



## Colorado's Private Lands Conservation Plan

March 2021 Board Meeting

### Water Plan Grant Application



| L O C A T I O N   |           |
|-------------------|-----------|
| County/Countries: | Statewide |
| Drainage Basin:   | Statewide |

| D E T A I L S                 |                           |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Total Project Cost:           | \$280,000                 |
| Water Plan Grant Request:     | \$75,000                  |
| Recommended Amount:           | \$75,000                  |
| Other CWCB Funding:           | \$0                       |
| Other Funding Amount:         | \$185,000                 |
| Applicant Match:              | \$10,000                  |
| Project Type(s):              | Study                     |
| Project Category(Categories): | Agricultural              |
| Measurable Result:            | Land and water protection |

Voluntary conservation of private land and water resources can play a critical role in furthering Colorado Water Plan and Basin Implementation Plan implementation. The Colorado Water Plan, for example, highlights the use of conservation easements to retain agriculture and current uses of water. The Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan, among others, also includes goals for protecting irrigated acres through initiatives such as the Gunnison Ranchland Conservation Legacy. Across Colorado, land trusts and open space programs are also engaging in more innovative water management strategies. The Palmer Land Conservancy, for example, is working to ensure viable farmland remains protected in response to the purchase of agricultural water supplies for urban uses. In the Colorado River Basin, the Colorado West Land Trust is assessing the development of habitat mitigation banks that will provide a means for ditch companies to utilize credit offsets from ditch piping projects.

Keep It, Colorado, a nonprofit coalition of conservation organizations, is developing a statewide plan to provide a roadmap and vision for private lands and water conservation in Colorado. A statewide plan will ensure that private land conservation is coordinated in ways that help advance the Colorado Water Plan's objectives and build connectivity in areas where work is otherwise fragmented. The project will focus collective protection efforts on the priority lands, waters, and habitats necessary to create resilient and connected landscapes and thriving communities in the face of climate change and population growth. Through this collaborative planning process, there is a significant opportunity to include Colorado Water Plan priorities ranging from forest health to protecting wetland and riparian systems. In particular, the planning process will allow CWCB to work with and educate the land trust community about specific state priorities such as the Colorado Fluvial Hazard Mapping Program, helping build future collaborative efforts.

This project furthers several Colorado Water Plan critical action goals, including encouraging collaboration with the land trust community on water resource challenges, supporting projects that sustain irrigated agriculture and its public benefits, and cultivating multi-benefit projects.



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## Colorado Water Conservation Board

### Water Plan Grant Application

#### Instructions

To receive funding for a Water Plan Grant, applicant must demonstrate how the project, activity, or process (collectively referred to as “project”) funded by the CWCB will help meet the measurable objectives and critical actions in the Water Plan. Grant guidelines are available on the CWCB website.

If you have questions, please contact CWCB at (303) 866-3441 or email the following staff to assist you with applications in the following areas:

Water Storage Projects  
Conservation, Land Use Planning  
Engagement & Innovation Activities  
Agricultural Projects  
Environmental & Recreation Projects

Matthew.Stearns@state.co.us  
Kevin.Reidy@state.co.us  
Ben.Wade@state.co.us  
Alexander.Funk@state.co.us  
Chris.Sturm@state.co.us

**FINAL SUBMISSION:** Submit all application materials in one email to

**[waterplan.grants@state.co.us](mailto:waterplan.grants@state.co.us)**

**in the original file formats [Application (word); Statement of Work (word); Budget/Schedule (excel)]. Please do not combine documents. In the subject line, please include the funding category and name of the project.**

#### Water Project Summary

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Name of Applicant  | Keep It Colorado                           |
| Name of Water Project  | Colorado's Private Lands Conservation Plan |
| CWP Grant Request Amount   | \$ 75,000                                  |
| Other Funding Sources <u>GOCO (tentative)</u>                        | \$ 115,000                                 |
| Other Funding Sources <u>Gates Family Foundation (tentative)</u>     | \$ 50,000                                  |
| Other Funding Sources <u>Trinchera Blanca Foundation (tentative)</u> | \$ 30,000                                  |
| Applicant Funding Contribution                                       | \$ 10,000                                  |
| Total Project Cost   | \$ 280,000                                 |



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| Applicant & Grantee Information   |  |
|---|--|
| Name of Grantee(s):   | Keep It Colorado   |
| Mailing Address:  | P.O. Box 16280, Golden, CO 80402                               |
| FEIN:   | 84-1355809   |
| Organization Contact:   | Melissa Daruna   |
| Position/Title:   | Executive Director   |
| Email:  | <a href="mailto:Melissa@keepitco.org">Melissa@keepitco.org</a> |
| Phone:  | Cell – 720-530-4364; Office – 303-325-3805                     |
| Grant Management Contact:   | Same as above  |
| Position/Title  |  |
| Email   |  |
| Phone   |  |
| Name of Applicant<br>(if different than grantee)  |  |
| Mailing Address   |  |
| Position/Title  |  |
| Email   |  |
| Phone   |  |
| Description of Grantee/Applicant  |  |
| Provide a brief description of the grantee's organization (100 words or less).  |  |
| <p>Keep it Colorado is a nonprofit statewide coalition of conservation organizations working to protect the lands and waters that define Colorado. We are intent on creating a future in which conservation and stewardship are priorities for Colorado's communities.</p> <p>Land trusts form the core of our membership, along with public agency partners and other conservation champions. We are uniquely qualified to unite the work of private land conservation, which will be necessary to achieve larger objectives such as 30x30, and to support and advise implementation of Colorado's Water Plan and the Colorado Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative.</p> |  |



