

**Water Supply Reserve Account – Grant and Loan Program
Water Activity Summary Sheet
Agenda Item 7.g.**

Applicant: Northwest Colorado Council of Governments

Water Activity Name: Colorado Basin Nonconsumptive Needs Quantification

Water Activity Purpose: Nonstructural study of nonconsumptive needs

County: Grand, Summit, Pitkin, Eagle, Garfield and Mesa counties

Drainage Basin: Colorado

Water Source: N/A

Amount Requested: \$315,171 (Colorado Basin Account)

Matching Funds: There are no matching funds specified in this application, although the project is set to share costs with the Wild & Scenic alternatives process for site specific quantification.

Staff Recommendation
The proposed project will complete the requirements of the Colorado Basin's Nonconsumptive Needs Assessment. Staff recommends approval of up to \$315,171 from the Colorado Basin Account to help complete this project.

Water Activity Summary:

On behalf the Colorado Basin Roundtable, the Norwest Regional Council of Governments, an association of county and municipal governments, formalized by Intergovernmental Agreement, is seeking to further quantify flow needs within the basin.

The goal is to conduct a basin-wide modeling approach using the Watershed Flow Evaluation Tool paired with site specific quantification, which will be used to verify the model. The site-specific quantification of instream flow needs for the Colorado River will be between Kremmling, Colorado and No Name, Colorado. The Watershed Flow Evaluation Tool will be completed for the entire Colorado River Basin to focus future site specific and water management efforts.

The objectives of the study are to:

- Build upon existing quantification efforts in the basin to maintain consistency in approaches and to develop a comprehensive dataset of quantification measures in the basin
- Conduct site-specific quantification of instream flow needs for Colorado River between Kremling and No Name which would determine the current state of the aquatic ecosystem in this river reach including:
 - Physical/geomorphic characteristics
 - Hydrologic characteristics
 - Riparian characteristics
 - Instream aquatic habitat characteristics
- The site-specific quantification for the Colorado River between Kremmling and No Name would also determine expected changes as a result of hydrologic change with additional water regulation such as
 - Expected geomorphic changes
 - Expected riparian changes
 - Expected aquatic habitat changes
- Complete evaluation of Colorado River Basin using the Watershed Flow Evaluation Tool

- Conduct study within a stakeholder process with the Colorado Basin Nonconsumptive Needs Assessment Committee and Basin Roundtable. Coordination and communication will be provided with all affected stakeholders including water providers, watershed groups, local, state and federal agencies and interested citizens. All related material will be publicly available through the Colorado Basin Roundtable/IBCC website.

Threshold and Evaluation Criteria

The application/project meets all four Threshold Criteria. No Statewide funds are being requested, therefore the evaluation criteria does not apply.

Funding Overview

Grant funding in the amount of \$315,171 is being requested from the Colorado Basin Account. No matching funds are specified in the grant.

Discussion:

This study will assist the Colorado Basin Roundtable in assessing its nonconsumptive needs by quantifying flows within the basin. In addition, the site specific work closely ties to the development of Wild and Scenic alternatives on the mainstem of the Colorado River. The timing of the grant enables this work to proceed without losing a year of field work, which could delay the Wild and Scenic alternatives process.

The intent of the basin is to prepare enough data that nonconsumptive flow quantifications could be incorporated into Phase II of the Colorado River Water Availability Study (CRWAS). An important component is outreach to water suppliers. In addition, the grant specifies that the site-specific quantifications will be considered more accurate, should they and the flow evaluation tool conflict. **The applicant has also agreed to provide specifics as to how the study will be used prior to the board meeting.**

Issues/Additional Needs:

- Please amend the budget to reflect matching funds associated with site specific analysis and sampling.
- The flow evaluation tool component of the project should only be funded if the pilot study on the Roaring Fork Watershed indicates that this is a useful tool to be applied across the basin, closely tying to the site specific work conducted to verify the project.
- It is staff's understanding, through discussions with the Colorado BRT, that the applicant intends to integrate this work with the Wild & Scenic alternatives process, Phase II of the CRWAS, and that major transbasin water providers will be one aspect of the outreach efforts, however a revised scope of work should specify these items.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of up to \$315,171 from the Colorado Basin Account to enable the completion of the Colorado Basin's Nonconsumptive Needs Assessment, contingent upon the above issues and needs being addressed.

All products, data and information developed as a result of this grant must be provided to CWCB in hard copy and electronic format as part of the project documentation. This information will in turn be made widely available to Basin Roundtables and the general public and will help promote the development of a common technical platform.

In accordance with the revised WSRA Criteria and Guidelines, staff would like to highlight additional reporting and final deliverable requirements. The specific requirements are provided below.

Reporting: The applicant shall provide the CWCB a progress report every 6 months, beginning from the date of the executed contract. The progress report shall describe the completion or partial completion of the tasks identified in the scope of work including a description of any major issues that have occurred and any corrective action taken to address these issues.

Final Deliverable: At completion of the project, the applicant shall provide the CWCB a final report that summarizes the project and documents how the project was completed. This report may contain photographs, summaries of meetings and engineering reports/designs.