



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Kirk Russell, Finance Section Chief
Tracy Kosloff, DWR Deputy State Engineer

DATE: November 15-16, 2023 Board Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: 17b. 2024 Projects Bill - Non-Reimbursable Project Investments - Presentations
(3) Southern High Plains Groundwater Study Update

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board approve \$250,000 in funding for the Southern High Plains Groundwater Study Update from the Construction Fund for inclusion in the 2024 Projects Bill.

Background

The Southern High Plains Designated Groundwater Basin is a complex aquifer system in the southeast corner of Colorado, underlying most of Baca County and southeastern Prowers County. In 2002, McLaughlin Water Engineers conducted a study titled “Hydrogeology and Water Resources of the Southern High Plains Designated Ground Water Basin.” This study explored the Basin’s groundwater formations, the volume of recoverable water in each layer, and the overall withdrawal and recharge of the system. The deeper portion of this complex aquifer system (Lower Dockum) is not well understood, but may contain considerable water supply. The Report found that the system is being mined and that recoverable groundwater life is limited. There is not consensus in the local community around continuing with the status quo where new well permits are issued for new uses, or seeking regulatory changes to restrict new well permits.

Description/Scope of Work

The Colorado Ground Water Commission is requesting this effort to provide information to the residents and to help them establish goals for their local groundwater resources. The study update will include scenario analyses and community facilitation to establish the Southern High Plains residents' goals for their groundwater resources. Community facilitation would include a presentation of the possible future outcomes for various levels of ongoing groundwater use or regulation, including likely social and economic impacts to the community.

Although the details of the proposed efforts will be further refined given local input and suggestions from the experts conducting the study, the study will describe: (1) the range of possible futures for Southern High Plains groundwater resources considering various management changes, and (2) the likely economic and social outcomes of each scenario. **Total Cost: \$250,000**





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P R O J E C T D E T A I L S	
<i>Project Cost:</i>	\$250,000
<i>NRI Funding Request:</i>	\$250,000
<i>Funding Source:</i>	Construction Fund
<i>Project Type:</i>	Study/Facilitation
<i>Type of Grantee:</i>	State Agency

L O C A T I O N	
<i>Benefits:</i>	Southeastern Colorado
<i>Water Source:</i>	N/A
<i>Drainage Basin:</i>	Arkansas

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