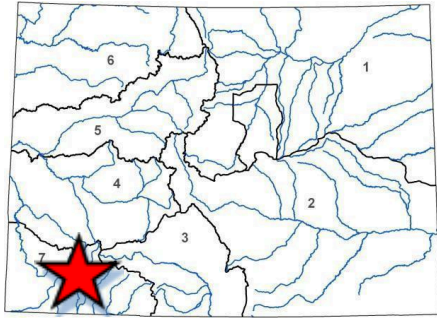




### Water Plan Grant Program



LOCATION	
County:	La Plata
Basin:	Southwest

DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	\$74,000.00
Water Plan Grant Request:	\$55,500.00
Recommended Amount:	\$55,500.00
Match Commitment:	\$18,500.00
Grant to Match Ratio:	75/25
Project Type:	Planning
Primary Project Category:	Conservation & Land Use Planning
Measurable Results:	470 acre-feet/year in efficiency savings; 23,000 Coloradans impacted by engagement activity

The City of Durango is seeking a grant to update its water efficiency and drought management plans. With a population of 20,000, Durango is the largest municipality in southwestern Colorado and a regional economic hub. Durango's water is sourced primarily from the Florida River, with supplemental supply from the Animas River. Durango also has storage water rights in Lake Nighthorse, but these are currently undeveloped.

To date, Durango has primarily pursued water conservation on a voluntary basis, with few incentive programs or significant conservation-oriented rate structures. However, the community has a strong concern for water conservation, with a survey listing water as a top environmental and sustainability issue alongside climate change. This public sentiment provides a strong foundation for the city's updated water plans.

In a decisive step toward improving water conservation, a team of Durango staff from the water utility, sustainability, and land use planning departments attended the Growing Water Smart Workshop in February 2025—a capacity-building effort funded by a CWCBC Water Plan Grant. Together, the team identified updating Durango's water efficiency and drought management plans as a key first step to advancing their water conservation goals.

Adopted in 2011, Durango's water efficiency plan is long past its 10-year planning horizon and progress toward goals has stalled. Meanwhile, Durango continues to see an evolving context with regard to water management, including the continued impacts of climate change, growth and ongoing development in the community, municipal staff turnover, department restructuring, and even governance changes regarding the structure of boards and commissions that oversee the water utility.

Since its adoption in 2020, Durango's drought management plan has been applied and tested in severe drought conditions. These experiences helped city staff identify the need to further clarify specific town actions during acute summer water shortage.

By updating both plans simultaneously, Durango aims to modernize, simplify, and align the two guiding documents, thereby creating a clear vision for ongoing water conservation and acute drought response. The project will accomplish this by reviewing existing plans, profiling the city's water system, analyzing historical water use, and identifying new conservation measures and drought response strategies. These updated plans would recommend more effective conservation strategies, projects, programs, and actions for Durango as a municipal water utility and for its residential, commercial, irrigation, and institutional customers.

Durango's planning effort advances Colorado Water Plan by enhancing municipal water efficiency reporting, updating planning scenarios, and supporting climate adaptation decision tools. The project also aligns with the plan's goals to balance multiple water needs reducing the city's reliance on river source water.

#### Funding Recommendation:

Staff recommends a Water Plan Grant award not to exceed \$55,500.00 to the City of Durango for Water Conservation Plan and Drought Response Plan Updates.