

Helping Landowners Recover from the Lee and Elk Fires

DITCH CLEANING Assistance Program



PURPOSE



Support local landowners in clearing and repairing irrigation ditches damaged by post-fire debris, sediment, and erosion. Restoring essential water delivery systems for agriculture and protecting community water resources.

BACKGROUND



The Lee and Elk Fires burned through key agricultural watersheds in Rio Blanco County. Burned vegetation and soil instability have led to heavy sediment, ash, and woody debris flowing into irrigation systems. Blocked or damaged ditches threaten crop irrigation, livestock operations, and downstream water quality, including the Town of Rangely drinking water supply.

PROGRAM GOALS



- Clear fire-related debris and sediment from irrigation ditches.
- Repair and restore damaged sections to proper function.
- Reduce flooding and erosion risks from post-fire runoff.
- Protect agricultural production and strengthen watershed resilience.

COST-SHARE DETAILS



- 50/50 cost-share between the landowner and the White River Conservation District.
- Apply through the White River Conservation District.
- Landowners contribute half the total cost; WRCD assists with the remainder through recovery funding.



This program is made possible through the White River Conservation District, working with local producers, agencies, and recovery funders such as the Yampa Valley Disaster Recovery Fund.

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