COLORADO
Colorado Water Conservation Board
Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	Western Slope Conservation Center	
Name of Water Project	Farmers Ditch Improvement Project	
Grant Request Amount		**$1,822,853.00**
Primary Category		$1,822,853.00
Agricultural Projects		
Total Applicant Match		**$164,295.00**
Applicant Cash Match		$0.00
Applicant In-Kind Match		$164,295.00
Total Other Sources of Funding		**$1,872,046.87**
Colorado River Water Conservation District		$100,000.00
Colorado Parks and Wildlife		$25,425.00
Farmers Ditch Company		$20,000.00
Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART		$1,439,531.91
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation		$235,889.96
Farmers Ditch Company		$1,200.00
Colorado Parks and Wildlife		$50,000.00
Total Project Cost		**$3,859,194.87**

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: Western Slope Conservation Center
Mailing Address: 204 Poplar Ave Paonia CO 81428

Organization Contact: Hannah Stevens
Position/Title: Executive Director
Phone: (970) 527-5303
Email: director@theconservationcenter.org

Organization Contact - Alternate: Jake Hartter
Position/Title:
Phone: 970-417-3426
Email: jake@theconservationcenter.org

Grant Management Contact: Hannah Stevens
Position/Title: Executive Director
Phone: (970) 527-5303
Email: director@theconservationcenter.org

Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Jake Hartter
Position/Title:
Phone: 970-417-3426
Email: jake@theconservationcenter.org

Description of Grantee/Applicant

Based in the North Fork Valley, the Western Slope Conservation Center builds an informed and engaged community to protect and enhance the lands, air, water and wildlife of the Western Slope.

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	38.897138
Longitude	-107.569051
Lat Long Flag	Precise coordinates: Project coordinates are readily definable and precisely define the location of the project
Water Source	North Fork of the Gunnison River
Basins	Gunnison
Counties	Delta
Districts	40-North Fork/Tribs.

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type	Agricultural
Type of Water Project	Construction / Implementation
Scheduled Start Date - Design	11/1/2025

Scheduled Start Date - Construction 11/1/2025

Description

The Farmers Ditch diversion modernization project will improve water delivery and efficiency for agriculture use, while maximizing instream flows by leaving excess water in the river and improving ecosystem resilience to allow for upstream fish passage and safe recreational boating. The project will result in the installation and automation of an actuator on the reconstructed headgate for the Farmers Ditch, an actuator on the existing turnback gate, and telemetry controlled sensors to monitor flow rates at the Parshall Flume. This will allow the ditch company and water commissioner to control flows into the ditch from a remote location, substantially improving efficiency and keeping excess water in the river for in-stream flow improvements. An Obermeyer gate in the diversion structure will allow the ditch company to fulfill all diversion decrees when necessary, replacing drop boards and existing iron cribbing. The open ditch from the headgate to the turnback structure will be piped for 1,600 feet, eliminating structural leakage between the two points of measurement. The construction of a point bar upstream of the diversions, along river left, would replicate the natural morphology of the river channel and provide for fish passage during all times of the year. The automated Obermeyer gate and proposed 200' long rock runout from the top of the dam will provide safe boat passage for recreational water users.

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)
2,000	Length of Stream Restored or Protected (linear feet)
1,600.00	Length of Pipe, Canal Built or Improved (linear feet)
	Efficiency Savings (dollars/year)
3,400	Efficiency Savings (acre-feet/year)
3	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
	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity

Other

In order for the water commissioner to administer this water right, he must park their truck on the highway, climb down a steep embankment, adjust the turnout valve, climb back up the hill and drive over to the next ditch downstream and measure the water. If there is insufficient water, they must drive back to the Farmers Ditch turnout and repeat the entire process. This project will greatly improve the efficiency of the water commissioner freeing up travel time and saving money.

Water Project Justification

The Farmers Ditch Improvement Project was born out of a stakeholder driven process through the North Fork Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP). The IWMP process was sponsored and funded through the Colorado Water Plan’s programming and specifically addresses the multi-benefit projects that highlight improvements to consumptive and nonconsumptive use. The IWMP was a partnership undertaken by the North Fork Water Conservancy District, Western Slope Conservation Center and local water users to address the need for long-range river planning for the North Fork of the Gunnison river watershed. The plan was completed in two phases in 2017 and 2023. Both reports are attached to this application.

The Farmers Ditch Improvement Project was identified within a high priority river segment and selected as a pilot project to showcase how Colorado's Water Plan can support resilient communities. The project is additionally listed as a high priority in the Basin Implementation Plan developed by the Gunnison Basin Roundtable.

Related Studies

The Farmers Ditch Improvement Project is supported by the following related studies:
Watershed Restoration Action Strategy for the North Fork Gunnison River. NFRIA, 2009
North Fork of the Gunnison River Watershed Plan Update. NFRIA, 2010
Assessment of Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Projects (1999-2014) WSCC, 2014

The Farmers Ditch Improvement Project assists in the implementation of the following CWCB funded studies and complementary programs:
North Fork of the Gunnison River Environmental and Recreation Assessment. WSCC, 2017 (attached to application)
North Fork of the Gunnison River Irrigation Management Plan. NFWCD, 2017 (attached to application)
North Fork and Smith Fork of the Gunnison, Wildfire Ready Action Plan (in progress)

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

Not applicable