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Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Investing in Colorado's Watersheds: Update on the CWCB Water Plan Grant Program

RIPARIAN RESTORATION CONFERENCE

Where Water, Wildlife, and People Meet

CMU, Grand Junction, CO

March 5, 2026

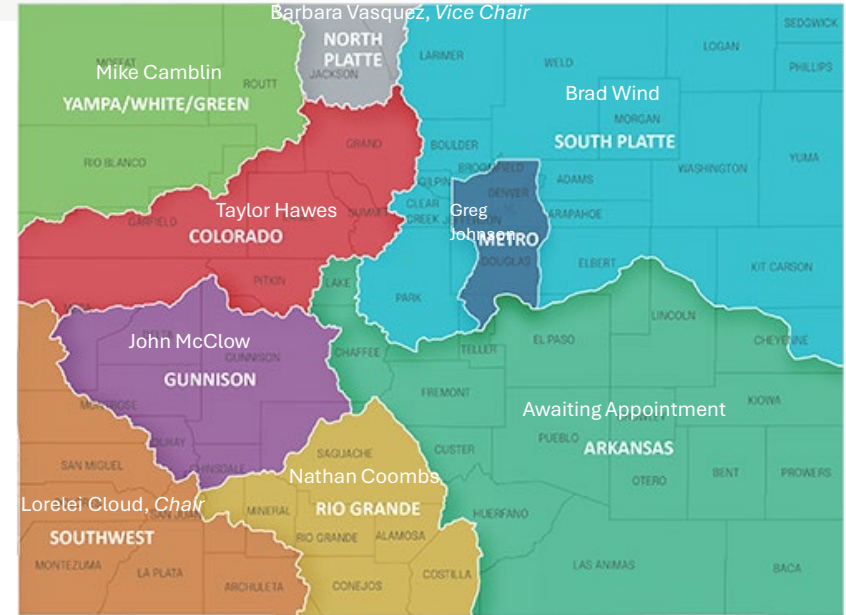
Who We Are

Mission:

To Conserve, Develop, Protect and Manage Colorado's Water for Present and Future Generations.

Program Areas:

- Finance
- Interstate, Federal & Water Information
- Stream & Lake Protection
- Water Supply Planning
- Watershed & Flood Protection
- Grants Section



Ex-Officio Members:

Dan Gibbs, DNR Director (*voting*), **Phil Weiser**, AG (*non-voting*), **Jason Ullman**, State Engineer (*non-voting*)
Kate Greenberg, DOA Director (*non-voting*),
Laura Ciellan, CPW Director (*non-voting*)
Lauren Ris, CWCB Director (*non-voting*)

CWCB Water Funding Explorer



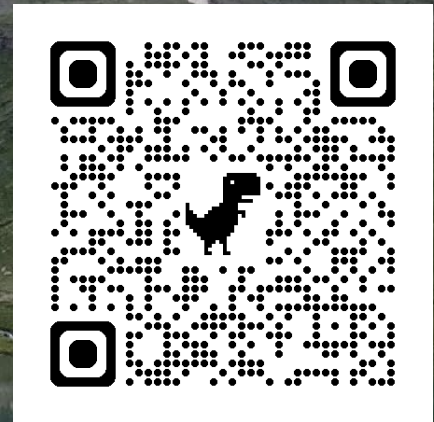
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WATER PLAN GRANT INTERACTIVE MAP



