



COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Jared Polis, Governor

Dan Gibbs, DNR Executive Director

Rebecca Mitchell, CWCB Director

TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Elizabeth Schoder, Water Supply Planning

DATE: May 18, 2023 CWCB Board Meeting

ITEM: Agenda Item #28 Water Education Colorado’s Work Plan - Annual Allocation

Staff recommendation: Staff recommends the Board approve the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Scope of Work for Water Education Colorado (WEco).

Background

The CWCB has supported WEco since its inception in 2002. This support has included serving on the WEco board, providing guidance, partnering on numerous outreach and educational efforts, and financial support from the CWCB Construction Fund as well as from other various CWCB grant programs and funding sources.

From Fiscal Year 2002 to Fiscal Year 2020 the CWCB supported WEco (formerly known as Colorado Foundation for Water Education) with an annual \$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 21189). The Board approved the Fiscal Year 2023 WEco Scope of Work in May 2022.

As such, the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 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 the Colorado Water Plan.

Elizabeth Schoder and Katie Weeman currently serve as the CWCB representatives on WEco’s Board, along with Kelly Romero-Heaney serving as the DNR representative. Jayla Poppleton, WEco’s Executive Director, will be present at the meeting to make a presentation and answer questions. The proposed Scope and summary table are attached.



FY2024 WEco-CWCB Scope of Work

Submitted for Approval

This Scope of Work identifies how the state legislative annual allocation via the CWCB Construction Fund, in sum of \$150,000, will be used to support Water Education Colorado (WEco) operations and programs in Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024).

Operational Support

1.1 Strategic Plan Implementation

Overview

In January 2020, the WEco Board of Trustees adopted a 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. 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 continue to activate the plan to accomplish its goals, WEco will fine-tune a one-year work plan for FY24 and another looking ahead to FY25. The FY24 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, fine-tune and implement FY24 work plan.
- Develop FY25 work plan.

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2024	\$25,000	\$5,000

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. The last audit was conducted for FY21 and the next one will be conducted for FY24. This year, WEco will work with a consultant to accomplish a standard financial review of FY23. 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

- Engage and work with accounting firm to perform FY23 financial review.
- Complete and distribute FY23 year-end annual report.

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
June 2024	\$15,000	\$1,500

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	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2024	\$30,000	\$6,000

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, recommend resources, and to promote resources and opportunities through the Headwaters PULSE newsletter, the WEco website and social media.

In addition, WEco conducts various outreach activities to legislators throughout the legislative session. In 2023, WEco held four 101 and 201-level water workshops at the Capitol, distributed publications to legislators, and delivered a welcome packet with fact sheets, the Great Divide documentary DVD, and other opportunities to learn about water. In 2024, WEco will pursue similar opportunities.

Work Plan

- Provide presentations as requested for community groups.
- Present at conferences to promote educational opportunities and resources
- Identify relevant resources for community groups as requested.
- Promote educational opportunities and resources through newsletter and events calendar.
- Offer educational opportunities to legislators.

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2024	\$23,500	\$7,500

2.2 Participation in Collaborative Groups

Overview

WEco staff are regularly invited to participate in and advise on educational opportunities and resources through various collaborative forums and other community and educational groups.

Work Plan

- Participate and support collaborative forums including the Basin Roundtables, 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 and requests from organizations for support on outreach activities.

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2024	\$23,500	\$7,500

Water Education & Leadership Programs

3.1 Water Fluency Program

Overview

In its ninth 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 is offering the 2023 in a hybrid model, with a focus on the Rio Grande Basin. The second half of the program will be completed in FY24. WEco will also prepare to hold the 2024 program with a focus tentatively in Northern Colorado, including the North Platte River Basin, pending local partner support.

Additionally, because of the program’s popularity and effectiveness, WEco will scope out the possibility of running two sessions of Water Fluency in 2024 in order to double the number of participants who can benefit. This will be reliant on partner development to increase capacity to deliver.

Work Plan

- Hold second half of the 2023 program between July and September.
- Collect and analyze feedback, adjust the curriculum based upon that feedback.
- Plan, market and open registration for the 2024 program.
- Scope out the possibility of running 2 sessions of Water Fluency in 2024 based through partner development.

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2024	\$55,000	\$15,000

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, more than 220 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. In FY23, WEco increased the class size for Water Leaders to 20 participants, up from 16, in order to support more leaders in up-leveling their skills.

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 2023 Water Leaders Program.
- Collect and analyze feedback; adjust the curriculum based upon that feedback.
- Market the 2024 program, select applicants and run the first half of the 2024 Water Leaders Program.
- Hold a 2.0 training opportunity for program alumni.

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2024	\$123,500	\$15,000

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 defines a set of shared outcomes and metrics that educators across the state can collectively work toward to achieve measurable impact.

Work Plan

- Develop and recruit additional participation in the WEN affinity group structure, where water educators convene to work on shared SWEAP strategies.
- Hold the annual WEN Symposium, including training 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	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2024	\$87,500	\$25,000

3.4 Annual River Basin Tour

Overview

WEco’s annual river basin 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, tentatively in the Upper Arkansas River Basin. The Arkansas 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.

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2024	\$50,750	\$15,000

Content Programs

4.1 Headwaters Fall 2023 issue: One Water

Overview

WEco has published Headwaters magazine since 2003 and now boasts nearly 60 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 FY24 will focus on One Water concepts and planning opportunities to holistically view and manage water in urban settings.

Work Plan

WEco will produce the following:

- Produce and distribute Fall 2023 issue of *Headwaters* magazine on One Water.
- 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	Scope Allocation
July-November 2024	\$43,750	\$12,000

4.2 Headwaters Spring 2024 issue: Snowpack

Overview

The second issue in FY24 will be a deep dive on the role of Snowpack in the state's water supply picture. How do we rely on it, what challenges do we face, and how are we innovating ways to better measure it, protect it, and even bolster it through opportunities like cloud seeding?

