



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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Jared Polis, Governor

Dan Gibbs, DNR Executive Director

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Greg Johnson

DATE: July 22, 2021

SUBJECT: Agenda Item 21: Water Education Colorado Scope of Work Review

Staff recommendation: Staff recommends the Board approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2022 Scope of Work for Water Education Colorado (WEco).

Background

The CWCB has supported Water Education Colorado since its inception in 2002. This support has included board membership and guidance, partnering on numerous outreach and educational efforts, as well as financial support from the CWCB Construction Fund as well as other various CWCB grant programs.

From Fiscal Year 2002 to Fiscal Year 2020 the CWCB supported WEco (fka Colorado Foundation for Water Education) with an annual, automatic \$150,000 grant from the Construction Fund through a legislative mechanism known as a “continuous appropriation.” During the 2020 legislative session this appropriation was removed indefinitely through the 2020 CWCB Projects Bill (HB 20-1403), but was reinstated during the 2021 legislative session as an amendment to the 2021 Projects Bill (SB 21-189).

As such, the proposed Fiscal Year 2022 WEco Scope of Work (Scope) is presented for Board review and approval. As in past years, the proposed Scope supports WEco’s annual operations, water education, and outreach programs. The Scope covers numerous efforts that align with both organizations’ missions in the form of four overarching tasks: Operational Support, Public Outreach, Water Education & Leadership Programs, and Content Programs. The subtasks within each section allow the CWCB and WEco to strategically prioritize work related to various aspects of Colorado’s Water Plan.

Lauren Ris and Greg Johnson currently serve as CWCB representatives on WEco’s Board, along with Kelly Romero-Heaney serving as the DNR representative. Jennie Geurts, WEco’s Director of Operations, and Lisa Darling, President of WEco’s Board of Trustees, will be present at the meeting to make a presentation and answer questions. The proposed Scope and summary table are attached, along with a WEco memo providing more background information.





Memorandum

July 9, 2021

From: Jayla Poppleton, Executive Director

To: Colorado Water Conservation Board

Subject: Fiscal Year 2022 Scope of Work for Annual State Allocation

This memo is to provide background and an overview of the proposed FY2022 Water Education Colorado Scope of Work in advance of the 7/21/21-7/22/21 CWCB Board meeting.

Background:

In 2002, amid the worst single-year drought in state history, the Colorado General Assembly passed legislation enabling Water Education Colorado's establishment by dedicating recurring, annual funding via the Colorado Water Conservation Board's Construction Fund.

HB02-1152, the 2002 CWCB Projects Bill, also gave WEco its legislative mandate: "To promote a better understanding of water issues through educational opportunities and resources so Colorado citizens will understand water as a limited resource and will make informed water decisions."

That recurring funding allocation of \$150,000 annually, which had been in place since 2002, was eliminated during spring 2020 budget cuts, but restored by SB21-189, the 2021 CWCB Projects Bill.

Unique governance structure to ensure balanced representation and credibility:

WEco was given such a critical role in protecting the future of this state through its water education work that its governance structure was set up very purposefully to ensure its work would remain independent and would not be controlled by the current administration or any one interest area. It is much more inclusive than any one administration, state agency or water sector. Instead, WEco's governing board includes representation from a wide range of interest areas, geographies, as well as the current administration and the legislature. This guarantees credibility, and that balanced and diverse viewpoints are included in WEco's programs and publications.

As outlined in its bylaws, the WEco Board of Trustees includes a member of the House of Representatives, the Senate, the Department of Natural Resources, two directors appointed by the CWCB, two members appointed by Colorado Water Congress, and the rest of the board representing Colorado's diverse geographic and water use areas as well as other professional educators from respected institutions. There are currently 24 total members on the Board.

Funding relationship and annual work plan with CWCB:

Over the past 19 years, with the exception of FY2021, WEco has worked annually with the CWCB to discuss how the state's appropriated funds will be allocated across WEco's work plan.

