



Updating Five Water Efficiency Plans in Summit County including:

The Blue River Watershed Regional Water Efficiency Plan

And Individual Water Efficiency Plans For:

Town of Dillon

Town of Frisco

Town of Breckenridge

Copper Mountain Consolidated Metropolitan District

Category B Applicant:

High Country Conservation Center
P.O. Box 4506
Frisco, Colorado 80443

Partner Applicant:

Town of Frisco
P.O. Box 4100
Frisco, Colorado 80443

Project Manager:

Rachel Zerowin, Community Programs Director
Email: rachel@highcountryconservation.org
Phone: 970-668-5703 x 101
Address: High Country Conservation Center
P.O. Box 4506
Frisco, Colorado 80443

Table of Contents

Executive Summary:	2
Project Location:	3
Project Description:	4
Evaluation Criteria.....	8
E.1.1 Project Benefits	8
Threats to Watershed Health	8
Impacts of These Threats on Specific Sectors and Water Uses	9
How the Regional Water Efficiency Plan Will Address These Threats.....	10
E.1.2 Inclusion of Stakeholders, Stakeholder Project Support and Previous Planning Efforts for Task A: Water Strategy Grants.....	11
E.1.3 Ability to Meet Program Requirements	12
How HC3 Will Meet Program Requirements for Water Strategy Grants	12
Preliminary Project Schedule	15
Existing Data and Models	15
Staff Qualifications	16
E.1.4 Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities.....	17
E.1.5 Nexus to Reclamation	17
Project Budget	17
Permits, Assurances, and Statements	18
References	19

Executive Summary:

Application Date: May 3, 2024

Request Amount: \$397,588

Applicant:

High Country Conservation Center
Frisco, Summit County, Colorado

Partner Applicant:

Town of Frisco
Frisco, Summit County, Colorado

Applicant Category:

High Country Conservation Center (HC3) is applying under Task A: Water Strategy Grant. This proposal requests funding to update five Water Efficiency Plans including the Blue River Watershed Regional Water Efficiency Plan and four Individual Water Efficiency Plans that were all originally completed in 2018. The Individual Water Efficiency Plans will be updated for the following water providers: Town of Frisco, Town of Dillon, Town of Breckenridge, and Copper Mountain Consolidated Metropolitan District. As a nonprofit conservation organization, HC3 is a Category B applicant. HC3 will work with Category A partner – the Town of Frisco – to update the five Water Efficiency Plans. HC3 and the Town of Frisco have a long history of working together on similar projects and as a result have established a good working relationship. Please see the attached Letter of Commitment from the Town of Frisco confirming their support of, and commitment to, this application.

Project Summary:

High Country Conservation Center (HC3) will lead efforts to update and monitor the progress of five Water Efficiency Plans in the Blue River Watershed in Summit County, Colorado. The plans to be updated include the Blue River Watershed Regional Water Efficiency Plan and Individual Water Efficiency Plans for each of the following water providers: Town of Frisco, Town of Dillon, Town of Breckenridge, and Copper Mountain Consolidated Metropolitan District (the four utilities are formal project partners). These plans will be updated in partnership with a consultant (subject matter experts) and key stakeholders in the area. As an important headwaters area to the Colorado River basin, there are many complex factors affecting the Blue River Watershed that these plan updates will address. Climate change is causing increasingly warm summer days and shorter and shorter winters. This is leading to lower snowpack in the winter, earlier runoff, and drier soils in the summer; all of which lead to a scarcer water future for the county. Short winter seasons also threaten the major industry in Summit County: ski resorts. Shorter ski seasons mean lower tourism revenue throughout the winter months. Summit County is the home of several transbasin diversions of water from the western slope (where Summit County is located) to the larger cities on the eastern slope of Colorado. These water diversions mean there is less water available for local use – even as the population of Colorado continues to grow – and create an even greater need to conserve more of what the county is allocated. An update to the Regional Water Efficiency Plan is now necessary to make Summit County a more

resilient community in the face of these challenges through implementation of coordinated water conservation activities. The updated Regional Water Efficiency Plan will complement other planning efforts in the watershed by filling a need for water conservation specific planning that is not addressed by other efforts. A few of the main planning efforts that this project will enhance include the Blue River Watershed Integrated Water Management Plan, The Colorado River Basin Implementation Plan, and The Colorado Water Plan.

Project Completion and Involvement of Federal Land

HC3 estimates that the five updated Water Efficiency Plans will be completed by March 2028 (assuming a grant start date of April 2025). Because this project strives to conserve water across the county, it will have a positive impact on the operations of all downstream facilities and water rights, including Green Mountain Reservoir, the closest federal facility to the project.

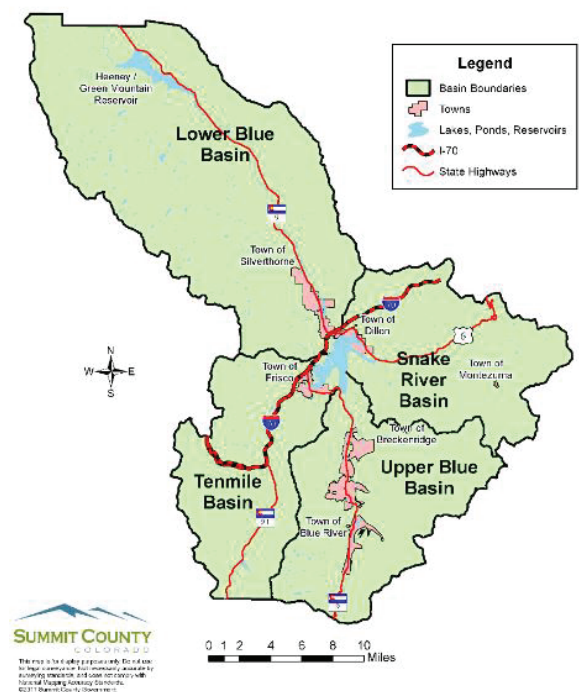
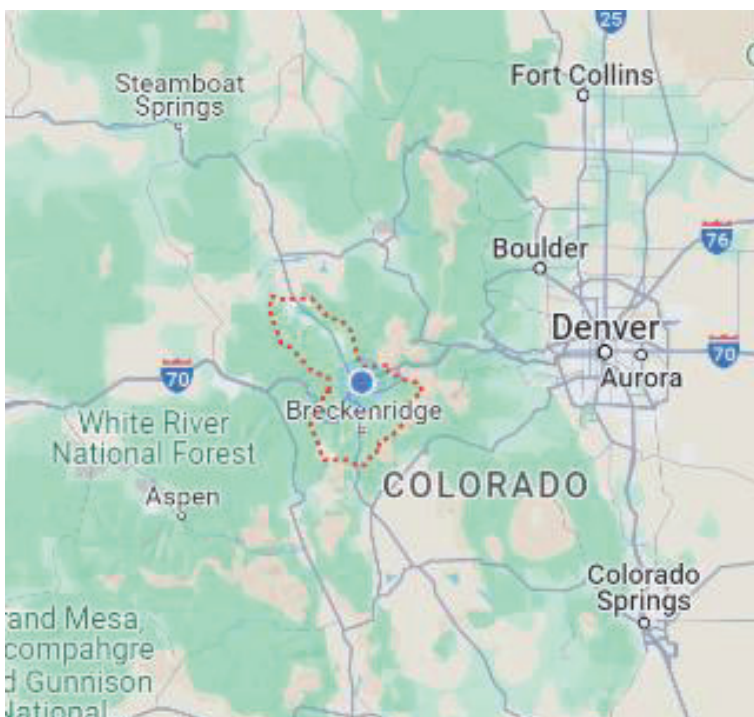
Project Location:

