

October 26, 2009

RE: Colorado Drought Plan Assistance

The National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC) has a long history assisting states across the country in their drought planning efforts. Even before forming the NDMC in 1995, Don Wilhite worked closely with Colorado officials on their drought planning efforts during the 1980s and early 1990s. As a result, Colorado has often been cited as a model for other states to follow in the development of their drought plans, particularly as the emphasis in recent years has shifted more towards mitigation—identifying actions that can be taken by states before a drought occurs that reduces that state's vulnerability to future droughts.

In 2009, Colorado began a comprehensive update of the 2002 Colorado Drought Mitigation and Response Plan. Because of its experience working with the state, and with drought officials on planning-related projects across the country, the NDMC is perfectly suited to provide Colorado with technical assistance during this update.

The NDMC has already provided some guidance to the state as it has begun this process. In order to continue to assist the state in its drought plan update, the following tasks are proposed and are accompanied by an associated budget request to the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB). The NDMC proposes to offer technical assistance to state officials and those working on the update covering three essential aspects of which the NDMC has particular strength: 1) monitoring, triggers, and mitigation expertise; 2) risk assessment experience; and 3) overall plan development strategy.

Specifically, multiple NDMC staff will be involved in the following tasks:

Task 1: Monitoring, Triggers, and Mitigation

Working with state officials, the Colorado State Climatologist, and the drought and climate communities within the state, NDMC staff will provide input and feedback into the effort to identify and evaluate statewide triggers and hazards. In addition, the NDMC will provide input on drought impact information based on experiences working to develop a national Drought Impact Reporter and working with individual states to develop state- and local-level drought impact reporting systems. NDMC staff are also familiar with the process for the identification of appropriate mitigation and response strategies, and will provide direct assistance as this process is undertaken in Colorado. To accomplish this task, the NDMC will communicate with the individuals and groups working on these tasks in Colorado. There will also be a process of reviewing materials and providing feedback to individuals as these activities are being accomplished.

Task 2: Risk Assessment

As part of the efforts to assess vulnerability across Colorado, NDMC staff will provide assistance on the risk assessment component of the state's drought plan update. This assessment requires the examination of potential drought and climate change impacts at the

local, regional, and state levels. To accomplish this task, the NDMC will help guide and review the process that officials are taking to make these assessments at these levels, providing important feedback as the assessment takes place. The NDMC will also help advise the persons' responsible for the development of a database that will collect and track this information for the state so that this database can coordinate mitigation actions at various levels and geographic regions across the state to reduce drought risk.

Task 3: Overall Plan Development

Drought plans should be "living" documents, continually adjusting as changes take place within a region to remain current and effective. The NDMC has a long history of advising states in the development of drought plans. NDMC staff will use this expertise to advise Colorado officials in the drought plan update so that the three components of a successful plan are incorporated: monitoring, risk assessment, and appropriate mitigation and response strategies. To accomplish this task, the NDMC will interact directly with officials within the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCBC) and others on the drought plan update. This communication will include providing suggestions and feedback during the process, including the development of the state's Drought Planning Toolbox--an innovative concept designed to transition drought planning into a process that will continue even after the plan update is completed. The NDMC will also assist in the integration of local plans with the statewide plan. Reviews and interactions will regularly take place between the NDMC and individuals working on the update.

BUDGET

Task 1: Monitoring, Triggers, and Mitigation

To accomplish this technical assistance task, a budget that includes 60 hours of NDMC staff time over the next 9-month period at a rate of \$50/hour is requested.

60 hours @ \$50/hour = \$3,000

Task 2: Risk Assessment

To accomplish this technical assistance task, a budget that includes 60 hours of NDMC staff time over the next 9-month period at a rate of \$50/hour is requested.

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Task 3: Overall Plan Development

To accomplish this technical assistance task, a budget that includes 60 hours of NDMC staff time over the next 9-month period at a rate of \$50/hour is requested.

60 hours @ \$50/hour = \$3,000

Travel

Travel for three NDMC staff to a planning meeting (\$1000/person) is requested.

Travel = \$3000

Total Request

Task 1 = \$3,000

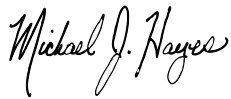
Task 2 = \$3,000

Task 3 = \$3,000

Travel = \$3,000

Total Request = \$12,000

If you have any additional questions for me, please feel free to contact me at (402) 472-4271 or “mhayes2@unl.edu”.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Hayes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'M' and 'H'.

Michael J. Hayes, Ph.D.

Director, National Drought Mitigation Center

Associate Professor, School of Natural Resources