

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

Applicant: Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District

Water Activity Name: Stakeholder’s Cooperative Management Analysis for the Upper Arkansas River Basin

Water Activity Purpose: Study and analysis of a nonstructural nonconsumptive project

County: Chaffee County, Fremont County, Pueblo County

Drainage Basin: Arkansas

Water Source: Arkansas

Amount Requested: \$33,600 (Arkansas Basin Account)

Matching Funds: \$8,400 (25% of funding request)

Staff Recommendation
Staff recommends approval of up to \$33,600 from the Arkansas Basin Account. These funds would allow for a stakeholder driven assessment of flow alternatives for the Upper Arkansas.

Water Activity Summary:

The Voluntary Flow Management Program developed in 1990 for the Upper Arkansas is considered a model throughout Colorado and the country and has allowed for Colorado’s most vibrant rafting economy. After 15 years of operating, the addition of Chaffee County’s recreational inchannel diversion, and other water management agreements and objectives, many stakeholders believe that flows could be managed better to meet the needs of many stakeholders.

The Stakeholder’s Cooperative Management Analysis is a stakeholder supported investigation of past and current river operations in the upper the Arkansas River basin. This analysis will identify historic management strategies used during high, average, and low river flow years and assess the impacts of those strategies. Then, based on stakeholder inputs, a limited number of new management strategies to enhance impacts on fishery, recreational, agricultural and landowner components will be developed and assessed.

The study will focus on water supplies in the upper Arkansas River basin, especially as it relates to the operations involving transmountain diversions, municipal upstream exchanges from Pueblo Reservoir and Fountain Creek, releases from Turquoise and Twin Lakes Reservoirs, and storage levels in Pueblo Reservoir. Input from the stakeholders will be analyzed in the context of a river operations analysis that identifies the legal and institutional framework in which all management alternatives must be considered.

As stated in the scope of work, the project’s objectives are to:

- 1) Identify and assess (at a reconnaissance level) specific stakeholder-supported management alternatives for Arkansas River operations related to high, average, and low flow regimes.
- 2) Create a better understanding of the rationale and need for upper Arkansas River management among stakeholders.
- 3) Promote cooperation and collaboration of the stakeholders to more effectively and efficiently address the multiple needs and interests.
- 4) Provide and add data to the Roundtables consumptive and non-consumptive needs assessment
- 5) Develop an integrated water management system to address the project categories

Threshold and Evaluation Criteria

The application meets all four Threshold Criteria. No statewide funds are being requested, therefore the evaluation criteria do not apply.

Funding Overview

The applicant is requesting grant funding in the amount of \$33,600 from the Arkansas & Metro Basin Accounts. Funding from the WSRA constitutes 80% of the overall project cost of \$42,000.

Discussion:

The application will address one of the three main areas identified in the nonconsumptive needs assessment. Together with 1) the analysis of John Martin wetland flow needs and reservoir levels in Neenoshe and 2) the Fountain Creek Watershed Plan, this study will enable the roundtable to understand what projects and methods are needed to address their nonconsumptive needs.

The scope of work and application are well thought out and thorough. The application could serve as a model for others applying to WSRA grants.

Issues/Additional Needs: No issues or additional needs were identified.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of up to \$33,600 from the Arkansas Basin Account for the assessment of flow management alternatives in the Upper Arkansas.

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.