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| Type of Eligible Entity (check one) |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
|                                     | <b>Public (Government):</b> Municipalities, enterprises, counties, and State of Colorado agencies. Federal agencies are encouraged to work with local entities. Federal agencies are eligible, but only if they can make a compelling case for why a local partner cannot be the grant recipient. |
|                                     | <b>Public (Districts):</b> Authorities, Title 32/special districts (conservancy, conservation, and irrigation districts), and water activity enterprises.   |
|                                     | <b>Private Incorporated:</b> Mutual ditch companies, homeowners associations, corporations.   |
|                                     | <b>Private Individuals, Partnerships, and Sole Proprietors:</b> Private parties may be eligible for funding.  |
| X                                   | <b>Non-governmental organizations (NGO):</b> Organization that is not part of the government and is non-profit in nature.   |
|                                     | <b>Covered Entity:</b> As defined in <a href="#">Section 37-60-126 Colorado Revised Statutes</a> .  |

| Type of Water Project (check all that apply) |   |
|--|---|
| X  | Study                                   |
|  | Construction                            |
|  | Identified Projects and Processes (IPP) |
| X  | Other - statewide conservation planning |

| Category of Water Project (check the primary category that applies and include relevant tasks) |  |          |
|--|--|----------|
|  |  |          |
|  | Water Storage - 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.<br><i>Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):</i> |          |
| X  | Conservation and Land Use Planning - Activities and projects that implement long-term strategies for conservation, land use, and drought planning.<br><i>Applicable Exhibit A Task(s): 1-5</i>   |          |
|  | Engagement & Innovation - Activities and projects that support water education, outreach, and innovation efforts. Please fill out the Supplemental Application on the website.<br><i>Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):</i>   |          |
| X  | Agricultural - Projects that provide technical assistance and improve agricultural efficiency.<br><i>Applicable Exhibit A Task(s): 1-5</i>   |          |
| X  | Environmental & Recreation - Projects that promote watershed health, environmental health, and recreation.<br><i>Applicable Exhibit A Task(s): 1-5</i>   |          |
|  | Other  | Explain: |

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| Location of Water Project   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Please provide the general county and coordinates of the proposed project below in <b>decimal degrees</b> . The Applicant shall also provide, in Exhibit C, a site map if applicable. |           |
| County/Countries  | Statewide |
| Latitude  |           |
| Longitude   |           |

| Water Project Overview   |
|--|
| <p>Please provide a summary of the proposed water project (200 words or less). Include a description of the project and what the CWP Grant funding will be used for specifically (e.g., studies, permitting process, construction). Provide a description of the water supply source to be utilized or the water body affected by the project, where applicable. Include details such as acres under irrigation, types of crops irrigated, number of residential and commercial taps, length of ditch improvements, length of pipe installed, and area of habitat improvements, where applicable. If this project addresses multiple purposes or spans multiple basins, please explain.</p> <p>The Applicant shall also provide, in Exhibit A, a detailed Statement of Work, Budget, Other Funding Sources/Amounts and Schedule.</p>   |
| <p>Keep It Colorado's <b>Connectivity and Resilience Through Conservation: Colorado's Private Lands Conservation Plan</b> will be a collaborative plan developed in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and with input from land trusts, open space agencies and community stakeholders. This plan will unify the future vision of private lands conservation, while supporting and advising larger objectives of the Colorado Water Plan, Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Regional Outdoor Partnership Initiatives, and Colorado's 30x30 vision to conserve 30 percent of lands and water by 2030. It will help the land trust community strategically identify urgent and emergent land acquisitions needed to achieve common conservation priorities.</p> <p>Private lands comprise 60 percent of Colorado, accounting for a significant portion of the state's natural resources to be protected. Threatened by rapid and ongoing land loss, climate change and decreasing water supplies, the health and survival of Colorado's open space and wildlife habitat are at risk, and communities that rely on local agriculture and recreation economies are negatively impacted. This plan is the only strategic, coordinated approach to prioritize the protection and connectivity of private lands, while identifying clear objectives that align and are timed with statewide water, wildlife and recreation objectives.</p> |



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| Measurable Results   |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| To catalog measurable results achieved with the CWP Grant funds, please provide any of the following values as applicable: |   |   |
|  | New Storage Created (acre-feet)   |   |
|  | New Annual Water Supplies Developed or Conserved (acre-feet), Consumptive or Nonconsumptive |   |
|  | Existing Storage Preserved or Enhanced (acre-feet)  |   |
| X  | Length of Stream Restored or Protected (linear feet)  |   |
|  | Efficiency Savings (indicate acre-feet/year OR dollars/year)                                |   |
| X  | Area of Restored or Preserved Habitat (acres)   |   |
|  | Quantity of Water Shared through Alternative Transfer Mechanisms                            |   |
|  | Number of Coloradans Impacted by Incorporating Water-Saving Actions into Land Use Planning  |   |
|  | Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity  |   |
| X  | Other   | Explain: Identify priority lands and waters privately owned to conserve to meet CWP goals and create resilient landscapes. Coordinate conservation efforts of 25 land trusts across Colorado to conserve those priority lands and waters. |