The update to the Blue River Watershed Regional Water Efficiency Plan will focus on the entire Blue River watershed area. The four Individual Water Efficiency Plans that will be updated will focus on smaller geographic areas within that larger boundary. The Blue River Watershed lies within the larger Colorado River Basin. The boundaries of the Blue River watershed are roughly equivalent to the boundaries of Summit County. The watershed area encompasses the towns of Silverthorne, Frisco, Breckenridge, Dillon, Copper Mountain, and Keystone. The main river in the watershed is the Blue River which flows north until it joins the Colorado River.

The coordinates for the centroid of the county boundary are:

- Latitude: +39.621023; Longitude: -106.137555

The red dotted line on the map on the left shows where the boundary of the Blue River Watershed is situated within the state of Colorado. The map at the right shows a closer view of the watershed with the location of the county's major towns and reservoirs.



Project Description:

High Country Conservation Center (HC3) is requesting funds from the Bureau of Reclamation to update five state-approved Water Efficiency Plans to help the entire Blue River Watershed reduce municipal water use. The five state-approved Water Efficiency Plans to be updated include the overarching Blue River Watershed Regional Water Efficiency Plan and four Individual Water Efficiency Plans for local municipalities, including: the Town of Frisco, Town of Dillon, Town of Breckenridge, and Copper Mountain Consolidated Metropolitan District. These plans will also be referred to as the Regional Water Efficiency Plan and the Individual Water Efficiency Plans, respectively, throughout this application. These five plans were originally completed in 2018, through collaborative efforts led by HC3. This was the first planning effort in the county to promote a coordinated approach to water conservation and now, six years later, it remains the only effort dedicated to the issue of water conservation.

The Blue River watershed is one of the most critical headwater areas in Colorado, serving both west slope and east slope users. Despite the achievements made after the initial Regional Water Efficiency Plan was created, continued reduction of municipal water use is essential in the face of climate change, population growth, increased crowds at ski resorts, snow making, ski resort expansions, and other demands on the watershed. An update to these five Water Efficiency Plans will allow community stakeholders to take stock of the progress and build upon the work started in 2018. The updated plans will contain new recommendations and re-engage the community to keep these issues top of mind for both the water providers and local community members.

Over the last six years, a great deal of progress has been made on many of the recommendations in the plan. Efforts were led by both HC3 and the individual water providers to create the following progress on improving water efficiency in the county. In the 2018 Regional Water Efficiency Plan, recommendations were made for each provider to complete the following changes and upgrades to their practices to encourage more water conservation among their customers.

1. Billing Upgrades: Water providers planned to create WaterSmart Report Cards for their customers, which would give customers more detailed information about their water usage, how their usage compared to similar customers, and suggestions for improving their water efficiency. Once the Town of Frisco gets transmitters fully online this year, they will be able to complete a full roll out of WaterSmart Report Cards for their customers. The Town of Breckenridge has begun billing their customers monthly so that customers can see shifts in their water use quickly and make changes in a timely manner.
2. Advanced Metering Infrastructure: All the water providers planned to make some improvements to their metering infrastructure to be able to bill customers and identify leaks in the system quicker and more accurately. Each provider who installed advanced metering infrastructure would see an estimated 7% decrease in water use. The Town of Frisco already had advanced metering infrastructure installed in 2018 that were capable of daily reads, however, these meters were only being read quarterly at the time. To realize the full benefit of the AMI system, the town has upgraded their radio tower. They

now have all the infrastructure in place and are just waiting for testing and certification from the metering company before this system is fully operation this summer. In 2018, Copper Mountain Consolidated Metropolitan District had upgraded approximately 15% of their meters to advanced metering infrastructure. Since then, they have successfully upgraded the remaining 85% of meters, which has enabled the district to realize additional income from improved meter functioning and allowed them to proactively engage with customers to address leaks identified by the upgraded metering infrastructure.

3. Conservation-Oriented Rates: Each participating provider planned to adopt inclining block rate structures, which are designed to encourage water conservation by charging higher rates for higher water usage. The Town of Frisco implemented more aggressive tiered water rates, based on consumption, bringing them more in line with surrounding utilities. They have seen a positive impact on water conservation after these rate changes. Copper Mountain Consolidated Metropolitan District is still working on doing a full rate study. In the meantime, they have increased their rates for outdoor irrigation to motivate customers to pay more attention to their irrigation usage and promote conservation and have seen some initial reductions in irrigation as a result. Breckenridge also moved to using a three tier system of conservation-based rates in January of 2024 and looks forward to seeing what impact this will have on use this summer.

The 2018 Regional Water Efficiency Plan also laid out some recommendations that HC3 has implemented as a regional conservation organization. As a result of the 2018 plan's recommendations, HC3 created an outdoor water efficiency program that focused on providing outdoor water audits to evaluate irrigation systems for efficiency improvements. As part of this program, HC3 also works with homeowner's associations – as they are some of the largest water users in the community – to provide them with irrigation assessments, resulting in recommendations for ways they can improve the efficiency of their irrigation. One homeowner's association was able to cut their water in use in half after working with HC3 and the irrigation assessment program.

HC3 was an important player in some regional changes that will lead to long term water efficiency improvements for Summit County. As but one example, Summit County passed new ordinances in their development codes restricting the amount of turf in new developments to no more than 10% of the landscape. Another effort that came from the Regional Water Efficiency Plan is the creation of unified watering restrictions for the county. Previously, the restrictions on outdoor watering were different for each of the many municipalities in summit county. By unifying this disjointed policy, HC3 will be able to educate the community this summer on the new county wide irrigation policy.

