



Headwaters Alliance
PO Box 518 625 USFS Rd 504.1A
Creede, CO 81130
www.headwatersalliance.com

Presentation to the City of Creede Board of Trustees October 7, 2025

**Randy McClure, President Headwaters Alliance Board of Directors, and
Heather Greenwolf, Project Manager for Headwaters Alliance**

Items to share:

- 1. City of Creede Water Efficiency Plan**
- 2. North Creede Stream Stability and Flood Mitigation Project**
- 3. Lower Willow Creek Restoration Company**

City of Creede Water Efficiency Plan

- In partnership with the City of Creede, Headwaters Alliance secured full funding and facilitated the effort for Wright Water Engineers to research and create a proposed Water Efficiency Plan for the City of Creede. Funders included: Colorado Water Conservation Board, Rio Grande Water Conservation District, Sonoran Institute, and the City of Creede.
- *What is a Water Efficiency Plan?* A Water Efficiency Plan (WEP) is a formal, State of Colorado approved document that guides how a water provider or municipality will manage water use and reduce demand, enhance long-term water supply reliability and system resilience for their customers and community. It is guided by the [Municipal Water Efficiency Plan Guidance Document](#), authored by the Colorado Water Conservation Board.

Ideally, a WEP is approved by both CWCB and the Board of Trustee and functions like a living document to support informed decision making for the long-term water security of the community.

- *Why a Water Efficiency Plan?*
 - In 2022, CWCB in partnership with the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable and Adams State College hosted Grande Growing Water Smart Conference for all the Counties and water-centered organizations within the upper Rio Grande, San Luis Valley in Colorado. A portion of this effort was focused on regional teams. The Mineral County Team (comprised past City Manager MinCo County Administrator Janelle Kukuk, Creede water guru and current MinCo Board of Commissioners Zeke Ward, Heather Dutton of the San Luis Irrigation District and

past President of the Board for CWCB and Pat McDermott, recently retired from Division 3 Division of Water Resources).

Their first activity was to do a thorough policy and practice review as it relates to water for both the City and they County.

Their finding? That there was a shortage of cohesive information, cohesive thinking and planning for the long-term water security for Creede and MinCo. So logically, we decided to try to rectify this – the first step to establish a Water Efficiency Plan.

- The intent for a WEP for the City of Creede was to generate a single document that
 - (1) could function as repository for all that is currently known and unknown about the Creede water system. And in doing so, provide a location for relevant historical information to aid in future decision making; and
 - (2) to engage in the processes outlined by CWCB and consider if and what the top water infrastructure goals and objectives for Creede might be.
- Current Status.
 - The Draft WEP is being reviewed by Kevin Reidy at CWCB. Upon his greenlight, it will be brought to all of you for review, discussion, revising and ideally for your approval. This will be provided to the City as soon as CWCB signs off. There is no emergency to approve the document, so we can work together to structure the information sharing necessary to help everyone feel informed and knowledgeable about the process and recommendations. This includes bringing the Wright Water engineer into the discussion.
 - Key recommendations:
 - Metering. Without better data of actual water use, water loss, water leakage it was challenging for the working group to make too many recommendations.

North Creede Stream Stability and Flood Mitigation Project

1. Initiated in 2020 as part of HWA's Comprehensive Willow Creek Watershed Planning Project, HWA, in partnership with City of Creede.
2. HWA engaged WaterVation, LLC to generate a 30% design for the North Creede reach attending to stream stability and flood mitigation.
 - a. Design concept was heavily vetted by the community at the time – MinCO, Road & Bridge, City of Creede, Div of Water Resources, individuals, etc.
 - b. Design was informed by the lengthy process of securing a Letter of Map Revision from FEMA related to the flood liability for Creede. The LOMR was secured in fall 2023.

3. In 2023, HWA secured further funding to develop the 30% design to construction ready. The side-trip consideration for installation of a hydro-electric system caused a few hiccups, but we persevered.
4. In 2025, HWA was awarded \$2.2million from the Bureau of Reclamation and \$830,130 from Colorado Water Conservation Board to bring the design to construction. City of Creede made a provisional commitment of \$20,000 at that time, should all other funding be secured.
 - a. HWA will enter into contract with CWCB this week.
 - b. We had been moved along the path with the Bureau and were feeling more confident about funding. We will not know the status of the federal funds until after the federal government reopens.
5. Factors for consideration for City of Creede
 - a. Currently the entire project area is considered Creede City Limits. While this may change, it appears that at least a small portion of the project will remain on City property, thus we want to inquire as to whether we still have City support for this project? What kind of further in-depth discussion you would like to have? Etc.
 - b. Flood mitigation activities have direct benefit for the City in potentially lessening the impact of late spring runoffs, rain on snow events and other flood inducing catastrophes.
 - c. HWA would like to move forward with finalizing engineering, securing permits, all efforts prior to any boots on the ground. We will need additional funding for the time involved in this effort. We would like to request \$16,000 for the immediate next steps in 2026 and possibly another \$10k in 2026 dependent on Bureau funding. We would anticipate seeking further funding in 2027.
6. Submitted for Trustee review
 - a. 30% Conceptual Design
 - b. Basis of Design Report for the 30% Conceptual Design.

Lower Willow Creek Restoration Company

There is a long history here. It weaves in the legacy Willow Creek Reclamation Committee which was formed in 1997 in response to a request from both City and County to track the activities and efforts of both CDPHE and EPA regarding legacy mining impacts in the Willow Creek watershed in the aftermath of mining closing. The WCRC was a truly phenomenal group of civic minded people – they implemented small non-regulatory solutions in the Willow Creek watershed, lead massive water quality sampling program and worked to keep Creede autonomous but also attending to real risks. HWA was created by the last Exec Dir for WCRC as a means of establishing a more formal org to carry on the work.

In 2010, WCRC was looking around for another project, another way to do good work. Then WCRC member and City Trustee JB Alexander worked with the City and Hecla Mining Company to craft a strategy for restoring the lower Willow Creek floodplain. For those of you who may not remember, it used to be a moonscape of chaotic rock, no vegetation, no path, no delightful Creede landscape magic.

The strategy was for the City to annex the property from the County; for Hecla to transfer ownership of the property through the Brownfields process, thereby alleviating liability for past actions that may have harmed the site to the Lower Willow Creek Restoration Company. This would then allow the 140 acres to be reclaimed and restored via a Voluntary Cleanup Plan through Colo Dept of Health and Environment for reuse for economic benefit to the community. The Lower Willow Creek Restoration Company was formed as a 501c3 nonprofit comprised of two advising orgs that form the Board of Directors – City of Creede and Creede Resources Inc, which is a subsidiary of Hecla.

From 2012- 2018 reclamation/restoration work was done. The previously braided channel was rechanneled into a sinuous single channel and about 19 acres of land with lead contaminant higher than 1500ppm were capped with 12” of clean fill.

On June 7th, 2019, high water runoff event began, (estimated at a 6-year flood), and caused significant damage to recently completed project. In a likely fortunate twist, the project had not been fully closed out, and so the site is still operating under that original VCUP.

Both past Mayor Larson and Trustee Dooley sat on the LWCRCO board for the City of Creede. HWA would like to encourage the City to select two new Trustees to sit on the LWCRCO Board as there are a number of potential scenarios going forward that could directly benefit the community.