| Water Project Justification   |
|---|
| <p>Provide a description of how this water project supports the goals of <a href="#">Colorado's Water Plan</a>, the most recent <a href="#">Statewide Water Supply Initiative</a>, and the applicable Roundtable <a href="#">Basin Implementation Plan</a> and <a href="#">Education Action Plan</a>. The Applicant is required to reference specific needs, goals, themes, or Identified Projects and Processes (IPPs), including citations (e.g. document, chapters, sections, or page numbers).</p> <p>The proposed water project shall be evaluated based upon how well the proposal conforms to Colorado's Water Plan Framework for State of Colorado Support for a Water Project (CWP, Section 9.4, pp. 9-43 to 9-44;)</p> <p>The timing of Colorado's Private Lands Conservation Plan coincides with the update to the Colorado Water Plan, which means the plans can advise each other. We will include participation from the basin roundtables in the statewide listening tour, ensuring that scoping for both plans works to achieve common goals. Likewise, we envision that the objectives and priorities outlined in this plan will help advise the private land conservation goals that are reflected in the Colorado Water Plan update.</p> <p>Specifically, Colorado's Private Lands Conservation plan supports the following goals and values of the Colorado Water Plan as outlined in Section 1, p. 1-6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Ensuring a productive economy that supports growth, viable and productive agriculture, and thriving recreation industry.</b> This plan will help coordinate the efforts of private lands conservation to protect the lands and waters necessary to sustain rural agriculture economies while planning for urban population growth and increasing water demands. It will also focus on lands and waters that are critical to support local recreation-based economies and sustainable recreation access.</li><li>• <b>Efficient use of water and land.</b> This plan will help the conservation community evaluate landscapes across the state that will maximize resilience for people and wildlife. It will also help identify lands more suitable for development, identify agricultural lands in most need of water protections, and encourage strategic planning for the most efficient use of our natural resources.</li></ul> |



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- **Strong environment with healthy watersheds, rivers, streams and wildlife.** Private lands comprise 60 percent of Colorado. A focused, coordinated plan for these landscapes will help ensure healthy ecosystems that are naturally connected. This plan will complement public conservation efforts where they currently exist and can provide a model in areas where they have yet to be developed.
  - This plan will also meet goals outlined in Section 6, p. 6-10 calling for implementing projects and methods that support imperiled species and recreation areas that are critical to local economies. Conservation of private lands will be essential to reaching these goals, and this coordinated plan will map these landscapes and rally collaborative conservation efforts from the land trust community.

Section 1, p. 1-9 of the Colorado Water Plan identifies the challenges we face across the state. This plan will create coordinated projects that will help meet these challenges.

- **Growing water supply gap, meeting the need for a growing population and protecting agricultural lands.** Land trusts across Colorado are already incorporating water into their land conservation efforts. An example is the Palmer Land Conservancy's efforts along the Bessemer Ditch in the lower Arkansas River basin. Palmer has been working with the community to identify the most critical agricultural lands to conserve as municipal water needs in Pueblo grow. This project is helping to achieve Arkansas River Basin BIP Agricultural Goals 1, 3 and 4 (Arkansas Basin BIP Section 1, pp.16-17). These types of creative, collaborative approaches to community-wide conservation planning are exactly what Colorado needs to strategically meet the water supply gap and avoid detrimental buy-and-dry practices.
- **Environmental concerns including watershed health, ecosystem resilience and habitat loss and variable climatic concerns.** Creating healthier, more resilient landscapes is the purpose of using The Nature Conservancy's Resilient and Connected Networks tool for this project. Using TNC's tool, the plan will map the most critical lands and waters necessary to conserve in order to protect habitats, increase connectivity, and ensure ecosystem resiliency in the face of climate change and growing populations.
- **Funding needs.** Similar to the Water Plan, we recognize the need to identify and foster increased funding opportunities for the conservation work created from this plan. Throughout the project we will work to secure a pool of funds for a round of projects that can begin as soon as the plan is finalized and released. We will continue to work on creative ideas to increase funding and investments in conservation so that implementation projects can continue in the future.

### Related Studies

Please provide a list of any related studies, including if the water project is complementary to or assists in the implementation of other CWCB programs.





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The following studies and reports help advise Colorado's Private Lands Conservation Plan:

