

South Platte River Basin Roundtable

Water Supply Reserve Account Grant Guideline – Draft

Background

The South Platte Basin Roundtable (SPBRT) has actively developed x projects by leveraging funds from the Water Supply Reserve Account (WSRA). To date, XXXXX funds from the basin account have been expended on projects that also have received xxxx funds from the statewide account.

This WSRA Grant Guideline Document provides prospective applicants requiring SPBRT approval for distribution of statewide and/or basin reserve accounts with information to help maximize their success of obtaining funding approval from the SPBRT.

SPBRT Vision

The SPBRT wishes to provide the best direction to prospective applicants to help them maximize the likelihood of receiving funding, and to make transparent to applicants the SPBRT vision of what may constitute a project best suited to meeting the needs of the basin.

Changes in statewide funding requirements for match from basin accounts for statewide requests, and a new focus of the roundtable to develop and implement a basin implementation plan require that the roundtable be strategic with WSRA fund approval. These guidelines are intended to create more structure around the WSRA funding request approval process in such a way that will promote applications that are most consistent with the consumptive and non-consumptive needs of the South Platte Basin.

As a majority of Colorado's M&I gap is expected to occur in the South Platte Basin, the SPBRT believes that efforts to meet M&I demands should continue to be a high priority for the basin. The SPBRT also believes that efforts to close the projected M&I gap should be done in a way that ensures to the greatest extent possible the long-term sustainability of the Basin's agriculture and natural environment, both for their own sake and for the beneficial economies, open space, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation activities that agriculture and a healthy environment support.

Diverse interests along the Front Range and Northeastern Colorado, including the largest urban centers in Colorado, have the potential to divide water into several separate and opposing uses whereby agriculture and the environment lose. The SPBRT wishes to encourage WSRA Grant-funded projects of statewide and local basin significance that address existing and future M&I demands while also meeting goals related to the long-term sustainability of agricultural economies and the natural environment. Such projects could include:

- trans-mountain diversions that diminish the need for more traditional “buy and dry” water acquisition techniques within the Basin by South Platte Basin municipal water supply utilities or related organizations,

- multi-benefit projects that address several benefits using existing water rights; alternative transfer methods; infrastructure retrofit, replacement, or upgrade projects that serve to meet consumptive and/or non-consumptive needs; conservation easements that protect water for agriculture and/or wildlife; or studies and planning efforts to address these issues.

It is important for WSRA Grant applicants to understand that SPBRT members are focused on delivering on-the-ground solutions to the M&I gap, but doing so in a manner that also contributes to lessening the agricultural gap and meeting non-consumptive demands. Several multiple benefit projects have been approved and developed by the roundtable, and applicants should strive to address these needs in every project. Of course, the SPBRT recognizes that not all individual projects can accomplish these ambitious goals. Therefore, projects that only meet one or two of the three demands will be considered and ranked according to their contribution to the basin and statewide goals for meeting future water demand.

Additionally, the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) has issued a directive for all roundtables to develop 3-5 non-consumptive use projects, one of which can be a consumptive use project with non-consumptive benefits. The roundtable is committed to demonstrating the value of non-consumptive projects by fulfilling this directive.

Application Deadlines

Funds from the WSRA are available from both individual basins and through a competitive statewide account.

WSRA funds can be applied for year around, but need to be submitted to the CWCB at least 60 days ahead of a scheduled board meeting. Board meetings are held bi-monthly.

Statewide funds are reviewed and considered for approval by the CWCB twice annually in March and September. Therefore, the SPBRT will consider applications **for statewide funds in January and July annually.**

Applicants seeking basin funds will be considered at any SPBRT meeting that is at least 60 days before the CWCB board meeting. **Therefore, applicants will have to plan and prepare to present to the SPBRT at the March, May, September, or November meetings.** The SPBRT holds meetings periodically throughout the year and not particularly on a schedule that corresponds with the CWCB 60-day limit. So, applicants must plan appropriately to present to the roundtable in manner that meets the 60-day limit, but could be as much as 120 days from the targeted CWCB board meeting.

Application Process

The SPBRT has developed the following process, and accompanying flow chart (see below) in order to assist applicants with developing successful projects and meet deadlines. It is the SPBRTs intention to alleviate some of the anxiety felt by applicants who present projects that can't be supported by the roundtable and to keep our membership informed of developing projects so their comments may be focused in a constructive manner.

- Sponsorship - If the applicant is not a direct member or have an affiliation with the roundtable, then the applicant must discuss the project with SPBRT members who most closely represent the project either by location or outcomes. For example, a WSRA project seeking to benefit M&I needs would need to garner sponsorship from a member of the SPBRT that holds an M&I seat, or represents the geographic area in which the project will be constructed. Non-consumptive use projects should consult with the environmental or recreational member(s) for sponsorship who could then include a municipal representative, either of which could sponsor the project.

