



Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	Colorado State University
Name of Water Project	Colorado Water Fellows Program: Water Workforce Development through Education, Training, and Internships
Grant Request Amount	\$332,167.28
Primary Category	\$332,167.28
<i>Engagement & Innovation Activities</i>	
Total Applicant Match	\$73,042.29
Applicant Cash Match	\$50,198.04
Applicant In-Kind Match	\$22,844.25
Total Other Sources of Funding	\$10,000.00
Colorado Mesa University	\$10,000.00
Total Project Cost	\$415,209.57

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: Colorado State University
 Mailing Address: 2002 Campus Delivery Fort Collins CO 80523
 FEIN: 846,000,545

Organization Contact: Catherine Douras
 Position/Title: Senior Research Administrator Email: catherine.douras@colostate.edu
 Phone: 9704912375

Grant Management Contact: Catherine Douras
 Position/Title: Senior Research Administrator Email: catherine.douras@colostate.edu
 Phone: 9704912375

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 40.573436
Longitude -105.086547
Lat Long Flag Default/Proponent headquarters: If the location cannot be defined with flags above, use location of project proponent headquarters
Water Source
Basins Southwest; South Platte; Metro
Counties La Plata; Denver; Larimer; Boulder
Districts

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type
Type of Water Project Education
Scheduled Start Date - Design
Scheduled Start Date - Construction
Description
The overall goal of expanding the Water Fellows Program (Program) to five universities and creating an annual Water Fellows Education and Career Event (Event) is to enhance the capabilities of academic institutions in Colorado to attract and retain a more diverse student body in water programs, foster the development of a skilled and collaborative water workforce that reflects a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives, and establish clear career pathways in water-related fields for students in universities and colleges across the state. By extending the Program to multiple universities, the project aims to cultivate a diverse and skilled cohort of students passionate about water-related issues. The Event serves as a central platform for education, networking, and career development, fostering collaboration among students, professionals, and the broader community. This multifaceted approach directly contributes to improved public awareness and engagement regarding water issues.
The Program's emphasis on interdisciplinary education and career pathways aligns with the goal of advancing

Colorado's water supply planning process by developing a well-equipped workforce. Furthermore, the initiative supports a statewide water innovation ecosystem by creating a network that encourages collaboration, innovation, and knowledge-sharing among water professionals, students, and the community.

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
- 1,000 Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity

Other

The Coloradans impacted by this program has the potential to be much greater than just the students directly participating in the program, industry professionals and community members, this program will equip the next generation of water leaders to educate and impact thousands of community members across the State.

Water Project Justification

The Water Fellows Program and the annual Water Fellows Education and Career Event directly align with Colorado's Water Plan's measurable objective to "significantly improve the level of public awareness and engagement regarding water issues statewide by 2020." By expanding the Water Fellows Program to five universities and establishing a dedicated annual Event, the initiative becomes a powerful vehicle for education, outreach, and public engagement. The program's focus on diverse student recruitment and interdisciplinary education directly contributes to enhancing public awareness by creating a skilled workforce attuned to the complexities of water-related challenges. The annual event serves as a public forum, providing a centralized platform to disseminate information, share insights, and engage with the community. Surveys conducted post-event can measure increased public awareness, understanding, and engagement in water issues. The project, through its multifaceted approach, not only addresses the specific measurable objective set forth in Colorado's Water Plan but also lays the foundation for a sustained and informed dialogue around water-related matters in the state.

The Water Fellows Program and the annual Water Fellows Education and Career Event make significant strides in achieving various measurable objectives and critical goals outlined in Colorado's Water Plan. In direct correlation with water value #4, the initiative contributes to cultivating an informed public with creative and resilient solutions, fostering strong, equitable communities capable of adapting and thriving amidst challenges (Water Plan Executive Summary, Pg. 2). Additionally, this project aligns with the following Water Equity Task Force recommendations including "promoting diversity in career pathways in water-related fields through education and engagement; and promoting collaboration of new voices and greater community engagement in water discussions"(Colorado Water Plan 2023 pg 5). By addressing these key components of the Water Plan and aligning with the Water Equity Task Force's recommendations, the Water Fellows Program becomes a crucial initiative in advancing the state's water-related objectives and contributing to the development of informed and engaged communities.

