

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation**  
**WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Grants for Fiscal Year (FY)**  
**2024 and FY 2025**  
**Funding Opportunity Announcement No. R24AS00059**

*Application Period 2: Submitted July 9, 2024*

*Category A Applicant*

**Municipal Water Meter Upgrade Project for**  
**Water Efficiency in Simla, Colorado**

**Applicant:**

Town of Simla

PO Box 237, Simla, CO 80835

Email: [Town\\_simla@fairpoint.net](mailto:Town_simla@fairpoint.net)

Website: <https://townofsimla.com/>

**Project Manager:**

Myke McCune, Public Works Director

PO Box 237, Simla, CO 80835

Email: [Myke@townofsimla.com](mailto:Myke@townofsimla.com) | (719) 368-9178

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## 1.0 Technical Proposal: Executive Summary

**Date:** July 9, 2024

**Applicant Address:** Town of Simla, PO Box 237, Simla, CO 80835. Elbert County

**Applicant Category:** Category A Applicant

The Town of Simla (Town, Simla), located in Elbert County in southeastern Colorado, provides domestic water supply to 600 people through 28-year-old unreliable water meters on residential and commercial connections. Simla requests \$100,000 from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Project (SWEP) grant to help fund the replacement of municipal water meters with more accurate, modern, smart radio-read meters and accompanying software. Cost share match will be provided by both the Town and the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA). Simla has experienced population and economic contraction simultaneously with increasing water scarcity and drought risk common in the western high plains. The Project will improve Simla's water supply resiliency by increasing efficiencies in meter reading and billing and by reducing non-revenue water loss in the distribution system. Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) will support accurate water usage reporting and billing, reduced staff-hours, improved water use efficiency and water conservation, and financial sustainability for the Town's water system. The Project is supported by the planning documents of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) "Drinking Water Project Needs Assessment Form," related attachments and a Preliminary Engineering Report on water system improvements.

**Duration and Estimated Completion Date:** The Project duration will be approximately six weeks. The anticipated start date for this project is 04/30/2025, which is within 1 month of the anticipated award date of 03/31/2025 in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. The anticipated completion date is a maximum of twelve months following the start date, which is 04/30/2026.

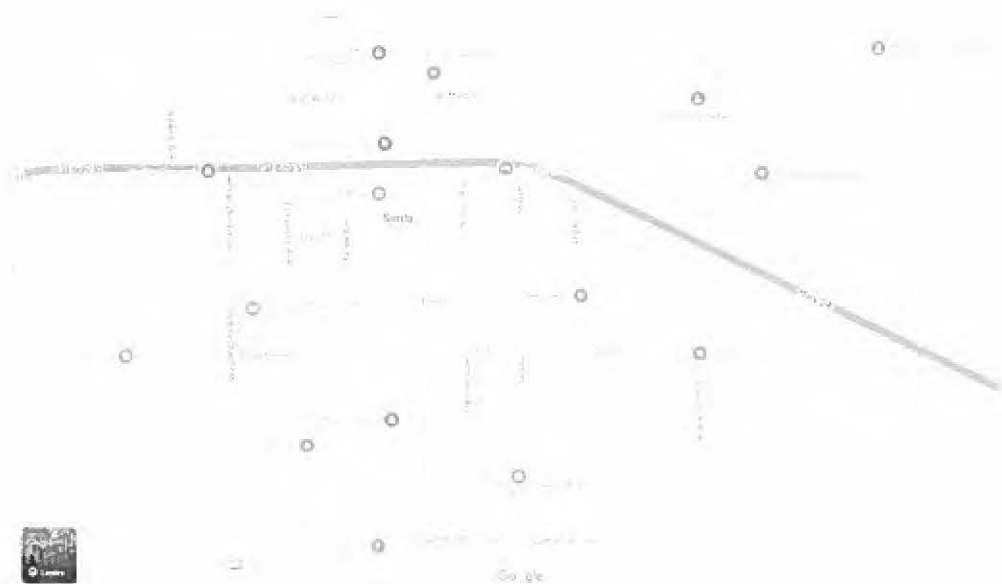
**Federal Facility:** The Project is not located on a Federal facility.

