

**COLORADO**Colorado Water  
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

## Colorado Water Conservation Board

# Water Plan

**Water Project Summary**

Name of Applicant	Colorado Rio Grande Restoration Foundation
Name of Water Project	Rio Grande Streambank Stabilization and Riparian Revegetation Project - Phase 6
Grant Request Amount	<b>\$503,778.20</b>
Primary Category	\$503,778.20
<i>Watershed Health &amp; Recreation</i>	
Total Applicant Match	<b>\$0.00</b>
<i>Applicant Cash Match</i>	\$0.00
<i>Applicant In-Kind Match</i>	\$0.00
Total Other Sources of Funding	<b>\$507,725.32</b>
<i>Ducks Unlimited</i>	\$10,000.00
<i>Natural Resources Conservation Service</i>	\$352,613.00
<i>Private Landowners</i>	\$48,000.00
<i>Bird Conservancy of the Rockies</i>	\$6,500.00
<i>Technical Advisory Team</i>	\$2,087.40
<i>Natural Resources Conservation Service</i>	\$88,524.92
Total Project Cost	<b>\$1,011,503.52</b>

**Applicant & Grantee Information**

Name of Grantee: Colorado Rio Grande Restoration Foundation

Mailing Address: 623 4th Street Alamosa CO 81101

Organization Contact: Daniel Boyes

Position/Title: Executive Director

Phone: 719-589-2230

Email: daniel@riograndeheadwaters.org

Organization Contact - Alternate: Connor Born

Position/Title: Stewardship Coordinator

Phone: 3162159153

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Grant Management Contact: Daniel Boyes

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Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Connor Born

Position/Title: Stewardship Coordinator

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Email: connor@riograndeheadwaters.org

**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	37.570256
Longitude	-106.038864
Lat Long Flag	Stream location: Coordinates based on general location on stream
Water Source	Rio Grande
Basins	Rio Grande
Counties	Alamosa; Rio Grande
Districts	20-Rio Grande

### Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type	Environmental
Type of Water Project	Design & Construction
Scheduled Start Date - Design	
Scheduled Start Date - Construction	12/15/2025
Description	
The Rio Grande Riparian Stabilization Project – Phase 6 (Phase 6) seeks to improve the health and resilience of the Rio Grande in Alamosa and Rio Grande counties by stabilizing and revegetating streambanks, enhancing aquatic habitat, reconnecting the river to its floodplain in select locations, and revitalizing riparian wetlands.	

These restoration actions build on the success of previous efforts and will improve water quality and alluvial storage during drought years, restore riparian and aquatic habitat, and increase the resilience of adjacent ditch diversion infrastructure.

Phase 6 will engage private landowners, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Ducks Unlimited, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado Division of Water Resources, and Bird Conservancy of the Rockies in streambank stabilization and riparian restoration along the Rio Grande up- and downstream of the Alamosa–Rio Grande county line, resulting in at least 4,737 feet of river restored and six acres of riparian area restored. In addition, Phase 6 will survey and evaluate river conditions within the Shriver-Wright and Rio Grande state wildlife areas, providing recommendations for future work that can implement the unique opportunities for natural floodplain inundation, channel movement, and other river processes that are possible along this reach of the Rio Grande.

### 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)
4,737	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)
6	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
30	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity
Other	
	No additional measurable results provided

### Water Project Justification

The Rio Grande Riparian Revegetation and Streambank Stabilization – Phase 6 (Phase 6) will address multiple river health, infrastructure, and community needs facing the Rio Grande and the broader Rio Grande Basin in Colorado. Phase 6 activities will support multiple Colorado Water Plan (CWP) Action Areas as well as goals established in the Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) and the Rio Grande Stream Management Plan (SMP). Phase 6 aligns primarily with the CWP Action Areas of Thriving Watersheds, and Resilient Planning in the following ways:

- The CWP Action Area of Resilient Planning includes, “climate adaptation, planning for climate extremes, embracing EDI (equity, diversity, inclusivity), education, outreach and engagement, supportive government, etc” (2023 CWP, Chapter 1, pp. 8). By surveying and evaluating conditions of the riverscape within the Rio Grande and Shriver Wright state wildlife areas (SWAs), Phase 6 partners will be equipped with the knowledge to plan and implement restoration in key areas to promote floodplain connectivity, natural sediment regimes, and improved alluvial connection. These strategies will increase resilience to downstream infrastructure during high flows and allow for improved connectivity during low flows. Additionally, the education events planned as part of Phase 6 further this Action Area.
- Channel shaping, creation of vegetated bankfull benches, and aquatic habitat restoration with materials such as installation of rock and woody debris will restore natural sediment transport processes, increase alluvial aquifer storage, and mitigate potential impacts to aquatic life. In doing so, Phase 6 implements “Nature-based solutions [which will] attenuate flood flows, boost late-season low flows, and improve ecosystem health and water quality”

(CWP Section 3 pp. 205). Although Phase 6 restoration activities will not affect the river's flow regime, it will increase pool depth, which will act as a refuge for aquatic life during late-season low flows. This, combined with riparian revegetation, will improve water quality by increasing stream shading and buffering water temperature.

