



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TOWN OF RIDGWAY BEAVER CREEK DIVERSION RESTORATION | CATEGORY G 2027 COLORADO ACEC EEA AWARDS

In August 2024, a debris flow tore through Beaver Creek above Ridgway, Colorado. The flood buried the Town's raw-water diversion structure and ditch intake beneath sediment and boulders and reshaped the channel around and away from it. The stream downcut near the former intake and eliminated the gravity flow to the Town. Ridgway lost access to a source that supplied approximately 70 percent of the drinking water to its 1,200 residents.

A temporary diversion kept some water moving but could not fully replace the lost supply. Residents conserved, the Town stopped irrigating public spaces, and local hotels asked guests to limit water use. By March 2025, Ridgway had secured emergency funding and selected RESPEC to design a permanent replacement facility before winter again restricted access to the remote mountain site.

The challenge went beyond replacing damaged infrastructure. Beaver Creek was still adjusting after the flood, the former intake location no longer supported gravity flow, and the team faced limited site data, uncertain subsurface conditions, difficult access, and a compressed construction season. Water-rights, permitting, procurement, and funding requirements also needed to advance without delaying construction.

RESPEC used geomorphic analysis to identify the new location within 200 feet of the historical diversion, thereby avoiding a Water Court process that could have added a year to the schedule. The team then developed a precast, Coanda screen diversion suited to the changed channel and remote site, with features that reduce sediment, protect critical components, and allow the Town to monitor and adjust flows remotely.

Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) delivery brought Meridian Contracting into the process before the final design, which allowed constructability and procurement decisions to proceed. RESPEC advanced permitting, private access coordination, and federal funding requirements against the seasonal deadline.

The diversion was operating by early December 2025. By spring, the diversion had filled Ridgway's storage reservoir, despite the notably low snowpack and severe drought conditions, and restored the primary water source before summer.