

Rio Grande Inter-Basin Roundtable
c/o San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District
623 Fourth Street
Alamosa, CO 81101
Telephone: (719) 589 – 2230
Email: slvwcdco1@qwestoffice.net

August 28, 2013

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

Ms. Rebecca Mitchell, Section Chief
Water Supply Planning Section
Colorado Water Conservation Board

Reference: Rio Grande Basin Plan

Dear Mr. King and Ms. Mitchell:

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 attached application for WSRA funding of \$311,000, is to cover the anticipated costs of the R.G.R.T. developing its 2014 Rio Grande Basin Plan (Plan), in accordance with Governor Hickenlooper's Executive Order D 2013-005 requesting that a Statewide Water Plan be developed by the CWCB in 2014. The R.G.R.T voted unanimously at their regular Meeting on August 13, 2013 that this WSRA request go forward to the CWCB Board for approval at their September 2013 Board Meeting. The R.G.R.T. is requesting \$100,000 from Statewide Funds and \$211,000 from Basin Funds. Please do not hesitate to contact me if this ratio of funding needs to be discussed or if other arrangements have been made by the CWCB to fund these necessary Basin Plans.

The applicant and fiscal agent of this funding request is the Colorado Rio Grande Restoration Foundation, which has previously received WSRA funding and meets the criteria for a recipient of WSRA Funds.

The Plan will be developed in accordance with the published CWCB Guidelines. After considerable debate the R.G.R.T. deemed it necessary to hire an outside, third party consultant to assist with the Plan and to eventually write, edit and prepare the Plan's necessary documentation. The consultant selected for this work is DiNatale Water Consultants, whose principal is Kelley DiNatale, formally with CDM. Kelly is very familiar with the SWSI process, and has recently been retained by entities in the Rio Grande Basin to

perform engineering studies and analyses. DiNatale's Project Manager will be Tom Spezze, formally with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), who has been working on various projects in the Basin since leaving CPW.

The development of the Plan will be driven by the R.G.R.T. members and will focus on projects and methods recommended by the RGBRT to address the consumptive and non-consumptive needs. The Plan will assist the Rio Grande Basin to proactively meet future water needs, through completion of currently planned projects, re-prioritized projects, and development of new projects, operational agreements, flow protections, or other methods as needed. A major objective will be developing approaches to achieve aquifer sustainability throughout the Basin.

The Plan will utilize existing information developed for the Rio Grande Decision Support System (RGDSS) Groundwater modeling, the ongoing Rio Grande Cooperative, and Radar Projects and other information that is available and relevant to the process. Additionally, it is anticipated that more detailed surface water and stream-flow modeling analyses will be conducted that will build on these efforts. The approach will be compatible with CWCB's data centered approach for its DSS modeling so that the work can be incorporated into a future RGDSS surface water model.

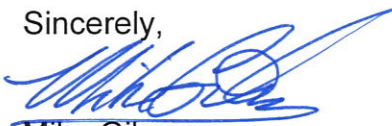
It is also critical for the Plan to develop, in conjunction with the US Forest Service and other federal and state agencies, watershed protection (short-term) and watershed restoration (short and long-term) implementation plans to address the areas of the Basin impacted by the recent West Fork Complex Fire. Watershed protection and restoration will take into account all natural resource attributes of the watershed including consumptive and non-consumptive elements (land, plants, water and wildlife).

The restoration plan will dove-tail with and augment the Forest Service BAER Team and Rio Grande Watershed Emergency Action Coordination Team (RWEACT) watershed restoration efforts that have been underway since July 2013. Tom Spezze and many members of the R.G.R.T. have been involved with the RWEACT and USFS BAER Team efforts associated with the West Fork Complex Fire. As such, the connection of the Plan to the watershed restoration efforts related to the impacts of the fire will be seamless.

The R.G.R.T. looks forward with working and coordinating with CWCB staff as the Plan is developed.

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.

Sincerely,



Mike Gibson

Chair, Rio Grande Interbasin Roundtable

Attachment (1)