

**COLORADO**Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board**Water Plan****Water Project Summary**

Name of Applicant	High Desert Conservation District
Name of Water Project	Wilson Ditch Piping Project
Grant Request Amount	\$758,419.00
Primary Category	\$758,419.00
<i>Agricultural Projects</i>	
Total Applicant Match	\$33,800.00
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$5,000.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$28,800.00
Total Other Sources of Funding	\$2,547,219.00
<i>Colorado Department of Local Affairs</i>	\$877,500.00
<i>U.S. Bureau of Reclamation</i>	\$1,669,719.00
Total Project Cost	\$3,339,438.00

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: High Desert Conservation District

Mailing Address: 628 West 5th Street Cortez CO 81321

Organization Contact: Neva Connolly

Position/Title:

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Phone: 970-529-8365

Organization Contact - Alternate: Erica Holm

Position/Title: Office Manager

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Phone:

Grant Management Contact: Neva Connolly

Position/Title:

Email: hdc.d.manager@highdesertconservation.org

Phone: 970-529-8365

Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Erica Holm

Position/Title: Office Manager

Email: admin@highdesertconservation.org

Phone:

Description of Grantee/Applicant

The High Desert Conservation District (formerly the Dolores Conservation District) is one of 76 Districts throughout Colorado. The Colorado State Legislature encouraged formation of local Districts in 1941 with the passage of the Colorado Soil Conservation Act (Title 35, Article 70 of the Colorado Revised Statutes). The Dolores Soil Conservation District was organized on April 11, 1942 per this Act. The District boundaries include all but a small portion of Montezuma County.

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 37.325360
 Longitude 108.700720
 Lat Long Flag Other: Coordinates based on other boundaries or locations
 Water Source Point of Diversion is at Hartman Draw.
 Basins Southwest
 Counties Montezuma
 Districts 32-McElmo Creek Basin

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type Agricultural
 Type of Water Project Design & Construction
 Scheduled Start Date - Design 10/21/2025
 Scheduled Start Date - Construction 11/26/2025
 Description
 With reference to the accompanying Interactive Map, the Project (in red) will place 8,650 linear feet of the Lower Wilson Ditch (in blue) in 28" OD, 26.1" ID DR 32.5 HDPE pipe, stretching from a point just east of the present "Point Sluice" to a point on the Ditch's upper branch west of the present "High-Low" diversion structure. The

aging “Point Sluice” structure will be bypassed and a new sluice structure will be constructed at the eastern entrance to the pipeline. The present “High-Low” diversion structure will be demolished and replaced with a new diversion apparatus. All existing culverts and pipe segments along the Project length will be removed, and the new pipeline will connect to an existing sleeved culvert and pipe (24” HDPE and 30” SDR) under Road G (depicted in yellow) just west of the present Point Sluice. The new pipeline will be bedded in aggregate to 7/10 of its diameter and backfilled to a cover depth of 12 inches.

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)
8,650.00	Length of Pipe, Canal Built or Improved (linear feet)
	Efficiency Savings (dollars/year)
268	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)
48	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Incorporating Water-Saving Actions into Land Use Planning
	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity
Other	
Greater community impacts: all of McElmo Canyon (24 miles)	
Public Safety Improved	
Liabilities Obviated	
Tribal Water Delivery Benefited	
Farming Operation Disruptions Avoided	
Disadvantaged Community Benefited	
Salinity Load on Colorado River Lessened	
Federal and State Grant Money Leveraged	

Water Project Justification

The Project seeks to pipe 1.8 miles of the Lower Wilson Ditch, an open, earthen irrigation ditch in Montezuma County’s McElmo Canyon, and to upgrade or replace various associated delivery structures.

Once completed, the Project will help conserve Colorado water resources by improving the efficiency of the Lower Wilson Ditch, reducing carriage loss along its length, limiting disruption of water delivery during irrigation season, improving public safety, reducing the proliferation of

invasive and non-native species along its length, and obviating potential liabilities associated with ditch overtopping and failure. The Project will sustain and enhance agricultural production in McElmo Canyon, serve both the current and future needs of LWDA's 48 member-farmers, a cohort that includes the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and benefit the greater McElmo Canyon ecosystem.

With specific reference to the 2023 Colorado Water Plan, the Project will upgrade and improve conveyance infrastructure, helping to manage water supplies in the face of changing hydrology, help keep agricultural lands in production by aiding producers in more efficiently diverting water for beneficial uses, and improve the McElmo Canyon riparian corridor by returning more

water to McElmo Creek, the San Juan River, and the Colorado River.

With specific reference to CWCB's 2024 Agricultural Program Criteria, the Project will help maintain Colorado's agricultural productivity, rural economies, and food security while reducing agricultural water shortages and other growing water demands by improving agricultural efficiencies and modernizing water infrastructure.

With specific reference to the Southwest Basin Roundtable's strategic goals, as articulated in its Basin Implementation Plan, the Project will minimize the removal of irrigated acreage from production, support implementation of efficiency measures to maximize beneficial use and production, support implementation of projects that work toward meeting agricultural water supply shortages, and address delivery concerns created by aging infrastructure, all with a view toward maintaining the quality of life in our rural, agricultural community.

HD CD/LWDA is pursuing both design and construction in a single grant to mirror the Project funding previously and conditionally approved by BOR/WaterSMART/WEEN (up to \$1.68M) and DOLA/LOMA (\$877.5K), and do so after receiving preliminary engineering input from NRCS and Plummer Associates Engineering, all of which, together with its own extensive preliminary engineering and site visits, helped inform WCA Construction, LLC in drafting its concurrently-submitted Proposal which includes both design and construction services.

Note that BOR and DOLA both have extended their agreement acceptance deadlines only through September of 2025 to allow HD CD/LWDA to pursue this CWCB grant funding opportunity.

Related Studies

See Water Savings calculation (Plummer Associates Engineering) at pages 7-8 of LWDA's accompanying support letter dated June 25, 2025. See also:

Web Soil Survey - Home (<https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>)

CORTEZ, COLORADO - Climate Summary (<https://wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/cliMAIN.pl?cocort>)

Anthropogenic Climate Change Negatively Impacts Vegetation and Forage Conditions in the Greater Four Corners Region - Williams - 2023 - Earth's Future - Wiley Online Library (<https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1029/2022EF002943>)

CRBSCP - McElmo Creek Unit - Title II (<https://www.usbr.gov/projects/index.php?id=349>)

Montezuma County, CO | Data USA (

<https://datausa.io/profile/geo/montezuma-county-co#:~:text=Median%20household%20income%20in%20Montezuma%20County,CO>
.)

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

The High Desert Conservation District has been de-TABORed.