## 2.0 Technical Proposal: Project Location

Located in Eastern Plains of Colorado, in Elbert County, at the coordinates of 39°8'27"N, 104°4'58"W, the Town of Simla (Town, Simla) is 49 miles northeast of Colorado Springs, CO and 24 miles southwest of Limon, CO on U.S. Highway 24 (see Figures 1 and 2). Average annual precipitation is 17 inches in Simla's semi-arid steppe climate. The small community is 0.54 square miles in area with a total population of 601

## SMALL-SCALE WATER EFFICIENCY PROJECT | GRANT APPLICATION | TOWN OF SIMLA, CO

people (2020 Decennial U.S. Census). Median household income is \$41,625 and 57.9% of the population is estimated to be employed (2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates).



**Figure 1. Map of Simla on U.S. Hwy 24 in eastern Colorado** (Google maps, July 2024).



**Figure 2. Simla (red icon) within the State of Colorado** (Google maps, July 2024).

### **3.0 Technical Proposal: Project Description**

The scope of the proposed Project is to replace and upgrade 320 existing residential and commercial water meters in Simla's water system (ID number CO 0120025) with new Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) and set aside 3 additional customer meters for new connections, totaling 323 meters. The Project is composed of a one-time purchase of equipment and software for meter monitoring. The existing meters, Sensus SR II brand, were installed in 1996, are beyond their useful life, and do not accurately or reliably measure water usage. Several meters do not connect with the drive-by meter reading system and require labor-intensive manual reading each month. An unknown number significantly under-report water usage. The unaccounted for and unbilled water consumption costs the Town a significant amount of potential revenue and wastes water that would be detected in real time with the AMI metering system.

The replacement meters will be new, functional, and employ modern AMI technology for immediate transmittal of water use data to the town hall, using compatible software. The upgrade will include 323 meters with radio, 300 of which will be 3/4-inch size, 15 will be 1-inch size, three will be 1-1/2-inch size, two will be 2-inch size, two will be 3 by 12 inch-size, and one will be 4 by 14-inch size. Hosting software for all 323 meters will be installed along with two AMI collectors, two AMI antenna, and two outdoor UPS systems. The Project cost includes associated set-up costs of this non-moveable equipment as well as installation costs (See Budget and Budget Narrative for more details).

The new meters will be distributed using the Town's truck. Existing residential and commercial meter pits will be uncovered by the maintenance worker using the Town's backhoe. The new meters will be installed by the recommended installation team of the competitively selected water meter vendor. This project will involve minimal ground disturbance and site preparation; digging and minor excavation work will be conducted only at the existing water meter sites which are routinely accessed for monthly meter reading.

Simla has experienced population and economic contraction simultaneously with increasing climatic variability and drought risk common in the semi-arid steppe climate of the western high plains, which receives approximately 15 inches in annual precipitation. In 2010, the largest employer, a manufacturing company called SofaMart, and several small businesses closed causing Town revenue to decrease. Over the past 14 years, less rate revenue has been available for maintaining and updating failing infrastructure due to a smaller tax base. Furthermore, the Town's water and wastewater enterprise fund, which uses collected water rates for operations, maintenance, repairs, salaries, and benefits, is underfunded by the failure of existing water meters to capture actual water use for accurate billing. The Project will upgrade old, failing, unreliable water meters with modern AMI meter resulting in more efficient management of water

supply, faster leak detection, saved staff time and improved operational efficiency, incentivized water conservation, accurate billing, and recovered water rate revenue in Simla. Improved small-scale water efficiency from this Project will result in less water pumped from the Upper Big Sandy Creek groundwater sub-basin within the Arkansas River Basin.