Since its release in 2015, much of WEco's work has corresponded with, and been in support of, the Colorado Water Plan. This includes:

- Publishing numerous issues of Headwaters magazine to highlight progress toward Water Plan measurable outcomes and call attention to Water Plan priorities (e.g. Spring '21 issue on Storage; Summer '19 issue on Permitting; Fall '18 issue on Reuse; Summer '18 issue on Stream Management Planning; Fall '17 issue on ATMs; Summer '15 issue on Land Use; and of course the Winter '15 issue about the newly launched Water Plan itself).
- Showcasing Water Plan and Basin Implementation Plan goals on its annual river basin tours;
- Highlighting in its leadership programs the role of the CWCB and Basin Roundtables in setting priorities and accomplishing them within the context of the Water Plan;
- Convening Water Plan-focused educational sessions during the annual Sustaining Colorado Watersheds conference; and
- Continuing to convene and support the Water Educator Network and leading development of the 2020-2025 Statewide Water Education Action Plan as a shared, collective-action education strategy supporting the Colorado Water Plan's vision.

Our programs will continue to call attention to the Water Plan and Basin Implementation Plans and their goals as they continue through their respective updates, as well as to public engagement opportunities for review, comment and input.

We also regularly highlight other CWCB programs and opportunities for stakeholders. This includes, but is not limited to, providing information on the Instream Flow Program, opportunities for financing projects through CWCB grants and loans, work on flood and fire mitigation and restoration, and ongoing efforts to protect Colorado's share of the Colorado River.

FY2022 scope overview and Colorado Water Plan connections:

This proposed scope includes 4 primary tasks, including Operational Support, Public Outreach, Education and Leadership Programs, and Content Programs, summarized in the table at the end of this memo. This Scope contributes to just over \$570,000 in WEco programs and operations out of a total FY2022 budget of \$953,850 that was approved by the WEco Board of Trustees on 5/14/2021. Work will take place between July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022.

This scope helps to advance 2015 Colorado Water Plan goals first and foremost by calling attention to them and helping decision makers, water sector professionals, and community members understand opportunities to advance implementation through financing, partnerships, technology, best practice, and other solutions. Other specific Water Plan goals this scope advances include:

- Significantly improve the level of public awareness and engagement regarding water issues statewide by 2020, as determined by water awareness surveys. *Executive Summary: Measurable Objectives, Actions and Future Updates*
- Expand outreach and education efforts that engage the public and promote well-informed community discourse regarding balanced water solutions. *Outreach, Education & Public Engagement, Sec. 9.5*
- Foster continued engagement of the Water Education Task Force (now Water Educator Network) and use the network of existing water educators in a coordinated fashion to educate the various and diverse audiences in Colorado. *Outreach, Education & Public Engagement Actions, Sec. 9.5*

- Inform Coloradans about water issues to encourage engagement and innovation in determining Colorado's water future. Education Critical Action, Ch. 10

In addition, while the Water Plan does not directly call for investment in the knowledge and skills of the work force needed to carry out its goals, continued implementation of the plan will require the next generation of leaders to be versed in the techniques of collaboration and compromise, to be exposed to different values and priorities from other sectors and regions of the state, and to have a diverse professional network. Our leadership programs foster this kind of skilled, collaborative leadership within our profession and, by widening the experience and networks of the class members, are foundational to implementing many of the Water Plan recommendations in communities and organizations across Colorado.

