



Colorado Water Conservation Board

## Water Plan

### Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	The Watershed Center
Name of Water Project	Strengthening Coordination for Successful and Scalable Beaver Management
Grant Request Amount	<b>\$134,555.00</b>
Primary Category	\$134,555.00
<i>Watershed Health &amp; Recreation</i>	
Total Applicant Match	<b>\$134,555.00</b>
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$115,445.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$19,110.00
Total Other Sources of Funding	<b>\$0.00</b>
Total Project Cost	<b>\$269,110.00</b>

### Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: The Watershed Center  
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### Description of Grantee/Applicant

Since 2005, the Watershed Center has been working to protect and restore watersheds for people and the environment using a collaborative and science-based approach. We are a stakeholder driven, non-profit organization in Boulder County that uses the best available science to monitor, assess, and manage our watersheds. We plan and implement on-the-ground forest and river restoration projects. We strive to build a strong stewardship ethic in our community through place-based and participatory learning. Though our primary focus is the St. Vrain Basin, we increase our impact by developing programs and projects to be scalable and repeatable across other Colorado 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 40.151775  
Longitude -105.113713  
Lat Long Flag Default/Proponent headquarters: If the location cannot be defined with flags above, use location of project proponent headquarters

Water Source  
Basins South Platte  
Counties Boulder  
Districts 5-St. Vrain Creek

### Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type  
Type of Water Project Design / Engineering  
Scheduled Start Date - Design 1/1/2026  
Scheduled Start Date - Construction  
Description  
The proposed project aims to advance beaver management in the St. Vrain Basin watershed by developing a locally tailored Beaver Management Playbook and conducting on-the-ground pilot projects concurrently. Beaver

management provides a nature-based approach to enhance stream and riparian habitat, reconnect floodplains, and increase resilience to drought, wildfire, and flooding. Pilot testing will focus on applying coexistence strategies in 1-3 priority locations, leveraging cross-jurisdiction partnerships to address current beaver-related issues and opportunities. This will include monitoring to evaluate impacts on flows, habitat, and hydrologic processes. By engaging landowners, ditch companies, water managers, and restoration practitioners, the project fosters collaboration, reduces conflict, and ensures strategies meet both ecological and water management goals. Lessons learned will inform a scalable framework that can be applied regionally.

### 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)
976,800	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)
320,000	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
325,000	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity
Other	
No additional measurable results provided	

### Water Project Justification

Colorado Water Plan:

1. Thriving Watersheds (Chapter 6, page 204): “Colorado’s watersheds hold the future of our water supply security. Comprehensive water resources planning should incorporate conditions of forests, streams, wetlands, and wildlife habitat. As our state’s water source, the health of watersheds affects agriculture, downstream communities, recreation, tourism, and ecosystem function. Colorado will continue to follow a shared stewardship ethic to plan and implement multi-benefit projects to enhance the health of our watersheds.”

a. Partner Actions: Nature-based solutions; rehabilitate streams to improve habitat, reduce erosion, and meet needs; create greater drought, fire, and flood resilience; reconnect floodplains and nature-based solutions; improve riparian and aquatic habitat.

This project advances these actions by using beaver management as a nature-based solution to improve stream health, expand wetlands, reconnect floodplains, and increase drought and wildfire resilience. It will provide locally tailored, scalable guidance developed in partnership with water users, landowners, and agencies to support shared stewardship and reduce conflict during implementation.

2. Resilient Planning (Chapter 6, page 216): “Water security is critical to the quality of life, environment, and economy of Colorado. The future is uncertain, and Colorado needs to be adaptive and resilient to face the challenges ahead. Water security roadmaps, inclusively developed at a local level and informed by strong state leadership, can identify acute and chronic risks to water supply, integrate local planning strategies, prioritize collaborative solutions, and build adaptive capacity and resilience.”

a. Partner Actions: Multi-purpose projects for building resiliency; conservation-oriented outreach and education; support for natural and working lands.