## 4.0 Technical Proposal: Responses to Evaluation Criteria

### 4.1 Evaluation Criterion A. Project Benefits (35 points)

**Will the project result in more efficient management of water supply?** Yes, the municipal water meter upgrading Project will result in more efficient management of water supplied from the Upper Big Sandy Ground Water Management District (UBSGWMD, District). With AMI meters, real-time reporting to customers, and automatic downloads to the Town's billing system, management of the municipal water service will be less time intensive and more efficient. Public Works staff will no longer spend 10 hours each month doing drive-by and manual meter reading. The Project will also result in more efficient management of the water resource, the aquifer, which supplies water to the Town. With the ability to monitor their own water use, and the rate-based incentive to conserve water, customers will have the necessary information to improve water efficiency behind the meter. Similarly, Public Works staff will have information to detect leaks earlier and identify and reduce non-revenue water loss from the current rate of almost 30%.

Simla relies on five groundwater wells and pays the UBSGWMD for this water supply. The Town tracks gallons pumped on monthly, daily average, and year-to-date timescales for each well, and the five wells combined, and can compare this supplied volume to the billed volume of water from bulk accounts (fill trucks at fire hydrants), the public access filling kiosk, and residential and commercial water meters. Simla's water usage report for 2021 shows 33,898,780 gallons pumped, 357,767 gallons supplied to bulk accounts, 123,685 gallons supplied at the kiosk, and 23,376,000 gallons billed according to water meter readings. The difference between the water supplied and the water billed is 10,041,328 gallons or 29.86% in non-revenue water loss (Appendix B 2021 Water Use Report). This nearly 30% loss rate significantly exceeds recommended municipal standards and norms; the American Water Works Association (AWWA) recommends a non-revenue water loss goal of 10%.

Faulty, unreliable residential and commercial water meters are understood to be the cause of this 30% non-revenue water loss for two reasons. First, the meters on the bulk water withdrawals and the kiosk withdrawal are modern and accurate, leaving the 28-year-old water meters at fault by process of elimination. Second, a test with a new



meter, conducted at a single-family residence in Simla from April to June 2024, revealed monthly water use of 11,500 gallons compared to a consistently reported three-year average monthly water use of 3,500 to 4,000 gallons reported by the outdated water meters. In this test, the outdated 28-year-old water meter reported approximately one-third of actual water use measured with the modern test meter, and thus the customer was not billed for approximately two-thirds of actual water use.

The installation of modern, functional AMI customer water meters will result in more efficient management of Simla's water supply through real-time water consumption monitoring and leak detection, accurate reporting and billing, saved staff time, and reduced non-revenue water loss.

**Where any conserved water as a result of the project will go and how it will be used?** Water conserved as a result of the Project will remain in the aquifer and will not be pumped for Simla's water supply. Instead, this conserved water will be available for sustainable beneficial uses, as managed by the UBSGWMD. If extracted, the conserved water may support local ranching (mostly cattle, as well as pigs and sheep), agriculture (such as sunflowers or alfalfa), or domestic use by domestic well users or other municipalities. If left unextracted, this conserved water will help maintain aquifer water levels, supporting wetland, riparian, surface water habitat or groundwater dependent ecosystems.

**Are customers not currently getting their full water right at certain times of year?** The Town of Simla and its water customers have not had problems getting their full water right at certain times of year.

**Does this project have the potential to prevent lawsuits or water calls?** The Upper Big Sandy groundwater sub-basin is not a litigated basin and there are no lawsuits or water calls known to or relevant to the Town of Simla at this time.