\$127,669,663.77
awarded

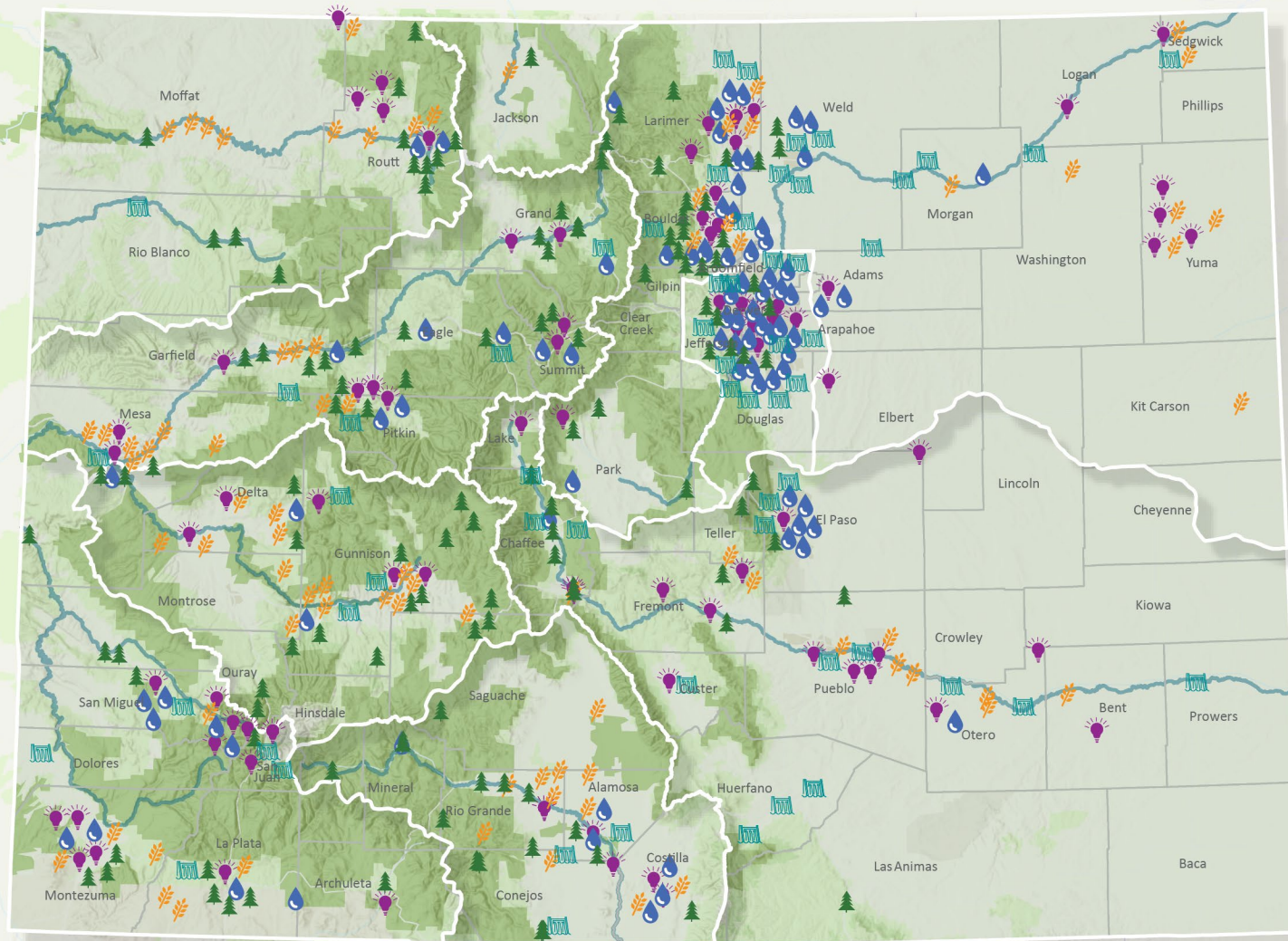


covering 9 basin roundtables











since 2017

All Water Plan Grant Locations (2017-2024)



Basin	Funding Category				
	Ag	C&LU	E&I	S&S	WH&R
Arkansas	5	9	9	18	12
Colorado	12	7	10	4	22
Gunnison	16	2	4	4	18
Metro	1	23	12	8	6
North Platte	1	0	0	0	1
Rio Grande	11	3	6	3	17
South Platte	12	19	16	17	23
Southwest	11	3	10	5	13
Yampa/White/Green	6	2	0	1	11
Statewide	9	26	25	1	7
Total	84	94	92	61	130

Legend

-  Agriculture
-  River Mainstems
-  Conservation & Land Use
-  River Basins
-  Engagement & Innovation
-  County Boundaries
-  Storage & Supply
-  Watershed Health & Recreation

WATER PLAN GRANTS



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- *Storage and supply/demand gap (New storage)*
- *Collaborative Water Sharing Agreements*
- *Conservation, land use, & drought planning*
- *Engagement and Innovation*
- *Agricultural projects*
- *Watershed Health & Recreation projects*
 - *Preference given to projects w/ multiple benefits/purposes*
 - *Applications due July 1 & December 1*