WEco Construction Fund Allocation FY2022 Scope of Work Summary Table

Task #1: Operational Support					
<i>Subtask</i>		<i>Time of Deliverable</i>	<i>Description of Deliverable</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>CWCB Contribution</i>
1.1	Strategic Plan Implementation	June 2022	Develop and implement FY22 work plan and track progress on strategic plan; develop FY23 work plan	\$15,600	\$4,000
1.2	Financial Management and Reporting	Jan. 2022	Complete FY2021 year-end audit and final report	\$9,800	\$3,000
1.3	Maintain and update web platform	June 2022	Maintain website functionality and identify opportunities to improve user experience and viewer metrics	\$14,000	\$3,500
Task 1 Total				\$39,400	\$10,500
Task #2: Public Outreach					
<i>Subtask</i>		<i>Time of Deliverable</i>	<i>Description of Deliverable</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>CWCB Contribution</i>
2.1	General Public Outreach	June 2022	Provide presentations to various community groups and conferences, promote educational opportunities and resources, support EDI work with Colorado Water Congress, advise on Water in the West with SPUR, and other miscellaneous opportunities	\$22,500	\$7,500
2.2	Water '22	June 2022	Coordinate a broad coalition of partners, develop a campaign strategy, timeline and materials, and coordinate implementation of first half of campaign strategy and activities	\$116,200	\$25,000
Task 2 Total				\$138,700	\$32,500
Task #2: Water Education & Leadership Programs					
<i>Subtask</i>		<i>Time of Deliverable</i>	<i>Description of Deliverable</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>CWCB Contribution</i>
3.1	Water Fluency Program	June 2022	Deliver 2021 program and plan, market and open registration for 2022 program	\$32,400	\$10,000
3.2	Water Leaders Program	June 2022	Complete second half of 2021 program and first half of 2022 program	\$97,100	\$10,000
3.3	Water Educator Network	June 2022	Complete second half of 2021 program and first half of 2022 program	\$73,600	\$30,000
3.4	Tours	June 2022	Host multi-day tour of Upper Colorado River Basin and urban water cycle tour series in 2-3 locations	\$45,800	\$15,000
Task 3 Total				\$248,900	\$65,000
Task #4: Content Programs					
<i>Subtask</i>		<i>Time of Deliverable</i>	<i>Description of Deliverable</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>CWCB Contribution</i>
4.1	Headwaters Fall '21 - Watershed Health and Wildfires	November 2021	Publish and distribute fall issue	\$35,200	\$10,000
4.2	Headwaters Winter '22 - Tribes and the Colorado River	March 2022	Publish and distribute winter issue	\$35,200	\$10,000
4.3	Headwaters Spring/Summer '22 - On-Farm Sustainable Ag Practices and Water	June 2022	Publish and distribute spring/summer issue	\$35,200	\$10,000
4.4	Complimentary content including webinars and blog posts tied to Headwaters topics	June 2022	Produce one webinar and 1-2 blog posts following publication of Spring '21 (Storage), Fall '22, and Winter '22 issues of Headwaters, digging deeper into the	\$15,000	\$4,500
4.5	Citizen's Guides - Translating one guide to Spanish and distribution	June 2022	Publish one Spanish language Citizen's Guide and expand distribution of existing guide library	\$23,500	\$7,500
Task 4 Total				\$144,100	\$42,000
TOTAL				\$571,100	\$150,000



Proposed FY2022 WEco-CWCB Scope of Work

Operational Support

1.1 Strategic Plan Implementation

Overview

In January 2020, the WEco Board of Trustees adopted a new strategic plan to guide our work from 2020-2025. The plan identifies both internal-facing and external-facing goals for long-term sustainability and expanded impact. Although the plan provided high-level vision that was embraced and considered during the past fiscal year, due to the tumultuous nature of 2020, a specific work plan to make progress on the plan's goals has not yet been developed or put in place.

The plan, importantly, includes a strong emphasis on achieving equity in educational programs and improved access and reach to underrepresented audiences, whether geographic, ethnic or socioeconomic. In order to activate the plan to accomplish its goals, WEco will develop a one-year work plan for FY2022 and another for FY2023. The FY2022 plan will be used to guide and measure progress against the strategic plan's goals during the coming year.

Work Plan

- Working with WEco Board and Committees, develop and implement FY2022 work plan
- Develop FY2023 work plan

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	CWCB Contribution
Throughout FY2022	\$15,600	\$4,000

1.2 Financial Management and Reporting

Overview

Every year WEco completes a financial review, and once every three years undergoes a more thorough financial audit. WEco will work with a consultant to accomplish its tri-

annual audit of FY2021 during FY2022. In addition, WEco produces an annual report to provide transparency in financial information, acknowledge donors, and share out on impact. This helps us stay connected to our supporters and convey the value of our work, as well as to build additional capacity through fostering ongoing membership and donation support.