**What are the consequences of not making the improvement?** If AMI water metering is not implemented in Simla, the Town will continue to lose revenue from unmeasured and therefore unbilled water consumption, and the Town's water and wastewater enterprise fund will continue to be inadequately resourced for managing municipal water service. Staff time will continue to be used inefficiently by drive-by meter reading followed up with manual meter reads on the existing AMR meters with faulty radio transmission, wasting 10 hours of time per month from the public works director and the part-time maintenance worker. Leaks will remain undetected for extended periods resulting in a larger volume of wasted water than if AMI meters notified the public works director and customer quickly. For example, in 2023, an elderly resident had a running toilet that she could not hear and accidentally used 50,000 gallons of water that month, compared to her usual 1,200 gallons, resulting in 38,000 wasted gallons. The resident lacked access to real-time water usage monitoring and the Public Works employees were unable to catch the issue until their monthly meter read at the end of that billing cycle. The consequence of not making the AMI

improvements entailed in the Project, will be continued risk of significant water inefficiencies and waste, as illustrated by this example.

**Are customer water restrictions currently required?** There are no customer water restrictions currently but if there were, failing and faulty meters would make compliance and enforcement impossible. New, upgraded, functional AMI will provide real-time data to assist customers in complying with future water restrictions and support the Town in accurately monitoring water consumption and enforcing water restrictions with reliable data.

**Broader Benefits to water supply reliability at sub-basin or basin scale:**

**How will the project increase collaboration and information-sharing among water managers in the region?** The Project will provide accurate reports of water consumption, via the AMI meters, for the first-time allowing collaboration and information sharing between several parties: Townhall, customers, nearby communities, other public works directors, and ground water management district managers. The newly accurate water consumption data will inform accurate billing, providing customers with accurate information. This consumption data will be cross-referenced with water pumping reports from the Town's five wells drawing on the Upper Big Sandy aquifer to detect and address inefficiencies. Second, the public works directors of municipalities in the area will be able to coordinate water use information with each other and with the Upper Big Sandy Ground Water Management District (UBSGWM) managers, trusting the accuracy of Simla's reports. The nearby Town of Calhan uses older AMR drive-by meters, Ramah uses manual water meter reading, and Matheson community members rely on domestic wells and septic systems. With the implementation of this AMI Project, Simla could be a leader in water use efficiency in the immediate geographic area and provide the UBSGWM district with an example of improving leak detection and water conservation.

**Is area experiencing or recently experienced drought or water scarcity? Will project help address drought conditions at sub-basin or basin scale, how?** The area faces ongoing water scarcity; the Upper Big Sandy Ground Water Management District (UBSGWMD, District), which supplies water to the Town, commissioned a study in 2005 that concluded the aquifer is over-appropriated. The District website notes that in response to the study, the Colorado Ground Water Commission closed the basin for drilling new high capacity irrigation and municipal wells and the District adopted new regulations to restrict practices that would adversely impact the aquifer (UBSGWMD website, accessed July 2024). As part of the western U.S. and eastern Colorado, the Project area frequently experiences droughts of varying degrees of severity. In early July 2024, at the time of writing, the U.S. Drought Monitor shows Simla in the D0-Abnormally Dry drought and dryness category. Yes, the Project will help address these water scarce conditions at the sub-basin scale by improving municipal water efficiency, incentivizing water conservation, and detecting and fixing leaks early with modern upgraded AMI metering. Less wasted water in Simla as a result of the Project will



reduce demand on the shared aquifer freeing up scarce water resources for other beneficial uses.

**How will project benefit species (federally threatened, endangered, recognized, state listed, species of recreational or economic importance)?** By improving water efficiency, detecting leaks earlier, and conserving municipal water use, the Project will protect the aquifer from over withdrawal leaving more water in the environment to support species and ecosystems. According to the Upper Big Sandy Ground Water Basin Phase 2 Water Balance Report (2009) avoiding declines in the alluvial water level will protect wetlands from stress and shrinking in area. Citing the Colorado Division of Wildlife (2008), the report states protection and maintenance of "groundwater levels would greatly enhance the Arkansas darters' habitat, abundance, and distribution." This fish species, *Etheostoma cragini*, was first identified as a candidate for listing as federally endangered and threatened in 1989. Water depletion is identified as the stressor with the largest potential impact to the species viability. In 2016, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that the petition to list the Arkansas darter as endangered and threatened was not warranted (Federal Register/ Vol. 81, No. 194).