Sponsorship should be sought very early in the process (at least one month prior to the targeted roundtable approval meeting). If a SPBRT member agrees to sponsor the applicant then the applicant can make a proposal to the SPBRT Needs Committee.

- Needs Committee - The Needs Committee will vet sponsored projects and determine their applicability to SPBRT goals and priorities. The committee will be comprised of seven individuals, including a municipal, county, industrial, agricultural, environmental, and recreational representative, and the roundtable chair or appointee.

The applicant will provide a short (no more than two (2) pages) summary of the project that includes elements outlined elsewhere. The applicant is encouraged to attend the Needs Committee meeting with the sponsor to explain the project and answer questions in more detail. The summary is due to the Needs Committee seven (7) days prior to the Needs Committee meeting. A visual presentation is optional.

The Needs Committee can suggest changes to the application, if needed. If the Needs Committee approves the proposal it will then be forwarded to the SPBRT Executive Committee with a recommendation to add the proposal to the agenda of the next roundtable meeting. If the Needs Committee votes to reject the proposal, it will provide written notice to the applicant and SPBRT member sponsor explaining the decision. The sponsor and applicant can then decide whether or not to amend and resubmit.

- Roundtable Meeting – The applicant will prepare and submit a near final draft of the grant application to the CWCB at least 14 days prior to the scheduled SPBRT meeting. The CWCB will distribute applications to the SPBRT members for review with a copy of the Needs Committee decision. The applicant will attend the roundtable meeting and provide a short visual presentation of the project that is no more than 15 minutes in length. The SPBRT will discuss the project before voting to either approve or disapprove the grant funding application. It is hoped that vetting projects through the Needs Committee will alleviate long discussions of applications. The SPBRT will then vote.

If the SPBRT votes “yes” to move the project to the CWCB for funding approval, the applicant will make final preparation of the application with no changes except those required by the SPBRT and secure the required Chairman’s Letter. Both the application and letter must be submitted to CWCB 60 days prior to the board meeting.

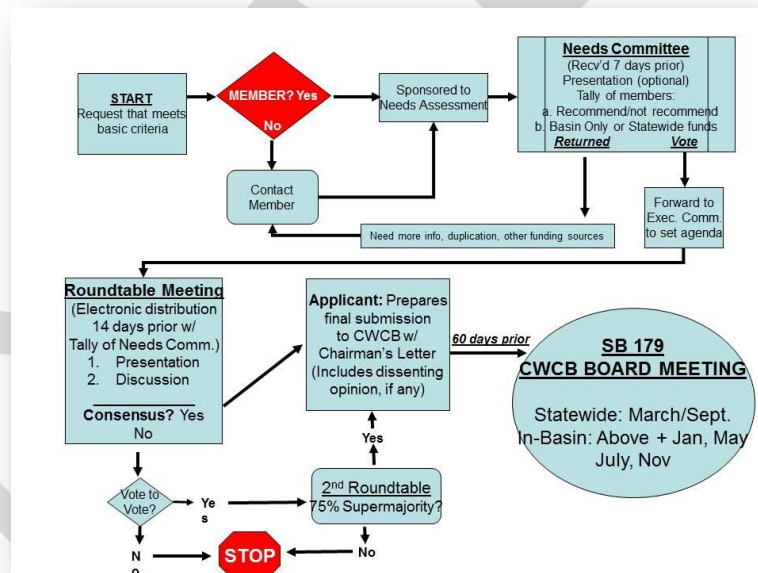
If the SPBRT votes “no,” the applicant may wish to revise the application and start the entire process over, and therefore may do this at their discretion. The applicant may also revise the application to address concerns identified by the SPBRT and then resubmit it for consideration at the next SPBRT meeting, though without going through the Needs Committee. A second vote will be conducted. If the application is rejected again, the applicant will be required to start the process again from its beginning.

Project Summary for Needs Committee

The project summary needs to include:

- A brief narrative of the project
- A narrative of the specific benefits to be addressed and relation to SPBRT vision
- A description of how the project meets the threshold criteria outlined in the application; and if seeking statewide funds, how the project is of statewide significance
- A budget summary that identifies contributing partners and match funds
- One or two photos of the project and/or a project map

Application Process Flow Chart



Reports to the Roundtable Following Grant Award and Contracting

The CWCB will require a written report regarding contract progress and project status. The applicant will submit reports to the CWCB and will assure the CWCB provides the report to the roundtables. The applicant will coordinate with the SPBRT Chair to provide a verbal and visual update any time after six months, but no later than once annually from the date of the notice to proceed.