- **The Nature Conservancy's Resilient and Connected Networks tool.** We will incorporate TNC's Cumberland Forest project, the Monsoon Passage project, and the studies and proven coordinated conservation efforts that resulted from use of the RCN tool in these multistate regions in the east and mid-west. Throughout the project, we will leverage a strong partnership with TNC to bring training to our stakeholders and encourage widespread use of consistent data.
- **The Colorado Water Plan and the upcoming updates to the plan.** Timing for the development of this conservation plan aligns well with the updated schedule for the Colorado Water Plan in 2021 and 2022, which will ensure that land and water conservation efforts are coordinated across both plans.
- **Basin Implementation Plans.** We will review current BIPs for each basin and include representatives from each basin roundtable (in addition to any land trusts who also participate in the roundtables) in our stakeholder outreach. This will ensure that regional voices and priorities are heard and included as we set broader statewide goals.
- **Statewide 30x30 goals and Colorado's Greenhouse Gas Roadmap.** Colorado is 60 percent private land. In order to achieve statewide goals to conserve 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030, it is imperative to include private lands. Colorado's Private Lands Conservation Plan is a guide to determine which 30 percent of private lands to prioritize; what type and degree of conservation must happen on those lands; and what natural climate solutions through conservation will help to combat climate change. Additionally, Colorado's Greenhouse Gas Roadmap calls for a strategic plan related to natural working lands. This plan will coincide with the development of the Natural Working Lands Strategic Plan, in which Keep It Colorado will also be participating.
- **"Investing in Colorado" (2017) – A Colorado State University published study.** The report outlines the numerous public benefits (ecosystem services) of conserved lands. Water is a key conservation theme. We will incorporate these values and themes as well.
- **"Southeast Colorado Conservation Easement Report" (2015) – published by a group of land trusts and conservation partners.** The report includes an extensive analysis of water conservation values in southeast Colorado and will help advise priorities for that region.
- **Arkansas Basin Conservation Alliance case statement (2020).** Keep It Colorado is creating a case statement demonstrating collaborative efforts, projects and opportunities among several land trusts in the Arkansas Basin, all of which have expressed the protection of source and tributary waters as a high priority and the lack of coordinated, strategic conservation efforts as an obstacle. We will use this work as a blueprint for development of the Private Lands Conservation Plan.
- **Colorado Parks and Wildlife Regional Outdoor Partnerships (CO-OP) and Statewide Conservation and Recreation Plan.** Keep It Colorado and The Nature Conservancy are core members of CO-OP and have been supporting and advising the development of the Regional Outdoor Partnerships Initiative, which will lead to a larger, more comprehensive statewide conservation and recreation plan. One piece that is often missing from these larger plans is coordinated planning and goals for private lands. We will complete the Statewide Private Lands Conservation Plan in time to be incorporated into and help advise the process for the larger planning effort lead by the Regional Outdoor Partnerships Initiative.

### Previous CWCB Grants, Loans or Other Funding

List all previous or current CWCB grants (including WSRF) awarded to both the Applicant and Grantee. Include: 1) Applicant name; 2) Water activity name; 3) Approving RT(s); 4) CWCB board meeting date; 5) Contract number or purchase order; 6) Percentage of other CWCB funding for your overall project.





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None.

### Taxpayer Bill of Rights

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.

None.

### Submittal Checklist

|   |  |
|---|--|
| X   | I acknowledge the Grantee will be able to contract with CWCB using the <a href="#">Standard Contract</a> . |
| Exhibit A                                     |  |
| X   | Statement of Work <sup>(1)</sup>   |
| X   | Budget & Schedule <sup>(1)</sup>   |
|   | Engineer's statement of probable cost (projects over \$100,000)  |
|   | Letters of Matching and/or Pending 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Commitments <sup>(1)</sup>                        |
| Exhibit C                                     |  |
|   | Map (if applicable) <sup>(1)</sup>   |
|   | Photos/Drawings/Reports  |
|   | Letters of Support (Optional)  |
| X   | Certificate of Insurance (General, Auto, & Workers' Comp.) <sup>(2)</sup>                                  |
| X   | Certificate of Good Standing with Colorado Secretary of State <sup>(2)</sup>                               |
| X   | W-9 <sup>(2)</sup>   |
|   | Independent Contractor Form <sup>(2)</sup> (If applicant is individual, not company/organization)          |
| Engagement & Innovation Grant Applicants ONLY |  |
|   | Engagement & Innovation Supplemental Application <sup>(1)</sup>  |

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(1) Required with application.

(2) Required for contracting. While optional at the time of this application, submission can expedite contracting upon CWCB Board approval.

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## ENGAGEMENT & INNOVATION GRANT FUND SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION

### Introduction & Purpose

Colorado's Water Plan calls for an outreach, education, public engagement, and innovation grant fund in Chapter 9.5.

The overall goal of the Engagement & Innovation Grant Fund is to enhance Colorado's water communication, outreach, education, and public engagement efforts; advance Colorado's water supply planning process; and support a statewide water innovation ecosystem.

The grant fund aims to engage the public to promote well-informed community discourse regarding balanced water solutions statewide. The grant fund aims to support water innovation in Colorado. The grant fund prioritizes measuring and evaluating the success of programs, projects, and initiatives. The grant fund prioritizes efforts designed using research, data, and best practices. The grant fund prioritizes a commitment to collaboration and community engagement. The grant fund will support local and statewide efforts.

The grant fund is divided into two tracks: engagement and innovation. The Engagement Track supports education, outreach, communication, and public participation efforts related to water. The Innovation Track supports efforts that advance the water innovation ecosystem in Colorado.