The Metro and South Platte Basin Roundtable goals include:

- Broadening South Platte communications, outreach and education programs” (South Platte Basin Implementation Plan, pg 2) . This will be accomplished through:
 - o “Expanding on existing communications and outreach programs to improve knowledge and understanding of water challenges and needs for all citizens of the South Platte Basin, and on how these needs are being addressed through the South Platte BIP.”
 - o “Developing the network of existing community organizations.” (South Platte Basin Implementation Plan, pg. 39)

The expansion of the Water Fellows program to Metropolitan State University, University of Colorado Boulder, and University of Denver Sturm College of Law will contribute to the goal of enhancing existing communications and outreach programs. By involving these universities, the initiative will reach a broader audience and improve knowledge and understanding of water challenges and needs for all the South Platte Basin community members. Through expanded educational opportunities and outreach initiatives, the program seeks to empower individuals with comprehensive insights into water challenges, thereby promoting a more informed and engaged community.

Southwest Roundtable

The Southwest Basin Implementation Plan Section 8: Education and Outreach goals will be in partnership with the PEPO Workgroup and Education Action Plans. The goals of the PEPO Workgroup include:

- Reaching “target audiences that include local community members, urban audiences, and recreational visitors to communicate the Southwest BRT’s shared values. These values include the importance of agriculture, water management, collaboration among partner agencies, and natural resource stewardship.
- “Help foster additional inclusivity and increased participation by a diverse audience by supporting outreach strategies proposed by the Southwest BRT.” (Southwest Basin Implementation Plan, pg. 54)

The expansion of the Water Fellows program to Fort Lewis College and Colorado Mesa University aligns with the goals of reaching diverse target audiences and fostering inclusivity as outlined by the Southwest Basin Roundtables. The program will prioritize inclusivity with the goal of including students that represent diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, identities, perspectives, majors, and academic years to the fullest extent possible. Additionally, by incorporating these universities, the program can effectively communicate the shared values emphasized by the Southwest Basin Roundtables, including the significance of agriculture, water management, collaboration among partner agencies, and natural resource stewardship. Through collaborative efforts with Fort Lewis College and Colorado Mesa University, the program aims to create a more comprehensive and inclusive platform for communication, education, and community engagement regarding water-related challenges in the Southwest Basin.

The project aligns with the Metro and South Platte Basin PEPO Education Action Plan by directly addressing its objectives. The PEPO Education Action Plan designates academic institutions as a principal target audience, with a specific mention of Colorado State University, Metro State University, and the University of Colorado as partner institutions (Combined South Platte and Metro Roundtables Basin Education Action Plan, pg 1). The University of Denver Sturm College of Law, although not mentioned specifically, is also situated within the South Platte/Metro Basin.

This project serves as a strategic opportunity to fulfill the plan's goal of fostering collaboration with academic institutions. Through the Water Fellows Program, it provides a tangible platform for expanding partnerships between the basin roundtable and the partner institutions, promoting engagement with water programs and students. By facilitating meaningful connections and educational opportunities, the project directly contributes to the PEPO Education Action Plan's objective of enhancing collaboration with academic partners.

Related Studies

The expansion of the Water Fellows Program and the creation of an annual Water Fellows Education and Career Event are substantiated by critical findings from the American Water Works Association's (AWWA) State of the Water Industry '22. The report identifies key workforce challenges within the water sector, ranking the aging water workforce as the fourth most critical issue and talent attraction and retention as the eleventh. These findings underscore the urgent need to address workforce gaps and develop strategies for attracting and retaining talent in the water industry.

The research indicates that issues such as staffing shortages, a lack of qualified candidates, limited educational opportunities, low pay, the need to advance diversity, and the challenge of attracting young professionals are prevalent concerns among industry participants (AWRA 2022, State of the Water Industry '22 pg 15). By aligning with the insights from the AWWA report, the Colorado Water Fellows Program and its associated annual Event directly respond to industry needs, offering a targeted solution to address the identified challenges and contribute to building a resilient and skilled workforce for the water sector.

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

No TABOR issues exist.