

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

**Applicant:** Routt County Conservation District

**Water Activity Name:** Armstrong Creek Restoration Project

**Water Activity Purpose:** Non-consumptive

**County:** Routt

**River Basin:** Yampa/White

**Water Source:** Armstrong Creek, tributary to Elkhead Creek and Elkhead Reservoir

**Amount Requested:** \$35,000 (Statewide Account); \$15,000 (Yampa/White Basin Account)

**Matching Funds:** \$277,000 (\$145,000 existing cash, \$72,000 in-kind, \$60,000 pending cash)

<b>Staff Recommendation</b>
Staff recommends approval, upon the condition of addressing concerns specified below in the Issues/Additional Needs section, of up to \$15,000 from the Yampa/White Basin Account and \$35,000 from the Statewide Account to help fund the Armstrong Creek Restoration Project.

**Water Activity Summary:**

The Armstrong Creek Restoration Project is a stream restoration project designed to improve stream and riparian function. WSRA funding will be used to implement a design for a lower stream reach and design and construct a project for an upper reach of Armstrong Creek. Restoration methods focus on redirecting stream channels away from eroding hillslopes, constructing geomorphic floodplains, and realigning exiting channels into old channel meanders. Riparian areas in the project area will be re-vegetated to insure channel stability and limit colonization by invasive species. The applicant will monitor the new channel alignments and re-vegetation areas. The restoration methods are designed to reduce sediment loading from streambanks, reduce stream temperatures, and improve cutthroat trout habitat.

*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:**

The project has a committed (financially and in-kind) and diverse stakeholder group (see discussion below). Implementation of the project will benefit non-consumptive and consumptive needs. Cutthroat trout habitat will be improved, as well as the habitat for animals lower on the food chain. Recreation fishing opportunities will be improved. Water quality is likely to be improved through the reduction of sediment and temperature. Sediment loading in Elkhead Reservoir will also be reduced.

**Tier 2: Facilitating Water Activity Implementation:**

The applicant has raised \$217,000 in cash and in-kind investments for this project. The WSRA funds will be used to complete designs and implement construction. The WSRA funds will also be used as non-federal match critical to leverage \$60,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and National Fish Habitat Action Plan grant programs.

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

The project will benefit recreational fishing by improving habitat for cutthroat trout and the species trout depend on for food. Colorado River cutthroat trout are a Colorado State Species of Concern. Other Species of Concern that will benefit include the mountain sucker, northern leopard frog, and the boreal toad, the latter being state endangered.

**Discussion:**

The project supports varied needs which include channel/floodplain reconnection, habitat improvement, and sediment load reduction. Stabilizing the channel will reduce the amount of sediment depositing in Elkhead Reservoir. The project stakeholders are also varied. The CWCB supports restoration projects committed to collaborative approaches that involve diverse interests in the watershed. The Armstrong Creek Restoration Project stakeholders include the City of Craig, CPW, Colorado River Water Conservation District, Routt County Conservation District, Tri-State Electric, Trout Unlimited, and the USFS.

**Issues/Additional Needs:**

- The applicant should provide staff with a detailed monitoring plan that describes geomorphic and vegetation monitoring methodologies.
- The monitoring plan should conform to the CWCB Measurable Results Program's Standard Operating Procedures for Topographic Survey of Stream Channels.
- All proposed river channel work should conform to the CWCB Rules and Regulations for Regulatory Floodplains in Colorado
- The applicant should provide more detail for fencing and long term grazing management strategies.

**Staff Recommendation:**

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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:

### Vicinity Map

