Water Supply Reserve Account – Grant and Loan Program Water Activity Summary Sheet March 18-19, 2015 Agenda Item 17(m)

Applicant & Fiscal Agent: Open Water Foundation

Water Activity Name: Agricultural Land and Water Buffer Feasibility Analysis Water Activity Purpose: Multi-purpose (agricultural, environmental, municipal)

County: multiple throughout South Platte Basin

Drainage Basin: South Platte

Water Source: South Platte River

Amount Requested/Source of Funds: \$20,000 South Platte Basin Account

\$84,954 Statewide Account \$104,954 Total grant request

Matching Funds: Basin Account Match (\$20,000) = 19% of total grant request

Basin Account and Applicant Match (\$50,000) = 47.6% of total grant request Basin Account and Applicant Match = 37% of total project costs (\$134,954)

(refer to Funding Summary/Matching Funds section)

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of up to \$20,000 from the South Platte Basin Account, and \$84,954 from the Statewide Account to help fund the project/study titled: Agricultural Land and Water Buffer Feasibility Analysis.

Water Activity Summary:

WSRA funds will be expended to evaluate the feasibility of the development of an Agricultural Land and Water Buffer Program in the South Platte River Basin. The underlying goal is protection of land and water rights to achieve multiple goals and leverage different types of interests and resources.

This feasibility analysis will examine threshold issues related to the use of conservation easements that include interruptible supply agreements as well as the willingness for city, county, and water managers to participate in such a program. Incentives for landowner participation will be discussed, and additional recommendations will include actions to advance such a collaborative concept.

The project will bring together the key parties necessary for coupling conservation easements with interruptible water supply agreements, and explore tools for entities wishing to explore such a program. Also, the feasibility study will examine how this type of program may be integrated into a water provider's system.

Discussion:

The identified goals are threefold:

- 1) provide an important open space buffer between towns and cities
- 2) promote local agricultural production and support agricultural families
- 3) create an interruptible water supply project that would operate during defined hydrologic conditions (dry year fallowing, drought recovery)

The application identifies seven key tasks to accomplish: 1) Land and Water Protection tools; 2) Identification of Funding Mechanisms Specific to an Agricultural Land/Water Buffer; GIS Mapping for Use in Interviews; 4) Interviews and Surveys of Key Stakeholders; 5) Public Involvement and Outreach; 6) Recommendations and Final Report; and 7) Meetings and Project Management.

Issues/Additional Needs: No issues or additional needs were identified.

Threshold and Evaluation Criteria: The application meets all four Threshold Criteria.

Tier 1-3 Evaluation Criteria:

This project has undergone review and evaluation per the Supplemental Scoring Matrix. Further analysis of the project, and how the project will meet Tiered Evaluation Criteria, is provided by the applicant in the WSRA Application.

Funding Summary/Matching Funds:

The South Platte roundtable has approved a request for \$20,000 from their basin account, and recommended the approval of \$84,954 from the Statewide Account. The Open Water Foundation has committed \$30,000 in cash match.

	<u>Cash</u>
Private foundation cash match	\$30,000
WSRA South Platte Basin Account	\$20,000
WSRA Statewide Account	<u>\$84,954</u>
Total	\$134,954

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: 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.

Final Deliverable: 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.