Finally, HC3 also carried out many regional education and outreach activities in Summit County. Some of the recommendations found in the 2018 Regional Water Efficiency Plan that HC3 implemented over the past few years include:

- Monthly outreach events were held in the summer of 2023 to educate the community on the need for water conservation. These events were hosted in partnership with other local nonprofits and covered topics such as how local water use impacts the larger Colorado River basin, how trans-basin diversions work, and an overview of basic water law and how that affects the local community. The series will continue this summer.
- HC3 facilitated community-wide conservation campaigns that unified the language of many independent water providers to provide clear and consistent communication throughout the county on how to use less water, especially regarding irrigation during the dry summer months.
- In 2022 and 2023, HC3 ran training for both landscapers and irrigation professionals. These training events focused on water conservation in these professions and HC3 even hosted the Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper certification course. Educating these local professionals is an effective tactic to reach second homeowners who often hire out their landscaping and aren't present in the community to attend other outreach events.

HC3 is the ideal organization to lead this project because they have a proven track record of effective programs that save water, conserve resources, educate the community, and more. The landscape of stakeholders in Summit County is complex, which makes creating cohesive policy over the watershed difficult. There are 19 water provider and five major government jurisdictions in the county, each understandably focused on their own small area of operations within the watershed. HC3, however, is concerned with the watershed as a whole and has the resources, reputation, and connections to step in as an ideal catalyst for regional collaboration on water issues with the local governments and the many water utilities of the Blue River Watershed.

If awarded funding from Reclamation, HC3 would begin the project by hiring a consultant – who is a subject matter expert – to facilitate the plan updates. The consultants will begin their work with a thorough review of the original Water Efficiency Plans (completed in 2018) and will identify both the quantitative and qualitative results of those plans. HC3 and the consultants will then begin the stakeholder and community engagement process, which will continue alongside the technical elements of the plan updates.

HC3 already has a great working relationship with many of the main stakeholders throughout Summit County, which will make engagement much easier. HC3 and the consultant team will use the stakeholder engagement plan that was utilized in the original 2018 plans to ensure that important voices are heard throughout the process. The engagement techniques that will likely be used to engage stakeholders include focus groups with topic experts, facilitated group discussion, polling exercises, and brainstorming activities. Using a varied set of techniques like this ensures that everyone's voice is heard as different people are more comfortable sharing feedback in different environments.

Once the existing plans and progress on their goals have been analyzed the consultants will move on to a thorough update of data regarding current water demand, projections for future demand, and will also review the successes and shortcomings of current and past water management practices. They will also look at geographic service areas, water sources, facilities, water rights

and associated yields, and reliability and drought criteria. This review of progress and update of relevant data will allow the consultants to identify concerns and areas for improvement regarding water conservation in the watershed.

The results from this data review will allow the consultant team to create a series of recommendations for how the community can continue to move forward with greater water conservation. These recommendations will be reviewed by relevant stakeholders and consultants to determine which solutions will have the greatest positive impact on the local watershed while remaining cost effective. The winning strategies will be compiled in the updated Water Efficiency Plans, which will be made publicly available.

The updated plans will contain concise implementation strategies, which will include defining clear expectations for funding, equitable roles and responsibilities among project partners, plans for continued outreach and education, metrics for success, a method for measuring and tracking progress, and potential incentives for implementation. Throughout this process, the consultant team will work closely with HC3 and project partners to engage the community and important stakeholders at every step of the plan update.

This framework was used for the initial creation of the Water Efficiency Plans in 2018 and has been proven effective at creating a comprehensive community involvement plan, involving important stakeholders, and getting buy-in from all project partners. Most importantly, the framework also created a roadmap for implementation of the plan's recommendations rather than just publishing a guidance document that is quickly forgotten. Because of this focus on action, a great deal of water has been conserved since the publication of the original plans. HC3 firmly believes that use of this framework for the plan updates will also lead to meaningful action and further water conservation.

Although HC3 has been tracking progress on the five Water Efficiency Plans, the tracking has been informal in nature. The difficulty of collecting data from 19 water providers and five major government jurisdictions – among other important stakeholders – has prevented a more formal approach. To improve this process, HC3 would also use Reclamation funding to develop a new implementation tool. This implementation tool would greatly increase the efficiency of monitoring the long-term progress of the plan updates. Specifically, the tool will help HC3 compile, organize, and review quantitative data on the many initiatives in the plan such as irrigation audits, outreach and education activities, land use activities, and much more. Critically, the implementation plan will allow for real time monitoring of results from the updated plans' strategies, allowing for adjustments to be made where necessary. This will lead to a more efficient use of limited staff time and funding.

Evaluation Criteria

E.1.1 Project Benefits

Threats to Watershed Health

The Blue River watershed is one of the most critical headwaters in Colorado. It serves west slope users as it flows into the Colorado River and east slope users through transbasin diversions. The main threats to the health of the Blue River watershed are listed below.

Climate Change

Climate change is the biggest threat to the health of the Blue River Watershed and the sustainability of its water supply. Projections from the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization (Rocky Mountain Climate Organization, 2021) show that Summit County will continue to see hotter summer temperatures and warmer winters. The average annual high temperature is projected to increase by 5 degrees over the next 50 years and by 9 degrees by the end of the next century. This means that the hottest days of the summer months could increase from 79 degrees on average, to an average of 85 degrees. Winter is not exempt from these warming trends either. Projections show that more days above freezing are expected during the winters and that spring temperatures will lead to earlier melting of the snowpack.

These warming temperatures are expected to lead to more scarce water supplies as detailed in the chart at the right from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (Colorado Water Conservation Board, 2023). A decreasing availability of water in the county will lead to many other environmental and community issues including shorter ski seasons, more devastating wildfires, decreasing snowpack levels and earlier spring runoff, greater need for irrigation, lower river flows, and other detrimental effects to the natural environment.

Climate variable/event	Recent trend	Projected future change	Confidence in change
Spring Snowpack	Lower	Lower	Medium 🟡
Runoff timing	Earlier	Earlier	High 🟢
Annual Streamflow	Lower	Lower	Medium 🟡
Evaporative demand	Higher	Higher	High 🟢
Summer soil moisture	Lower	Lower	High 🟢

Transbasin Diversions

Colorado’s naturally arid environment has always presented a challenge to the water supplies for its cities and towns. While 80% of the water in the state is located on the western slope, nearly 90% of the state’s population lives on the eastern slope (Colorado Basin Roundtable, 2022). Colorado’s population is projected to continue growing – reaching 8.5 million people or more by the year 2050 (Water Education Colorado, 2014). This will further exacerbate the growing impacts of climate change.

This population distribution in Colorado created a logistical challenge that has been solved by large scale water projects that divert water from the west slope to the east slope. Several such projects divert water from the Blue River Watershed to the front range to provide water for Denver, Colorado Springs, and other large cities. This presents a challenge to the residents of this watershed as there is less water available for local use. With the transbasin diversions and other

complicated water rights that affect the Blue River Watershed area, it is even more important for Summit County residents to be as efficient with the water that they have as possible. The county and its residents must recognize that even though there appears to be plenty of water in the county (especially with the large Dillon Reservoir at the heart of the region), the water rights and complicated diversions mean that there is much less water available than what is visible.

Increasing Population and Visitors

Between the 2010 and 2020 census the Summit County permanent resident population grew by 11% to reach 31,000 residents (Summit County Government, 2020). While this isn't an incredibly large population, the number of visitors on peak weekends can easily reach 150,000, which is nearly five times that of the year-round population (Summit County Government, 2018). With Colorado's population projected to continue to increase to 8.5 million people (nearly double the current population) by the year 2050 (Water Education Colorado, 2014), visitors to Summit County's ski resorts, trails, lakes, and rivers will also increase. This increase in tourism will lead to more water being needed as ski resorts expand to new terrain and improve their snow making equipment, new condos are built for the local workforce and second homeowners, and other development is conducted to provide a better experience for the growing number of visitors.

Impacts of These Threats on Specific Sectors and Water Uses

Water affects every aspect of life and the economy in Summit County. The Colorado Basin Implementation Plan concludes that by 2050 the Blue River Watershed will likely face a gap of 22,000-48,000 acre-feet per year (ac-ft/year) between water supplies and demands, and therefore cannot be relied upon to provide increased transbasin diversions for water users on the eastern slope (Colorado Basin Roundtable, 2022). A shortage of that magnitude will dramatically impact the county's tourism and recreation industry, and growing population demands will suffer from the water shortages of the future.

Threats to Water Infrastructure and Water Supply

The threats discussed above impact the many water providers in the county by decreasing the amount of water available to serve a growing population. In past drought years some local water providers have had to cease use of certain water sources due to low stream flows. The county and its water providers must be prepared for these future challenges as the climate continues to get warmer. The lower water supply also leads to more devastating wildfires. Future wildfires could impact the water quality and harm water infrastructure.

Declining Revenue from Tourism

As a resort community, much of the economy relies on tourism, and having adequate water in the rivers and reservoirs is critical to that tourism. Whether it's skiing, snowboarding, Nordic skiing, fly fishing, rafting, sailing, kayaking, or nearly any other form of outdoor recreation, water resources are incredibly important to local recreation.

With the winter season shortening year after year, snowmaking equipment has been a great solution for many resorts to get operations started earlier than natural conditions would allow.

With climate change worsening these conditions and creating lower stream flows; ski resorts could lose their right to draw water from the rivers for snowmaking. The water rights of ski resorts for snowmaking are generally junior to the water rights of other users, which means they are only allowed to be fulfilled if the senior water rights are already fulfilled. Starting their seasons later with inferior snow conditions would be a significant economic blow to the community. According to a study published in the *Global Environmental Change* journal, by the year 2050 the ski season will be 14 to 33 days shorter (based on a conservative scenario with low emissions). This shorter season could result in the United States ski industry losing \$657 million annually (Cameron Wobus, 2017). These impacts would be devastating to a resort economy.

Less Water Available for Environmental Uses

As climate change and a growing population ensure that less water will be left flowing in the rivers and streams of the Blue River Watershed, this creates problems for wildlife and local plants. For example, the section of the Blue River between Silverthorne and Green Mountain Reservoir lost its Gold Medal Fishery status in 2016. Colorado Parks and Wildlife indicated that the cause of the lower quality fishery is likely a combination of low river flows and lack of food for the fish (Blue River Watershed Group, Trout Unlimited, 2021).

How the Regional Water Efficiency Plan Will Address These Threats

Updating the Regional Water Efficiency Plan and the four Individual Water Efficiency Plans will have a direct positive impact on water conservation in Summit County. The updated plans will serve as a guide for policies throughout Summit County on its journey to reach optimal conservation and development of its water resources. The updated plans will have a positive impact on the following areas:

Municipal Water Efficiency

The plan will lay out very specific recommendations that will help the 19 different water providers improve the efficiency of their water delivery systems. For example, in the original plan recommendations included installing updated metering infrastructure and changing rate structures to incentivize conservation.

Water Efficient Land Use and Planning

Creating more water efficient land use policies ensures that water conservation is a priority in every new development and in remodeling projects. Without these policies many developers would build without this priority at the forefront. The original Regional Water Efficiency Plan addressed this by creating the groundwork for collaboration between local governments, which led to several changes to land use and development codes that require new developments to be more water efficient. The updated plan will build upon that success to create a more water efficient community that is more resilient in the face of the drier and hotter climate that is projected because of climate change.

Education and Outreach

The education and outreach activities associated with the Regional Water Efficiency Plan will create an engaged and educated community in Summit County. This is important for two

reasons. First, an electorate that is informed on water issues will make better choices on election day; resulting in local government officials who care about protecting and conserving water in Summit County. Secondly, outreach activities provide a place to share diverse perspectives, which results in creative, community-led solutions to mitigate the impacts of water shortages and climate change.

Technical Efficiency

HC3 is well positioned to lead community-wide programs that result in reduced water use across the county. These programs therefore help a growing population learn to live with less water by helping residents and business owners evaluate their water use and turn to technical solutions to help them use less water. Helping a growing population learn to live with less water through technical solutions helps them remain resilient in the face of climate change.

This planning project will not specifically address the provision of domestic water supplies to a tribe, insular area, or disadvantaged community without reliable access to water supplies. The plans updated through this project do not involve the improvement of nature-based features. The project is not for the purpose of meeting existing environmental mitigation or compliance obligations under Federal or State law.

E.1.2 Inclusion of Stakeholders, Stakeholder Project Support and Previous Planning Efforts for Task A: Water Strategy Grants

Updating the Regional Water Efficiency Plan addresses the water management of the entire county. Not only is it a large geographic area to address, but the watershed is also a critical headwater for the drought-stricken Colorado River and an important water source for major cities, including Denver, on the east slope of Colorado. Therefore, the updated water efficiency plans are important tools to bring all the relevant stakeholders together – who are otherwise likely to remain focused on their own area of responsibility – to plan for the future of the watershed.

This project is a direct update of the 2018 Blue River Watershed Regional Water Efficiency Plan and the four Individual Water Efficiency Plans created for four major water providers. The original plans were developed collaboratively with a diverse group of stakeholders. The update to the plans will be completed in a similar manner. The following stakeholders have committed to participating in and financially supporting the planning process to update the Regional Water Efficiency Plan and the four Individual Water Efficiency Plans:

- Town of Frisco
- Town of Breckenridge
- Summit County Government
- Town of Dillon
- Copper Mountain Consolidated Metropolitan District

In order to ensure the participation of a diverse array of stakeholders in the update of the Regional Water Efficiency Plan, HC3 will reach out to important stakeholder groups directly to

find representation from all relevant stakeholder groups such as the 19 water providers in the county, local governments, US Forest Service, ski resorts, tourism boards, water quality experts, transbasin water diverters, the rafting and fishing guide communities, and other industry experts. For example, during plan creation in 2018, HC3 engaged the Summit County Board of Commissioners, Summit County Government, Vail Resorts, Copper Mountain Resort, Middle Park Conservation District, Denver Water, and the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments. Many of these organizations are expected to participate again in the plan update. To ensure that the voices of traditionally underrepresented communities are heard HC3 also plans to work with the Climate Equity Committee to find appropriate representation from the Hispanic population in Summit County. While the stakeholders will not be confirmed until the project is underway, HC3 already has relationships with the relevant groups mentioned above.

There is widespread support for the planning effort and no opposition.

E.1.3 Ability to Meet Program Requirements

How HC3 Will Meet Program Requirements for Water Strategy Grants

The program requirements laid out in Attachment A for Water Strategy Grants are the same steps that High Country Conservation Center (HC3) went through when they wrote the original Regional Water Efficiency Plan and each provider's Individual Water Efficiency Plan. Therefore, HC3 is well equipped to meet all program requirements for the plan update as well. Each required program component is described below.

1. Outreach and Partnership Building

Community involvement and buy-in is critical to any water conservation efforts in the watershed, especially as so many areas of the local economy depend on water in various forms. This includes fishing guides, the marinas on Lake Dillon, snow making at ski resorts and more. Therefore, the following activities will be undertaken as part of the process to update the Regional Water Efficiency Plan.

The first step that will be undertaken is to create a public involvement plan. This plan will identify key stakeholders, set a regular meeting schedule, outline the frequency of outreach and public involvement opportunities for securing local input and buy-in and provide options for keeping the process and progress of the plan update visible to the community. The community outreach will be divided into two main strategies:

Engagement of an advisory committee

One of the most effective public outreach strategies during the creation of the original Regional Water Efficiency Plan was the engagement of an advisory committee. This advisory committee was made up of representatives from key stakeholder groups. These representatives serve as project stewards who can share the progress of the planning efforts with their sectors and provide important insight and knowledge from their sector to the planning effort. The advisory committee will be engaged through regular meetings and working sessions.

Wider public engagement

HC3 and partners will follow the same effective system for updated public input as during the creation of the original Regional Water Efficiency Plan. They will conduct a survey of water provider customers that will focus on (1) gaining an understanding of the current perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of customers toward water conservation and how they have changed since 2018; (2) gathering input on the awareness of and satisfaction with existing conservation services provided by the water providers; and (3) collecting feedback and reactions from customers on the various water conservation strategies identified. The draft of the updated Regional Water Efficiency Plan (and each of the Individual Water Efficiency Plans) will be made available for public comment and input through online forums and in person open house events.

2. Analyses, Scoping, and Planning Activities

To begin the update of the Regional Water Efficiency Plan, the consultant team will conduct a thorough analysis of the progress on water conservation made over the last six years. They will also compile any new and relevant research that will allow them to identify current challenges and opportunities in the watershed where water conservation is concerned. These research areas include:

Updating the profiles of the existing water supply systems:

This step will involve updating the data concerning the existing water supply systems, reliabilities, limitations, and needs for the individual water providers as well as synthesizing the information for a regional watershed perspective to describe how each water provider operates within the larger system. The consultant will work with each water provider to gather updated information on geographic service area, water sources, facilities, water rights and associated yields and reliability, and drought criteria. Much has changed for the main water providers over the past six years as many have implemented improved systems throughout their organizations.

Updating the profiles of water demand and historical demand management:

The consultant team will update the data on the current water demand and look back at historical demand management practices. This will provide them with a current understanding of what the county needs from the water supply and what strategies have been effective in the past at promoting conservation. The consultant team will also analyze the future water needs of the county based on projected population growth, climate change trajectories, and other relevant factors.

Identification of water conservation strategies:

The consultant team will reference the updated research and data to identify the environmental and economic benefits of possible water conservation strategies. An important consideration for these strategies will be accounting for the varying community needs and expectations, such as residential supply, snowmaking, and downstream collaboration and delivery obligations. All the potential water conservation strategies will then be discussed with the advisory committee before being chosen for the updated Water Efficiency Plans.

3. Development of a Water Strategy Document

After the advisory committee has weighed in on the potential water conservation strategies, the five updated Water Efficiency Plans will be developed (Water Efficiency Plan is HC3's term for a Water Strategy Document). Each Water Efficiency Plan will address all the required topics including an outreach summary, a statement of problems and needs, project opportunities and comparison of alternatives, the implementation strategy, and a discussion of lessons learned. These updated Water Efficiency Plans will be made publicly available for comment and feedback.

One of the main reasons that the original five Water Efficiency Plans were able to create change in the community is that the plans included an implementation strategy. To create this strategy for the updated plans the consultant team will work with HC3 and water providers to lay out a roadmap for getting activities underway and sustaining progress over time. The roadmap will define clear expectations for funding, equitable roles and responsibilities, plans for maintained outreach and education, metrics for success, a method for measuring and tracking progress, and potential incentives for implementation. To improve this process, HC3 will also use Reclamation funding to develop a new implementation tool. This implementation tool will greatly increase the efficiency of monitoring the long-term progress of the updated Water Efficiency Plans. Specifically, the tool will help HC3 compile, organize, and review quantitative data on the many initiatives in the updated plans. A few of the benefits of the implementation tool include:

- The tool will create consistency in the way that quantitative data is tracked between different organizations over many years.
- Tracking data in real time will allow for adjustments to the strategies for water conservation where necessary. This helps ensure that limited funds and staff time are used in the most effective way.
- The tool will allow for easy creation of reports that showcase the results of the water efficiency plans and can be shared with the public to garner further support for these efforts.
- Future updates to the water efficiency plans will be easier because the implementation tool will have gathered important data during the years leading up to the next update.

This implementation tool is one of the ways the plan updates will add a great deal of value to the original water efficiency plans created in 2018. Overall, the implementation tool will streamline the process of monitoring project progress and will therefore ensure that the updated Water Efficiency Plans will have a lasting positive impact on the community.