FY 26/27 \$37.7M available

Updated category
allocation in May

Minimum match:
25% for planning
50% for implementation



By the Dollars:

\$16M

Total matching funds for FY25 was \$16M—a more than 100% return on investment, leveraged from \$15.7M awarded

projects for FY25

\$248K

The average grant award size in FY 2024-25

per grant project

approved projects (includes design, implementation, planning)

\$15K-\$1.2M

The range of grant award amounts in FY 2024-25

in FY25

counties across the state for FY25

Watershed Health and Rec



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Forest Hill Mill Reclamation

Grantee: Trout Unlimited

Basin: Gunnison

Grant Amount: \$ 337,563.12

Reclamation of the Forest Hill Mill site, removing 7,000 cubic yards of mine waste and restoring 11 acres of wetland, riparian, and upland habitat.

Improve water quality, habitat resilience, and community awareness

Taylor Park in the Upper Gunnison River Basin, has a history of recreation, logging, and mining, which has led to degraded environmental conditions

Collaboration between state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, academic institutions, and community volunteers



Engagement & Innovation



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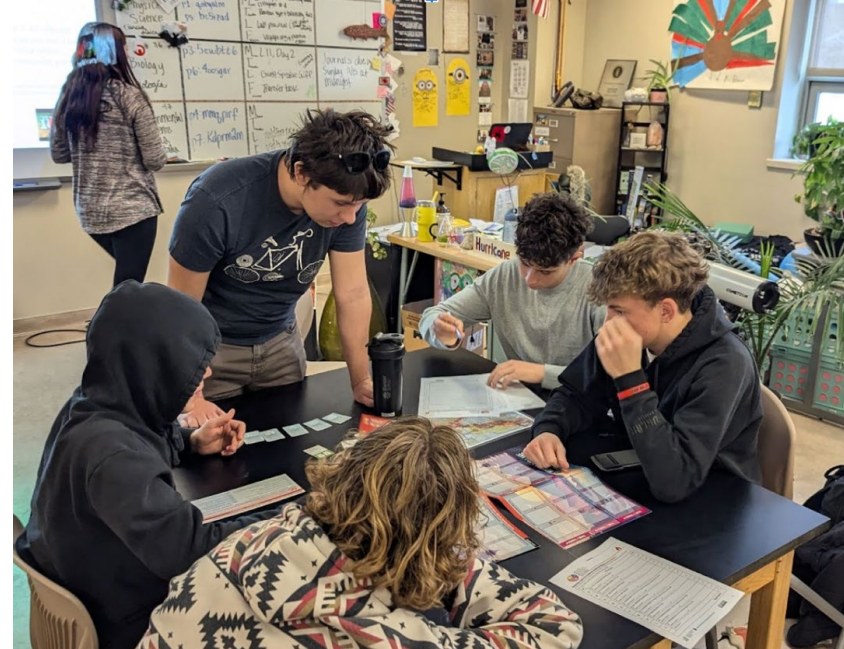
GameOn for Drought Resilience: Youth Led Rural Engagement

Grantee: University of Colorado Boulder
Basin: Gunnison, Rio Grande, Southwest
Grant Amount: \$70,029

CU Boulder's Center for Education, Engagement, and Evaluation (CEEE) is expanding their existing educational drought resilience game to include examples from the Colorado Water Plan and Basin Implementation Plan, videos from local water leaders, and Spanish translations.

The game has been redesigned and created a digital game facilitation toolkit.

The game has been shared at summer teacher training workshops and taught in classrooms and at student-led Community Game Nights.



Agricultural Projects



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Upper Little Snake River Restoration and Diversion Structure Improvements

Grantee: Pot Hook Water Conservancy

Basin: Yampa, White, Green

Grant Amount: \$781,989.00

Upgraded 3 irrigation diversion structures and restored channel to fish-friendly designs

Natural channel design and bioengineering methods maintain reliable agricultural water delivery across multiple landowners, eliminate annual push-up dams

Improve irrigation efficiency with permanent rock diversion structures, headgates, and headwalls that allow efficient water diversion without instream alteration



