

**Water Supply Reserve Account – Grant and Loan Program  
Water Activity Summary Sheet  
Agenda Item 29c**

**Applicant:** Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

**Water Activity Name:** North Park Irrigated Meadow Conservation Program – Phase I

**Water Activity Purpose:** Environmental compliance and feasibility study; Technical Assistance regarding permitting, feasibility studies, and environmental compliance

**County:** Jackson County

**Drainage Basin:** North Platte River

**Water Source:** North Platte River and Tributaries

**Amount Requested:** \$20,000 (North Platte Basin Account)

**Matching Funds:** \$41,338 pending from: Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund, DOW Wetlands Program Fund, and North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)

<b>Staff Recommendation</b>
The proposed project will meet consumptive and nonconsumptive water supply needs in the North Platte Basin. Staff recommends approval of up to an additional \$20,000 from the North Platte Basin Account to fund the North Park Irrigated Meadow Conservation Program – Phase I for Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

**Water Activity Summary:**

The North Park Irrigated Meadow Conservation Program is a multi-partner effort to restore and enhance irrigated meadows in Jackson County, Colorado. The Program addresses both consumptive and nonconsumptive needs by rehabilitating water-delivery systems in the Park. Irrigators benefit by increasing efficiencies and the acreage under irrigation allowed under the North Platte Decree. Waterfowl will benefit by increasing the quantity and quality of breeding habitats in the North Platte Basin (NPB). This application is for the first phase of the program which will assess candidate projects. This assessment will detail water availability, irrigation infrastructure condition, wetland habitat condition, wildlife value, project impact assessments and the necessary project permitting in order to provide the information subsequently required by potential funders of project construction.

The basin's Nonconsumptive Needs Assessment, the North Park River Surface Water Model, and the work of the Colorado Natural Heritage Program will be integrated with other wildlife resource data to specify where irrigated meadow conservation work would provide the most benefit to water users. A 'Thunderstorm' map of potential project sites will be developed to facilitate outreach efforts to landowners. DU biologists and engineers will then make site visits to identified properties. These visits will delineate the work needed to rehabilitate irrigation infrastructure and to ascertain the benefits of any such work. A conceptual plan, provisional budget, and summary of benefits (both agricultural and ecological) will be compiled, along with any significant hurdles to fully realizing the identified benefits. Four to five of the sites with the best potential will be subject to a detailed survey and design effort by DU engineers and technicians. Topographic maps, detailed water-control designs, ditch courses and impoundments will be plotted and made available to the landowner. These plans and the corresponding budgets will be used to raise funds for project delivery. Potential conflicts with existing land and water use arising from improvements will also be assessed. Finally, the necessary permits to accomplish project objectives will be identified and, to the extent possible, secured such that the planned work need only be funded for rehabilitation to begin.

*Threshold and Evaluation Criteria*

The application meets all four Threshold Criteria. No Statewide funds are currently being requested.

### *Funding Overview*

Grant funding in the amount of \$20,000 is requested from the North Platte Basin Account. Requested WSRA funds constitute about 33% of the overall project cost (\$61,338). The balance of funding (\$41,338) is being pursued from the Colorado Healthy Rivers Fund, the DOW Wetlands Program Fund, and federal funds from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA).

### **Discussion:**

The Statewide Water Supply Initiative anticipates little change in consumptive use in the NPB over the next half-century. Water use in the watershed will likely continue to be dominated by irrigated agriculture. This application seeks funding for project feasibility work to develop plans to utilize available irrigable acres under the North Platte Decree and the Platte River Recovery Program. These irrigation projects will benefit both consumptive users, the irrigators, and nonconsumptive users, wetland-dependent wildlife species and the citizens who enjoy them. As a result the proposed project aims to increase the vitality of the area's agricultural economy through increased yields and heightened efficiencies while benefiting wetland-dependent wildlife species by providing more reliable, higher quality and more interconnected wetland habitats.

This application was approved by the North Platte Basin Roundtable on a split vote of 5 to 4 as detailed in the approval letter dated March 10, 2010.

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

No issues or additional needs remain. The applicant has worked with the North Platte Basin Roundtable and CWCB staff to address concerns as detailed on page 8 and 9 of the application. As a result, the project's scope has been significantly scaled back. The scope has also been modified to address legal and environmental concerns.

### **Staff Recommendation:**

The proposed project will meet consumptive and nonconsumptive water supply needs in the North Platte Basin. Staff recommends approval of up to an additional \$20,000 from the North Platte Basin Account to fund the North Park Irrigated Meadow Conservation Program – Phase I for Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

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.

**Engineering:** All engineering work (as defined in the Engineers Practice Act (§12-25-102(10) C.R.S.)) performed under this grant shall be performed by or under the responsible charge of professional engineer licensed by the State of Colorado to practice Engineering.