project advances the Colorado Water Plan and the Rio Grande Basin Water Plan by helping to achieve goals for groundwater and aquifer sustainability and by seeking a viable alternative for resilient agriculture. This project aligns with the Water Plan's goals of Robust Agriculture and Resilient Planning by developing methodologies that support irrigated agriculture throughout the state and support varied value-add options for wool producers.

Grant dollars would be used to purchase wool pellet processing equipment that is necessary to conduct the study and trials; focusing on trials which will accurately track the following variables: wool pellet application rates, irrigation rates, soil moisture content, soil nutrition content, crop yield, crop quality, and any other variables that are deemed essential during the duration of the trials to fully determine if wool pellets will make a viable soil amendment to increase soil health and reduce irrigation requirements.

Project supporters include the Colorado Department of Agriculture, Wool Growers Association, Colorado Sheep & Wool Authority, Colorado Association of Conservation Districts, Colorado State Conservation Board, Colorado State University, and Saguache County Sales Tax Grant.

Funding Recommendation:

Staff recommends a Water Plan Grant award not to exceed \$264,965.00 to the Center Conservation District for the Southern Colorado Wool Pellet Project. This amount is instead of, not in addition to the previous award.