



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

Basin Education Action Plan (Rio Grande Basin Roundtable)

Background:

1. Basin Educational Vision/Goals:

- Please include how Basin EAP will help achieve goals in the CO Water Plan to inform/educate an additional 250,000 Coloradans by 2020?

The vision of the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable is to reach target audiences that include local community members, urban audiences outside our basin, and recreational visitors to our basin in order to communicate our values regarding the importance of agriculture, water management, collaboration between partner agencies, and natural resource stewardship. Through these key target audiences, we anticipate informing numerous Coloradans and out of staters about the Rio Grande Basin's water projects and values which in turn align with the Colorado Water Plan's goals for increasing awareness and connection with water projects, management, and use. Our Basin EAP includes strategies to implement the Statewide Water Education Action Plan (SWEAP) which is estimated to begin implementation in the next two years. We also anticipate creating communications tools that may be disseminated at a state level as well as our local Basin level, including:

- Quarterly newsletter
- Topical local news articles that may be posted to other news outlets
- Topical podcasts
- Local events in which state policy makers and other interested water community members will be invited as COVID restrictions allow
- Social media posts
- Video vignettes
- Print publications

In addition to these useful tools, we also have an active PEPO liaison who will be supported to attend statewide meetings and discussions regarding outreach and education efforts, particularly as they pertain to SWEAP, Basin Implementation Plan updates, and coordination with K-12 and higher education curriculum.

- How many people do you estimate your engagement efforts will reach?

Locally, we anticipate reaching approximately 500 people of all ages over the next year through publications and media. Statewide, we hope to impact at least 300 other basin members and urban community members through media and publications.

2. How is the Basin structured to implement the EAP? (List of Individuals/organizations Implementing EAP):

The EAP will be implemented primarily by the Rio Grande Watershed Conservation & Education Initiative, specifically executive director Bethany Howell. RGWCEI will be assisted by members of the education subcommittee, including the San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District (Heather Dutton), the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project (Emma Reesor), the Conejos Water Conservancy District (Nathan Coombs), and Colorado Open Lands (Judy Lopez). Additionally, members of the Roundtable Executive Committee and Roundtable itself will be enlisted to help implement events, such as Trout Unlimited, Alamosa Riverkeepers, irrigation districts, US Forest Service, CPW, NFW, and individual farmers and ranchers. The education subcommittee meets bi-monthly to monthly in order to assess and move projects, and the executive committee meets monthly.

How will programs be assessed/monitored?

Programs will be assessed by members of the education subcommittee and the executive committee as to effectiveness, number of people reached, topics prioritized, and variety of outreach tools (newsletter, website, podcast, print pieces, etc.). These assessments occur monthly to bi-monthly and involve Roundtable members from a wide variety of water users. Primary point of contact for monitoring programs will be Bethany Howell of the Rio Grande Watershed Conservation and Education Initiative and contracted education and outreach provider.

What are the key metrics that you use to track engagement?

Metrics involve website click tracking, email clicks and opens for the quarterly newsletter, circulation numbers for the local newspaper and any state news publications, number of attendees at outreach events, podcast episode downloads, and number of print pieces circulated. We also track number of attendees present at Roundtable meetings, and number of youth engaged in local programs.

3. Critical issues currently in the basin that need to be addressed over the EAP planning period?

Where possible, please reference your BIP and/or specific IPPs.

Critical issues in our basin over the 2021-2022 planning period include updating of the Basin Implementation Plan, which includes working with the Local Expert to identify issues and communicate those within the BIP. Additionally, groundwater sustainability, surface water rights administration, newly adjudicated

well rules and regulations, as well as a water export proposal are all on the front burner of Rio Grande Basin priorities. The BIP regularly points to agriculture as the most important economic driver in our area, with recreation and tourism as an important second. Municipal use rounds out the main water uses in our Basin, all of which encompass a wide variety of target audiences. These community members have varying levels of water education and awareness, which necessitates a concentrated effort on the education of multiple water issues.

○ How would you design your programs to target these issues?

Realizing that people have different preferences for information input, the RGBRT is working on a multi-pronged approach to reach our community members in varying age and economic groups. Working with higher education, specifically the Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center, allows us to leverage the reach of Adams State University to utilize facilities, faculty, and staff, while RGWCEI continues to work with K-12 programs and schools for the youth component. The gap in education in the business, agriculture, and municipal communities will therefore be the focus of the Community Education Liaison staff. Through the Basin's contract with the Rio Grande Watershed Conservation & Education Initiative, a flexible framework for strategies involving these aforementioned water issues (groundwater, water export, well rules, etc.) is being developed. This involves multiple points of contact through hard copy print, news and social media, and in person events.

4. Identify the audience the EAP will be targeting:

○ What new group (stakeholders/general public) are you hoping to engage?

We continue to have a target audience for 2021 which includes local community members such as K-12 students and teachers, general adult community members, local policymakers such as county commissioners and city council members, and university students, staff, and faculty. We also will include a wider target audience of urban areas for specific topics such as water export, agricultural water use, and recreational water use. We have not specifically targeted these urban audiences (especially in other basins) in the past, but as certain topics in our basin need attention, we hope to address those through communications and outreach efforts in a statewide capacity. Additionally, as we continue to see an increase in tourism and visitors to our recreational landscapes, our Basin is determined to create communications pieces focused on water values, stewardship, and use to better communicate with those who don't live here, but have a definite impact on our sustainability.

5. Budget: How will \$6,500 be spent? If possible, please include if your basin is using other funding sources to implement the EAP. (Please create table or attach an excel spreadsheet with EAP submittal)

Please see attached detailed budget for the 3 year plan of funding for Rio Grande EAP. The \$6500 PEPO funding will be used as hard cash match for our Basin-funded Communications and Education staff liaison position.

**Rio Grande Watershed Conservation & Education Initiative
2020-2023 Rio Grande Basin Roundtable Community Education Staff Liaison Grant**

		CWCB Funds	Notes	Per Year
Task 1	Print Communication Pieces			
Subtask	Staff Time	\$ 25,200.00	(\$40/hr) x 210 hours per year	\$ 8,400.00
Totals		\$ 25,200.00		\$ 8,400.00
Task 2	Stakeholder Engagement Events			
Subtask	Staff Time	\$ 28,200.00	(\$40/hr) x 60 hours per quarterly event	\$ 9,400.00
Totals		\$ 28,200.00		\$ 9,400.00
Task 3	Roundtable Project Coordination			
Subtask	Staff Time	\$ 23,700.00	(\$40/hr)x(200 hours per year)	\$ 7,900.00
	Mileage	\$ 1,500.00	(\$0.545/mile)x 920 miles per year	\$ 500.00
Totals		\$ 25,200.00		\$ 8,400.00
Task 4	Basin Audio Podcast			
Subtask	Staff Time	\$ 22,200.00	(\$40/hr)x(200 hours per year)	\$ 7,400.00
	Mileage	\$ 4,500.00	(\$0.545/mile)x(55 miles per week)	\$ 1,500.00
Totals		\$ 26,700.00		\$ 8,900.00
Task 5	State Project Participation			
Subtask	Staff Time	\$26,700.00	(\$40/hr) x (220 hours) per year	\$8,900
	Mileage	\$ 1,500.00		\$ 500.00
Totals		\$ 28,200.00		\$ 9,400.00
		\$133,500.00		