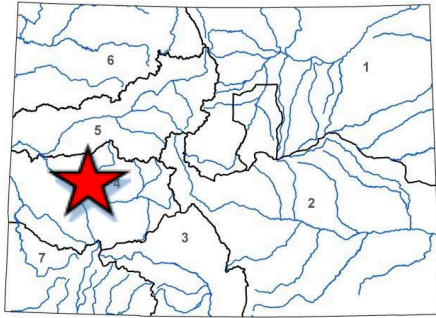




Water Plan Grant Program



DETAILS	
<i>Total Project Cost:</i>	\$3,858,923.17
<i>Water Plan Grant Request:</i>	\$1,822,853.00
<i>Recommended Amount:</i>	\$1,822,853.00
<i>Match Commitment:</i>	\$2,036,070.17
<i>Grant to Match Ratio</i>	47/53
<i>Project Type:</i>	Construction / Implementation
<i>Primary Project Category:</i>	Agricultural Projects
<i>Measurable Result:</i>	2,000 linear feet of Stream Restored 3,400 acre-ft/year Efficiency Savings

LOCATION	
<i>County:</i>	<i>Delta</i>
<i>Basin:</i>	<i>Gunnison</i>

The Western Slope Conservation Center, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a mission to protect and enhance the lands, air, water, and wildlife of the Western Slope, is seeking grant funding to support the Farmers Ditch Improvement Project on the North Fork of the Gunnison River, upstream of Paonia. This project aims to improve water delivery and efficiency for agricultural use, maximize stream flows, and enhance ecosystem resilience for fish passage and recreational boating.

The North Fork Farmer's Ditch diversion is a check dam made of timber, rock, and concrete, supported by a boulder field. The dam is installed and removed annually, requiring substantial time, effort and impact to the river corridor. Additionally, the measuring device is far down the canal from the diversion, preventing effective and timely management of water delivery. This structure presents a hazard to boaters due to high flows and protruding metal cribbing. During the late irrigation season, the diversion diverts almost all of the river's water for a 0.3-mile section, creating an impassable barrier for aquatic species. The North Fork of the Gunnison River Environmental and Recreation Needs Assessment recommends improvements including providing minimum flows when possible, creating safe boat passage, and improving access to the measuring flume.

This project would allow the ditch company and water commissioner to control flows into the ditch remotely, substantially improving efficiency and keeping excess water in the river for instream flow benefits. It advances the Colorado Water Plan by implementing a multi-benefit project that has improvements for consumptive and nonconsumptive use. It aligns with the Water Plan Grant criteria by promoting watershed health, environmental health, and recreation, as well as facilitating efficient water delivery.

Grant dollars would be used for the installation and automation of an actuator on the reconstructed headgate for the Farmers Ditch, an actuator on the existing turnback gate, and telemetry controlled sensors to monitor flow rates at the Parshall Flume. The project also includes piping a section of the open ditch and constructing a point bar and rock runout for fish and boat passage. A CWCW Water Supply Reserve Fund grant was awarded in 2023 that supported the planning and design phase of this project.

Project supporters include the Colorado River Water Conservation District, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Farmers Ditch Company, Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Funding Recommendation:

Staff recommends a Water Plan Grant award not to exceed \$1,822,853.00 to NFRIA-WSERC Conservation Center, Inc., dba Western Slope Conservation Center for Farmers Ditch Improvement Project project.