



COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	Trout Unlimited_Montrose	
Name of Water Project	Middle Colorado AG Collaborative	
Grant Request Amount		\$1,500,000.00
Primary Category		\$1,500,000.00
	<i>Agricultural Projects</i>	
Total Applicant Match		\$0.00
	<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$0.00
	<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$0.00
Total Other Sources of Funding		\$4,171,703.00
	<i>Bureau of Reclamation</i>	\$2,999,595.00
	<i>Colorado River District</i>	\$120,000.00
	<i>Fish/Wildlife Service</i>	\$1,052,108.00
Total Project Cost		\$5,671,703.00

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: Trout Unlimited_Montrose
Mailing Address: 264 County Road 4 Montrose CO 81403
FEIN: 381,612,715

Organization Contact: Richard VanGytenbeek
Position/Title: Colorado River Outreach Coordinator Email: richard.gytenbeek@tu.org
Phone: 3076901267

Organization Contact - Alternate: Nancy Johnston
Position/Title: Email: nancy.johnston@tu.org
Phone: 9704626750

Grant Management Contact: Richard VanGytenbeek
Position/Title: Colorado River Outreach Coordinator Email: richard.gytenbeek@tu.org
Phone: 3076901267

Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Nancy Johnston
Position/Title: Email: nancy.johnston@tu.org
Phone: 9704626750

Description of Grantee/Applicant

No description provided

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	39.575881
Longitude	107.447071
Lat Long Flag	Stream location: Coordinates based on general location on stream
Water Source	Elk Creek (tributary to the Colorado River at New Castle, CO)
Basins	Colorado
Counties	Garfield
Districts	39-Rifle/Elk/Parachute Creeks

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type	Agricultural
Type of Water Project	Construction / Implementation
Scheduled Start Date - Design	
Scheduled Start Date - Construction	10/21/2024

Description

The Middle Colorado AG Collaborative (MCAC) grew out of early work on fish passage with the Ware and Hinds Ditch Co (2018) and the Canyon Creek Fish Passage project that enabled fish passage through the I-70 culvert system (2021). The projects success highlighted the potential to increase successful spawning in Elk Creek. Based on that, potential multiple benefit projects that upgrade irrigation infrastructure and open channels to spawning fish were inventoried throughout the middle Colorado River basin, incorporated into the Middle Colorado IWMP and CWCB Projects List.

In May 2022, TU initiated the first of three project phases. Phase 1, Outreach/Conceptual Planning was completed in May 2023. Phase 2. Construction Plans/Specifications is currently taking four conceptually designed projects and developing them into construction ready plans and specification (complete in April 2023). This grant request will fund Phase 3 and enable field construction of the four projects from October 2024 - April 2025.

The four identified projects will open up an additional 7 miles of Elk Creek above the original Ware and Hinds project. Work includes two projects which will combine four points of diversion(s) into two diversion points. A third project will relocate a point of diversion downstream to a pumping station thereby abandoning a mile of porous ditch and a push up dam. The final project will retrofit an existing diversion with a rock ramp (fish passage) and reconstruct the headgate/sluceway system.

Measurable Results

0	New Storage Created (acre-feet)
0	New Annual Water Supplies Developed or Conserved (acre-feet), Consumptive or Nonconsumptive
	Existing Storage Preserved or Enhanced (acre-feet)
0	New Storage Created (acre-feet)
79,200	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)
0	Area of Restored or Preserved Habitat (acres)
	Quantity of Water Shared through Alternative Transfer Mechanisms or water sharing agreement (acre-feet)
75	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Incorporating Water-Saving Actions into Land Use Planning
75	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity

Other

The project has engaged approximately 75 irrigators that divert water from Elk Creek. If all diversions become fish passable there will be approximately 7 miles of spawning and rearing habitat opened to native fish from the Co. River. Upgrades to irrigation infrastructure will likely increase diversion efficiency savings through the use of telemetry actuated headgate systems and enable voluntary bypass flows when diverted water is not needed for agricultural operations. Diversion amounts and timing information will be automatically uploaded to the DWR records.

Water Project Justification

Water Project Justification

The Middle Colorado AG Collaborative initiated a three phase project in May 2022 to work with irrigators in Elk Creek to upgrade their infrastructure and improve fish passage. Phase 1 formed partnerships with the Meadow Creek Ranch and the Roseman Ditch Co. and provided these owners with conceptual upgrade plans for their infrastructure (Phase 1 is complete). Phase 2 has engaged an engineering firm (Wright Water Engineers) to develop the concept plans into construction plans and specifications by April 2024 (construction plans currently at 30%). The goal of Phase 3 (this application) is to fund reconstruction of the four identified diversion structures in Elk Creek. The projects will provide fish passage and increase irrigation water diversion efficiency and measurement. The applicant believes that this phase of the MCAC, like previous phases, continues to compliment and further the objectives, goals and actions as described in Chapter 6 Vision and Actions for Addressing Colorado's Risks of the Colorado Water Plan, as well as the themes, goals and strategies stated in the Colorado Basin Roundtable's Basin Implementation Plan.

