

## Funding Available for Post-Wildfire Impact Evaluation and Recovery

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Colorado experienced the three largest fires in its recorded history in 2020. The Pine Gulch fire north of Grand Junction burned 139,007 acres and was the largest - until the Troublesome and Cameron Peak fires eclipsed it by burning more than a combined 400,000 acres. All told, wildfires have burned over 620,000 acres in Colorado so far this year. (sources: BLM, The Coloradoan, National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) .

Wildfires result in the loss of vegetation, exposure of soil to erosion, and increased water runoff that may lead to flooding, increased sediment, debris flows, and damage to critical natural resources, including water supplies (source: NWCG).

Water resource stakeholders, including agricultural groups that have been affected by wildfire can apply for a Watershed Restoration Grant and receive help to assess and prioritize where actions on the ground are needed to remove safety hazards, mitigate erosion and debris flows, protect infrastructure and support NRCS in preparing a Detailed Damage Survey Report (DSR).

The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) recently contracted with a group of environmental and engineering professionals to help local stakeholders evaluate and respond to post-wildfire impacts that threaten public health, infrastructure, land and water resources. The Technical Assistance Team will provide support to [Watershed Restoration Grant](#) applicants and grantees for post-wildfire hazard mitigation and recovery. Services can include rapid assessment of burned watersheds, mitigation design review, engineering analysis, and construction oversight.

Other services available include baseline conditions assessment, post-burn hydraulics analysis to determine increased flood risk, data collection, and fluvial hazard zone (FHZ) delineation to identify areas vulnerable to sediment and debris flows spurred by rainfall over the burn scar. The team is also approved to facilitate stakeholder meetings and help align projects with appropriate funding.

For non-disaster related proposals, the application deadline for Watershed Restoration Grant funding was November 5, 2020. However, the deadline is waived for applicants with disaster-related project proposals, which includes wildfire impacts. The grant can also be used for pre-wildfire risk assessment and planning, however pre-impact planning is not eligible for the application deadline waiver.

Grant applicants must demonstrate:

- A collaborative approach that involves all stakeholders within the area of interest and is open to all interested persons in the watershed. Basin roundtable support is encouraged but not required;



Photo: csfs.colostate.edu

- a commitment to restoring or protecting ecological processes that connect land and water while protecting life and property from flood hazards, and integrate a multiple objective approach;
- a broad based involvement in or support for the grant application, including relevant local, state, or federal governmental entities; and
- an ability to provide the appropriate in-kind and cash match for the activities proposed.

Apply at <https://cwc.colorado.gov/colorado-watershed-restoration-grants> and contact Chris Sturm, Watershed Program Director at 303-866-3441 x3236 with any questions.

--- CCA Ag Water NetWORK ([www.agwaternet.org](http://www.agwaternet.org)) ---