Work Plan

- Perform FY2021 financial audit during FY2022
- Complete and distribute FY2021 year-end annual report in FY2022

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	CWCB Contribution
October 2021- January 2022	\$9,800	\$3,000

1.3 Maintain and Update Web Platform

Overview

WEco developed and launched a new website in 2017 to vastly improve our digital presence and availability of our digital resources. The site serves as a hub for all things WEco, including archives of all past publications, radio programs, webinars, and more. The site requires regular maintenance in order to maintain functionality, improve Search Engine Optimization so that interested learners can readily find our information, and improve the user experience.

Work Plan

- Engage web developer in annual maintenance contract
- Review google analytics to understand how viewers are interacting with the site and evaluate opportunities for improvement
- Prioritize and implement improvements

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	CWCB Contribution
Throughout FY2022	\$14,000	\$3,500

General Public Outreach

2.1 General Public Outreach

Overview

Colorado continues to welcome thousands of new residents every month who are unfamiliar with the water resource constraints and concerns in our state. WEco has also consistently heard from members and the wider water community that more general public education and outreach is needed in order to raise awareness, promote sustainable water behaviors, and inform decision making. Additionally, WEco staff members are regularly asked to give presentations to community groups and conferences, or to participate in and advise on educational opportunities and resources in collaborative forums.

Work Plan

- Provide presentations as requested for community groups
- Identify relevant resources for community groups as requested
- Present at conferences to promote educational opportunities and resources
- Participate and support collaborative forums including the Water and Land Use Alliance, South Platte River Urban Waters Partnership, Colorado Water Congress Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee, advise on Water in the West with SPUR, and respond to other miscellaneous opportunities

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	CWCB Contribution
Throughout FY2022	\$22,500	\$7,500

2.2 Water '22

Overview

WEco will lead the Water 2022 campaign, building off of the success of the Water 2012 campaign’s success 10 years prior. Water ‘22 will aim to raise awareness among a wider range of Coloradans about the value of water, the role of water management organizations, successful models of collaboration, and opportunities to continue learning. In addition, the campaign will promote engagement in sustainable water behaviors and participation in discourse and decision making processes, including the Colorado Water Plan update. 2022 is timely and relevant for a number of reasons, including that it coincides with the centennial of the Colorado River Compact as well as WEco’s 20th anniversary and the update to the 2015 Colorado Water Plan.

Work Plan

- Coordinate a broad coalition of partners to participate in the campaign (Water 2012 had 600 participating entities)
- Develop a campaign strategy, timeline and shareable materials and toolkits
- Coordinate implementation of the first half of the campaign strategy and activities, through June 30, 2022, with the remainder to come in the following fiscal year

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	CWCB Contribution
Throughout FY2022	\$116,200	\$25,000

Water Education & Leadership Programs

3.1 Water Fluency Program

Overview

In its seventh year, WEco's Water Fluency Program offers elected officials, appointed water board members, students and members of the public immersion in the language and concepts of water as well as tools for navigating the culture, complexity and future of water management and policy issues. Topics covered include an orientation to basic hydrology, water law and administration, water quality protection, funding opportunities for projects (including CWCB grants and loan programs), the Basin Roundtables and Colorado Water Plan, land use and water efficiency, watershed health and protection, stream management planning, Colorado River drought contingency plans, and more.

This in-depth curriculum consistently receives strong positive feedback, and has filled or exceeded the 35-class-member capacity every year. WEco will offer the 2021 program virtually, with a focus on Northwest Colorado and the Yampa/White/Green Basin, and will prepare to hold the 2022 program in-person in either the Gunnison or upper Colorado River Basin.

Work Plan

- Hold the 3 sessions (4 days) of the 2021 program between July and September. CWCB will receive a free spot for one staff person or board member to participate in the 2021 class.
- Collect and analyze feedback, adjust the curriculum based upon that feedback.
- Plan, market and open registration for the 2022 program.