### Application Questions

\*The grant fund request is referred to as "project" in this application.

| Overview (answer for both tracks)   |
|---|
| In a few sentences, what is the overall goal of this project? How does it achieve the stated purpose of this grant fund (above)?  |
| <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>  |
| Who is/are the target audience(s)? How will you reach them? How will you involve the community?   |
| <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>  |
| Describe how the project is collaborative or engages a diverse group of stakeholders. Who are the partners in the project? Do you have other funding partners or sources? |
| <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>  |



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| Overview (answer for both tracks)  |
|--|
| Describe how you plan to measure and evaluate the success and impact of the project? |
|  |
| What research, evidence, and data support your project?                              |
|  |
| Describe potential short- and long-term challenges with this project.                |
|  |

Please fill out the applicable questions for either the Engagement Track or Innovation Track, unless your project contains elements in both tracks. If a question does not relate to your project, just leave it blank. Please answer each question that relates to your project. Please reference the relevant documents and use chapters and page numbers (Colorado's Water Plan, Basin Implementation Plan, PEPO Education Action Plan, etc.).

| Engagement Track   |
|--|
| Describe how the project achieves the education, outreach, and public engagement measurable objective set forth in Colorado's Water Plan to "significantly improve the level of public awareness and engagement regarding water issues statewide by 2020, as determined by water awareness surveys." |
|  |
| Describe how the project achieves the other measurable objectives and critical goals and actions laid out in Colorado's Water Plan around the supply and demand gap; conservation; land use; agriculture; storage; watershed health, environment, and recreation; funding; and additional.           |
|  |
| Describe how the project achieves the education, outreach, and public engagement goals set forth in the applicable Basin Implementation Plan(s).   |
|  |



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|   |
|---|
| Describe how the project achieves the basin roundtable's PEPO Education Action Plans. |
|   |

| Innovation Track  |
|---|
| Describe how the project enhances water innovation efforts and supports a water innovation ecosystem in Colorado.   |
|   |
| Describe how the project engages/leverages Colorado's innovation community to help solve our state's water challenges.  |
|   |
| Describe how the project helps advance or develop a solution to a water need identified through TAP-IN and other water innovation challenges. What is the problem/need/challenge? |
|   |
| Describe how this project impacts current or emerging trends; technologies; clusters, sectors, or groups in water innovation.   |
|   |



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## Colorado Water Conservation Board

### Water Plan Grant - Exhibit A

#### Statement Of Work

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Date:</b>   | <b>November 24, 2020</b>                             |
| <b>Name of Grantee:</b>  | <b>Keep It Colorado</b>                              |
| <b>Name of Water Project:</b>  | <b>Colorado's Private Lands Conservation Plan</b>    |
| <b>Funding Source:</b>   | <b>CO Water Plan Grant, GOCO, family foundations</b> |
| <b>Water Project Overview:</b>   |  |
| <p>Keep It Colorado's <b>Connectivity and Resilience Through Conservation: Colorado's Private Lands Conservation Plan</b> will be a collaborative plan developed in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and with input from land trusts, open space agencies and community stakeholders. This plan will unify the future vision of private lands conservation, while supporting and advising larger objectives of the Colorado Water Plan, Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Regional Outdoor Partnership Initiatives, and Colorado's 30x30 vision to conserve 30 percent of lands and waters by 2030. It will help the land trust community strategically identify urgent and emergent land acquisitions needed to achieve common conservation priorities.</p> <p>Private lands comprise 60 percent of Colorado, accounting for a significant portion of the state's natural resources to be protected. Threatened by rapid and ongoing land loss, climate change and decreasing water supplies, the health and survival of Colorado's open space and wildlife habitat are at risk, and communities that rely on local agriculture and recreation economies are negatively impacted. This plan is the only strategic, coordinated approach to prioritize the protection and connectivity of private lands and waters, while identifying clear objectives that align and are timed with statewide water, wildlife and recreation objectives.</p> <p>Leveraging Keep It Colorado's established coalition of more than 50 member organizations and The Nature Conservancy's proven science and data, Colorado's Private Lands Conservation Plan will represent the shared work of land trusts and their partners. The plan has two primary areas of emphasis. It will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Focus our collective protection efforts on the priority lands, waters and habitats necessary to create resilient and connected physical landscapes in the face of climate change and population growth; and</li><li>2) Establish models for conservation based on effective programs that connect people with their local landscapes, a concept we have dubbed "community conservation."</li></ol> <p><b>Why the plan is needed</b></p> <p>There is a long history of strong private lands conservation across the state. In 2020 alone, Keep It Colorado's land trust and open space agency members conserved over 114,795 acres of land in Colorado, and since their inception they have collectively conserved over 4,251,800 acres. These numbers are to be celebrated. However, numerous threats are facing Colorado that make the current pace and scale of conservation inadequate. The efforts of land trusts, open space agencies and other conservation partners are often fragmented and represent only a fraction of the work that needs to be done to effectively mitigate the effects of climate change; property plan for growth and development while protecting our open spaces, wildlife and water; and create better connectivity and resiliency across Colorado communities. These numbers can only grow if efforts are coordinated and strategic under a common vision and set of statewide priorities. The Statewide Private Lands Conservation Plan will prioritize the protection and connectivity of private lands; establish common conservation values that reflect the economic, ecological and social needs of local communities; and advance the pace of conservation.</p> |  |



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Furthermore, larger statewide planning efforts that are currently beginning or are being updated – such as the state’s 30x30 initiatives, the Colorado Water Plan, and Colorado Parks and Wildlife’s Colorado Regional Outdoor Partnerships Initiative – will be incomplete unless they include private lands conservation. Including private lands priorities and strategies through this plan will create a more balanced, more comprehensive approach to all statewide efforts.