Agricultura



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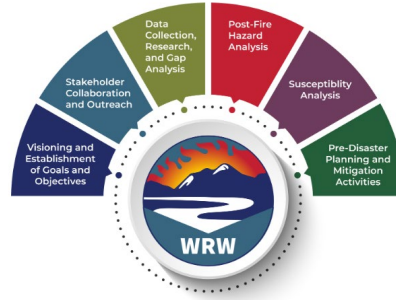
Colorado Watershed Restoration Grants



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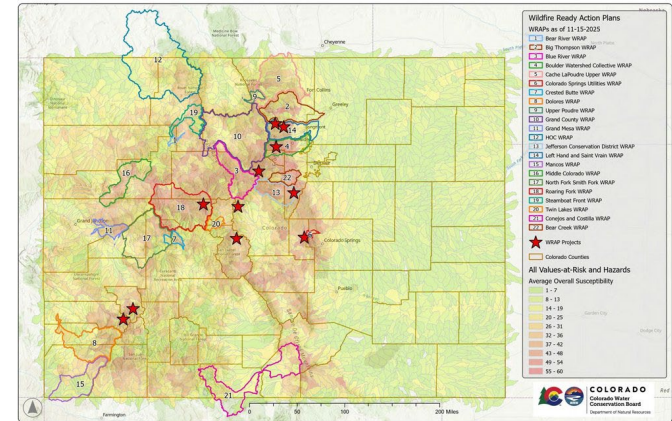
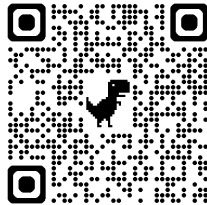
Address the susceptibility of values at risk to post wildfire hazards through:

- Capacity building,
- Planning & Engineering
- Implementation
- Post-wildfire emergency funding



Minimum match:
25% for planning
50% for implementation

- *Preference given to projects w/ multiple benefits/purposes*
- Rolling application deadline, until the available funds are obligated



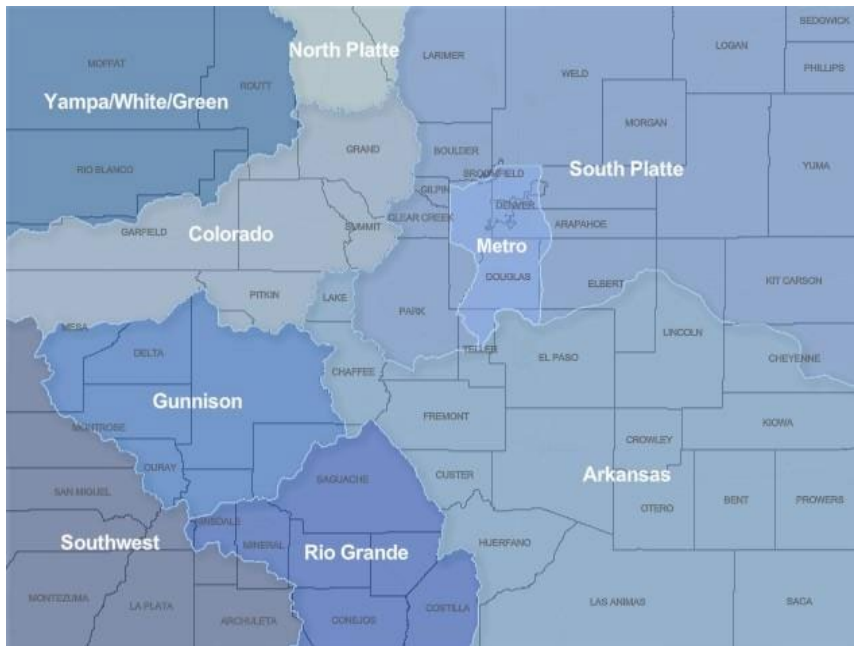
Regional Contacts



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**We welcome inquiries from all
constituent entities, NGOs, water
providers, ditches, etc.**

Arkansas Basin

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Colorado, Gunnison & Yampa/White/Green Basins

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Metro, South Platte & North Platte Basins

Jackie Carano

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Rio Grande & Southwest Basins

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Colorado Water Plan

Focus Areas

Funding

Public Information

About Us

[Home](#) > [Funding](#)

Funding

The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) offers numerous loans and grants to water providers and other entities statewide for a variety of water-related projects, studies, planning documents, awareness campaigns and other activities.

For a complete overview, see the [Loan & Grant Programs Overview Flyer](#).

