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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Funding Propels Mission of the Colorado Water Innovation Cluster

The Colorado Water Innovation Cluster (CWIC), headquartered in Fort Collins, Colorado, has received grant funding from the Colorado Water Conservation Board's (CWCB) Alternative Agricultural Water Transfer Methods Program that will further the cluster's mission of developing actionable initiatives. The CWCB grant of \$135,105 will help complete the CWIC's Lake Canal Alternative Practices and In-stream Flow Demonstration Project.

The demonstration will address the municipal, industrial and environmental water "gap" during irrigation season in the Lake Canal area by using a packaged software/field instrumentation solution developed by Colorado-based Regenes Management Group, along with researchers from Colorado State University (CSU) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

With the new technology from Regenes, the Colorado Water Innovation Cluster will demonstrate how alternative irrigation transfers from agriculture use to urban use can be achieved without sacrificing local food production. Currently, Lake Canal diverts from the Cache la Poudre River just west of College Avenue in Fort Collins and flows south and east to farms along the Larimer and Weld County line. During the last several decades municipalities have purchased water rights from farmers. Due to a lack of water, the farmers stopped operations, while the urban areas continued to receive more water.

According to Forbes Guthrie of Stewart Environmental Consultants, "With the State demographer predicting approximately 1.7 million residents along the Colorado Front Range by 2020, availability of water presents a critical path to sustaining a region with high quality of life. Balancing the water demands of urban infrastructure with a thriving agricultural community, as well as upcoming unconventional energy exploration, will demand innovation in water trading, filtration, use and conservation. This demonstration project is an important step, and one of many for which the CWIC will serve as a catalyst."

As a partner of the CWIC, the City of Fort Collins supported the grant application knowing that the workforce and talent needed to address these kinds of economic, social and environmental challenges exist in the region and can move technology and know how to market for best results.

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Josh Birks, the Economic Advisor of the City of Fort Collins states, "Water conservation groups, agricultural organizations and government agencies all see the positive effect of managing irrigation in a different way. Farmers can use less water while still yielding comparable crop quantities, while the savings in water use is leased to the City for urban uses."

The State Engineer's Office administrative requirements for water transfer and use will be met during the demonstrations. Results of the study will be shared with the general public and will help promote the development of a common technical platform for other communities facing increasing agricultural and consumer water demands.

About the Colorado Water Innovation Cluster

The CWIC, formed in September 2010, focuses on innovative and entrepreneurial ways to grow the water resource and technology sector of our economy through actionable initiatives. Specifically, the CWIC seeks out initiatives that highlight our region's capabilities, help to address workforce gaps, involve the innovative use of technologies, contribute to the body of research around water and grow jobs in our region.

Participants in the cluster reflect the depth of knowledge and expertise in the water and hydrology industry in Fort Collins and the state of Colorado. The CWIC Board consists of Aqua Engineering, BHA Design, City of Fort Collins, Colorado State University, Hach-Lange Global Innovation, In-Situ, Riverside Technologies, Rubicon, Stewart Environmental Consultants and Ted Bendelow, Esq. The City of Fort Collins is a partner in CWIC to further the economic goals of City Council, which includes the support of diverse industries through a clusters strategy. Learn more at www.co-waterinnovation.com.

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