### **How the plan will be used**

The plan will serve as a guide that enables users to align conservation plans and strategies for both private and public lands within a larger statewide framework. Users will be able to:

- View and use maps of priority landscapes across the state based on The Nature Conservancy’s Resilient and Connected Networks tool and other critical data sets and mapping provided by partnering organizations.
- Access a clear set of agreed upon statewide objectives for private lands conservation over the next 10 years.
- Access detailed summaries of land trust conservation projects that will help meet statewide objectives and identify potential areas of partnership and collaboration.
- Understand the impacts of private lands conservation in broader terms than simply number of acres conserved. Impacts can be measured by evaluating:
  - quality, type and location of habitat conserved;
  - use of natural climate solutions to combat climate change, including land protection and management strategies that avoid conversion of forests, wetlands and grasslands to other uses; improve soil health; maintain natural working lands; and mitigate flood and fire risks;
  - conservation as an economic driver and economic recovery tool in local communities that rely on outdoor recreation and local farming and ranching production;
  - level of engagement of communities in driving conservation efforts and programs.
- Have access to language and metrics for talking about the public benefits of private lands conservation with funders, partners, community members and policy makers.

### **Project Objectives:**

#### **Project Goals and Objectives**

**The plan will result in shared a vision and a set of goals for private lands conservation across the state that will:**

- **Unify the Work of Land Trusts**
  - Call on the conservation community to focus efforts on protecting and connecting critical habitats for wildlife, landscapes at risk of being converted or developed, and vital waterways.
  - Foster synergy and increased partnerships among land trusts and across jurisdictions by collectively brainstorming solutions and projects based on the plan’s priorities.
- **Map Priority Landscapes Critical for Resiliency in the Face of Climate Change and Population Growth**
  - Use The Nature Conservancy’s *Resilient and Connected Networks (RCN)* tool to identify and prioritize the landscapes and the number of acres critical to conserve over the next 10 years to ensure connectivity of large natural areas, promote health and survival of wildlife and fish, and enable Colorado communities to prepare for and adapt to change.
  - Incorporate regional priorities and the Colorado Water Plan goals to ensure that private lands conservation goals align.
- **Increase Community-Driven and Community-Focused Conservation**
  - Create a guide for proven, successful community conservation service models and projects.





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- Promote on-the-ground conservation efforts that are initiated by communities, are supported by communities and engage communities.
- Increase Funding Opportunities for Conservation
  - Identify and secure funding for an initial round of implementation projects from the plan.
  - Identify new funding opportunities for ongoing implementation and an increased pace of conservation.

| Tasks   |
|---|
| <b>Task 1 – Listening Tour</b>  |
| Description of Task:  |
| <p>We will engage an advisory council to help finalize the plan objectives and desired outcomes. The advisory council will comprise a diverse cross-section of land trust members and will also include seats for representatives from the water conservation community (including CWCB), public lands (including Colorado Parks and Wildlife), recreation and agriculture, as well as funding partners. The advisory council will serve as a sounding board and steering committee throughout the plan development and will be engaged in the broader plan adoption efforts once the final plan is published.</p> <p>Next, we will engage a plan development consultant to facilitate regional meetings with land trusts in the southwest, Front Range, Arkansas Basin and northern-central regions of the state to determine current conservation priorities. During these meetings we will also work with The Nature Conservancy to conduct trainings on its Resilient and Connected Networks (RCN) tool. This tool will be used across the land trust community to help identify and map priority landscapes necessary to increase connectivity and create more resilient lands and waters. This mapping will incorporate data from other priority-setting efforts such as Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Colorado Natural Heritage Program's CODEX and Colorado Ownership, Management and Protection (COMaP), a map of protected lands to which Keep It Colorado's members contribute data annually.</p> <p>As we engage additional stakeholders in each region, we will use meetings and surveys to capture and identify additional common priorities from representatives from water conservation organizations and the Basin Roundtables.</p> <p>The objective of the listening tour is to catalog current regional priorities and identify common areas for focused efforts statewide. We will then develop a list of the common priorities for reaction and discussion in the Plan Development Tour phase.</p> |
| Method/Procedure:   |



Last Updated: February 2021

| Tasks  |
|--|
| <p>We will primarily conduct the listening tour through virtual meetings in early 2021. We will also utilize surveys and interviews to capture additional quantitative and qualitative data. And we will review existing studies and reports previously developed at a regional level.</p> <p>Colorado Water Plan grant funds will also be used to closely review current Basin Implementation Plans and Colorado Water Plan objectives so that we can incorporate and reflect those priorities in the land conservation goals of this plan.</p> <p>The advisory council and the plan consultant will help inform and develop the specific procedures related to the listening tour.</p> |
| <p>Deliverable:</p> <p>A catalog of regional priorities and a clear list of common priorities across the state. We will refine and present this list for feedback and discussion during the Plan Development Tour.</p>   |

| Tasks                                 |
|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Task 2 – Plan Development Tour</b> |
| Description of Task:                  |