**How will project positively impact/benefit various sectors and economies within the applicable geographic area?** Cattle ranching is the largest economic activity in the geographic area around Simla and herd size is restricted in proportion to water supply. When water supply is restricted, ranchers have had to cut herds back. By improving municipal water efficiency, incentivizing water conservation, and detecting leaks early through the Project's AMI meters, more water supply will be available in the aquifer for sustainable use by ranchers. The Project will positively benefit the ranching sector by easing water restrictions from the shared aquifer, managed by the UBSGWMD.

**How will the project complement work being done in coordination with NRCS in the area directly connected with the district water supply?** This Project provides metered municipal water service to the NRCS Simla Service Center office located at 504 Washington St, Simla, Colorado. However, as a municipal metering upgrade effort, this Project does not directly coordinate with specific NRCS work known to the Town's Public Works Director.

## **4.2 Evaluation Criterion B. Planning Efforts Supporting the Project (25 points)**

**Plan description, objectives, and development:** The Project is supported by a set of planning documents dated to 2019 outlining the need for water system improvements in the Town of Simla. The set is composed of: 1. Drinking Water Project Needs Assessment (PNA) Form is a 14-page form from the Water Quality Control Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) which references 2. Project Needs Assessment for Water System Improvement Project, a 155-page document with a Professional Engineer's Seal (Danna M. Koeniger, Colorado Licensed

Professional Engineer # 37106) dated 8/30/2019, as well as 3. Water System Improvements Project Needs Assessment Additional Information, a 31-page attachment. The Additional Information document references a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) that evaluates deficiencies within Simla's water system and recommends improvements to several aspects of the system. Section 4 of Additional Information outlines the project purpose and need as health and compliance, existing facility limitations, and operation and maintenance issues. This document provides additional information on the water system structure and operation, existing facilities analysis, facility planning analysis, and alternatives assessment.

**Support for the Project: Is the project identified specifically in the planning effort?**  
Yes, the need for functional water meters is identified specifically in the planning effort.

**Explain whether the proposed project implements a goal or addresses a need or problem identified in the existing planning effort?** The planning effort was completed to address the requirements of the Colorado CDPHE Drinking Water Project Needs Assessment. Within the Existing Facility Analysis of the PNA, sub-section 5.3.3 states:

"The Town of Simla requires the installation of water meters for all customers. The water meters and water meter pits were replaced within the 1996 water system improvements project with Sensus SR II meters."

The planning document directly dates the age of Simla's water meters to 28-years-old (1996-2024), which is past their useful life, and it identifies the requirement by the Town for water meters to be installed for all customers.

**Explain how the proposed project has been determined as a priority in the existing planning effort as opposed to other potential projects/measures?** The Colorado Governor's Office determined the project is a priority and assigned grant writing technical assistance to Simla for this project. Simla has pledged \$10,000 in cost share demonstrating the high priority of this project. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) will fund \$115,000 in cost share and has written a Letter of Commitment demonstrating the high prioritization of this project. Simla's Public Works Director explains that this project will ensure accurate meter readings and revenue collection, which will enable the Town's enterprise fund for water and wastewater to be financially sustainable. In this way, the project is prioritized as the first water system improvement that will bolster the ability to collect water rates reflective of actual water use which will fund future improvements.

#### **4.3 Evaluation Criterion C. Project Implementation (20 points)**

The Project will be put out for competitive bid for water meter equipment and installation, which account for the majority of the project costs. No design, engineering, or permits are required for the Project. The budget narrative in the budget attachment

provides a reasonable explanation of project costs and detail. Table 1 below describes a detailed plan of the proposed work including activities, responsible parties, duration, and sequencing. The Project duration will be approximately six weeks. The anticipated start date for this project is 04/30/2025, which is within 1 month of the anticipated award date of 03/31/2025 in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. The Town of Simla does have access to the water meter pits and does not require permission to access the Project locations. The Town has not yet contacted the local Reclamation office but, per Section 6.0, does not anticipate challenges with environmental and cultural resource compliance requirements.

