



COLORADO

Colorado Water
Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Supply Reserve Fund

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	Elbert County Government		
Name of Water Project			
Basin Account Request Subtotal			\$45,000.00
Applicant Cash Match			\$45,000.00
Applicant In-Kind Match			\$0.00
Basin Requests			
Sources of Funding			

Applicant & Grantee Information

Name of Grantee: Elbert County Government	
Mailing Address: 215 Comanche Street Kiowa CO 80117	
FEIN: 846,000,763	
Organization Contact: Eric Larson	
Position/Title:	Email: eric.larson@elbertcounty-co.gov
Phone: (720) 815-8793	
Organization Contact - Alternate: Marc Dettenrieder	
Position/Title: Economic Development Manager	Email: marc.dettenrieder@elbertcounty-co.gov
Phone: (720) 595-3617	
Grant Management Contact: Eric Larson	
Position/Title:	Email: eric.larson@elbertcounty-co.gov
Phone: (720) 815-8793	
Grant Management Contact - Alternate: Marc Dettenrieder	
Position/Title: Economic Development Manager	Email: marc.dettenrieder@elbertcounty-co.gov
Phone: (720) 595-3617	

Agency Information

Agency Type	Other
Current Assessment	
Number of Shareholders or Customers	
Number of Shares	
Number of Taps	
Average Monthly Water Bill	
Annual Water Delivery (acre-feet)	

Description of Grantee/Applicant

No description provided

Location of Water Project

Latitude 0.000000
Longitude 0.000000
Lat Long Flag
Water Source
Basins
Counties
Districts

Water Project Overview

Major Water Use Type
Type of Water Project
Scheduled Start Date - Design 10/23/2022
Scheduled Start Date - Construction 10/23/2022
Description

Measurable Results

0 New Storage Created (acre-feet)
0 New Annual Water Supplies Developed or Conserved (acre-feet), Consumptive or Nonconsumptive
0 Existing Storage Preserved or Enhanced (acre-feet)
0 New Storage Created (acre-feet)
0 Length of Stream Restored or Protected (linear feet)
\$0 Efficiency Savings (dollars/year)
0 Efficiency Savings (acre-feet/year)
0 Area of Restored or Preserved Habitat (acres)
0 Quantity of Water Shared through Alternative Transfer Mechanisms or water sharing agreement (acre-feet)
0 Number of Coloradans Impacted by Incorporating Water-Saving Actions into Land Use Planning
0 Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity
Other
No additional measurable results provided

Executive Summary

Elbert County Water Plan Grant Request

to Colorado Water Conservation Board via South Platte Basin Roundtable

Elbert County is requesting \$45,000 in WSRF matching funds to build a Water Plan for the county. With no major surface storage for Municipal and Industrial (M&I) water users, Elbert County is almost entirely dependent on the Denver Basin Aquifer to supply household and commercial water. While we acknowledge the South Platte Basin's priority and focus on surface water to meet multiple purposes, such as watershed/ habitat and recreation, our principal interest is preserving access to underground supply. Of course, the two are linked -- any water drawn from the aquifer is water not drawn from surface sources, so conservation of one is directly related to supply available to the other.

Elbert County also applauds the South Platte and Metro Roundtable areas for leading Colorado in water efficiency – as measured by water utilities for metered customers. Not known are the use patterns of households served by individual wells, of which there are almost 8,000 in Elbert County. That's the equivalent of two Fort Morgans drawing solely from the aquifer, for which we have very little data to show their positive impacts or recognize their gains in efficiency.

Along with neighboring El Paso County, Elbert County has proactively applied a 300-year water rule to preserve known underground supplies as the only economical source. Elbert County thanks the SPBRT for its support in conducting the WSRF-funded 2018 Elbert County Water Supply Study that confirmed the Denver Basin aquifer was adequate to meet County requirements well beyond the study's 2050 planning horizon. However, that study also cautioned it *could not account for the effects on overall aquifer levels and pressures of the draw by adjacent counties and communities* – which are only using 100-year rules.

Elbert County Water Plan Objectives

First, and foremost, Elbert County needs a water plan that clearly shows we are proactively striving for balance between up-front cost and long-term sustainability of new developments and addressing the concerns of existing residents to preserve their access to the water under their homes. To address these rightful concerns, the plan must:

- **Show the advantages of applying the existing 300-year water rule to current and future large-scale development.** The efficiency benefits of community water systems are many, from transparent monitoring and metering to reuse/recycle at scale. But those systems are most feasible in both the short-term and long-run with denser development. The fundamental tension for Elbert County water planning is only addressed by demonstrating there is a sustainable way to deliver water to 1,000 future homes on 125 acres versus 125 current homes on 1000 acres. The innovations now being applied in new development are challenging the conventional wisdom that dense development cannot meet these standards.
- **Identify partners, resources, messages, and technologies that make conservation the best economic choice for well-served residents.** Well users have already paid their dues – they bought the water under their property, drilled the well, and installed the septic system. They don't get monthly water bills showing their block rates, and can't spread the cost of efficiency upgrades

across 1,000 customers. They need to see the price and advantages of conservation in real dollars, and be connected to monetary resources (as incentives, loans, or grants) that close the gap between cost and benefit for their household. We need to give them a reason to participate in metering and monitoring that gives them credit for their water conservation efforts.

- **Integrate our efforts (and sacrifices) into the Basin and State Plans.** Elbert County water users want to know they are equal, valuable partners in the larger Colorado efforts to preserve water supplies. A well-crafted plan would show the value – both as good neighbors and for our pocketbooks – that we all place on conservation, and how our sacrifices are being equally matched by other communities.

Links to SPBRT Basin Implementation Plan Goals

We anticipate the Water Plan would contribute directly to the following BIP Goals:

- **Maximize the development of native South Platte Supplies.** By maximizing efficiency in new developments and promoting conservation by existing well-users, Elbert County is encouraging self-reliance on those groundwater resources already found under the county. The 2018 study confirmed Elbert County has an adequate supply for present and future local users, but conventional wisdom says that supply is best preserved through both conservation by individual well-users and regional recognition that Elbert County's only economical future supply will be from the aquifer.

- **Maintain and promote M&I conservation and efficiency.** By showing the advantages of continuing the 300-year rule, Elbert County is driving new developments toward the most innovative and sustainable solutions for those communities and the aquifer. By linking existing well-users to resources for efficiency upgrades, we are potentially addressing almost 8,000 users (roughly the customer base of the Town of Berthoud, CO).

- **Maintain and promote reuse.** Reuse and recycle will inevitably be a part of any efficient community water system. In fact, no new community system is likely to achieve the 300-year rule requirements without reuse. Further, demonstrating the value and viability of reuse and recycle technologies in large systems encourages their adoption by individual users.

- **Broaden South Platte communications, outreach, and education programs.** We will draw from the lessons of the Tri-County Health public outreach program initially funded in 2019 by CWCB and implemented in 2021. That outreach reached over 22,000 well-owner contacts. Elbert County would use many of the same themes, but plan to link them with monetary incentives and resources.

Show the Value, Live our Values

As the Basin Implementation Plan notes, “competition for additional M&I water supplies is significant” – that statement increasingly applies to the combined water resources of the South Platte and Republican Rivers and the Denver Basin aquifer. Conservation by well-users (almost 80% of our households) is most likely to succeed only if we can show them the investment is worth their dollars. We are also unlikely to gain the efficiency of new community systems without showing how new developments will be responsible water users. Elbert County looks forward to building a water plan that preserves the natural resources of the county for our residents; doing so will make us great neighbors without contributing to the race to the bottom of the well.