The Colorado Water Plan

The Colorado Water Plan identifies a “Vision and Actions” to address water related risks in Colorado and how both partners and CWCB (the agency) can work to address those risks. This project addresses these efforts in the areas of Robust Agriculture and Thriving Watersheds. They are:

Robust Agriculture

Partner Actions (pg. 194)

Meeting Future Water Needs

- Replacing diversion structures:
- Measurement of agricultural uses:

Agency Actions (pg. 202)

2.8 Streamline Agricultural Infrastructure Funding

- The CWCB.....will support agricultural producers seeking infrastructure funding.

Applicant Comment: This project will combine four antiquated irrigation diversions into two, abandon 1.5 miles of leaking ditch and install a pumping system and completely rebuild an existing diversion structure. All projects will be fish passable. Each of the reconstructed projects will have telemetry actuated headgates which will improve diversion efficiency, enable voluntary bypass flow and deliver real time diversion rates to the CDSS system.

Thriving Watersheds

Partner Actions (pg. 205-206)

Meeting Future Water Needs

- Improving Fish Passage Through Replacement of Agricultural Headgates:
- Increased Access to Recreational Opportunities:

Wise Water Use

- Streamflow Level Protections for Environmental Needs

Agency Actions (pg. 212)

3.6 Enhance Use of Water Plan Grant Funding for Watersheds, Environment and Recreation

- The Water Plan Grant Program can better support a holistic view of watershed health in terms of recognizing and equally funding environmental projects, watershed projects, applicable forest health projects, and recreation.

Applicant Comment: The project will improve fish passage by upgrading four diversion projects as described. Spawning fish and their progeny reside in the Colorado River mainstem and improve recreational opportunities for anglers. Structures will be telemetry controlled providing irrigators with greater control to bypass unneeded irrigation diversions thereby improving creek flows. While Agency Action 3.6 is focused on providing funds for planning and study this project is, in part, the culmination of that study (Middle Colorado IWMP). Accordingly, the applicant believes that providing Water Plan funds to realize the goals of the Middle Colorado IWMP is a logical end.

Applicant Comment: As stated this project is a product of the Middle Colorado IWMP process. It was led by the Middle Co. Watershed Council and the GarPit Conservancy District. It is complete and the identified projects and goals have been committed to the CBRT-BIP-Projects List. This project will help restore critical perennial streams that provide spawning and rearing habitat for fish from the Colorado River main-stem. Additionally, their progeny migrate back to the Co. River to provide outstanding recreational opportunities for anglers on one of the state's most accessible rivers.

The CBRT-Updated Basin Implementation Plan

The Colorado Basin Roundtable Basin Implementation Plan continues to employ the original “6 Themes” and associated goals found in the original BIP. These themes and goals are further supported by identified strategies. This project supports specific goals within two of the six themes; “Protect and Restore Healthy Streams, Rivers, Lakes and Riparian Areas” and “Sustain Agriculture”. They are:

- 1) Protect and maintain healthy and self-sustaining aquatic and riparian ecosystems, and rehabilitate damaged ecosystems.
- 2) Engage, educate, learn from, and collaborate with the agricultural community on Co. River Basin water issues, and increase awareness among the broader community about the importance of agriculture.

Applicant Comment: With respect to maintaining a healthy, self sustaining aquatic system, the project goal is to increase spawning and rearing habitat for native fish in the Colorado River. A successful project will require engaging and collaborating with the local agricultural community. Based on previous successful projects in these basins, the community at large becomes better informed about the relationship between agriculture and a healthy environment.

The project further supports the following identified strategies:

- 1) Use the IWMP mechanism to reduce risks and enhance benefits across all sectors.
- 2) Implement projects on the Projects Database.

Applicant Comment: This project largely originates from and was supported by the Middle Colorado IWMP process. The project is listed on the CBRT Projects Database as project CO-2020-0001 and is further supported by ancillary Middle Co. IWMP projects CO-2020-0014, CO-2020-0015 and CO-2020-0024 also listed on the Project Database.

Citations: CBRT BIP Update Pgs. 52-62 and Pgs. 153-155.

Related Studies

There are no known related studies at this time.

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

There are no TABOR grant limitations on Trout Unlimited.