

**Water Supply Reserve Account – Grant and Loan Program
Water Activity Summary Sheet
Agenda Item 17.b**

Applicant: Eagle River Watershed Council

Water Activity Name: Colorado River Inventory and Assessment

Water Activity Purpose: Nonconsumptive

County: Eagle

Drainage Basin: Colorado

Water Source: Colorado River

Amount Requested: \$30,000 (Colorado Basin Account)

Matching Funds: \$56,501 (Eagle County General Fund, Eagle County Open Space Fund, CSU)

Staff Recommendation
Staff recommends approval of up to \$30,000 from the Colorado Basin Account to help complete the Colorado River Inventory Assessment.

Water Activity Summary:

The Eagle River Watershed Council (ERWC) seeks to create an Inventory and Assessment of the Colorado River in Eagle County. While updating Eagle County's 1996 Eagle River Watershed Plan, it became apparent that there was very little reference to the Colorado River in Eagle County, constituting almost 60 miles. In addition, there is virtually no monitoring on this stretch of the Colorado River in Eagle County, with the only USGS gage located in Dotsero close to the county line. As a result, there is minimal baseline data on this major reach of the river that is heavily affected by trans-basin diversions, climate change, extensive recreational use, invasive species, and many other issues.

Therefore, the proposed assessment seeks to understand and protect the Colorado River by creating a well-defined and prioritized list of restoration and conservation projects. The Assessment will be utilized to educate local communities and the state, as well as to ultimately help obtain funding for prioritized projects. A more complete understanding of the ecological setting of the Colorado River corridor will aid future land use decision making, conservation funding, and other agriculture, recreation or wildlife-based projects that benefit Eagle County and its tourism-based economy.

The proposed assessment will:

- Inventory channel, riparian , and upland characteristics within Eagle County that influence the ecological integrity, recreational amenities, and aesthetic values of the Colorado River and its major tributaries in the corridor.
- Analyze existing monitoring data and information to assess the status of river corridor.
- Conduct synoptic field surveys of riparian condition, chemical, physical, and biological water quality, and geomorphic attributes to supplement existing information.
- Identify and describe candidate rehabilitation projects (structural and non-structural) and link to current issues and likely outcomes.
- Assess current and potential recreation impact upon the river.
- Identify, describe and prioritize candidate sites best suited for recreation access.
- Prioritize rehabilitation strategies in a decision matrix based on likelihood of success, potential benefits, rough estimates of costs, and stakeholder input.

- Produce a report describing the results of the river corridor inventory and prioritized recommendations for rehabilitation projects following the updated approach and template of the 2005 Eagle River Inventory and Assessment.

Threshold and Evaluation Criteria

The application meets all four Threshold Criteria.

Funding Overview

Matching funds are provided from the Eagle County General Fund, the Eagle County Open Space Fund, and CSU totaling \$56,501 and resulting in a total match over 188%.

Discussion:

The proposed project addresses multiple issues and needs arising from the lack of a comprehensive ecological inventory for the Eagle County reach of the Colorado River. This has significant implications for both existing and future non-consumptive and consumptive needs. The Eagle County Conservation District has identified this area as a stream bank management zone, while the Colorado River Outfitters Association has identified significant future capacity for increased commercial boating on the reach from State Bridge to Glenwood Springs. In addition, Eagle County has acquired several open space parcels with the intent to increase recreational river access. The project also seeks to identify and evaluate threatened or endangered fish and/or riparian wildlife with the objective of the conservation and/or restoration of their habitats.

Pairing results of this baseline inventory with both upstream and downstream information and management plans for the river (including Grand County and the Middle Colorado River Partnership) has the potential to better manage and address future nonconsumptive and consumptive interests on public and private land, and to preserve and enhance the Colorado River through the work of multiple jurisdictions, agencies and organizations. The proposed project seeks to attract additional funding to implement identified projects that will inform, conserve or restore the health of the Colorado River.

Issues/Additional Needs:

No issues or additional needs remain.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of up to \$30,000 from the Colorado Basin Account to help complete the Colorado River Inventory Assessment.

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.