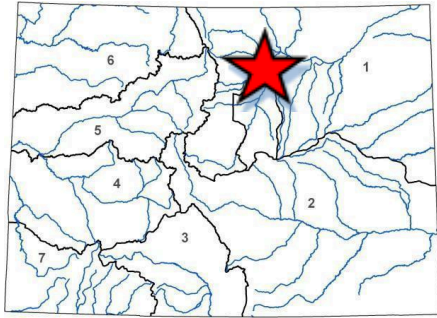




Water Plan Grant Program



| LOCATION | |
|------------------|---|
| Counties: | Boulder; Denver; Larimer; Weld; Broomfield |
| Basins: | Metro; South Platte |

| DETAILS | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Total Project Cost:</i> | \$524,017.83 |
| <i>Water Plan Grant Request:</i> | \$370,071.24 |
| <i>Recommended Amount:</i> | \$370,071.24 |
| <i>Match Commitment:</i> | \$153,946.59 |
| <i>Grant to Match Ratio:</i> | 71/29 |
| <i>Project Type:</i> | Capacity Building |
| <i>Primary Project Category:</i> | Conservation & Land Use Planning |
| <i>Measurable Result:</i> | 1,234,000 Coloradans impacted by incorporating water-saving actions into land use planning |

The Sonoran Institute (SI), a non-governmental organization, is seeking a Colorado Water Plan grant to support its "Growing Water Smart: Action and Impact Initiative" project. Growing Water Smart (GWS), a partnership between SI and the Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy, offers training and support to local governments to integrate land use and water planning.

GWS aims to improve community capabilities and implement integrated water and land use planning by bringing together water providers, land use planners, and elected officials for a three-day training and offering technical assistance for projects such as updating land use codes and refining water use data analysis. Since 2017, community teams representing approximately 68% of the state's population have participated in GWS workshops, received technical assistance, and contributed to peer learning. Most recently, GWS has expanded its reach to the San Luis Valley, the Western Slope, and southwestern Colorado with funding from Water Plan Grants.

Communities leave the workshop having developed their own land use and water "action plan" that identifies concrete steps, target completion dates, and a team lead for each task. Action plans often identify steps that further Colorado Water Plan goals and align with grant guidelines, further catalyzing statewide progress. Looking at solely July 1 applications to the Conservation and Land Use category, 10 of the communities are past GWS participants, several citing GWS as a key impetus for their project and grant request.

The GWS program itself aligns with the Colorado Water Plan, specifically supporting its goals for vibrant communities and resilient planning. In fact, the Colorado Water Plan cites GWS as a key resource for land use and water integration and recognizes the program for its long-term impact on empowering decisionmakers, fostering leadership, and strengthening relationships.

This application supports a three-part program to continue GWS activities in Colorado: 1) delivering a GWS workshop to Denver Metro communities (water providers, land use planners, elected officials from six municipalities) to promote integrated land and water planning, 2) providing technical assistance grants to 4-6 past GWS communities for projects like land use code updates and water efficiency improvements, and 3) piloting an impact assessment of the GWS program by reviewing materials from 27 Northern Water communities, conducting interviews, and producing reports to inform future evaluation and support. Findings from the impact assessment will inform a model for ongoing GWS evaluation, targeted technical support, and single-day engagements, further refining the GWS effort in Colorado.

Project supporters include Northern Water, the Gates Family Foundation, the Mighty Arrow Family Foundation, WaterNow Alliance, and Western Resource Advocates.

Funding Recommendation:

Staff recommends a Water Plan Grant award not to exceed \$370,071.24 to the Sonoran Institute for the Growing Water Smart: Action and Impact Initiative.