

**COLORADO**Colorado Water  
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

## Colorado Water Conservation Board

**Water Plan****Water Project Summary**

Name of Applicant	Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust
Name of Water Project	Rio Grande Basin Water Education Mural Project
Grant Request Amount	<b>\$58,781.03</b>
Primary Category	\$58,781.03
<i>Engagement &amp; Innovation Activities</i>	
Total Applicant Match	<b>\$3,880.00</b>
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$1,000.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$2,880.00
Total Other Sources of Funding	<b>\$20,814.15</b>
<i>Rio Grande County Lodging Tax Grant</i>	\$2,190.00
<i>Alamosa County Lodging Tax Grant</i>	\$2,190.00
<i>Adams State University Foundation</i>	\$652.00
<i>Adams State University Foundation</i>	\$4,346.00
<i>Business Sponsors</i>	\$5,000.00
<i>Public Volunteers</i>	\$6,436.15
Total Project Cost	<b>\$83,475.18</b>

**Applicant & Grantee Information**

Name of Grantee: Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust

Mailing Address: PO Box 444 Del Norte CO 81132

Organization Contact: Jocelyn Catterson

Position/Title: Community Engagement Director

Phone: 719-937-3517

Email: [jocelyn@rightslv.org](mailto:jocelyn@rightslv.org)

Organization Contact - Alternate: Laura Cusick

Position/Title: Land Protection Director

Phone: 719-657-0800

Email: [laura@rightslv.org](mailto:laura@rightslv.org)

Grant Management Contact: Jocelyn Catterson

Position/Title: Community Engagement Director

Phone: 719-937-3517

Email: [jocelyn@rightslv.org](mailto:jocelyn@rightslv.org)

Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Laura Cusick

Position/Title: Land Protection Director

Phone: 719-657-0800

Email: [laura@rightslv.org](mailto:laura@rightslv.org)**Description of Grantee/Applicant**

The Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust is a non-profit land trust working to conserve our land, water, and way of life in Colorado's San Luis Valley.

### 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 37.678720  
 Longitude -106.351340  
 Lat Long Flag Default/Proponent headquarters: If the location cannot be defined with flags above, use location of project proponent headquarters  
 Water Source Rio Grande  
 Basins Rio Grande  
 Counties Alamosa; Rio Grande  
 Districts 20-Rio Grande

### Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type Education  
 Type of Water Project Education  
 Scheduled Start Date - Design 11/1/2025  
 Scheduled Start Date - Construction  
 Description  
 The Rio Grande Basin Water Education Mural Project blends art, education, and community engagement to build water literacy in the San Luis Valley (SLV). In this pilot phase, elementary, middle, and high school students in

Del Norte and Alamosa will explore local water issues, including aquifer health, conservation, agriculture, and water law, through 4-5 class sessions co-led by educators, water partners, and artists. Each pilot includes a field trip to the Rio Grande and culminates in the co-creation of a public mural.

Led by the Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust (RiGHT), in partnership with the Rio Grande del Norte Salazar Center at Adams State University and the Rio Grande Watershed Conservation and Education Initiative (RGWCEI), this collaborative project engages students as ambassadors to help reach the broader public. Mural designs will be shaped through student input and refined by local professional artists with experience in public art, community engagement, and classroom collaboration, in partnership with water experts to ensure accurate messaging.

Each mural will be painted at a public community event, with educational booths and student presentations that bring families and neighbors into conversations about water. The project offers a scalable model for creative, place-based water education across the basin.

### 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  
 400 Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity  
 Other  
 Estimated 3,000+ tourists per year interacting with or engaging with the public murals in Del Norte and Alamosa

### Water Project Justification

The Rio Grande Basin Water Education Mural Project directly advances the goals of Colorado’s Water Plan (CWP, 2023), the Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan (BIP, 2021), and the PEPO Education Action Plan by blending place-based education, creative public outreach, and community engagement to build water literacy and foster civic participation.

The project fulfills the measurable objective in CWP Chapter 9.5, which calls for “diverse and creative outreach strategies that meet people where they are” to “significantly improve the level of public awareness and engagement regarding water issues statewide” (CWP, Ch. 9.5, p. 9-55). By integrating art and education, the project engages students in local water issues and empowers them to become water ambassadors, translating what they learn into public mural designs and messages that reach their families, peers, and broader community.

Aligned with CWP Chapter 7 (Ch. 7.1–7.3), the project also strengthens public understanding of the links between watershed health, agriculture, aquifer sustainability, and climate resilience. It builds community capacity to participate in adaptive water strategies by fostering an informed and engaged public.

The Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan names Goal 5: “Promote an informed citizenry engaged in water issues,” and Action 5.2: “Expand school-based and youth water education programs” (BIP, Section 6.3.5, pp. 104–105). This project directly implements those priorities through student-led mural development, classroom instruction, field experiences, and public events that spark basin-wide water dialogue.

The project also fulfills the PEPO Education Action Plan priority to “develop enduring communication tools that reflect local values and water knowledge” (PEPO Plan, p. 3). By engaging students as both learners and messengers, and using public art to amplify their voices, it exemplifies PEPO goals for place-based storytelling, cross-sector partnerships, and lasting, visible outreach.

In sum, this project operationalizes education and engagement goals across all three guiding documents, offering a replicable model that strengthens local water literacy and contributes to a more resilient water future for the Rio Grande Basin.

Related Studies
NA

Taxpayer Bill of Rights
NA