

Rio Grande Inter-Basin Roundtable  
c/o San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District  
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January 7, 2013

Mr. Michael King, Executive Director  
Colorado Department of Natural Resources

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

**Reference: Rio Grande Watershed Conservation & Education Initiative – Value of Water: Rio Grande Basin “Narrowing the Gap” for Colorado’s Water Future - Correction**

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 Rio Grande Watershed Conservation & Education Initiative (RGWCEI) is the Applicant for \$23,500.00 of Rio Grande Basin Funds to implement *Value of Water: Rio Grande Basin “Narrowing the Gap” for Colorado’s Water Future*, an informational and educational program directed at the communities of the Rio Grande Basin.

The overall cost of the *Value of Water in the Rio Grande Basin* is estimated to be \$75,350.00 with the difference between this figure and the WSRA request being made up of cash and In-Kind contributions totaling \$51,850.00, which accounts for involvement and supervision by the RGWCEI’s Conservation Education Specialist, and In-Kind contributions by volunteers and other organizations associated with the project.

At the regular December 9, 2012 meeting of the R.G.R.T. there was unanimous support that this WSRA funding request of \$23,500.00 go forward to the CWCB.

The criticality of informing the public of the issues confronting the state regarding the projected water demands and limited supplies has become more relevant as the process of considering these issues by the CWCB, IBBC and Roundtables has continued. This is manifested in Governor Hickenlopper declaring 2012 the “Year of Water” and the subsequent “2012 Water” initiative, and the CWCB launching the “*Value of Water*” campaign in 2013. The R.G.R.T. has been recognized as being a leader in 2012 with the

development and implementation of its "Water 2012" initiative. The Roundtable looks forward to complimenting the CWCB's *"Value of Water"* campaign with the continuation of the success of the "Water 2012" program and additional elements to inform the communities of the Basin on the critical water issues not only confronting the Basin but the State.

This request for funding is to hire a Coordinator to manage the *"Value of Water"* activities within the Rio Grande Basin. This position will design, implement, and administer outreach and education activities and serve as a liaison to the IBCC and PEPO work groups, and the Coordinators in other Basins. *"Value of Water in the Rio Grande Basin"* will showcase the collaborative work of water users of all types across the Rio Grande Basin. The Statewide *"Value of Water"* initiative is set to recognize the value of Colorado's water and communicate this value by making it readily identifiable to all community members. The Rio Grande Basin is a critical piece in this information web. Because the stakeholders in the Rio Grande live in a rural, headwaters community that is facing several critical water issues they, like other rural basins, play an integral role in getting the water message out. The purpose is to further the involvement and learning for all Colorado's citizens.

Activities will be branded for public appeal using a *"Narrow the Gap"* logo and include the following efforts:

- 24 weekly water stories showcasing the Rio Grande Basin's water past, present and future will be published in local papers.
- A one-time pull-out in the 6 county newspapers, which will be all about water with shared perspectives from other basins.
- 12 radio interviews that will build on the Water 2012 shows and continue to provide listeners with a wide variety of water experts and topics.
- A "Rio Grande Water Leaders" course that will give the 20 participants an opportunity to engage in concentrated water education offered by state and basin experts.
- Tours that will include Rio Grande Basin Roundtable and Statewide Water Supply Reserve Account funded projects, along with educational tours dedicated to Water 101 topics: such as Irrigation & Agriculture, Recreation, Wetlands, Wells, etc.
- A children's "Waterfest at Cole Park", Alamosa, Colorado, with hands-on activities that highlight water.
- Events where a traveling display will be displayed throughout the basin to show highlights of the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable activities and other Basin activities from across the state. This will provide a mobile story board in libraries and town halls on display throughout the year.

The result of Value of Water in the Rio Grande Basin will be a collaborative sharing of opinions, solutions and views all in an attempt to inform, educate, enlighten, and encourage participation in our water future.

Focus on Water: The Rio Grande Basin Coordinator will be the link between the statewide *Value of Water* campaign and the Rio Grande Basin. The Coordinator's activities will focus on issues that are parallel to the Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable's Basin-wide vision of keeping a sustainable balance between limited water supplies and tomorrow's growing water demands. As stated in the vision statement of the Rio Grande Interbasin Basin Roundtable

Response to IBCC, December 9, 2008, "to have sustainable water resource while recognizing Colorado Water Law."

Raising Public Understanding: Future water conservation requires educating today's youth, raising the level of public awareness, increasing understanding of issues relating to the management of the Basin's natural water supply, and openly discussing and analyzing the issues faced by our communities as they struggle to satisfy changing demands within the Rio Grande Basin and Statewide. Public outreach and education is critical as we prepare tomorrow's leaders to support economic, environmental, and community values, which the people of the San Luis Valley attach to conserving land, water, forests and rangelands, and wetlands.

Need for Funding: With the exception of its Conservation Education Specialist (Judy Lopez), all positions in RGWCEI are non-paid, volunteer positions. At the time of its incorporation, RGWCEI took over all funds of the Association that had been designated for conservation education activities, which consisted of more than 25% of that organization's total assets, or \$19,586.00. The community-based conservation organizations represented by the five San Luis Valley Conservation Districts have contributed \$2,000.00 per year for approximately the past twenty-one years, with these funds earmarked for conservation education purposes. The rest of the Education Specialist funding comes from water entities throughout the San Luis Valley, agriculture organizations, and Counties, who value resource awareness. This commitment will continue into the foreseeable future. However, RGWCEI's budget is not sufficient to retain a part-time *Value of Water in the Rio Grande Basin* Coordinator.

The R.G.R.T urges the CWCB to approve this request for funding of \$23,500.00 from the WRSA Rio Grande Basin Account.

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

Attachment (1)

cc: Rio Grande Watershed Conservation & Education Initiative