



**COLORADO**

**Colorado Water  
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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**TO:** Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

**FROM:** Ted Kowalski, Chief  
Steve Miller, Water Resources Engineer  
Interstate, Federal and Water Information Section

**DATE:** November 19-20, 2014 Board Meeting

**AGENDA ITEM:** 30b - CWCB's 2015 Project Bill - Construction Fund  
Non-Reimbursable Project Investments  
Technical Assistance for USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program

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### Introduction

The USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) was authorized as a new program in the 2014 Farm Bill to be administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Per NRCS:

*The ... RCPP promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements. RCPP combines the authorities of ... former conservation programs (including) - the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program, ..., the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative .... Assistance is delivered in accordance with the rules of EQIP, CSP, ACEP and HFRP; and in certain areas the Watershed Operations and Flood Prevention Program.*

The RCPP allows enhanced delivery of traditional NRCS programs, such as the Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) by modifying some requirements and addressing problems in a more comprehensive, basinwide basis. This can be particularly useful in meeting regional water quality and water conservation goals. Selection into the RCPP involves a highly competitive process. The applicant must demonstrate the ability to meet eligible resource goals through implementation of specific best management practices. In addition, the RCPP requires the applicant to identify sources of the 50% non-USDA cost-share they are required to provide. Applications therefore involve a significant amount of pre-proposal planning and cost-estimating. The funding requested herein will be used to provide technical assistance to entities applying to the NRCS for RCPP funding and to successful applicants for further design work on specific project elements. Under NRCS rules the CWCB funds can be credited towards the 50% cost-share requirement participants must demonstrate.

### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board approve this request for the General Assembly to authorize this project and appropriate \$500,000 from the Construction Fund to the Department of Natural Resources for allocation to the CWCB to provide technical assistance to applicants and participants in the Regional Conservation Partnership Program.





## Technical Assistance for USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Colorado Water Conservation Board

November 2014 Board Meeting

The USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) was authorized is a new program created in the 2014 Farm Bill to be administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

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The funding requested herein will be used to provide technical assistance grants to entities applying to the NRCS for RCPP funding and to successful applicants for use in design of specific project elements when federal funding for those activities is limited.

P R O J E C T D E T A I L S	
<i>Project Cost:</i>	\$40,000,000
<i>NRI Funding Request:</i>	\$500,000
<i>Funding Source:</i>	Construction Fund
<i>Project Type:</i>	Technical Assistance
<i>Type of Grantee:</i>	Agricultural Water Users

L O C A T I O N	
<i>Benefits:</i>	Statewide
<i>Water Source:</i>	Statewide
<i>Drainage Basin:</i>	Statewide