



Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	American Rivers	
Name of Water Project	Surface Creek Watershed Restoration	
Grant Request Amount		\$70,000.00
Primary Category		\$70,000.00
<i>Watershed Health & Recreation</i>		
Total Applicant Match		\$36,697.00
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>		\$35,007.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>		\$1,690.00
Total Other Sources of Funding		\$33,303.00
<i>US Forest Service</i>		\$33,303.00
Total Project Cost		\$140,000.00

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: American Rivers	
Mailing Address: 1101 14th St NW Suite 1400 Washington DC 20005	
Organization Contact: Katherine Barlow-Heath	
Position/Title: Director of Government Grants	Email: kbarlow-heath@americanrivers.org
Phone: 520-502-9012	
Organization Contact - Alternate: Fay Hartman	
Position/Title:	Email: fhartman@americanrivers.org
Phone: 616-990-0049	
Grant Management Contact: Katherine Barlow-Heath	
Position/Title: Director of Government Grants	Email: kbarlow-heath@americanrivers.org
Phone: 520-502-9012	
Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Fay Hartman	
Position/Title:	Email: fhartman@americanrivers.org
Phone: 616-990-0049	

Description of Grantee/Applicant

American Rivers protects and restores rivers and clean water for people and nature.

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 39.030802
 Longitude 107.816876
 Lat Long Flag Stream location: Coordinates based on general location on stream
 Water Source
 Basins Gunnison
 Counties Delta
 Districts 40-North Fork/Tribs.

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type Environmental
 Type of Water Project Construction / Implementation
 Scheduled Start Date - Design
 Scheduled Start Date - Construction 4/1/2026
 Description
 This project will enhance wildfire and drought resilience, as well as watershed health, in the Surface Creek Watershed near Cedaredge, CO through low-tech, process-based stream restoration methods, riparian re-vegetation, and grazing management. Final site selection and design of restoration treatments will be carried out in consultation with local stakeholders, including holders of grazing leases and managers of nearby water infrastructure. The selection of candidate sites has been informed by data developed through the ongoing Grand Mesa Wildfire Ready Watersheds planning process, as well as restoration priorities identified by the Grand Mesa Watershed Resiliency Partnership and the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest. The candidate sites are meadow (non-perennial flow) and stream reaches (perennial flow) within mild sloped valleys set within longer, steeper reaches within more narrow valleys, and have active or recent beaver ponds.

Restoration in these areas will protect and restore wet meadow habitats, enhance forest health and help mitigate the potential intensity of wildfire and post-wildfire impacts on critical water infrastructure.

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)
4,000	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)
8	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

In addition to the stream and habitat benefits within the project area, domestic water users downstream will benefit from reduced exposure to post-wildfire hazards such as flooding and sedimentation. The Surface Creek Watershed provides source water to the Town of Cedaredge water system, which serves 1,437 water taps, and the Upper Surface Creek Domestic Water Users Association, which provides water to over 1,000 customers.

Water Project Justification

The Colorado Water Plan's vision for Thriving Watersheds (Page 204) states that, "As our state's water source, the health of watersheds affects agriculture, downstream communities, recreation, tourism, and ecosystem function." This project is an excellent example of the Partner Action associated with "nature-based solutions," which states, "... nature-based solutions that support healthy forests, watersheds, and their natural water infrastructure such as floodplains and wetlands can attenuate flood flows, boost late-season low flows, and improve ecosystem health and water quality" (page 205). This project also fits the description of the Partner Action to "Rehabilitate streams to improve habitat, reduce erosion, and meet needs," which states that, "... projects that reconnect streams with their floodplains can improve stream and riparian habitat as well as water quality for the benefit of all water sectors" (page 205).

This Project also responds to the following goal in the Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan (BIP), updated in 2020, as described on page 13 of Volume I, "Maintain or, where necessary, improve water quality throughout the Gunnison Basin." By reducing channelization and erosion in wet meadows and along stream banks, this project will improve water quality by reducing sediment loading downstream. This project will also protect downstream water quality in the event of wildfire by enhancing natural wetland firebreaks and providing more opportunities for post-wildfire runoff to slow and spread across floodplains.

Related Studies

This project falls within the project area for the Grand Mesa Watershed Resiliency Partnership (GMWRP), which identified the Cedaredge area, including the Surface Creek Watershed, as a high priority for wildfire risk mitigation work. The Grand Mesa Wildfire Ready Watersheds Action Plan (GMWRWAP) project, which grew out of the GMWRP and is currently underway, has identified numerous values at risk from wildfire and post-wildfire hazards in the Surface Creek Watershed, including domestic and agricultural water infrastructure. The statewide

Wildfire Ready Watersheds post-fire susceptibility explorer also shows the Surface Creek Watershed as having high post-fire susceptibility for water infrastructure. American Rivers, the applicant for this Project, is also coordinating the GMWRWAP. Finally, the Surface Creek watershed was identified as a priority project area given the value of its water supply through Forest Service internal analyses.

As noted above, this project builds on work already completed through the GMWRWAP. It will also contribute to the GMWRAP by providing a demonstration to stakeholders of several stream and wetland restoration techniques that can contribute to wildfire resilience, helping to inform project selection.

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

There are no TABOR issues that may affect our application.