Last Updated: February 2021

| Tasks   |
|---|
| <p>We will reconvene groups from the listening tour to discuss findings and identified priorities. We will include draft paths for community conservation to connect more people to conservation work as well as the priority landscapes and watersheds identified with the Resilient and Connected Networks tool.</p> <p>In addition to discussing and finalizing the priorities, we will create a roadmap for the plan implementation with goals and objectives for coordinated conservation efforts.</p> |
| Method/Procedure:   |
| <p>We anticipate hosting the Development Tour meetings virtually. This will help ensure that we follow health and safety protocols and that our engagement is consistent across the state. It will also keep travel and meeting expenses down.</p> <p>We will conduct a second round of surveys to gather additional data and feedback on the draft priorities and goals and objectives for the conservation work.</p>  |
| Deliverable:  |
| <p>A list of statewide priorities and common goals and objectives for private lands conservation that will ensure more connected and resilient landscapes and coordinated land and water conservation efforts.</p>  |

| Tasks                         |
|-------------------------------|
| <b>Task 3 – Plan Drafting</b> |
| Description of Task:          |



Last Updated: February 2021

| Tasks  |
|--|
| With the established statewide priorities, goals and objectives, we will draft a plan for coordinated conservation efforts across the state. The plan draft will be shared with stakeholders for input and feedback along the way. |
| Method/Procedure:  |
| We will draft the plan with an initial small team consisting of the plan consultant, Keep It Colorado staff and the plan advisory council. We will share the draft with stakeholders for additional feedback before finalizing it. |
| Deliverable:   |
| A final plan that is ready for release and implementation.   |

| Tasks   |
|---|
| <b>Task 4 – Plan Release and Implementation</b> |
| Description of Task:                            |



Last Updated: February 2021

| Tasks  |
|--|
| <p>As part of the plan release, we will encourage each member and partner to formally adopt the plan. We will share the plan with larger statewide initiatives, including statewide pathways to achieve 30x30; the Outdoor Regional Partnerships Initiative and comprehensive conservation and outdoor recreation plan; the Colorado Water Plan update; and the Natural Work Lands Strategic Plan for the Greenhouse Gas Roadmap, to encourage them to incorporate the plan's goals and objectives into their initiatives. Incorporating the final Colorado Private Lands Conservation Plan into these larger initiatives will give a focus and strategy to the conservation of the private landscapes we know are necessary to create a resilient future. Without a coordinated plan, the goals around the conservation of private lands for each of these initiatives and the work on the ground will remain fragmented.</p> <p>We will also develop a communications strategy for the plan release. The goal will be to ensure that the plan not only reaches the land trusts and partners we engaged in the process, but also receives attention and continued support from policy makers and funders.</p> <p>To kick off the implementation phase, we will use the plan to identify initial projects that will energize audiences and keep forward momentum on the implementation of the plan. Ongoing fundraising throughout the plan development will result in a pool of resources for these initial implementation projects and draw attention from new funders. Through this task, we will also identify barriers to increased conservation funding and strategize solutions to help meet funding gaps across the state.</p> |
| Method/Procedure:  |
| <p>We will work with our members and partners to secure a formal "sign-on" to the final plan. We will also participate in planning meetings and projects of, and offer support for, the larger statewide initiatives mentioned above with the intention that those efforts will recognize and incorporate the plan's objectives.</p> <p>We will develop a communications strategy that involves a coordinated release of the plan and leverages our partners' networks for widespread dissemination. The strategy will include outreach to various traditional media outlets, social media, and outreach and engagement among state agencies and policy makers.</p> <p>Throughout the planning process we will engage and conduct outreach among current funding partners such as Great Outdoors Colorado, family foundations and state agencies. We will develop relationships with additional funding partners, identify viable grant programs and strategize any policy developments needed to increase funding opportunities.</p>  |
| Deliverable:   |
| <p>A communications and public relations strategy around the plan release and execution of the strategy resulting in broad attention to and adoption of the plan and initial implementation projects.</p> <p>A pool of funding to support approximately three to five initial projects that advance implementation of the plan, and a list of identified additional funding opportunities, models or policies needed to increase support for and implementation of the plan.</p>   |

Last Updated: February 2021

## Repeat for Task 3, Task 4, Task 5, etc.

### Budget and Schedule

This Statement of Work shall be accompanied by a combined Budget and Schedule that reflects the Tasks identified in the Statement of Work and shall be submitted to CWCB in excel format.

### Reporting Requirements

**Progress Reports:** The applicant shall provide the CWCB a progress report every 6 months, beginning from the date of issuance of a purchase order, or the execution of a contract. The progress report shall describe the status of the tasks identified in the statement of work, including a description of any major issues that have occurred and any corrective action taken to address these issues.

**Final Report:** At completion of the project, the applicant shall provide the CWCB a Final Report on the applicant's letterhead that:

- Summarizes the project and how the project was completed.
- Describes any obstacles encountered, and how these obstacles were overcome.
- Confirms that all matching commitments have been fulfilled.
- Includes photographs, summaries of meetings and engineering reports/designs.

The CWCB will pay out the last 10% of the budget when the Final Report is completed to the satisfaction of CWCB staff. Once the Final Report has been accepted, and final payment has been issued, the purchase order or grant will be closed without any further payment.

### Payment

Payment will be made based on actual expenditures and must include invoices for all work completed. The request for payment must include a description of the work accomplished by task, an estimate of the percent completion for individual tasks and the entire Project in relation to the percentage of budget spent, identification of any major issues, and proposed or implemented corrective actions.

