

Water Supply Reserve Account – Grant and Loan Program
Water Activity Summary Sheet
September 24, 2013
Agenda Item 18(g)

Applicant: The Greenway Foundation

Water Activity Name: Grant-Frontier Park West Bank Floodplain Design and Construction Project

Water Activity Purpose: Non-consumptive / Needs Assessment

County: Denver

River Basin: Metro

Water Source: South Platte River

Amount Requested: \$400,000 (Statewide Account); \$100,000 (Metro Basin)

Matching Funds: \$7,120,000 (93%) (GOCO, Rocky Mountain Arsenal and Shattuck NRDS Funds, Urban Drainage and Flood Control District, CPW, et al)

Staff Recommendation:
Staff recommends approval of up to \$250,000 from the Statewide Account \$100,000 from the Metro Basin Account for the Grant-Frontier Park West Bank Floodplain Design and Construction Project.

Water Activity Summary:

Most of the riverine corridor in the project area includes a very narrow riparian zone, typically less than 50 feet wide along each bank. Herbaceous and woody species, listed on the Colorado noxious, invasive or exotic pest plant/weed list, are common within the riparian corridor. In addition to state and city recommendations and actions to remove these species from natural areas, this type of vegetation decreases ecosystem biodiversity and can block views of and access to the river. The goal of the project is to re-establish a riparian floodplain in the project reach to restore the interactions between the river and its riparian corridor by increasing the frequency of riparian inundation, resulting in of the restoration of hydrologic and ecologic functions. There is limited opportunity within this highly urbanized watershed to re-establish a riparian floodplain along the banks of the South Platte River. The existing land in the proposed project area is a gravel surface used as a parking area, owned by the City and County of Denver. Planned improvements are currently being designed within the river and along the eastern bank of the South Platte as part of the River Vision Program. This location is ideal for establishment of a riparian floodplain because the land is available (owned by the City) and construction cost efficiencies can be realized because a Contractor will be mobilized on-site to construct adjacent improvements.

Re-establishing a riparian floodplain will not only improve the river environment but also increase the benefits derived from recreational and educational improvements within Grant-Frontier Park and Pasquinel's Landing Park to the east. Implementing these improvements in conjunction with the proposed park improvements will provide both schedule and financial benefits. For instance, construction cost efficiencies can be realized by using the same contractor under a single contract. Combining the design, permitting and construction of the riparian floodplain, in-channel and Grant-Frontier/Pasquinel's Park improvements means the work can be accomplished within the next two years. In addition to benefits associated with a new riparian floodplain, aquatic and riparian corridor improvements in this reach of the river will increase the synergy created by the extensive in-channel habitat and recreation improvements that are currently being designed at Grant-Frontier Park, Pasquinel's Landing and

Overland Pond, resulting in a longer continuous reach of high quality native species habitat in a reach of the river that has suffered urban impacts for many generations.

Funding this project will result in final design drawings (ready for bidding) and construction of the riparian floodplain and non-native and invasive species removal. Specifically, WSRA funding will be used to develop bid documents (final design drawings and specifications), secure required permits for improvements targeting non-consumptive needs including non-native and invasive vegetation removal, providing additional river access, establishment of a riparian floodplain to promote native wildlife in this urban environment, and provide funding for construction of the proposed improvements.

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:

Metro Basin Roundtable at their June 11, 2013 meeting. A portion of the River Vision Program planning and design funding was provided by the South Platte and Metro Basin Roundtables as a previous WSRA grant applications. Although no funding is requested of the South Platte Basin Roundtable for this grant application, implementation of this project will continue to promote collaboration between the Metro and South Platte Basin Roundtables through the stakeholder outreach process. In addition, this project will progress implementation of an identified project and process in the Metro Basin Needs Assessment Report (March 2011), addressing nonconsumptive needs, specifically targeting habitat restoration and recreation improvements.

The proposed improvements will integrate recreation and habitat enhancements that will benefit the Front Range community and one of the most densely-populated areas in the State of Colorado. This water activity will best leverage existing funding commitments, use of public and private resources and will result in constructed improvements by June of 2015. Because of the schedule opportunities and economy of scale, this project is an ideal candidate for implementing non-consumptive improvements in the South Platte River through Denver.

Tier 2: Facilitating Water Activity Implementation:

WSRA funds are necessary for successful completion of the project and further leveraging of local monies. A significant investment has been expended to date to develop this South Platte River Vision, as portrayed in the RINO, RISO and RVIP plans. Project stakeholders (The Greenway Foundation, the City and County of Denver and the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District) have already secured over \$15 million in construction funding, but the current scope does not include establishment of a riparian floodplain within this area or non-native and invasive vegetation removal along the west bank of the South Platte River. Improvements within this reach will amplify the benefit of recreation and habitat improvements that are included in the River Vision Program scope by expanding the reach of South Platte River with continuous in-channel habitat diversity.

Community support for this effort is strong. The former Mayor of Denver, now Governor Hickenlooper, officially endorsed this three-plus year planning and visioning effort. In addition, Denver City Council issued a proclamation in November 2010 applauding the RINO, RISO and RVIP documents. TGF has an excellent track record of delivering improvements to the South Platte River and tributaries for over 37 years.

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

The water activity helps meet identified environmental and recreational needs, as identified in the Metro Basin Needs Assessment Report and provides a high level of benefit to Colorado in relationship to the amount of funds requested. CWCB participated in the development of the RISO plan and design of recreation and habitat improvements (at Grant-Frontier and Overland Pond). This project will maximize benefits by providing more continuous habitat diversity within the South Platte River in Denver and build on the work CWCB has funded associated with this project over the last three years.

Discussion:

Staff considers the Greenway Foundation's River Vision Implementation Plan (RVIP) a well planned and well executed multi-phase project along the South Platte corridor in Denver. The project is designed to make the best use of the available flows. It will improve channel/floodplain connections, riparian species diversity & abundance, and recreational experiences. The effort is well funded, and so far the Water Supply Reserve Account has contributed \$900,000 for planning and design work. Staff believes that the current funding recommendation will allow The Greenway Foundation to complete the necessary final design work. There will be funds remaining for construction, and there should be adequate time to acquire the additional funds needed to complete construction.

Issues/Additional Needs:

- The applicant should provide staff with a detailed monitoring plan that describes geomorphic and biologic 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

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of up to \$250,000 from the Statewide Account \$100,000 from the Metro Basin Account for the Grant-Frontier Park West Bank Floodplain Design and Construction 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.