This project will serve as a locally developed roadmap for coordinated, cross-jurisdictional planning. Paired with on-the-ground pilot projects, this project bridges the gap between statewide guidance and local implementation, generating lessons that can accelerate effective, scalable beaver management that strengthens watershed and community resilience across Colorado.

### 3. Tools – Collaborative Groups & Public Outreach (Chapter 5, pages 154, 157):

“Collaboration through interagency and interdisciplinary approaches that define clear roles and responsibilities can help in prioritizing water issues from planning to implementation. Public outreach and education create awareness of policies and processes, promoting sustainable grassroots solutions.”

This project supports these tools by convening partners, clarifying roles, and improving communication with landowners and water users. Shared guidance will streamline permitting, reduce conflict, and build long-term local capacity for implementing beaver-related projects.

### South Platte Basin Implementation Plan:

1. Volume 1. Section 4 (page 26) Goal 1: Encourage Implementation of Projects: “The South Platte Basin will encourage the implementation of identified projects that meet existing and future M&I, agricultural, and environmental/recreational (E&R) water needs.”

This project aligns with this goal by advancing basin priorities from planning to implementation through coordinated, nature-based restoration projects. While beaver management is not explicitly identified in the BIP, it directly supports Basin goals related to watershed function, environmental enhancement, and multi-benefit project delivery. Volume 1. Section 4 (page 32) Goal 6: Protect and Enhance Watershed Function: “...To benefit the ecological health of all the watersheds within the basin, as well as to meet water supply, economic, and water quality demands, the South Platte Basin will recognize the importance of and encourage strategies that enhance watershed functions and hydrologic processes.”

a. Strategy 6.A.4: “Identify, assess, and implement actions, programs, and measures that aim to minimize the adverse effects on wetlands, lakes, streams/rivers, and associated ecosystems from water pollution, nutrient overload, reduced streamflows, and filling or dredging.”

Beaver-related restoration improves hydrologic processes, expands wetlands, reconnects floodplains, enhances water quality, and reduces nutrient and sediment loading. This project will guide identification and implementation of these actions throughout the basin.

### 2. Volume 1. Section 4.7 (page 36) Goal 7: Protect and Enhance Environmental Attributes

“Throughout the South Platte Basin, the importance of ecological processes and environmental attributes will be fully recognized. The South Platte Basin will implement strategies that protect and enhance environmental attributes for ecologically, socially, and economically important habitats and focus areas.”

a. Strategy 7.C: “Identify, assess, and implement actions, programs, and measures that aim to protect, maintain, and improve conditions and long-term sustainability of streams, lakes, floodplains, riparian areas, wetlands, and wet meadows for self-sustaining fisheries and functional waterfowl, beaver, and other aquatic habitats.”

This project advances the strategy by creating coordinated guidance to restore and sustain riparian, wetland, and

aquatic habitats while fostering long-term coexistence among beavers, landowners, and water users. By taking a basin-wide perspective, it strengthens ecological integrity and supports the enduring health of fisheries, wildlife, and water resources.

### Related Studies

This project directly builds on the St. Vrain and Left Hand Stream Management Plan and the Adaptive Management at Scale Plan, both of which highlight the need for clearer, locally grounded guidance for beaver-related restoration. It also complements the Colorado Beaver Conservation and Management Strategy by creating a practical local playbook to help balance water management needs with watershed health goals. By engaging key partners, the project will provide shared, collaboratively developed guidance that reduces confusion and supports smoother implementation.

The project also supports the St. Vrain and Left Hand Wildfire Ready Watersheds Plan by helping advance its recommended priority beaver management sites through agreed-upon decision-support tools. In addition, we will adapt several statewide beaver restoration tools for local application to better assess, prioritize, and advance restoration opportunities.

Related Studies and Tools:

- Colorado Beaver Conservation and Management Strategy
- Beaver Restoration Assessment Tool (BRAT)
- Colorado Beaver Activity Mapper (COBAM)
- St. Vrain and Left Hand Wildfire Ready Watersheds Plan
- St. Vrain and Left Hand Stream Management Plan
- Adaptive Management at Scale

### Taxpayer Bill of Rights

There are no relevant TABOR issues that would impact this application.