

**Water Supply Reserve Account – Grant and Loan Program
Water Activity Summary Sheet
Agenda Item 14.h**

Applicant: Ducks Unlimited

Water Activity Name: Prewitt Reservoir Wetland Partnership

Water Activity Purpose: Non-consumptive project

County: All

River Basin: South Platte

Water Source: South Platte

Amount Requested: \$45,414 (Statewide Account); \$45,414 (South Platte Basin Account)

Matching Funds: \$292,928

Staff Recommendation
Staff recommends approval of up to \$45,414 from the South Platte Basin Account and \$45,414 from the Statewide Account to fund the Prewitt Reservoir Wetland Partnership project.

Water Activity Summary:

The goal of the Prewitt Reservoir Wetland Partnership is the enhancement of over 450 acres of wetland habitat immediately associated with Prewitt Reservoir. The marshes and pools provided along the margins of the reservoir provide some of the highest-quality foraging and roosting sites for populations of migratory birds in the state. These wetlands also provide recreational opportunities for many Coloradoans, ranging from bird-watching to fishing to waterfowl hunting. The proposed activities will address habitat and recreational opportunities through the development of passive and active water management on both public and private properties surrounding the reservoir. Many of the area's wetlands are flooded through the normal operation of the reservoir.

With the installation of water-control structures and suitable excavations, the quality of these areas (or, at least, their persistence) can be increased even under normal water management provided by reservoir operators. Other wetlands in the scope of work can be developed such that active water management improves habitat quality and recreational opportunities. Provision of water for wetland wildlife habitat and waterfowl hunting recreation are two important nonconsumptive needs identified by the South Platte Basin Roundtable. These important goals will be accomplished without any additional diversions on the South Platte River.

This project provides for the attainment of these nonconsumptive water supply goals by achieving the following objectives:

- 1.) The enhancement of existing shallow-water basins associated with Prewitt whose disrupted hydrology has resulted in a shift in plant communities and degradation in habitat quality for wildlife;
- 2.) The identification of areas marginal to the reservoir that may be enhanced through the careful excavation of material impeding the natural back-flooding of shallow basins providing the best habitats to birds, other wetland wildlife, as well as fish;

3.) The design and installation of small levees placed (sometimes temporarily) on the margins of the reservoir that would serve both to protect existing infrastructure as well as provide additional flooded shallows.

Threshold and Evaluation Criteria

The application meets all four Threshold Criteria.

The application articulates how the project meets the Evaluation Criteria as summarized below:

Tier 1: Promoting Collaboration/Cooperation & Meeting Water Management Goals & Identified Needs:

This project demonstrates a high degree of collaboration including the partnership between Ducks Unlimited with two landowners, one of which is a traditional ranching/farming operation, the State of Colorado, the Playa Lakes Joint Venture (a multi-state bird conservation group) and the federal US Fish and Wildlife Service in consultation with the managers of Prewitt Reservoir. Public access and programs are benefits derived from this project. The South Platte Basin Roundtables nonconsumptive needs assessment recognizes wetland habitat and waterfowl-based recreation as important resources within the basin. Maintenance and/or expansion of these benefits without expanding water use in the basin is a key strategy to achieving nonconsumptive goals in light of the high demand for water supplies in the basin.

Tier 2: Facilitating Water Activity Implementation:

The WSRA funds will allow Ducks Unlimited to fully survey and develop any suitable site within the project boundaries. Absent this funding, DU would have to reduce the scope of work presented here, thus losing out on a significant amount of public benefit arising from the work. WSRA funds are critical for DU to achieve matching requirements for the other funding sources now pending. Without these funds our ability to mobilize those funds on the properties will be severely restricted, further diminishing the impact of the proposed work.

Tier 3: The Water Activity Addresses Issues of Statewide Value and Maximizes Benefits:

Aside from the acknowledged importance of reservoirs to migratory bird populations generally, the three properties targeted represent three important land uses associated with water resources in the Platte River Basin. The DPG parcel represents a privately-held tract, conserved in perpetuity, managed for high-quality waterfowl hunting. Prewitt Ranch represents agricultural land, with crop production and cattle ranching adding to the economic base of the county. This property, also protected in perpetuity, sits between I-76 and Prewitt Reservoir. Conservation of its water resources will sustain all of the mentioned needs. Finally, Prewitt Reservoir SWA represents publicly-accessible recreation ground. Both consumptive (sportsmen and women, anglers) and nonconsumptive (birders and campers) enjoy the water body and the abundant fish and wildlife it attracts. DU's proposed work will maintain and enhance these qualities for a long period of time (30+ years). DU's request represents a rate of \$200 of WSRA funds per wetland acre conserved. The Playa Lakes Joint Venture's HABS database estimates that the habitats enhanced under this proposal could support more than 250,000 Duck Use Day Equivalents.

Discussion:

Staff believes this project is an excellent example of Duck Unlimited's ability to bring partners together to collaborate on the implementation of projects. DU did a good job in the application describing how this meets the nonconsumptive needs in the South Platte Basin.

Issues/Additional Needs:

None identified.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of up to \$45,414 from the South Platte Basin Account and \$45,414 from the Statewide Account to fund the Prewitt Reservoir Wetland Partnership project.

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 and Final Deliverable: 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. 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.

Location Map:

