COLORADO
Colorado Water Conservation Board
Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	RiversEdge West
Name of Water Project	White River Riparian Restoration and Community Engagement Initiative
Grant Request Amount	**$142,793.80**
Primary Category	$142,793.80
Watershed Health & Recreation	
Total Applicant Match	**$1,000.00**
Applicant Cash Match	$1,000.00
Applicant In-Kind Match	$0.00
Total Other Sources of Funding	**$153,722.60**
Volunteers	$1,339.60
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	$140,185.00
Bureau of Land Management	$4,000.00
Bureau of Land Management	$1,000.00
LT and JT Dee Foundation	$250.00
George S. and Dolores Dore Eccles Foundation	$250.00
Landowner time and labor	$6,698.00
Total Project Cost	**$297,516.40**

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: RiversEdge West
Mailing Address: PO Box 1907 Grand Junction CO 81502

Organization Contact: Erin McDermott
Position/Title: Associate Director
Phone: 4108296986
Email: emcdermott@riversedgewest.org

Organization Contact - Alternate: John Leary
Position/Title:
Phone:
Email: jleary@riversedgewest.org

Grant Management Contact: Erin McDermott
Position/Title: Associate Director
Phone: 4108296986
Email: emcdermott@riversedgewest.org

Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Erin McDermott
Position/Title: Associate Director
Phone: 4108296986
Email: emcdermott@riversedgewest.org

Description of Grantee/Applicant

RiversEdge West restores riparian ecosystems through education, collaboration, and technical assistance. We accomplish this by replacing invasive plants with native plant species along thousands of riverside acres across the Southwest, educating thousands of community members and youth to foster long-term river stewardship, training river restoration professionals through our training series and annual conference – including education and outreach about the tamarisk beetle, and researching and developing new restoration techniques to effectively restore riparian ecosystems.

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	39.080344
Longitude	-108.571347
Lat Long Flag	Default/Proponent headquarters: If the location cannot be defined with flags above, use location of project proponent headquarters
Water Source	White River
Basins	Yampa/White/Green
Counties	Rio Blanco
Districts	43-White River Basin

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type	Environmental
Type of Water Project	Construction / Implementation
Scheduled Start Date - Design	9/1/2025
Scheduled Start Date - Construction	

Description

This project supports riparian health along the main stem of the White River through a combination of restoration implementation and community engagement. Tasks include riparian restoration (focused on tamarisk and Russian olive removal and native revegetation), a landowner-focused workshop on streambank and riparian health, a hands-on youth and community seedball revegetation events, and development of a Best Management Practice document. Restoration efforts will focus on priority areas identified through partner site visits and feedback: Big Trujillo area, the Meeker area, and private lands between Taylor Draw Dam and the Yellow Creek confluence. Approximately 30 acres of restoration will be completed using contractors and conservation corps crews. This project also supports the capacity for RiversEdge West staff to provide project coordination, landowner outreach, and technical expertise.

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)
7,920	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)
30	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
7,000	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity

Other

No additional measurable results provided

Water Project Justification

The White River Riparian Restoration and Community Engagement Initiative supports Colorado's Water Plan and the Yampa-White-Green Basin Roundtable's Basin Implementation plan by improving riparian habitat and function, enhancing river-based recreation, and improving agricultural uses of the White River. It also increases collaboration among state and federal agencies, local governments, conservation districts, private landowners, and NGOs. Through engaging local students, community members, and Western Slope young adults, as well as producing a Best Management Practices document, this project supports the long-term stewardship and health of the White River. This project is part of the watershed-scale multistakeholder collaborative group, the White River Partnership. Specific goals of Colorado's Water Plan and the Yampa-White-Green BIP that this project supports are outlined below.

Colorado's Water Plan Partner Actions:

Robust Agriculture

Healthy Lands

Reducing erosion and improving water quality (p195): Project enhances riparian buffers on private land by removing invasive plants that increase soil salinity and replacing them with native plants which better support natural riparian function and reduce erosion.

