



Location: Rifle, CO

Year: 2008 (plan); 2009 (implementation)

Construction Dollar Value: N/A

Owner: City of Rifle

Contact: Charlie Stevens, Utility Director, 970-625-6272

Key SGM Staff: Warren Swanson, PE ; Dan Richardson; Tony Haschke, EI, CEM

Client Benefits

- Successful acquisition of CWCB grant funding to cover 75% of project cost
- Recognition as first Western Slope water provider to receive CWCB conservation planning grant funds and final approval
- Development of a customized, fiscally-responsible, implementable water efficiency program
- Creation of a water advisory board to assist and advise the Utility Director in conservation program implementation
- Proximate, responsive SGM plan development team able to provide continued support during implementation

SGM advised the City in its 2006 Water Master Plan that its rapidly increasing water demand would soon trigger “covered entity” status under Colorado’s 2004 Water Conservation Act. This would require the City to have a Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB)-approved conservation plan on file to be eligible for certain state-administered water and wastewater infrastructure funding programs. With a \$22M wastewater treatment plant under design, the City retained SGM to make it the first water provider on the Western Slope to receive CWCB grant funding and final plan approval since passage of the Act. Most importantly, SGM and City staff seized the opportunity to collaborate on a plan to:

- Win City Council and community support
- Be capable of being implemented by the City and the community
- Achieve meaningful demand reductions yielding a favorable economic return

SGM delivered a project team comprised of water system and environmental efficiency experts with valuable public policy experience. The SGM team collaborated with City staff members at all levels of multiple departments. SGM also reached-out to local stakeholders, regional conservation experts, and potential conservation program partners/resource providers. This collaboration promoted development of a credible plan that easily won City staff and City Council support.

SGM crafted a plan document following the CWCB standard format. The plan identified 17 customized programs and measures for implementation. The SGM team recognized early that water conservation drivers for a rapidly-growing Western Slope community would differ from those for Front Range communities; because water supplies on the Western Slope are relatively inexpensive, to “pay for itself” the plan would need to effectively reduce peak day water demand to defer and significantly reduce future infrastructure expansion costs. SGM created detailed estimates of plan implementation costs and cost savings due to reduced water supply, system infrastructure, and energy/chemical needs. These supported a 20-year benefit/cost ratio projection for the overall plan that significantly exceeded one.

SGM is now assisting the City with plan implementation, including development of a conservation-oriented water rate structure, assembly of a conservation advisory board, and acquisition of additional CWCB grant funds.

Challenges

- Developing a cost-effective water efficiency program given the lack of financial drivers for water efficiency on Colorado’s Western Slope. Detailed analysis of water infrastructure cost savings plus identification of low- to modest-cost water efficiency measures were keys to success
- Creating a water efficiency plan for a community with no prior program. Identifying resources and involving stakeholders within the organization and broader community were critical here.