- Enhanced riparian and aquatic habitat through riparian revegetation, erosion reduction, channel shaping, floodplain connectivity, and creation of bankfull benches, is in alignment with the action item to “rehabilitate streams to improve habitat, reduce erosion, and meet needs” (CWP Section 3 pp. 205). As noted on page 204 of the CWP, “sustaining healthy watersheds, which include the forests, rivers, and habitat within them, is critical to Colorado’s tourism, our resilience, and our water supply.”
- By stabilizing streambanks, reactivating floodplains in select locations, and reducing the risk of high streamflow events to downstream infrastructure, including multiple ditches, road crossings, and the Alamosa Levee System, Phase 6 is aligned with the CWP action to “Create greater drought, fire, and flood resilience” (CWP Section 3 pp. 206).
- By restoring riparian and aquatic habitat for multiple native and vulnerable species, including the threatened yellow-billed cuckoo, endangered southwestern willow flycatcher, and the Rio Grande chub (a Tier I Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Colorado), Phase 6 furthers the statement, “efforts to improve riparian and aquatic habitat are important to the recovery of native and imperiled species.” (CWP Section 3 pp. 206).
- By reconnecting the Rio Grande to its floodplain in select locations, Phase 6 will increase alluvial aquifer storage during wet periods (spring runoff) for use during dry times (late summer/fall). This supports the action of “Storage to build drought resiliency” (2023 CWP, Chapter 6, pp. 217).

Phase 6 is also in alignment with the Public Education and Outreach goals outlined in the CWP. The CWP’s vision is that “Education and outreach engages the public, partners, and leaders in integrated water planning to conserve and protect water for current and future generations.” (2023 CWP, Chapter 5, pp. 240). Phase 6 will help address these key challenges of “Inclusive Public Engagement” identified in Chapter 5 by engaging youth and local community members in educational tours led by project partners within the Rio Grande and Shriver-Wright SWAs. Through at least two educational tours, we will highlight the values of state wildlife areas, conservation easements, and managed lands as well as the value of natural river functions and regimes.

In addition to meeting many of the CWP Action Areas, Phase 6 meets two of the five Rio Grande BIP goals and is supported by the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable. Phase 6 meets the following two BIP goals:

1. “Healthy watersheds that provide critical ecosystem services, are resilient to disturbances, and benefit from ongoing efforts to protect water sources, improve water quality, enhance aquatic, riparian, wetland, and upland habitat, and maintain connected ecosystems.” (2021 Rio Grande BIP, Section 4, pp. 19).
2. “Engaged and informed citizens who understand the scope and urgency of local, state, and regional water issues and participate in robust and diverse educational opportunities.” (2021 Rio Grande BIP, Section 4, pp. 24).

Phase 6 supports these goals by restoring riparian and aquatic habitat along the Rio Grande and organizing community tours to discuss restoration actions and opportunities in the Rio Grande and Shriver-Wright SWAs. Additionally, Phase 6 was also listed as an identified project (IPP #RG-2020-0029) titled Rio Grande Riparian Stabilization Project - Phase 6 (2021 Rio Grande BIP, Section 6, pp. 41).

Finally, Phase 6 supports many of the goals and strategies outlined in the Rio Grande Basin Education Action Plan (titled “Upper Rio Grande Communications and Outreach Plan). For example, Phase 6 supports goals #1 through 3, which are centered around educating the public about water resources in the valley, balancing water supply for wildlife and people, and increasing awareness of the variety of water uses in the valley. (2025 Rio Grande Comm Plan, pp. 1).

To measure success, the CRGRF will track and monitor outcomes of the grant activities. Specific monitoring metrics will include linear feet of stream restored, acres of riparian habitat restored, number of individuals engaged, and number of events/tours organized.

The Rio Grande Riparian Revegetation and Streambank Stabilization – Phase 6 (Phase 6) builds upon studies and restoration efforts which have taken place over the last 20 years. In 2001, a study of river conditions and restoration priorities was completed for the Rio Grande from South Fork to the Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge. The 2001 study led to the formation of our nonprofit and was the basis of our first restoration efforts, including Phases 1-4 of Rio Grande Riparian Revegetation and Streambank Stabilization.

More recently, Phase 6 was identified and prioritized in the 2020 Rio Grande Stream Management Plan (SMP), which is available here: <https://riograndeheadwaters.org/stream-management-plans>. An excerpt from the Rio Grande SMP is attached to this application. The project was specifically listed on page 202 of the SMP, the Rio Grande Riparian Stabilization Project – Phase 6 (2020 Rio Grande SMP, pp. 202). Phase 6 will also further objectives in the SMP-identified projects Middle Rio Grande Riparian Vegetation, Rio Grande Riparian Fencing, and Rio Grande Riparian Habitat Restoration (2020 Rio Grande SMP, pp. 206-207) by improving the extent and condition of riparian areas and riparian fencing within the Rio Grande state wildlife areas. Phase 6 furthers the following Rio Grande SMP goals:

- Goal A. Improve function and reduce maintenance of irrigation infrastructure, both for water users and river health.
- Goal B. Maintain or improve bank and channel stability, especially near important wildlife habitat and critical infrastructure such as homes, diversion structures, roads, and bridges.
- Goal C. Maintain and improve the function of floodplains, associated alluvial aquifers, and natural channel processes.
- Goal D. Maintain and improve the extent and condition of riparian areas.
- Goal F. Maintain or improve water quality, with a focus on mine reclamation projects and compliance with State water quality standards.
- Goal G. Maintain or improve long term sustainability of Rio Grande fisheries and associated aquatic habitat.

Additionally, Phase 6 was listed as an identified project (IPP #RG-2020-0029) titled Rio Grande Riparian Stabilization Project - Phase 6 (2021 Rio Grande BIP, Section 6, pp. 41).

### **Taxpayer Bill of Rights**

The Applicant, The Colorado Rio Grande Restoration Foundation, is not subject to TABOR limitations, as it is a Colorado nonprofit organization operating under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.