

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

**Applicant:** Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

**Water Activity Name:** Central South Platte Wetland Partnership

**Water Activity Purpose:** Environmental Compliance and Feasibility Study and Structural Water Project

**County:** Weld and Morgan Counties

**Drainage Basin:** South Platte River

**Water Source:** South Platte River

**Amount Requested:** \$150,000 (South Platte Basin Account)

**Matching Funds:** Over \$565,000

<b>Staff Recommendation</b>
The proposed project meets a consumptive and nonconsumptive water supply need in the South Platte Basin while promoting collaboration among diverse interests and effectively leveraging WSRA funds. Staff recommends approval of up to \$150,000 from the South Platte Basin Account to partially fund the wetland design and construction of the Central South Platte Wetland Partnership contingent on resolution of the items in the issues/additional needs section.

**Water Activity Summary:**

The Central South Platte Wetland Partnership (CSPWP) creates high-quality recharge wetlands in the South Platte River (SPR) Basin of Weld and Morgan Counties. Members of the partnership will provide direct diversion rights designated for recharge to meet a variety of beneficial uses corresponding to the objectives and recommendations identified in both SWSI Phase I and SWSI Phase II. Recharge wetlands as part of a program to augment SPR flows through the alluvial aquifer have become a widely accepted and dependable technique for meeting the demands of water users along the river.

The partnership includes the Central Colorado Water Conservancy District (CCWCD), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and private landowners. The CSPWP has identified three sites that will provide both quality wetland habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife species and strong river augmentation sources. The three wetland sites include: the Welker Augmentation Project, the Haren Wetland Development, and the Peckham Augmentation Site.

The Welker Augmentation Project represents an expansion of one of CCWCD's largest recharge complexes. An additional 60-80 acres of recharge wetland will be created by installing water delivery components and moving dirt in naturally-occurring swales on the Dry Lakes Ranch property immediately north of the existing recharge ponds. DU is partnering with CCWCD and Dry Lakes Ranch to achieve project objectives. DU will provide \$56,231 for project survey, design, and construction. CCWCD and Dry Lakes Ranch will provide an additional \$100,000 and \$50,000, respectively, for project infrastructure. A total of \$69,346 is requested from the basin WSRA to fully fund this project.

The Haren Wetland Development is a large-scale wetland recharge project located near the SPR in southern Weld County. Approximately 60 acres of recharge wetlands will be created on dried up agricultural land to generate recharge credit for CCWCD's plan and provide waterfowl habitat. Recharge basins will be created by constructing contour terraces in portions of the property served by water delivery from the Western Ditch. DU has secured \$87,577 for project survey, design, and construction. CCWCD will provide an additional \$200,000 for the diversion from the Western Ditch and wetland construction. The landowner, Mr. Haren, has pledged nearly \$5,000 in in-kind services from his agricultural engineering company. A total of \$37,537 is requested from the basin WSRA to fully fund this project.

The Peckham Augmentation Site is located in Weld County about 2 miles southeast of Peckham and will include about 15 acres of recharge wetlands created with low-level terraces on two properties bordering irrigated fields. Existing irrigation infrastructure will be expanded to allow the flooding of these impoundments with water from the Platte Valley Irrigation Company (PVIC) ditch. DU requests \$43,117 of WSRA funds to match the \$65,877 secured for project survey, design, and construction. In addition, CCWCD will provide funds for off-site water delivery and annual access agreements.

#### *Threshold and Evaluation Criteria*

The application 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 \$150,000 is requested from the South Platte Basin Account. Funding from the WSRA constitutes roughly 20% of the overall project cost (over \$715,000). The balance of the project's funding is provided by the CSPWP members.

#### **Discussion:**

Delivery of recharge wetlands on these sites will help multiple federal, state, regional, and private organizations realize water development, wildlife, and conservation goals. Although a few enterprises and landowners have built augmentation projects on their own, many have partnered with water and wildlife interests to complete the projects. This partnering is critical to meet the demands address the gap through recharge wetlands as well as assisting with Colorado's commitment to the Platte River Recovery Program.

Similar to other successful DU projects this application will utilize state dollars to leverage funds into a much larger program. This application seeks to leverage WSRA funds at a nearly 4:1 ratio. In addition, DU continues to engage new funding partners to meet multiple water needs along the South Platte River. Apart from the four new landowners involved in the project, this project will also test the utilization of Farm Bill program funding for water supply projects in the basin.

This well-prepared application represents a series of projects chosen because they show the highest opportunity for partnering amongst traditional water users and wildlife interests. Successful delivery of these projects will demonstrate the power of collaboration and the ability for nontraditional partnerships to meet the goals and objectives of SWSI, Basin Roundtables, and the intent of HB1177.

#### **Issues/Additional Needs:**

- Please include a more detailed budget and scope of work.
- Please include an updated project schedule that includes completion dates for key project milestones.

**Staff Recommendation:**

The proposed project meets a consumptive and nonconsumptive water supply need in the South Platte Basin while promoting collaboration among diverse interests and effectively leveraging WSRA funds. Staff recommends approval of up to \$150,000 from the South Platte Basin Account to partially fund the wetland design and construction of the Central South Platte Wetland Partnership contingent on resolution of the items in the issues/additional needs section.

All products, data and information developed as a result of this grant must be provided to the 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.