

Rio Grande Inter-Basin Roundtable
c/o San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District
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Mr. Michael King, Executive Director
Colorado Department of Natural Resources

Mr. Craig Godbout, Program Manager, Water Supply Planning Section
Colorado Water Conservation Board

**Meeting the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable's
Public Education and Public Outreach Goals**

Gentlemen:

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. This request for WSRA Funds is to further the extensive education and outreach efforts that have taken place in the Basin for the past eight years that have addressed the current unsustainable management of surface and ground water.

Rio Grande Watershed Conservation and Education Initiative (RGWCEI) is a Colorado tax exempt corporation organized exclusively for conservation and education purposes. All of the Board members of RGWCEI, except for Heather Dutton, are appointed or elected by the five San Luis Valley Conservation Districts, as follows: Center, