

Project Name

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, WATER EDUCATION, AND THE COLORADO WATER PLAN (Year Zero)

***Grant Recipient**

Colorado Watershed Assembly

***Primary Contact**

DonnyRoush

Phone Number

3038704690

***Email**

watereducation@denvergov.org

***WSRF Grant Type**

Education & Outreach

Eligible Water Activities (Check All That Apply)

Education & Outreach

If other, please explain.

(No response)

Total Project Cost

\$ 125,000.00

Are you submitting a proposal to the South Platte Basin RT, the Metro RT, or both?

Both

South Platte Basin RT Grant Amount Request (If applicable)

\$ 46,875.00

Metro RT WSRF Grant Amount Request (If applicable)

\$ 46,875.00

Statewide Fund Grant Amount (if any)

(No response)

Colorado Water Plan Grant Amount Request (if any)

(No response)

Other Basin Roundtables WSRF Funding Being Requested (if any)

(No response)

If Other Roundtable Requests, which roundtable(s)

(No response)

***Project Description**

Description: Program creation to incorporate youth development and environmental education best practices into implementation of the Colorado Water Plan Need: Today's youth – even a child born today – will be an adult by 2050, the year the Colorado Water Plan is to be fully implemented. Young people will be the ones to turn the plan into reality. "How old will you be in 2050?" For more than a year, I have been using this guiding question when teaching middle and high school groups – with positive, eye-opening effects. It has also prodded my thinking about the work of the Colorado Water Plan, our state's impressive corps of environmental educators, and ways to deepen interactions between the two. We need to harness the power of environmental education to make the Plan's vision a reality in 2050. I propose a planning

year to design and begin a lasting youth-developing, water-conserving mechanism. Nowhere in the Water Plan will you find the words “youth,” “children,” or “K-12,” however. To get to the Plan’s lofty goal of getting “all Coloradans to embrace a new water ethic,” young people must be considered and engaged. This proposal seeks to kickstart such an effort.

***Which basin priorities does the project address? How?**

This project directly and precisely addresses SPBIP Goal 11 – Broaden South Platte communications, outreach, and education programs. Secondly, this project addresses SPBIP goals and objectives 1.B, 3.E, 4.D, 5.G, 6.A.6, and 7.A. Further, this project uses the first Colorado Water Plan Tool for Action: Public outreach and education. It innovatively focuses on youth, who are currently missing from plan implementation efforts. Agency Actions 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.6, and 5.7 are supported. Donny Roush was a member of the Statewide Water Education Action Plan task force, has been a member of the Guidelines for Excellence in Environmental Education Trainers’ Bureau since 2006, and was on the writing team for the 2022 revision of Environmental Education Program Guidelines. He is the only Coloradan to do all three. This project applies these efforts to forward better water education for young people in our state. Broadly, the project accelerates development of the next generation of Coloradans, giving them knowledge, skills, and patterns of behavior to conserve water. The goal of environmental education, per the foundational Tbilisi Declaration (1977), is environmentally responsible behavior – which is exactly what the Colorado Water Plan seeks and this project is designed to deliver.

***Project Timeline and Tasks**

Year Zero focuses on South Platte/Metro education providers, expanding statewide in Year One Outputs

1. Water Education Exemplars—Identify and evaluate the best existing programs and resources that inform youth to become water decision-makers, creating an initial collection of 15 “Water Education Exemplars.” More than an inventory, nominees will be assessed using Guidelines for Excellence in Environmental Education, the national standards for the field. Exemplars address the “key characteristics” of excellence via expert reviews. (February 2025)
2. Youth and Water Convening—Youth development experts and water-interested youth will be recruited to review the Plan and first Water Education Exemplars, and then make recommendations about how to better engage youth into the Water Plan’s vision. Kept purposely small (9 youth and 3 facilitators), an in-person workshop will have three parts: Colorado Water Plan orientation, direct experiences with Water Education Exemplars, and strategic planning input for the project plan. Youth participants will be compensated. (June 2025)
3. Project Plan—The project manager will write a continuation plan, using input from reviews and convening. It will combine ways of better engaging youth, pathways to drive scale-up of exemplary water education, and plans to raise the necessary funding, with a 3-5-year timeline. (September 2025)

Attach Budget (not required)

[cwa_wsrf_youth_devel_water_ed_and_co_water_plan_year_zero_bud](#)