**Table 1. Schedule of activities, responsibilities, duration, and sequencing.**

Activity	Responsible Party	Duration	Sequencing
A. Inform public of upcoming changes	Public Works Director & Town Clerk	4 weeks	Activities A & B occur simultaneously
B. Purchase meters, radio receivers, and software	Public Works Director	4 - 6 weeks	
C. Install meters and radio receivers	Contracted vendor and installer	2 weeks	Activities C, D, and E occur simultaneously
D. Install software and get online	Contracted meter vendor with IT technician and Town staff	2 weeks	
E. Train residents and other water customers	Public Works Director, Town staff, and volunteers	30 days	

#### **4.4 Evaluation Criterion D. Nexus to Reclamation (5 points)**

The Project does not have a direct nexus to Reclamation. However, Simla's sole water source is the Big Sandy Creek Aquifer in the Arkansas River Basin. Simla has geographic proximity to, but is not a participant in, Reclamation's Arkansas Valley Conduit (AVC) major infrastructure project. Accurate water metering and water billing resulting from the Project will improve water efficiency and incentivize water conservation in Simla, thereby indirectly benefiting the sustainability of the Arkansas River Basin.

#### **4.5 Evaluation Criterion E. Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities (15 points)**

**Sub-criterion No. E1. Climate Change?** Through improving water usage accuracy and corresponding water billing accuracy, as well as early leak detection, the project will incentivize water conservation and reduce wasteful pumping from the Big Sandy Creek Aquifer. Conserved water for human use bolsters water availability for groundwater

dependent ecosystems and the biodiversity supported by local water resources. To the extent that water conservation reduces water pumping energy demands, the project will reduce climate pollution from non-renewable electricity generation. The project will protect public health by improving the water system's resiliency and management with smart meters, and detecting leaks which could introduce pathogens in the distribution system. Accurate water billing, enabled by smart meter installation, strengthens water system resilience to climate change.

**Sub-criterion No. E2. Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities?** Median household income (MHI) in Simla is \$41,625, less than half of the state of Colorado's MHI of \$87,598, and approximately one third of Elbert County's MHI of \$124,000 (2022 US Census; ElbertCountyWorks.com). While Tract number 0803996110, which includes Simla, is not classified as disadvantaged according to the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CJEST), this tract represents the whole of Elbert County which has a MHI three times that of Simla, at \$124,000. The nearest town of notable size, Limon is classified as a disadvantaged community on CJEST. The tract where Simla is located is classified as disadvantaged by CJEST on the parameters of energy cost (92<sup>nd</sup> percentile), abandoned mine land (yes), transportation barriers (96<sup>th</sup> percentile). This tract is close to disadvantaged on the parameters of projected wildfire risk (83<sup>rd</sup> percentile) and low income (52<sup>nd</sup> percentile).

Ranching, mostly of cattle, is the primary industry in the area and herd size is managed in proportion to available water supply, thus improved water efficiency from this Project will support more water availability for cattle ranching. Nearly 58% of Simla's population is estimated to be employed, although most jobs require a commute to the communities of Calhan or Limon (2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). Since the closure of SofaMart, Simla's largest employer, in 2010 along with several other small businesses, the economy and population in Simla has contracted and potential tax revenue has decreased. Simla has a meat locker butcher, two well and pump stores, a liquor store, and an antique store. Aside from a convenience store and a recently opened Dollar General, there is no grocery store, nor are there any restaurants or bars in Simla. The Project will benefit the local economy by ensuring a reliable water supply for residential and commercial growth and for fire protection, and by allowing accurate water billing and water rate revenue collection for the Town.