Thriving Watersheds

Thoughtful Storage
Nature-based solutions (p205): Project supports natural water infrastructure such as floodplains and their functions, ecosystem health, and water quality through the removal of invasive plants and re-establishment of native plants.

Meeting Future Water Needs
Increase access to recreational opportunities (p206): Project improves public river access points by removing invasive plants that form a physical barrier to boats landing and to residents and visitors accessing the river from the land.

Wise Water Use
Invasive phreatophyte and species removal (p206): Project is part of a large-scale effort across management jurisdictions to remove invasive phreatophytes like tamarisk and Russian olive which alter stream channels, reduce floodplain connectivity, alter nutrient cycles, and create sediment deposition, among other impacts. Project is coordinated through the White River Partnership.

Healthy Lands
Reconnecting floodplains and nature-based solutions (p206): Project restores riparian habitat by removing invasive plant species that armor riverbanks, channelize rivers, and disconnect rivers from the floodplain.
Improving riparian and aquatic habitat (p206): This project improves riparian habitat by removing invasive plant species and establishing diverse native plant species. It also improves instream habitat by removing invasive plants that armor riverbanks and disconnect the river from the floodplain and reduce the presence of backwater habitats that native fish depend on. Removal of tamarisk and Russian olive also helps maintain natural river geomorphology, which is key to healthy native aquatic habitat in the White River.

Partner Actions Rely on Effective Engagement and Education at Different Levels (p207)
This project is a collaborative effort between federal and state agencies, local government, private landowners, and three NGOs. Through these collaborative efforts, elementary school-aged students as well as young adults (age 18-25) are engaged in riparian restoration. The workshop will bring together a wide range of stakeholders to share expertise on riparian and streambank health.

Yampa-White-Green Basin Implementation Plan

Goal 4 Objective 9: This project informs research on noxious weed best management practices by comparing the efficacy of herbicide injector lances with traditional cut-stump or frill-cut treatment methods. Project supports education on impacts of noxious weeds through the workshop component and engaging students and young adults in the restoration project.

Goal 6 Objective 3: This riparian project improves riparian function and reduces wildfire risk which benefits general watershed health for consumptive and nonconsumptive uses; specific benefits include improvements to aquatic and riparian habitats, improved agricultural uses of the river, and enhanced recreational experiences along the river.

Goal 6 Objective 4: Through the removal of woody invasive plants and their replacement with native vegetation, this project will restore riparian areas to maintain and improve natural riparian functions, which include regulating atypically high flow events and storing water that is later released back into the river channel as flow levels decrease.The removal of woody invasive plants, which armor river banks, supports floodplain connectivity. The monitoring, mapping, and geodatabase component of this project tracks restoration projects to support maintenance needs.

Goal 6 Objective 8: This project improves riparian and aquatic ecology without changing the existing flow regime. It also improves recreational boating at existing flows by improving viewsheds and access to public riverbanks.

Goal 7 Objective 6: Removing tamarisk can reduce salinity levels in the White River because tamarisk increases the salinity levels of riparian soils and thus can increase salinity levels of rivers. Tamarisk and Russian olive increase the frequency and intensity of fires in riparian forests; fire in riparian zones can introduce ash and debris into the river, and reduce the riparian zone's ability to filter out sediment and slow runoff. Removing the fire fuel loads caused by tamarisk and Russian olive will reduce the likelihood and severity of wildfire and its negative impacts on water quality. This project involves active revegetation with native plants, including willows, which have been shown to improve water quality.

Goal 7 Objective 7: Tamarisk and Russian olive alter wildfire regimes in the riparian zone. This project is a collaborative effort between private landowners, nonprofit organizations, federal and state agencies, and local conservation districts to remove these hazardous fire fuels. This project is coordinated through the White River Partnership, made up of 14 diverse stakeholders that collaboratively developed a Riparian Restoration Plan for the White River Basin.

Related Studies

Conservation, Restoration, and Monitoring Plan for the Lower White River, Utah:
https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/eco_pubs/136/

White River Partnership Riparian Restoration Plan:
https://riversedgewest.org/sites/default/files/Restoration%20Plan_2021.pdf

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

No Tax Bill of Rights provided