Access the [CWCB Portal](#) to submit grant or loan applications ([Register to use the Portal here](#)).

Water Project Loan Program

Provides low-interest loans for agricultural, municipal and hydro projects in Colorado.

[Learn More](#)

Loan Payment Portal

You can now make loan payments online.

[Visit the Payment Portal](#)

Grants

The CWCB provides grants for a variety of water related projects.

[Learn More](#)



[Projects](#)

[Registration Request](#)

Registration Request

To start using the portal, please, request access by filling out the form below. DNR will need to manually review the request due to specific requirements. This process usually takes 2-4 business days after submission.

1 ACCESS TYPE 2 AGENCY DETAILS 3 AGENCY CONTACT 4 SUMMARY

Access Type

i Please click the options that apply to your request

Grants & Loans

Select this option if you are a new applicant seeking either grant or loan funding. Existing grantees and borrowers with a currently active contract should contact CWCB to enable access to the portal.

HB1051

Select this option if you are a new water provider seeking to submit an HB1051 report. Existing water providers who have previously submitted HB1051 reports should contact CWCB to enable access to the portal.

[Next](#)

THANK YOU

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Application Development Tips



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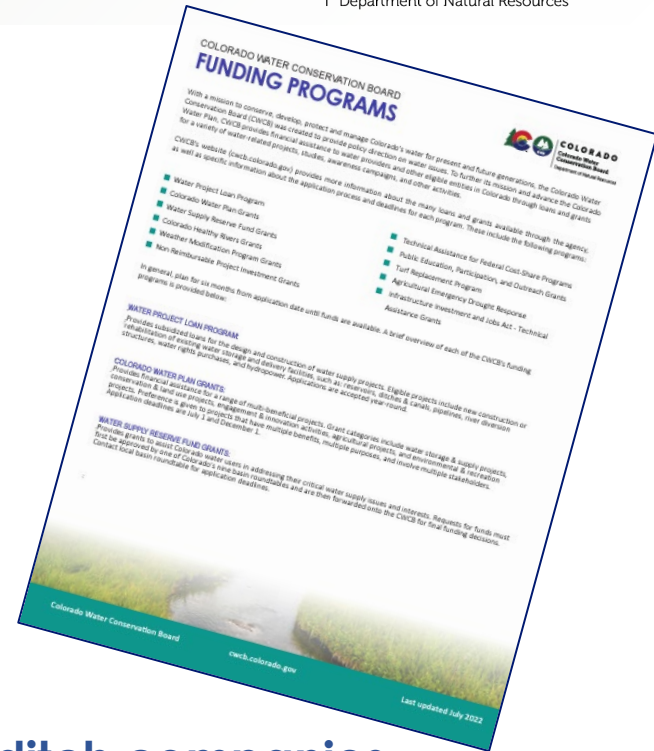
- **Get started early!** It can take 3-6 months to gather everything need to apply.
- Talk to potential contractors, an engineer, or consult suppliers to get an **estimated project cost**
- Identify **potential stakeholders, beneficiaries or partners**. Can the project/process/program benefit more than one user group?
- Secure **financial commitments** (CWCB requires 25% match on planning, 50% on implementation/construction)
- **Talk to the CWCB early on** about the application and which funding program best aligns with the project. We are here to coach and help!

Raw Water Funding Programs



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- Loan Program
- Water Supply Reserve Fund Grants
- Water Plan Grants
- Projects Bill Grants



Eligible applicants include public entities, NGOs, ditch companies

Match required, and CWCB loans can be used as match for most grants!

LOAN PROGRAM



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Loans for water supply projects such as:

- Reservoir rehabilitation or new construction
- Ditches & canals
- Pipelines
- River diversion structures
- Water rights purchases



Typically \$50M
available from CWCB
cash funds

Interest Rates
March 1, 2026

Agricultural: 2.35%

Municipal:
3.30% to 4.20%

Contact: Matt Stearns
(matthew.stearns@state.co.us)

WATER SUPPLY RESERVE FUND



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- **Grants** to address water supply issues (planning & construction)
- Public Education, Participation & Outreach (PEPO) grants
- Funding must first be approved by local roundtable

Typically \$3M
available annually
statewide

Minimum of 25%
match required

Contact: Ben Wade
(ben.wade@state.co.us)

