

Rio Grande Inter-Basin Roundtable  
c/o San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District  
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Mr. Michael King, Executive Director  
Colorado Department of Natural Resources

Mr. Eric Hecox, Manager, Office of Interbasin Compact Negotiations  
Colorado Department of Natural Resources

Mr. Todd Doherty, Intrastate Water Management & Development  
Colorado Water Conservation Board

**Reference: Platoro Reservoir- Crest of Dam Repair**

Gentlemen:

The Rio Grande Inter-Basin Roundtable (R.G.R.T) has determined that the single, most critical water issue confronting the Rio Grande Basin (Basin) is the current unsustainable management of surface and ground water. The R.G.R.T. has made the decision that water activities that address this issue be favorably considered for funding from the Water Supply Reserve Account, SB 2005 -179 (WSRA Funds), providing the proposed water activities meet the SWSI findings for the Basin and the CWCB & IBCC Criteria and Guidelines for funding.

The Conejos Water Conservancy District (CWCD) is a public, quasi-governmental entity, eligible under SB 06-179 to apply for funds for this structural water Project at Platoro Reservoir (Platoro) on the Conejos River in southern Colorado. The District's boundaries include approximately 100,000 acres, of which 86,000 acres are capable of being irrigated. An additional 8,000 acres that are not within the boundaries of the District are also irrigated by the Conejos River and its tributaries.

The CWCD was an outgrowth of the *San Luis Valley Project Colorado* designated by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) in 1928 and formed in September 1940 under the *Water Conservancy Act of 1938* codified at 37-45-101. The CWCD formed an Enterprise when Platoro Reservoir, a USBR facility, became available for the CWCD's operation and control, after Colorado's Rio Grande Compact debt was satisfied in 1985.

The CWCD Enterprise has sole operation and maintenance responsibility of Platoro except during flood stages when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers assumes control for flood control purposes.

Platoro serves multiple needs and users. It regulates the water supply for 88,000 acres of land irrigated by the District. The Reservoir is used for flood control and for re-regulating the flows of the Conejos River for irrigation in the San Luis Valley Project of the USBR. These flows are crucial to the Rio Grande Compact with Texas and New Mexico. The Reservoir is used by the Colorado Division of Water Resources that has a Conservation Pool, and is a valuable resource to a large number of hunters, fishermen and recreational enthusiasts. Releases made in anticipation of flood conditions are coordinated between the District and the Colorado Division of Water Resources to avoid interference with irrigation operations and to meet Rio Grande Compact delivery obligations.

The 2008 Comprehensive Facility Review, by the USBR's Technical Response Team, studied static, seismic, and hydrologic potential dam failure modes. The hydrologic analysis found that the core of the dam is 4 feet below the dam crest, indicating the potential for ".....[e]rosion through the upper portion of the embankment during an extreme flood that causes the reservoir to rise above the top of the core....."

In order to prevent further deterioration and to protect the structural integrity of the semi-permeable area at the top of the dam, the District proposes to restore the dam crest by placing additional rock along its full length (the Project). The Platoro site is roughly 35 miles from the nearest stone quarry, 25.5 miles of which is along U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Service Road # 250. Also included in the Project are the USFS requirements that the District grade the access road before, during, and on completion of the work.

The total Project cost is \$185,000.00, of which the RGRT requests WSRA funds of \$150,000.00, made up of \$15,000.00 from the Rio Grande Basin Account and \$135,000.00 from the Statewide Account.

By repairing and restoring the designed grade of the crest of the dam, this Project maintains Platoro's storage and release capabilities to meet the multiple needs it serves, as outlined above.

At the regular R.G.R.T meeting on March 8, 2011, RGRT Members voted unanimously to request funding from SB 2005 - 179 – Rio Grande Basin Funds for:

PROJECT AND AMOUNT REQUESTED	SOURCE SB 179
<u>PLATORO RESERVOIR- CREST OF DAM REPAIR</u>	BASIN \$15,000.00
<u>PLATORO RESERVOIR- CREST OF DAM REPAIR</u>	STATEWIDE \$135,000.00

Matching funds for the Project of \$35,000.00 include \$10,000.00 from the District and \$25,000.00 in engineering services from the USBR.

Deliverables of the Project include meeting dam safety requirements, reducing the risk of flood, and maintaining Platoro's excellent record of never having had any operational restrictions.

This Project is anticipated to be the last of a number of projects that have rehabilitated Platoro since 2008:

- Phase I, funded by the USBR, installed a bypass piping system to divert water while repairs were completed, thus maintaining a federally mandated minimum flow of 7cfs and creating a system for similar future bypass needs.
- Phase II, paid for by the CWCD re-coated and painted 440 feet of penstock just above the butterfly valves in each discharge tube.
- Phase III, which was funded by WSRA of \$50,000.00 from the Basin Account and \$200,000.00 from the Statewide Account, replaced the worn out butterfly valves in the discharge tubes and the operators on the dam.

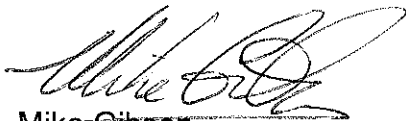
The rehabilitation of Platoro has been one of the Basin's IPP's, ensuring that the reservoir can operate safely and at capacity to meet the multiple uses of:

- Regulating the water supply for 86,000 acres of irrigated land.
- Regulating flows to meet flood control.
- Regulating flows to meet the State's obligations of the Rio Grande Compact.
- Providing a Conservation Pool for the Colorado Division of Water and providing a valuable resource to a large number of hunters, fishermen and recreational enthusiasts.

On behalf of the R.G.R.T. members, we appreciate the Board's consideration of this request and urge your support to the fullest extent possible. Enclosed are the application and supporting materials for the Project. If you require additional information, please notify me accordingly.

The R.G.R.T. appreciates the support of the Department of Natural Resources, the Colorado Water Conservation Board and the Interbasin Compact Commission in assisting in meeting the needs of all users of Colorado's water and in fostering intrabasin and interbasin communications and discussions. We believe that the above project will assist in this effort.

Sincerely,



Mike Gibson

Chair, Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable

Enclosures (2)

cc: Conejos Water Conservancy District