

# Colorado Source Water Protection Program

Scope: State

Location: Colorado

## CONTACT INFORMATION:

### Collaborative Leads:

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division  
Colorado Rural Water Association  
United States Forest Service

### Contacts:

Robert Murphy, Source Water Program Coordinator  
CDPHE WQCD  
720.248.7742  
[Robert.murphy@state.co.us](mailto:Robert.murphy@state.co.us)

Erin Vander Zee  
Colorado Rural Water Association  
719-458-0902  
[evanderzee@crwa.net](mailto:evanderzee@crwa.net)

Kristen Hughes, Source Water Protection Specialist  
CDPHE WQCD  
303.692.3313  
[Kristen.hughes@state.co.us](mailto:Kristen.hughes@state.co.us)

Karen Wait, Ph.D.  
USFS Rocky Mountain Region  
303-941-6316  
[karen.wait@usda.gov](mailto:karen.wait@usda.gov)

**Website:** <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/swap>

## SCOPE:

- Assist water stakeholders in the protection of Colorado's surface and groundwater resources.
- Build partnerships and networks, actively participate with Federal, State, and local partners in planning processes, program development, and project implementation.
- Offer grants and technical assistance to Public Water Systems and communities who develop and implement source water protection plans.
- Provide data, tools, and information for stakeholders to make informed decisions.

## COLLABORATIVE FORMATION:

- The State of Colorado's Source Water Protection Program works closely with the Colorado Rural Water Association to assist communities and public water systems with technical assistance, contractor support, and grant funding to develop source water protection plans and implement best management practices.
- The State of Colorado's Source Water Protection Program also works closely with various state agencies to assist with programmatic and policy development and implementation, providing data and expertise to communicate the interests, considerations, and perspectives of Colorado's drinking water providers.
- The Watershed Wildfire Protection Workgroup is an active, diverse group of water stakeholders, state and federal agencies, municipalities, coalitions, non-profits, and consultants that meet quarterly to network, share experiences, and discuss the numerous challenges surrounding wildfire mitigation, planning, response, and recovery.
- The State of Colorado's Source Water Protection Program has developed an initiative to generate a public water system Values-At-Risk dataset, with the intention of digitizing and cataloging an otherwise unavailable critical infrastructure dataset for use in wildfire mitigation actions, planning, response, and risk assessment. The State works closely with the Colorado Rural Water Association, COCO, CUSP, the Colorado Water Conservation Board, and the US Forest Service to leverage this data into action.
- The State of Colorado's Source Water Protection Program has developed an Memorandum of Understanding to work Collaboratively with the US Forest Service with data and information sharing, to identify important watershed areas and infrastructure related to drinking water resources.

## STRUCTURE/FUNDING:

- The Colorado WQCD Source Water Protection Program and SWP grants are funded through Capacity Development and Wellhead Set Aside funding under the Safe Drinking Water Act. In addition, Colorado Rural Water Association works as a contractor to the SWP Program, and staff funding is provided by the State Source Water Protection Program by utilizing the Colorado Water Resources and Power Authority funding from Clean Water State Revolving Fund Administrative fees.

## MEMBERS:

- State of Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), Water Quality Control Division (WQCD)
- Colorado Rural Water Association
- Coalition for the Upper South Platte (CUSP)
- Coalitions and Collaboratives (COCO)
- [Watershed Wildfire Protection Group](#)
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region
- Numerous public water systems, state agencies, watershed groups, and water conservancy district

## WATER CONCERNS:

- Contamination from anthropogenic point sources (USTs, industrial facilities, CAFOs, etc).
- Contamination from anthropogenic non-point sources (roads, urbanization, land use, etc).
- Naturally occurring contaminants (arsenic, radionuclides, metals, etc).
- Mining, oil and gas development, industrial sites.
- Emerging Contaminants (PFAS, Manganese, selenium, etc).
- Wildfire, and Wildland-Urban Interface Fires, and other natural disasters
- Water security, water scarcity issues, drought, and storage issues.

## STRATEGIES:

- Coordinate with the Forest Service to share data and information, and promote awareness and education between agencies.
- SWP Program works closely with State of Colorado Emerging Contaminants Program, Non-Point Source Program, Permitting, and other relevant agencies and regulatory partners to address water quality challenges.
- Development of our SWP Grants to develop plans and implement BMPs, and work with other water-agencies to acquire funding for drinking water projects and projects with beneficial impacts to drinking water quality challenges.
- Online tools, resources, and example projects and plans to model source water protection planning process.
- Leveraging local knowledge and relationships by engaging grassroots organizations, and facilitating communication between different stakeholders across boundaries, and at multiple scales.
- Assist communities in development of Source Water Protection Areas for consideration and land-use limitations through both municipal ordinance and their county-level environmental review process (Colorado 1041 permitting authority; <https://dlg.colorado.gov/1041-regulations-in-colorado>).
- Sponsoring and regularly contributing to important conferences that bring together water-sector stakeholders

## RESULTS:

- Completed 257 source water protection plans, addressing 61.5% of Colorado's population served by public water systems.
- Provided Technical assistance, grant funding, and data and mapping products to communities undertaking source water protection planning and project implementation.
- Completed a [Post Wildfire Playbook](#) developed for counties, tribes, municipalities, and water providers for guidance in navigating complexities surrounding post-fire rehabilitation. The Post-fire playbook is designed to help fill this gap in guidance by serving as an actionable worksheet that includes specific and critical steps to take and contacts to make before, during, and within the first 30 days of a fire to facilitate the process.

Information current as of January 2024. Please check with the Collaborative contacts (or website if available) for the most up to date information. To find other source water collaboratives across the U.S. or to add yours to the list, visit the Source Water Collaborative's [Collaboratives Near You](#). You may also be interested in the [How To Collaborate Toolkit](#)