## 5.0 Project Budget

The total estimated cost for this water meter project is \$225,000.00. Simla anticipates contributing \$10,000 and securing a Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) grant for \$115,000, totaling \$125,000 in matching funds to the requested \$100,000 in Small-Scale Water Efficiency Program (SWEP) grant funds. Please see the Budget Narrative Excel sheet included in the application submittal for a complete breakdown of project costs and budget narrative.

**Table 2: Budget Summary**

<b>Budget Category/ Object Class Category</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
a. Personnel	\$1,140.00
b. Fringe Benefits	\$152.00
c. Travel	\$0
d. Equipment	\$0
e. Supplies	\$0
f. Contractual	\$42,278.51
g. Construction	\$162,406.03
h. Other Direct Costs	\$0
i. Total Direct Costs	\$205,977.94
j. Indirect Costs	\$19,022.06
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$225,000.00</b>

## **6.0 Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance**

All water meter improvements will be completed on previously disturbed land within the Town limits and within existing disturbed areas and existing meter pits. The Town recognizes that Reclamation will complete its own environmental review and NEPA compliance determination if the grant is awarded. The Town anticipates the Project would be classified as a Categorical Exclusion to NEPA because no known threatened or endangered species live within the area of impact and no wildlife habitat will be impacted as a result of the project. While there are defined wetlands along the Big Sandy Creek, none are within the Town limits where the Project will be located. Similarly, the Project is outside of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mapped floodplain for the Big Sandy Creek, so no floodplain permit will be required. In preparing the referenced planning documents (Section 4.3), historic and archaeological properties have been reviewed through the National Register of Historic Places and through the Colorado State Register of Historic Places with no indication of registered historic places in the Town of Simla.

## **7.0 Required Permits or Approvals**

Since the water meter Project will take place at the sites of existing outdated water meters, it is not expected to require permitting. The Project will follow town codes and requirements for all permitting and approvals. The Project is anticipated to fall within a NEPA Categorical Exclusion as the scope of the project construction is entirely within previously disturbed area.

## **8.0 Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement**

The Project does not overlap with any other active or anticipated projects in terms of funding, activities, costs, or commitment of key personnel.

## **9.0 Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement**

The Town of Simla has no conflicts of interest to disclose. The Town will comply with its competitive procurement policies for implementing this Project.



## **10.0 Uniform Audit Reporting Statement**

The Town of Simla is required to submit annual audits and did so for the most recently closed fiscal year (12/31/2023). The audit is available through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse, Federal Employer Identification Number 84-6000621.

## **11.0 Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**

The Town of Simla has not made, or agreed to make, payments to any lobbying entity.

## **12.0 Letters of Support**

The Project is supported by the following agencies:

- Elbert County Government, Commissioner District 1 (Chairman)
- East Central Council of Local Governments, Colorado's Central Plains

Letters of Support are included in Appendix A of this SWEPP grant application.

## **13.0 Letter of Partnership**

The Town of Simla is a Category A applicant. There are no Category B partners for this project.

## **14.0 Official Resolution**

If selected, the Town of Simla will provide prior to award an official resolution adopted by the Town's elected Board of Trustees. This resolution will verify the identity of the official with legal authority to enter into an agreement, the Board of Trustees who has reviewed and supports the application submitted, and that the Town will work with Reclamation to meet established deadlines for entering into a grant or cooperative agreement.

## **15.0 Letters of Commitment**

The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) is anticipated to provide third-party cost share for this project. Simla's DOLA funding application was submitted on July 4<sup>th</sup>,

2024, and received support from DOLA through several emails and phone calls prior to submittal. If the Project is selected for award under this SWEF funding opportunity, third-party cost share from DOLA will be supported with a letter of commitment prior to award. This letter of commitment will identify the amount of funding commitment, the date the funds will be available to Simla, any time constraints on the availability of funds, and any other contingencies associated with the funding commitment.