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	CWCB Contribution
Throughout FY2022	\$33,800	\$10,000

3.2 Water Leaders Program

Overview

The Water Leaders Program is a highly regarded professional development program for water professionals who have demonstrated a sincere commitment to Colorado water as well as strong leadership potential. The curriculum instills leadership and

management principles in a select group of water professionals each year and grows their peer network so that they can be more effective in charting a path toward innovative and collaborative water solutions. Since 2006, 190 graduates have completed the program, including a number of CWCB staff and current board members, as well as other prominent leaders in the Colorado water community.

CWCB’s contribution through the Scope of Work keeps tuition for the Water Leaders Program affordable. Combined with other sponsorship support, CWCB funding keeps tuition nearly 20 percent lower than it would otherwise be.

In addition to the annual Water Leaders Program offering, WEco provides Water Leaders 2.0 training opportunities for alumni to continue to improve their skills.

Work Plan

WEco will engage in the following:

- Complete the second half of the 2021 Water Leaders Program.
- Collect and analyze feedback; adjust the curriculum based upon that feedback.
- Market the 2022 program, select applicants and run the first half of the 2022 Water Leaders Program.
- Hold a 2.0 training opportunity focused on inclusive leadership.

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	CWCB Contribution
Throughout FY2022	\$97,100	\$10,000

3.3 Water Educator Network

Overview

The Water Educator Network is an affiliate group of educators who are interested in increasing the amount, quality and effectiveness of water education in Colorado. The Network’s goal is to increase the capacity of local water educators by providing members with tools, trainings and collaborations that are relevant to their work, easily accessible and simple to implement. The Public Education Participation and Outreach (PEPO) liaisons from each river basin typically participate, along with K-12 educators, public affairs professionals, nonprofit communications leads, and others. WEco also worked with Network affiliates to develop the Statewide Water Education Action Plan (SWEAP) with a five-year time horizon from 2020-2025. The plan is an outcome of the Colorado Water Plan and defines a set of shared outcomes and metrics that educators across the state can collectively work toward to achieve measurable impact.

Work Plan

- Launch the first WEN affinity groups, where water educators targeting similar audiences or working on similar programs or shared SWEAP strategies can

find support. This will build from the model of past Water Festival Coordinators Gatherings.

- Hold the annual WEN Symposium, including trainings and presentations centered on a theme identified by affiliates as a top priority.
- Continue to serve as the host institution for Project WET (Water Education Today) curriculum, offering at least one training for facilitators and one for educators.
- Continue to recruit and build relationships with new water educators to grow WEN
- Maintain regular communications, including through a quarterly e-newsletter, to connect WEN affiliates with shared resources, professional development, and opportunities for collaboration

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	CWCB Contribution
Throughout FY2022	\$73,600	\$30,000

3.4 Tours

Overview

WEco’s one-day and multi-day tours are an opportunity for decision makers, water professionals and interested citizens to see water management in action and to get an up-close look at the challenges and opportunities currently before the industry. Tours regularly hit capacity, and generally one-half of tour attendees are individuals new to WEco.

Work Plan

- WEco will produce one multi-day Annual Basin tour in the upper Colorado River Basin. The Colorado Basin Roundtable will be invited to provide input in the planning of the Annual Basin tour in order to focus a portion of the agenda on their Basin Implementation Plan. The CWCB will receive a seat on the tour free of charge.
- WEco will engage and support local partners to deliver 2-3 Urban Water Cycle Tours focused on water quality and other challenges related to urban waterways in Denver, Fort Collins (tentative), and Colorado Springs.

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	CWCB Contribution
Throughout FY2022	\$45,800	\$15,000

Content Programs

4.1 Headwaters Fall 2021 issue: Watershed Health and Wildfire

Overview

WEco has published Headwaters magazine since 2003 and now boasts more than 50 issues in its archives, all of which are available online. The magazine continues to tackle tough issues in an accessible, engaging way, highlighting diverse perspectives, case studies and human interest stories from across Colorado and the west, and providing opportunities for engagement and further learning.

Coverage highlights recent innovations, collaborations, policy developments, and challenges/opportunities on the given topic in order to inform the statewide water community, decision makers, and interested citizens from a non-advocacy perspective. Many of the topics highlighted in the past five years have centered on goals and priorities identified in the Colorado Water Plan, such as land use and water efficiency, reuse, storage, climate change and improved permitting processes.