Preliminary Project Schedule

Project Component	Month and Year	Responsible Party
Grant Period Begins	April 1, 2025	
Hire Consultant	April 2025 - June 2025	HC3
Recruitment of Advisory Committee Members	April 2025 - June 2025	HC3
Kickoff Meeting with HC3, partners, and consultant	June 2025	HC3, Consultant, and Partners
Creation of Public Involvement Plan	June 2025 - July 2025	HC3, Consultant
Analysis Scoping and Planning Activities	July 2025 - December 2025	Consultant (with support from HC3 and Water Providers)
Development of the Updated Regional Water Efficiency Plan and Individual Water Efficiency Plans	October 2025 - July 2027	Consultant (with support from HC3, Water Providers, and Advisory Committee)
Development of Implementation Tool	July 2027 - December 2027	Consultant (with support from HC3, Water Providers, and Advisory Committee)
Draft Plans made publicly available for review	July 2027	Consultant and HC3
Updated Plans Finalized and published	December 2027 – January 2028	Consultant and HC3
Implementation and Monitoring	January 2028 - March 2028 (will continue beyond the grant period)	HC3 with support from partners
Grant Period Ends	March 31, 2028	

Existing Data and Models

There are several useful resources that will help High Country Conservation Center (HC3), the consultant team, and their partners complete this update to the five Water Efficiency Plans. A few such reports that will be utilized throughout the project include:

- Blue River Watershed Integrated Water Management Plan: this plan includes a wealth of data on the environmental conditions of the Blue River watershed, especially where the health of the trout fishery is concerned.
- Colorado River Basin Implementation Plan: Updated in 2022, the basin implementation plan contains a high-level overview of the issues affecting the Colorado River. The Blue River Watershed is a headwaters area to the Colorado River, and thus the watershed’s relationship to the rest of the basin is included in the plan.
- Climate Projections in Summit County, Colorado: Created in 2021 by The Rocky Mountain Climate Organization, this report provides a wealth of data on the effects of climate change in Summit County.

- Climate Change in Colorado: This report from the Colorado Water Conservation Board has a great deal of data and projections on how climate change will affect the state of Colorado with special attention to how water in Colorado will be affected.

Once consultants who are subject matter experts have been hired, there will be more sources of information and data to include in the final plan update.

Staff Qualifications

The following High Country Conservation Center (HC3) Staff members are involved in this project and their qualifications are listed below:

Rachel Zerowin is HC3's Community Programs Director. Rachel has worked at HC3 for five years and managed several large community projects with complex and varied stakeholder groups including waste and water policy adoption and implementation of a water efficiency plan. She is experienced in managing and reporting on large state grants. Because of her extensive marketing background, she oversees HC3's marketing team and has been integral in driving effective strategies for public outreach. In 2023, Rachel was selected for and completed Water Leaders, the premier leadership development program for the water community in Colorado.

Christy Turner is the Community Programs Manager for HC3. Christy oversees large program budgets for a variety of initiatives (for example, she is responsible for a \$645,000 budget for HC3's zero waste programs). She supports stakeholder outreach initiatives and has worked in various roles at HC3 for more than three years.

As the Marketing Manager for HC3, Lauren Richmond has extensive experience communicating complex initiatives to both public and industry audiences. From promoting industry-sector events to crafting relatable messages and marketing campaigns, Lauren will be critical to supporting the public outreach components of the project.

Andrii Iwashko is a Program Coordinator for HC3. With his water utility experience and certifications in water efficient landscaping, Andrii brings operational insight to the team while also providing administrative support.

Jennifer Schenk is the Executive Director of HC3 and has a master's degree in environmental policy and management. She was involved in the original Regional Water Efficiency Plan, completed in 2018 and has led numerous local policymaking initiatives and collaborative planning processes. Examples include the widely adopted Climate Action Plan, Climate Equity Plan, Green Building Codes, Pay as You Throw and more. Jennifer has extensive experience managing large federal and state grants. Although Jennifer's time is not included in the funds requested from BOR, her time (offered as an in-kind service from HC3) will provide valuable guidance and strategic insight on the plan update.

Because this is a very large project, requiring specific expertise in the subject matter, and coordination of many partners, High County Conservation Center plans to hire a consulting firm to support this project. If funding is awarded, HC3 will hire a consultant through a competitive process.

E.1.4 Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities

The update to the Regional Water Efficiency Plan will directly address the presidential priority of “tackling the climate crisis at home and abroad.” The plan will list actionable steps that, once implemented, will help make the water supply and water usage in Summit County more resilient to the impacts of climate change by learning to live with less water. As a headwater area to the Colorado River, it is doubly important that water is conserved in the rivers so it can continue downstream to feed the drought-stricken Colorado River and help prevent further problems stemming from low flows in the river and low water levels in the major reservoirs.

This project also exemplifies collaborative resource management and builds relationships that are important to acting on climate change in other areas such as energy use, transportation, forest health, and waste reduction. Through convening local leaders, elected officials and the public around water conservation, this project establishes a framework for community resilience in the face of climate change.

E.1.5 Nexus to Reclamation

Green Mountain Reservoir, a Reclamation facility, is located within the Blue River Watershed and included in the area addressed by the Regional Water Efficiency Plan. The plan will help conserve water in the watershed where the Reclamation facility is located. The applicant does not have a water service, repayment, or O&M contract with Reclamation. The applicant also does not receive Reclamation water through any contractual means.

Project Budget

Below are the funding sources for the project, including in-kind funding (denoted by an asterisk). Please see the attached project budget and detailed narrative for a full cost breakdown of the project.

FUNDING SOURCES	AMOUNT
Non-Federal Entities	
1. Town of Frisco	\$ 20,000
2. Town of Frisco*	\$5,000*
3. Town of Breckenridge	\$ 20,000
4. Town of Breckenridge*	\$5,000*
5. Town of Dillon	\$ 20,000
6. Town of Dillon *	\$5,000*
7. Copper Mountain	\$ 20,000
8. Copper Mountain*	\$5,000*
9. Summit County Government	\$ 25,000
10. Summit County Government*	\$5,000*
11. HC3*	\$60,500
Non-Federal Subtotal	\$ 190,500
REQUESTED RECLAMATION FUNDING	\$ 397,588
Total Project Cost	\$ 588,088

Permits, Assurances, and Statements

Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance

The project does not include monitoring, measurement, or other field work; therefore, environmental and cultural resources compliance is not necessary.

Required Permits or Approvals

This project is a planning effort that will provide recommendations for increased water efficiency in Summit County and at individual water providers. High Country Conservation Center will not be directly implementing any capital projects and therefore permits and approvals are not required for the work described in this application.

Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement

The project described in this application does not duplicate any ongoing efforts or programs in Summit County. High Country Conservation Center is the only organization working on water conservation in this way in the county.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement

High Country Conservation Center does not have any conflicts of interest related to this project or any Reclamation grants that may be awarded. HC3 maintains a formal conflict of interest policy that all staff members sign and is diligent about preventing conflicts of interest in grant funded programs and other local collaborations. The full conflict of interest policy is included as an attachment.

Uniform Audit Reporting Statement

High Country Conservation Center does not expend \$750,000 in federal grants in a fiscal year and is therefore not required to submit an audit report.

Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if Applicable)

High Country Conservation Center does not participate in lobbying activities.

Letters of Support/Partnership/Commitment

Letters of commitment from the following partners are attached: Summit County Government, the Town of Breckenridge, the Town of Frisco, the Town of Dillon, and Copper Mountain Consolidated Metropolitan District.

Official Resolution

If selected for funding, High Country Conservation Center will provide an official resolution adopted by the board of directors verifying the required information.

References

- Cameron Wobus, E. S. (2017, July). Projected climate change impacts on skiing and snowmobiling: A case study of the United States. *Global Environmental Change*, 45, 1-14.
- Colorado Basin Roundtable. (2022). *Colorado Basin Implementation Plan, Volume 2*.
- Colorado Water Conservation Board. (2023). *Climate Change in Colorado*.
- Rocky Mountain Climate Organization. (2021). *Climate Projections In Summit County Colorado*.
- Summit County Government. (2018). *Summit County Community Wildfire Protection Plan*.
- Summit County Government. (2020). *Summit County Permanent Resident Population* . Retrieved from <https://www.summitcountyco.gov/517/Permanent-Resident-Population>
- Summit County Government. (2023, June 16). *Land Use and Development Code*. Retrieved from https://library.municode.com/co/summit_county/codes/land_use_and_development_code?nodeId=17010
- Water Education Colorado. (2014). *Citizen's Guide to Colorado's Transbasin Diversions*.



**Appendix: Letters of Partnership & Support
Updating Five Water Efficiency Plans in Summit
County including:**

The Blue River Watershed Regional Water Efficiency Plan

And Individual Water Efficiency Plans For:

Town of Dillon

Town of Frisco

Town of Breckenridge

Copper Mountain Consolidated Metropolitan District

Category B Applicant:

High Country Conservation Center
P.O. Box 4506
Frisco, Colorado 80443

Partner Applicant:

Town of Frisco
P.O. Box 4100
Frisco, Colorado 80443

Project Manager:

Rachel Zerowin, Community Programs Director
Email: rachel@highcountryconservation.org
Phone: 970-668-5703 x 101
Address: High Country Conservation Center
P.O. Box 4506
Frisco, Colorado 80443



Bureau of Reclamation
Water Resources and Planning Office
Attn: Ms. Irene Hoiby
Mail Code: 86-63000
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, CO 80225-0007

Dear Grant Review Committee,

This letter is to show the Town of Frisco's partnership in and support of High Country Conservation Center's application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART grant program.

The Town of Frisco, located in Colorado, has water delivery authority and meets the Category A Criteria for this grant. We are 1) Acting in partnership with the applicant 2) Agree to the submittal and content of the application; and 3) Intend to participate in the project by providing both input and financial support.

The Town of Frisco is looking forward to partnering with High Country Conservation to update the Blue River Watershed Regional Water Efficiency Plan. We are also excited to have their support in updating the water efficiency plan for our own jurisdiction. This will help us conserve water across our system, taking further steps toward a sustainable water future.

In addition to our participation in the project, Town of Frisco will contribute \$20,000 in funding towards this project. If this grant is awarded, this funding will be available for the project at the beginning of the project period, in January 2025.

Town of Frisco worked with High Country Conservation Center on the original Blue River Watershed Regional Watershed Efficiency Plan. We are grateful for the support that they provided us at that time in creating the original water efficiency plan for our jurisdiction. This plan outlined the Town's population growth trajectory and incorporated the water demands for future growth while highlighting the need for water conservation goals. Through those goals the Town of Frisco adopted a new (5yr) water rate structure that incentivized water conservation, introduced a fixture rebate program aimed at eliminating low efficiency fixtures and toilets and participated in the Colorado Water Loss Initiative. We are excited for the opportunity to work with High Country Conservation Center again to update these plans and continue to improve our efforts in water conservation.

Thank you,
Ryan Thompson, Water Operations Supervisor
Town of Frisco
PO Box 4100
1 East Main Street
Frisco, CO 80443



TOWN OF BRECKENRIDGE
PUBLIC WORKS

Bureau of Reclamation

Water Resources and Planning Office

Attn: Ms. Irene Hoiby

Mail Code: 86-63000

P.O. Box 25007

Denver, CO 80225-0007

Dear Grant Review Committee,

This letter is to show the Town of Breckenridge's support of High Country Conservation Center's application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART grant program. Breckenridge is looking forward to working in partnership with High Country Conservation to update the Blue River Watershed Regional Water Efficiency Plan. We are also excited to have their support in updating the water efficiency plan for our own jurisdiction. This will help us conserve water across our system, taking further steps toward a sustainable water future.

In addition to our participation in the project, Breckenridge will contribute \$20,000 in funding towards this project. If this grant is awarded, this funding will be available for the project at the beginning of the project period, in January 2025.

Breckenridge worked with High Country Conservation Center on the original Blue River Watershed Regional Watershed Efficiency Plan. We are grateful for the support that they provided us at that time in creating the original water efficiency plan for our jurisdiction. This plan has already helped us focus on measures such as implementing conservation-based water rates and start a water meter upgrade project. We are excited for the opportunity to work with High Country Conservation Center again to update these plans and continue to improve our efforts in water conservation.

Thank you,

Laura Lynch
Water Division Manager
Town of Breckenridge



0800 Copper Rd, Box 3002 (mailing)
0477 Copper Rd (physical)
Phone: (970) 968-2537
Fax: (970) 968-2932
www.coppermetro.org

April 2, 2024

TO: Bureau of Reclamation
Water Resources and Planning Office
Attn: Ms. Irene Hoiby
Mail Code: 86-63000
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, CO 80225-0007

RE: CMCMD Partnership and Financial Contribution

Dear Grant Review Committee,

This letter is to notify you that Copper Mountain Consolidated Metropolitan District (CMCMD) is in support of High Country Conservation Center's application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART grant program. CMCMD is looking forward to working in partnership with High Country Conservation to update the Blue River Watershed Regional Water Efficiency Plan. We are also excited to have their support in updating the water efficiency plan for our own jurisdiction. This will help us conserve water across our system, taking further steps toward a sustainable water future.