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 related to the topic

- Produce and distribute Spring 2024 issue of *Headwaters* magazine on Snowpack.
- 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	Scope Allocation
August 2023-April 2024	\$38,300	\$12,000

4.3 Headwaters Summer 2024 issue: Industrial Water Use

Overview

The third issue of FY24 will tackle Industrial Water Use. What do we define as industrial water use? How is industrial water use changing or staying the same? What are the challenges and opportunities related to both water quantity and water quality when it comes to industrial water use?

Work Plan

WEco will produce the following:

- Hold half-day gathering of experts to identify the issues, current research, challenges and opportunities that WEco should focus on related to the topic.
- Produce and distribute Summer 2024 issue of *Headwaters* magazine.
- 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	Scope Allocation
November 2023-June 2024	\$43,750	\$12,000

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, to further expose audiences, deepen understanding and facilitate dialogue around the issues covered in the magazine.

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	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2024	\$20,000	\$4,500

4.5 Citizen’s Guide/Community Guide Update, 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 convened a focus group to identify two high-priority Citizen’s Guides to translate. In FY23, we published the Community Guide to Where Your Water Comes From and the Community Guide to Colorado Water Law in Spanish. We are also changing the names of the guides as they are updated or translated to Community Guides to be more inclusive.

The Citizen’s Guide to Colorado Water Conservation is the next guide in our series in need of an update. In FY24, we finish update and republish the guide to reflect the latest advances and priorities for water conservation in the municipal, agricultural and industrial sectors. We will also concurrently translate the guide into Spanish, as the third guide in the library to be available in Spanish.

Work Plan

- Continue to increase distribution of existing Citizen’s Guide library to reach new audiences.
- Continue working on new distribution channels for Spanish guides and monitor/evaluate demand for the product.
- Complete the Conservation guide update in both English and Spanish.

Schedule and Budget

Timeframe	Total Budget	Scope Allocation
Throughout FY2024	\$40,000	\$12,000

WEco Construction Fund Allocation FY2024 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>Scope Allocation</i>
1.1	Strategic Plan Implementation	July 2024	Develop and implement FY24 work plan and track progress on strategic plan; develop FY25 work plan	\$25,000	\$5,000
1.2	Financial Management and Reporting	July 2024	Complete FY2023 year-end financial review and annual report to share with members and supporters	\$15,000	\$1,500
1.3	Maintain and update web platform	July 2024	Maintain website functionality and identify opportunities to improve user experience and viewer metrics	\$30,000	\$6,000
Task 1 Total				\$70,000	\$12,500

Task #2: Public Outreach					
<i>Subtask</i>		<i>Time of Deliverable</i>	<i>Description of Deliverable</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Scope Allocation</i>
2.1	General Public Outreach	June 2024	Provide presentations to various community groups and conferences, promote educational opportunities and resources through newsletter and events calendar, offer educational opportunities to legislators	\$23,500	\$7,500
2.2	Participation in Collaborative groups	June 2024	Support EDI work with Colorado Water Congress, advise on Water in the West with SPUR, participate in collaborative groups (e.g. Basin Roundtables, South Platte Urban Waters Partnership, Water and Land Use Alliance), and support organizations with requests for other miscellaneous opportunities	\$23,500	\$7,500
Task 2 Total				\$47,000	\$15,000

Task #2: Water Education & Leadership Programs					
<i>Subtask</i>		<i>Time of Deliverable</i>	<i>Description of Deliverable</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Scope Allocation</i>
3.1	Water Fluency Program	June 2024	Deliver 2023 program and plan, market and open registration for 2024 program, scope out possibility for running 2 sessions of WF in 2024 through partner development	\$55,000	\$15,000
3.2	Water Leaders Program	June 2024	Complete second half of 2023 program and first half of 2024 program with 20 participants; offer a 201-level "shore-up" for alumni	\$123,500	\$15,000
3.3	Water Educator Network	June 2024	Host annual symposium, continue to serve as state lead for Project WET with multiple workshops per year, ongoing communications and resource sharing, collaboration and leadership on SWEAP strategies	\$87,500	\$25,000
3.4	Annual River Basin Tour	June 2024	Host multi-day tour, tentatively focused on Upper Arkansas River Basin	\$50,750	\$15,000
Task 3 Total				\$316,750	\$70,000

Task #4: Content Programs					
<i>Subtask</i>		<i>Time of Deliverable</i>	<i>Description of Deliverable</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Scope Allocation</i>
4.1	Headwaters Fall '23 - One Water	November 2023	Publish and distribute fall issue	\$43,750	\$12,000
4.2	Headwaters Spring '24 - Snowpack	April 2024	Publish and distribute winter issue	\$43,750	\$12,000
4.3	Headwaters Summer '24 - Industrial Water Use	June 2024	Publish and distribute spring/summer issue	\$43,750	\$12,000
4.4	Complimentary content including webinars and blog posts tied to Headwaters topics	June 2024	Produce one webinar and 1-2 blog posts following publication of Summer '22, Fall '22, and Winter '23 issues of Headwaters, digging deeper into the same topic focus area	\$20,000	\$4,500
4.5	Citizen's Guides / Community Guides Series	June 2024	Update and publish new edition of Citizen's Guide to Colorado Water Conservation, focus on distribution and evaluation of demand for first two Spanish-language Community Guides	\$40,000	\$12,000
Task 4 Total				\$191,250	\$52,500

TOTAL				\$625,000	\$150,000
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