

**COLORADO**Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	Trout Unlimited - National
Name of Water Project	Lower Trinchera Creek Fish Conservation Barrier
Grant Request Amount	\$57,500.00
Primary Category	\$57,500.00
<i>Watershed Health & Recreation</i>	
Total Applicant Match	\$0.00
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	
Total Other Sources of Funding	\$23,000.00
<i>Trinchera Ranch</i>	\$5,000.00
<i>Trinchera Ranch</i>	\$15,000.00
<i>Trout Unlimited</i>	\$3,000.00
Total Project Cost	\$80,500.00

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: Trout Unlimited - National
Mailing Address: 1700 N. Moore Street, Suite 2005 Arlington VA 22209

Organization Contact: Toby Van Ry
Position/Title: San Luis Valley Project Manager Email: toby.vanry@tu.org
Phone: (719) 480-2093

Organization Contact - Alternate: Nancy Johnston
Position/Title: Email: nancy.johnston@tu.org
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Grant Management Contact: Toby Van Ry
Position/Title: San Luis Valley Project Manager Email: toby.vanry@tu.org
Phone: (719) 480-2093

Description of Grantee/Applicant

Trout Unlimited (TU) is the nation's largest cold-water conservation organization with approximately 150,000 volunteers and roughly 277 employees nationwide, working to protect, reconnect, restore and sustain America's fisheries. TU's volunteers and their local chapter groups work on a variety of initiatives that meet the unique needs of their watersheds.

Type of Eligible Entity

- ☐ Public (Government)
☐ Public (District)
☐

- ☒ Public (Municipality)
- ☐ Ditch Company
- ☐ Private Incorporated
- ☐ Private Individual, Partnership, or Sole Proprietor
- ☒ Non-governmental Organization
- ☐ Covered Entity
- ☐ Other

Category of Water Project

- ☐ Agricultural Projects
Developing communications materials that specifically work with and educate the agricultural community on headwater restoration, identifying the state of the science of this type of work to assist agricultural users among others.
- ☐ Conservation & Land Use Planning
Activities and projects that implement long-term strategies for conservation, land use, and drought planning.
- ☐ Engagement & Innovation Activities
Activities and projects that support water education, outreach, and innovation efforts. Please fill out the Supplemental Application on the website.
- ☒ Watershed Restoration & Recreation
Projects that promote watershed health, environmental health, and recreation.
- ☐ Water Storage & Supply
Projects that facilitate the development of additional storage, artificial aquifer recharge, and dredging existing reservoirs to restore the reservoirs' full decreed capacity and Multi-beneficial projects and those projects identified in basin implementation plans to address the water supply and demand gap.

Location of Water Project

Latitude	37.392884
Longitude	-105.352905
Lat Long Flag	Precise coordinates: Project coordinates are readily definable and precisely define the location of the project
Water Source	Trinchera Creek
Basins	Rio Grande
Counties	Costilla
Districts	35-Trinchera Creek

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type	Environmental
Type of Water Project	Design / Engineering
Scheduled Start Date - Design	4/1/2026
Scheduled Start Date - Construction	
Description	<p>Trout Unlimited (TU) and the Trinchera Ranch seek \$57,500 in Water Plan funds to secure engineered designs for a fish conservation barrier on lower Trinchera Creek. The Trinchera Creek watershed is the site of a major conservation effort led by Trinchera Ranch and partners to restore native Rio Grande fish communities across 40 miles of high-quality habitat, following decades of non-native fish invasion. Currently, 26 stream miles have been restored and protected by existing barriers. The most critical next step is the installation of a final fish conservation barrier on the lower reach of Trinchera Creek to prevent non-native species from reinvading from</p>

Mountain Home Reservoir, thereby securing the significant conservation investments made upstream. This design grant specifically seeks funding for the detailed engineered drawings of this robust barrier. These designs will not only safeguard the native fish refuge but also improve water conveyance for downstream agriculture, enhance aquatic habitat, reduce sediment deposition, and establish a scalable model for similar conservation infrastructure across the region.

Measurable Results

211,200 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

Water Project Justification

This project supports the visions, goals and objectives of both Colorado's Water Plan (CWP) and the Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan (RGBIP). Justification for this water project is supported by both the CWP and Rio Grande BIP, as well as the guiding documents found in the 'Related Studies' section of this application. The Trinchera Creek watershed includes optimal and historic habitat for Rio Grande cutthroat trout, Rio Grande chub and Rio Grande sucker. All three of these species are Tier 1 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in Colorado Parks and Wildlife's State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) and all three species have been petitioned for federal listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Securing the designs for the Lower Trinchera Fish Conservation Barrier will greatly benefit these species and protect the significant conservation investments made in the watershed already on the largest aquatic species conservation initiative in the region. Upon funding of this design application, designs for a robust fish conservation barrier at the lower reaches of Trinchera Creek will be developed that will allow for unimpeded water conveyance and undisrupted angling opportunities downstream, while protecting these three at-risk species and their habitats in the Trinchera Creek basin.

The Thriving Watersheds vision of the CWP includes wildlife and aquatic species protection, as well as improving and protecting riparian and aquatic habitat (Page 206, CWP). The designs for this fish conservation barrier will protect 40 miles of high-quality stream habitat for the aforementioned species. Fish barrier projects, such as the proposed project, have been identified as critical to species conservation and recovery actions by the CWP (Page 215, CWP).

Studies referred to in the Related Studies section below have identified that the most important factor for the long-term persistence of these species is the removal of non-native species and the presence of fish conservation barriers that prevent invasion. Trinchera Ranch and their partners have already removed non-native fish from 26 of the 40 stream miles in the project area, and obtaining well-developed engineered designs will protect the non-native fish removal efforts upstream.

Objective 4.3.4 "Habitat Needs for Sensitive Species" in the Rio Grande BIP (page 67, BIP Vol2) is directly addressed by this project by protecting non-native species removal efforts and ensuring long-term viability of

at-risk species through habitat protection. This project also meets the goal of healthy watersheds (Goal 1, Page 19, BIP Vol1) of the Rio Grande BIP by protecting habitats that support wildlife populations. In addition, building barriers to protect from non-native invasions is directly cited as one of the strategies that should be used to achieve healthy watersheds goals (Page 20, BIP Vol1). Finally, this proposal will directly work to meet the needs of these three species that are specifically identified in Rio Grande BIP (Page 67, Vol2). The designs for this barrier that will inform construction, along with the removal efforts upstream, will ensure that identified non-native species threats are eliminated in 40 miles of stream habitats.

Related Studies

The justification for this water project is in direct congruence with the conservation planning documents cited below. All three of these documents cite non-native species as the most significant threat to these Tier 1 Species of Greatest Conservation Need and the presence of fish conservation barriers is continually cited as a critical action that will allow for long-term species persistence. Securing designs for this project will prevent upstream non-native species removal efforts from being compromised as well as increase the likelihood of long-term persistence of these species.

- 1) Draft 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, Denver, CO. <https://cpw.state.co.us/state-wildlife-action-plan>
- 2) RGCT Conservation Team. 2024. Rio Grande cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii virginalis*) Conservation Strategy. New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Santa Fe, NM.
- 3) Rio Grande Chub and Rio Grande Sucker Conservation Team. 2021. Rio Grande Chub and Sucker Conservation Strategy.

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

No Tax Bill of Rights provided