In addition to our participation in the project, CMCMD will contribute \$20,000 in funding towards this project. If this grant is awarded, this funding will be available for the project at the beginning of the project period, in January 2025.

CMCMD worked with High Country Conservation Center on the original Blue River Watershed Regional Watershed Efficiency Plan. We are grateful for the support that they provided us at that time in creating the original water efficiency plan for our jurisdiction. This plan has already helped by motivating us to implement a county-wide irrigation schedule, install advanced metering infrastructure, contract annual system-wide leak detection services, and improve our water accounting process. We are excited for the opportunity to work with High Country Conservation Center again to update these plans and continue to improve our efforts in water conservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chelsey Lange".

Chelsey Lange
Public Works Director
Copper Mountain Consolidated Metropolitan District



March 26, 2024

Bureau of Reclamation

Water Resources and Planning Office

Attn: Ms. Irene Hoiby

Mail Code: 86-63000

P.O. Box 25007

Denver, CO 80225-0007

Dear Grant Review Committee,

This letter is to show Town of Dillon support of High Country Conservation Center's application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART grant program. The Town is looking forward to working in partnership with High Country Conservation to update the Blue River Watershed Regional Water Efficiency Plan. We are also excited to have their support in updating the water efficiency plan for our own jurisdiction. This will help us conserve water across our system, taking further steps toward a sustainable water future.

In addition to our participation in the project, the Town will contribute \$20,000 in funding towards this project. If this grant is awarded, this funding will be available for the project at the beginning of the project period, in January 2025.

The Town worked with High Country Conservation Center on the original Blue River Watershed Regional Watershed Efficiency Plan. We are grateful for the support that they provided us at that time in creating the original water efficiency plan for our jurisdiction. This plan has already helped us do more to conserve our water resources. We are excited for the opportunity to work with High Country Conservation Center again to update these plans and continue to improve our efforts in water conservation.

Thank you,

Nathan Johnson
Town Manager
Town of Dillon



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

970.453.3414 ph | 970.453.3535 f
summitcountyco.gov

208 East Lincoln Ave. | PO Box 68
Breckenridge, CO 80424

Bureau of Reclamation
Water Resources and Planning Office
Attn: Ms. Irene Hoiby
Mail Code: 86-63000
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, CO 80225-0007

Dear Grant Review Committee,

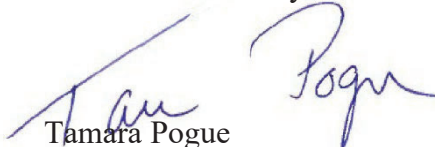
This letter is to show Summit County Government's support of High Country Conservation Center's application to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART grant program. Summit County Government is looking forward to working in partnership with High Country Conservation to update the Blue River Watershed Regional Water Efficiency Plan. This will help our community conserve water across multiple providers, taking further steps toward a sustainable water future.

In addition to our participation in the project, Summit County Government will contribute \$25,000 in funding towards this project. If this grant is awarded, this funding will be available for the project at the beginning of the project period, in January 2025.

Summit County Government worked with High Country Conservation Center on the original Blue River Watershed Regional Watershed Efficiency Plan. We are excited for the opportunity to work with them again to update these plans and continue to improve our community-wide efforts in water conservation.

Sincerely,

The Summit County Board of Commissioners


Tamara Pogue
Chair

**Updating Five Water Efficiency Plans in Summit County
Including The Blue River Watershed Regional Water Efficiency Plan
And Four Individual Water Efficiency Plans.**

PROJECT BUDGET

FUNDING SOURCES				
Source of Funding	Cash	In-kind	Total	Narrative
BOR Request	\$397,588		\$397,588	
Town of Frisco	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$25,000	Letters of Commitment from these partners stating their intention to fund this project have been included in the attachments. In-kind contributions represent the minimum staff time required of partners.
Town of Breckenridge	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$25,000	
Town of Dillon	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$25,000	
Summit County	\$25,000	\$5,000	\$30,000	
Copper Mountain	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$25,000	
High Country Conservation Center		\$60,500	\$60,500	
Total Funding	\$502,588	\$85,500	\$588,088	

Total Matching Funds = \$190,500

EXPENSE BUDGET		
Item	Cost	Narrative
Personnel		
HC3 Staff Time Project	\$190,500	Project Director: \$24,500 per year for three years (35% of time; \$70,000 annual salary) Project Manager: \$18,000 per year for three years (30% of time; \$60,000 annual salary) Marketing Manager: \$6,000 per year for three years (10% of time; \$60,000 annual salary) Project Coordinator: \$15,000 per year for three years (30% of time; \$50,000 annual salary) Total Salaries for three years = \$190,500
Partner Staff Time	\$25,000	Each project partner has committed to contribute at least \$5,000 worth of staff time to the project as in-kind support.
Fringe Benefits		
HC3 Staff Benefits	\$47,625	Fringe benefits for HC3 staff are calculated at 25% of the staff time included in this grant. The total HC3 staff time included here is \$238,125. 25% of that staff time is \$47,625. This covers the full three year project period.

Supplies		
Supplies and Materials	\$4,800	<p>Focus Groups - \$800 (4 meetings at \$200 each)</p> <p>Incentives for public surveys and focus groups - \$3,800</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reuseable bags for 400 respondents at \$8 per bag = \$3,200 - Grocery gift cards for 30 participants at \$20 each = \$600 <p>One open house meeting for public comment and review of the draft Water Efficiency Plans - \$200</p>
Contractual		
Consultant	\$195,000	<p>HC3 will hire a consulting firm to lead the process of updating the five Water Efficiency Plans. The consultants will work alongside HC3 and partners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assess the current state of water use in the Blue River Watershed - lead outreach efforts including the engagement of an advisory committee, surveying the community, and managing public comment on the draft Water Efficiency Plans - lead the development of five updated Water Strategy Documents (or Water Efficiency Plans as they are referred to throughout the proposal)
Professional Services	\$2,625	Spanish interpretation and translation services for meetings and focus groups
Marketing	\$9,075	<p>Two marketing campaigns - \$6,000 (\$3,000 each)</p> <p>Each campaign includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Radio ads, \$1,000 - Print ads, \$1,500 - Social media ads, \$500 <p>Printed flyers for surveys and open house (for public review and comment on draft plans) - \$75</p>
Implementation Tool	\$50,000	Development of an implementation tool to monitor progress on recommendations in the Water Efficiency Plan.
Survey Contractor	\$10,000	Contractor will implement an intercept survey
Total Direct Expenses	\$534,625	
Indirect Costs	\$53,463	*10% de minimus rate
Total Project Expenses	\$588,088	