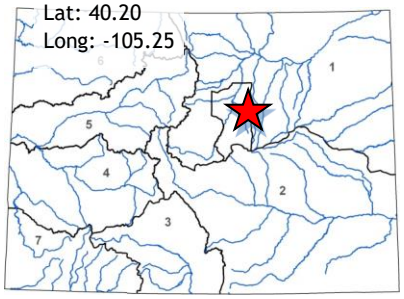
COLORADO
Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan Grant Application

Dryland Research Expansion Phase II
Drylands Agroecology Research

March 2022 Board Meeting



LOCATION	
County/Counties:	Boulder
Drainage Basin:	South Platte

DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	$535,000
Water Plan Grant Request:	$340,000
Other CWCB Funding:	$0
Other Funding Amount:	$165,000
Applicant Match:	$30,000
Project Type(s):	Study
Project Category(Categories):	Agriculture
Measurable Result:	45 acres of restored or preserved habitat; 900 Coloradans impacted by engagement activity

This grant request would fund expansion to two new properties of a research operation focused on dryland farming techniques.

Drylands Agroecology Research (DAR) is an independent research organization located in North Boulder County. It owns open land which was the site of their Phase I work consisting of studying the effects of improved dryland farming techniques paired with livestock ranging.

DAR intends to take the results of their Phase I work and apply the lessons learned to Phase II. This work would consist of (1) installing swales and windbreak plantings, (2) installing fencing and other infrastructure necessary for maintaining livestock, and (3) continuing resilient grain trials and breeding, including introducing perennial wheat.

The objective of Phase II is to track metrics on both properties to understand how well the systems are functioning. Metrics include water infiltration rate, soil organic matter percentages, bulk density, water holding capacity, crop yields, and growth and survival rates of trees/shrubs by species.

This application for this grant was submitted with support letters from Kitisis Capital, the Ladybug Foundation, the Tumbleweed Fund, the City of Boulder, and Boulder County.

Funding Recommendation:
Staff is not recommending approval of the grant request. The review matrix score was low relative to the other applications reviewed this round. Feedback from the Agriculture Review committee suggested that the request was of a lower relative priority as well. While the agricultural aspects of the project are front-and-center, the water nexus is less direct than that of the other applications reviewed this round.