Costs incurred prior to the effective date of this contract are not reimbursable. The last 10% of the entire grant will be paid out when the final deliverable has been received. All products, data and information developed as a result of this contract must be provided to CWCB in hard copy and electronic format as part of the project documentation.

### Performance Measures

Performance measures for this contract shall include the following:

(a) Performance standards and evaluation: Grantee will produce detailed deliverables for each task as specified. Grantee shall maintain receipts for all project expenses and documentation of the minimum in-kind contributions (if applicable) per the budget in Exhibit B. Per Water Plan Grant Guidelines, the CWCB will pay out the last 10% of the budget when the Final Report is completed to the satisfaction of CWCB staff. Once the



Last Updated: February 2021

### Performance Measures

Final Report has been accepted, and final payment has been issued, the purchase order or grant will be closed without any further payment.

(b) Accountability: Per Water Plan Grant Guidelines full documentation of project progress must be submitted with each invoice for reimbursement. Grantee must confirm that all grant conditions have been complied with on each invoice. In addition, per Water Plan Grant Guidelines, Progress Reports must be submitted at least once every 6 months. A Final Report must be submitted and approved before final project payment.

(c) Monitoring Requirements: Grantee is responsible for ongoing monitoring of project progress per Exhibit A. Progress shall be detailed in each invoice and in each Progress Report, as detailed above. Additional inspections or field consultations will be arranged as may be necessary.

(d) Noncompliance Resolution: Payment will be withheld if grantee is not current on all grant conditions. Flagrant disregard for grant conditions will result in a stop work order and cancellation of the Grant Agreement.



## GATES FAMILY FOUNDATION

25 February 2021

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
Colorado's Water Plan Grant

Dear Water Plan Grant Review Panel,

I am writing today on behalf of the Gates Family Foundation to endorse the Colorado's Water Plan Grant proposal from Keep It Colorado - Colorado's Private Lands Conservation Plan. Land conservation has had a profound impact on the unique quality of life in Colorado for over 30 years and represents a significant portion of the Gates Family Foundation's conservation legacy. Land trusts across the state have worked with their communities and landowners to conserve open spaces, protect family farms and ranches, keep our air and water clean, and provide more access to the outdoors. It is now time to look to the future. With increasing pressures from population growth, outdoor recreation, and climate change, Colorado needs a plan to prioritize the most connected and resilient landscapes and a strategy that connects the state's various land and water conservation efforts.

Strategic conservation of Colorado's land is necessary for the successful implementation of Colorado's Water Plan and to ensure the protection of critical watersheds and river basins, wildlife corridors, and healthy, thriving communities. Keep It Colorado is partnering with The Nature Conservancy to bring the science to unify the land trust community by identifying priority landscapes for coordinated conservation work that includes a focus on water.

The Gates Family Foundation supports this project because our partners are working throughout Colorado on projects that will benefit from additional, connected conservation work and by collectively focusing the protection efforts of the land trusts and their partners. With a shared vision for conservation in Colorado, this project can better connect land and water conservation efforts. I strongly encourage your support for Keep It Colorado's proposal.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Russell Schnitzer  
Senior Program Officer  
Gates Family Foundation

February 23, 2021

Colorado Water Conservation Board  
1313 Sherman, Room 718  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to express The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) strong support for Keep it Colorado's (KIC) CWCB grant proposal titled *Connectivity and Resilience Through Conservation: Colorado's Private Lands Conservation Plan* and to urge your favorable consideration and funding. Strategic conservation of Colorado's lands and waters will be critical to the successful implementation of Colorado's Water Plan by contributing to the protection and resilience of watersheds and river basins, wildlife corridors, and healthy, thriving communities.

We are excited to be supporting KIC in this unique and timely initiative that will provide a collaborative, climate-informed and strategic roadmap for the future of private lands conservation in Colorado. This roadmap will be a key piece in the larger puzzle of connected and resilient conservation across the state and will inform related efforts such as the update to Colorado's Water Plan, the state's Outdoor Regional Partnerships initiative and the emerging 30x30 dialogues which are focused on ensuring that Colorado's critical lands and waters are sustained across all ownerships for the benefit of both people and nature.

The Nature Conservancy will contribute to this initiative, in part, by providing education and technical support to local land trusts and partners in the use of our Resilient and Connected Network (RCN) data and tools. The RCN can be used, as a complement to other data sources, to help local, regional and statewide collaborative groups identify and conserve landscapes that are climate resilient and to build connectivity between those landscapes so that wildlife will have the room to move and adapt as conditions change.

Time is of the essence for developing this plan and moving quickly to coordinated implementation. In Colorado, the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated already tremendous pressure on land development and conversion, particularly in rural and mountain communities. As this pressure increases, combined with impacts from drought and intense recreation demand, it will only become more difficult to conserve the lands needed to ensure connectivity and resilience for a sustainable future.

Thank you for your careful consideration of KIC's proposal. We believe this Private Lands Conservation Plan will serve as a unique and critical catalyst to help land trusts, communities and partners conserve the private landscapes we'll need, in combination with public resources, to ensure Colorado sustains the many benefits our lands and water provide for future generations.

Sincerely,



Carlos E. Fernandez  
Colorado State Director