



COLORADO

Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Technical Assistance for Federal Cost-Sharing Program (TAFC)

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	Farmers Conservation Alliance
Name of Water Project	Cañon City Ditches Initial Assessment
Grant Request Amount	\$89,437.50
Total Cost to Apply for Federal Funding	
Total Project Cost	\$119,249.50

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: Farmers Conservation Alliance
Mailing Address: 102 State Street Hood River OR 97031

Organization Contact: Stacy Lowery
Position/Title: Email: contracts@fcasolutions.org
Phone:

Organization Contact - Alternate: Grace Brofman
Position/Title: Email: grace.brofman@fcasolutions.org
Phone:

Grant Management Contact: Stacy Lowery
Position/Title: Email: contracts@fcasolutions.org
Phone:

Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Grace Brofman
Position/Title: Email: grace.brofman@fcasolutions.org
Phone:

Description of Grantee/Applicant

Farmers Conservation Alliance (FCA) is a 501c3 nonprofit social enterprise. In partnership with rural communities, FCA is tirelessly in the pursuit of water management solutions that benefit both agriculture and environment.

Proposed Project Type

- ☐ Storage & Supply
- ☐ Conservation & Land Use
- ☐ Engagement & Innovation
- ☒ Agricultural
- ☐ Watershed Health & Recreation
- ☐ Other

Location of Water Project

Latitude	38.430318
Longitude	-105.238073
Lat Long Flag	Other: Coordinates based on other boundaries or locations
Water Source	Arkansas River
Basins	Arkansas
Counties	Fremont
Districts	

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type	Agricultural
Type of Water Project	Planning

Description

The South Cañon Ditch Company, Lincoln Park Pump Ditch, and Lincoln Park Crooked Ditch Company (the Ditches), located near Cañon City in Fremont County, divert water from the Arkansas River to deliver to over 500 irrigators who grow primarily grass pasture, orchards, and alfalfa. The Ditches are uniquely connected in that the South Cañon Ditch diverts water from the Arkansas River to serve all three ditches. If a maintenance issue or failure causes South Cañon Ditch to shut down, none of the Ditches receive water deliveries. The South Cañon Ditch headgate is located in a slide-prone area and vulnerable to future slide events, threatening water delivery capabilities for all three ditches.

Much of the Ditches' infrastructure is over a century old and is made up of earthen ditches which are aging and inefficient. The Ditches experience seepage, evaporation, and failures, creating water delivery reliability challenges. Trees along the ditches combined with cold temperatures present another management challenge. While the irrigation season lasts from mid-April to mid-October, the Ditches must often end water deliveries early due to falling leaves freezing and icing up the canals. The Ditches' two shared part-time ditch riders do not have the capacity to address these issues in addition to their day-to-day responsibilities.

During storm events, city runoff is collected in the Ditches, creating water quality challenges for irrigators. Many patrons will cease irrigation for multiple days after storms due to concerns about water quality.

This stretch of the Arkansas River is a popular destination for recreation and is an important economic driver for the area. Ensuring the viability of recreation, including fishing and boating, is also a priority of the Ditches.

Beyond the two part-time ditch riders, the Ditches have no paid employees, resulting in limited technical and staffing capacity and experience to do planning, design, or secure funding for projects.

The Ditches would like to collectively pursue modernization projects that would benefit all three, with a focus on actions that would improve water delivery reliability and efficiency and water quality. As water resources in the region become scarce, the Ditches want to both be good stewards of the resource and protect the resource from outside pressures.

This pre-development effort, referred to as the Initial Assessment, will provide the foundation needed to evaluate, design, fund, and implement priority projects at scale. Through this process Farmers Conservation Alliance (FCA), Colorado Ag Water Alliance (CAWA) and the Ditches will develop ditch briefs, data audits, and project matrices, initiate stakeholder engagement, and complete an Initial Modernization Strategy. FCA will also develop and submit an application to at least one federal funding opportunity. While the appropriate funding opportunity has not yet been identified, we anticipate that programs such as Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART or NRCS RCPP, EQIP, or PL-566 could be the best fit.

The Initial Assessment phase is the first phase in FCA's Irrigation Modernization Program. The Initial Assessment has a very broad scope, focusing first on identifying a community's goals and objectives, then narrowing in on specific projects in later phases such as Modernization Planning. The Ditches have identified several potential projects during initial conversations with FCA. While these projects will be considered during

this process, initial efforts will focus first on the Ditches' modernization goals; once those have been identified, specific modernization actions will be evaluated based on costs and benefits, stakeholder support, and, most importantly, how they serve to meet the Ditches' broad modernization goals and objectives.

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)
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

How does the proposed project advance Colorado Water Plan (or Basin Improvement Plan) goals, objectives, or actions?

Predevelopment efforts will help the Ditches and FCA identify projects that provide the greatest benefit for the Ditches and co-benefits for the community. By working through the Initial Assessment, the Ditches are addressing the Resilient Planning focus area laid out in the Water Plan. The combination of modernization actions that come out of the Initial Assessment will aim to provide benefits that support: Robust Agriculture through more reliable water supply and improved efficiency; Vibrant Communities by sustaining an economic driver important to the region; and Thriving Watersheds by exploring opportunities to maintain, and possibly improve, recreation opportunities and aquatic habitats.

The effort will also support several similar goals outlined in the Arkansas Basin Implementation Plan, including sustaining a productive agricultural economy, supporting projects that help meet the Basin's water supply gap, and maintaining or improving recreation opportunities and aquatic habitats

Anticipated federal grant programs that applicant is likely to apply for, if known at this time.

The best fit federal grant program will be determined through the Initial Assessment process. At this time, we anticipate one of the following programs could be the best fit:

- NRCS PL-566, EQIP, or RCPP
- Reclamation WaterSMART Programs

Does the project advance interstate, regional or watershed-scale water and natural resource management efforts and solutions? Please describe.

A goal of this phase is to identify and prioritize opportunities based on alignment with regional/watershed-scale efforts. Stakeholder engagement will help identify those projects which may have the greatest community

support, often because the project specifically advances those efforts. The Ditches have specifically requested collaboration with the Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative, which will ensure that identified actions serve to enhance and promote natural resource management efforts.

The Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) may limit the amount of grant money an entity can receive. Please describe any relevant TABOR issues that may affect your application.

n/a

Describe any local community and stakeholder support. Note: Letter of support can be uploaded at the end of the application.

FCA has engaged the Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative, who has voiced support for this effort and will be included throughout the process. The stakeholder engagement task outlined in the scope of work involves initiating conversations with organizations and community members who may have an interest in project outcomes. Some entities we anticipate engaging include Trout Unlimited, CPW, Cañon City, nearby irrigation communities, and others that will be identified in the Initial Assessment.

Have relevant Federal, state and local government agencies provided input on the project? Please describe which agencies and any relevant details.

We have not yet spoken with federal, state, or local government agencies. However, the stakeholder engagement task outlined in the scope of work involves initiating conversations with pertinent federal, state, and local government agencies to understand their goals and objectives in the region as well as how various funding sources may fit with potential modernization opportunities identified through this process.

Disadvantaged Community Information

Population 10,000 or less

☐

MHI less than 80%

☒

MHV less than 100%

☒

County 24-month unemployment average

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