The first issue in FY22 will focus on watershed health and wildfire, another water plan priority elevated further by the dramatic 2021 wildfire season. The issue will focus both on watershed restoration post-fire to protect water resources, as well as pre-fire mitigation to improve watershed health and reduce the risk of catastrophic fire.

Work Plan

WEco will produce the following:

- Fall 2021 issue of *Headwaters* magazine on Watershed Health and Wildfire
- CWCB will receive 25 copies of the *Headwaters* magazine free of charge and be invited to serve on the peer review work group

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	CWCB Contribution
July-November 2022	\$35,200	\$10,000

4.2 Headwaters Winter issue 2022: Tribes and the Colorado River

Overview

The second Headwaters issue of FY22 will circle back on past reporting covering the long-term drought on the Colorado River and implications to Colorado River management, with a focus on Tribal water rights. The issue will cover Tribes' role in Colorado River Basin, from drought contingency planning to participation in upcoming negotiations for the Interim Guidelines.

WEco’s new strategic plan includes a strong focus on equity and inclusion of historically underrepresented voices, and this issue will be an opportunity to help more Coloradans understand the challenges and opportunities Tribes have faced and continue to face with regard to water, as well as implications to other water users in the Colorado River system as Tribes gain more certainty around their rights.

Work Plan

WEco will produce the following:

- Half-day gathering of experts to identify the issues, current research, challenges and opportunities that WEco should focus on
- Winter 2022 issue of *Headwaters* magazine on Tribes and the Colorado River
- CWCB will receive 25 copies of the *Headwaters* magazine free of charge and be invited to serve on the peer review work group

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	CWCB Contribution
August 2021-March 2022	\$35,200	\$10,000

4.3 Headwaters Summer issue 2022: Sustainable On-Farm Management for Water

Overview

Research, innovation and new policies and programs are improving drought resilience, water efficiency and water quality protection on Colorado’s agricultural lands. The final FY22 issue of *Headwaters* will explore the advances Colorado’s producers are making in on-farm management when it comes to stretching scarce supplies and protecting water quality.

Work Plan

WEco will produce the following:

- Half-day gathering of experts to identify the issues, current research, challenges and opportunities that WEco should focus on
- Summer 2022 issue of *Headwaters* magazine focused on Sustainable On-Farm Management and Water
- CWCB will receive 25 copies of the *Headwaters* magazine free of charge and will be invited to serve on the peer review work group

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	CWCB Contribution
November 2021-June 2022	\$35,200	\$10,000

4.4 Companion content

Overview

Following the publication of each issue of Headwaters magazine, WEco produces companion content in other non-print channels, including webinars and the Your Water Colorado blog. Build on description

Work Plan

- Publish series of related blog articles authored by WEco staff and experts following each issue of Headwaters.
- Host one webinar following each issue of Headwaters, based on selected content

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	CWCB Contribution
Throughout FY2022	\$15,000	\$4,500

4.5 Citizen's Guide Translation and Distribution

Overview

WEco has built its Citizen's Guide series over time, and currently offers 10 reference guides, which serve as comprehensive primers on key aspects of water management, history, law and quality. Many of these guides have been updated to new editions in recent years, and the Citizen's Guide library is currently well stocked. Identifying new opportunities for distribution to reach new audiences is a high priority.

WEco has also identified a need to provide more educational resources in Spanish in order to increase access and equity in water education. In 2020, we published our first-ever issue of Headwaters in Spanish, and in FY22 we will publish a Spanish version of one high-priority Citizen's Guide.

Work Plan

- Increase distribution of existing Citizen's Guide library to reach new audiences
- Meet with a focus group of Spanish-speaking community members and professionals to determine which Citizen's Guide would provide the most value if translated into Spanish
- Translate and publish one high-priority Citizen's Guide in Spanish
- Identify and work distribution channels for Spanish guide

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	CWCB Contribution
Throughout FY2022	\$23,500	\$7,500