



COLORADO

Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	Conservation Investment Germinator	
Name of Water Project	Habitat Replacement Bank for the Colorado River Salinity Control Program	
Grant Request Amount		\$83,026.00
Primary Category		\$83,026.00
	<i>Engagement & Innovation Activities</i>	
Total Applicant Match		\$12,000.00
	<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	
		\$0.00
	<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	
		\$12,000.00
Total Other Sources of Funding		\$30,000.00
	<i>Walton Family Foundation</i>	
		\$15,000.00
	<i>Gates Family Foundation</i>	
		\$15,000.00
Total Project Cost		\$125,026.00

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: Conservation Investment Germinator
Mailing Address: 115 Wilcox Street Castle Rock CO 80104
FEIN: 841,933,451

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Description of Grantee/Applicant

The Conservation Investment Germinator is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to conservation finance innovation. In collaboration with public agencies, tribes, and local communities, we design, test, and launch new environmental markets and nature-based business models. CIG is part of a hybrid organization with Conservation Investment Management, a project developer and financial advisor for conservation finance projects. We have developed several mitigation and conservation banks across the western U.S., including the

Table Top Conservation Bank in partnership with the Colorado State Land Board. This project preserves over 200 acres of Preble's meadow jumping mouse habitat in Larimer county. The credits were purchased for by Northern Water as habitat mitigation for the Glade reservoir / NISP project.

Type of Eligible Entity

- Public (Government)
- Public (District)
- Public (Municipality)
- Ditch Company
- Private Incorporated
- Private Individual, Partnership, or Sole Proprietor
- Non-governmental Organization
- Covered Entity
- Other

Category of Water Project

- Agricultural Projects
Developing communications materials that specifically work with and educate the agricultural community on headwater restoration, identifying the state of the science of this type of work to assist agricultural users among others.
- Conservation & Land Use Planning
Activities and projects that implement long-term strategies for conservation, land use, and drought planning.
- Engagement & Innovation Activities
Activities and projects that support water education, outreach, and innovation efforts. Please fill out the Supplemental Application on the website.
- Watershed Restoration & Recreation
Projects that promote watershed health, environmental health, and recreation.
- Water Storage & Supply
Projects that facilitate the development of additional storage, artificial aquifer recharge, and dredging existing reservoirs to restore the reservoirs' full decreed capacity and Multi-beneficial projects and those projects identified in basin implementation plans to address the water supply and demand gap.

Location of Water Project

Latitude 38.901600
 Longitude -107.926500
 Lat Long Flag
 Water Source
 Basins Gunnison
 Counties Montrose; Delta; Mesa; Gunnison
 Districts

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type
 Type of Water Project Capacity Building
 Scheduled Start Date - Design
 Scheduled Start Date - Construction

Description

This project is a pilot of a Habitat Replacement Bank for the Colorado River Salinity Control Program. This program is an important source of federal funding for ditch companies to improve the efficiency of their water infrastructure. However, federal agencies will not release funding until the ditch company has identified a conservation project to replace riparian habitat lost during their water improvement project. Ditch companies lack the expertise and funding to carry out these conservation projects. This results in some ditch companies not applying to these grants, in funding delays, and in cost overrun. Under our concept, ditch companies could buy habitat replacement credits directly from a Habitat Replacement Bank to comply with regulations. The Bank would be responsible for securing, restoring, and managing a property approved by Reclamation to generate the required credits. By giving ditch companies more certainty on availability and cost of habitat replacement, we expect that they will be more likely to apply successfully to the program funding.

Measurable Results

- New Storage Created (acre-feet)
- New Annual Water Supplies Developed or Conserved (acre-feet), Consumptive or Nonconsumptive
- Existing Storage Preserved or Enhanced (acre-feet)
- New Storage Created (acre-feet)
- Length of Stream Restored or Protected (linear feet)
- Length of Pipe, Canal Built or Improved (linear feet)
- Efficiency Savings (dollars/year)
- Efficiency Savings (acre-feet/year)
- Area of Restored or Preserved Habitat (acres)
- Quantity of Water Shared through Alternative Transfer Mechanisms or water sharing agreement (acre-feet)
- Number of Coloradans Impacted by Incorporating Water-Saving Actions into Land Use Planning
- Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity

Other

No additional measurable results provided

Water Project Justification

This project is in direct support of the Water Plan. It is included in the "Highlighted Projects" of the Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan (Volume 2 - Page 17):

SALINITY HABITAT BANK

GUN-2020-0217 – Habitat Replacement Bank for salinity control program

Establishment of a habitat bank could provide a common location or mechanism for entities within the Gunnison Basin who are required to replace habitat lost during salinity control projects. Creating a bank could streamline an increasingly burdensome requirement within the salinity control program to replace habitat lost due to piping and lining irrigation canals. A habitat bank would allow participating entities in salinity control projects to purchase credits within the bank or make improvements on pre-identified lands to offset habitat losses appurtenant to their projects. The concept of a singular habitat bank does not have the full support of the Gunnison Basin Roundtable. Concerns exist that a bank would not result in habitat replacement as designed by the Salinity Program and credits might be created or purchased in areas where wetlands already exist, new wetlands would need additional diversions from already stressed sources, or are not in the vicinity of the salinity project. Overall, the GBRT would like to see habitat replacement plan requirements altered to better meet the realities of land ownership, water availability, and address in-stream habitat needs.

Important aspects of this project include:

- Increasing certainty for participating entities. Habitat replacement represents significant uncertainty when engaging with the salinity control program. Often times the entity applying for funds does not have the financial or administrative capability for identifying and vetting lands for habitat replacement prior to applying for funds and committing to 50-year agreements.
- Decreasing financial risk to irrigators and irrigation providers engaging with the salinity control program. Habitat replacement represents a significant technical and administrative burden that currently requires a conservation easement be placed on the property. This, as well as other aspects, of the habitat requirements risk delaying project implementation. Delayed project implementation often results in increased materials and construction costs.
- This project represents a potential opportunity for a project within the Gunnison Basin to partner with land trust organizations. Conservation easements on agricultural lands are mentioned numerous times within the 2015 BIP as a mechanism for achieving our basin goals, and that theme carries forward to the BIP update. This project, while not specifically conserving agricultural lands, represents a partnership between water users and conservation organizations.

Related Studies

Colorado Habitat Mitigation - Feasibility Study for the Salinity Control Program - A Value Discovery and Opportunity Analysis - Available at

https://www.dropbox.com/s/wk2jjimsze37v61/Colorado%20Habitat%20Mitigation%20Feasibility%20Analysis_Final%20Report.pdf

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

None