## Appendix A Letters of Support



# ELBERT COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Chris Richardson  
Commissioner District 1 (Chairman)  
chris.richardson@elbertcounty-co.gov  
Office 303-621-3132  
PO Box 7, 215 Comanche St, Kiowa, CO, 80117

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July 2, 2024

RE: WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Project Grant

Dear Selection Panel Members,

On behalf of the Elbert County Board of County Commissioners, I am writing to express our strong support for the grant request for the Town of Simla's water system improvement project, which involves upgrading the current water meters to Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) water meters.

This project is essential for several reasons:

1. **Accuracy and Billing:** Upgrading to AMI water meters will ensure accurate measurement of water usage, leading to precise billing. This significantly reduces the potential for human error, ensuring fairness and transparency for residents and business owners.
2. **Real-time Monitoring and Conservation:** AMI technology allows residents and business owners to monitor their water consumption in real time. This empowers them to adjust their water usage and irrigation practices, promoting water conservation and potentially lowering their water bills.
3. **Leak Detection:** The new system will enable the Town to monitor water usage on a daily basis, as opposed to the current monthly checks. This frequent monitoring will facilitate the early detection of leaks, preventing water wastage and reducing costs associated with water loss.
4. **Operational Efficiency:** Currently, the Public Works Department spends considerable time driving through the town with remote meter reading devices and manually reading over 35 meters that are not compatible with the drive-by devices. The AMI system will streamline this process, freeing up valuable time for the Public Works Department to focus on other essential duties.

The benefits of this project extend beyond just operational improvements; they represent a significant step towards sustainable water management for the Town of Simla. By increasing efficiency and accuracy in water metering, this project will help conserve water—a vital resource for our community.

Given the importance of this project and the financial constraints faced by the Town of Simla, we strongly urge you to consider providing the necessary support and funding to make this initiative a reality. The long-term benefits of upgrading to AMI water meters are substantial and will positively impact the entire community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued support of projects that enhance the quality of life in this rural municipality.

Sincerely,

Chris Richardson  
Commissioner, Dist 1 (Chair)  
Board of County Commissioners  
Elbert County, Colorado

# EAST CENTRAL COUNCIL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

COLORADO'S CENTRAL PLAINS



Box 28 • Stratton, Colorado 80836 • 719-348-5562 • (FAX) 719-348-5887 • [www.eccog.com](http://www.eccog.com)

July 3, 2024

RE: Town of Simla WaterSMART Application

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
Water Resources and Planning Office  
Mail Code: 86-630  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Bureau of Reclamation,

The East Central Council of Governments' Board of Directors and I fully support the Town of Simla application for the WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Project Grant. This rural town on the eastern plains of Colorado has replaced cast iron pipe with PVC; cleaned, repainted, and repaired water storage tanks; and added a SCADA system. These improvements are major upgrades to the Town's water supply system. The Town seeks funding to take the next step to continue their water distribution and metering system upgrade and thereby improve efficiencies for not only the Town's operations but in consumer use.

The current water meters will be upgraded with AMI water meters, which benefits the Town, residents and business owners. The new meters will ensure accuracy of water usage and provide accurate billing. Residents and business owners will have more control over their water consumption in real time and adjust water use to reduce their water bill and conserve our precious water. The Town's staff can monitor water usage across the community and detect possible leaks every day, any day. The AMI system provides more efficient recording of water usage without driving the streets to read meters. Upgrading the Town's water meters will increase efficiency and accuracy and allow the town and its residents and businesses to conserve water, which is a great win!

Thank you for considering the WaterSMART Small-Scale Water Efficiency Project Grant application for the Town of Simla. East Central COG knows Simla and its residents and businesses will benefit greatly from the project by reducing operational costs and encouraging water consciousness in the community. With such great improvements in Simla, the whole region benefits from water conservation and improved usage.

Sincerely,

Candace Payne  
ECCOG Executive Director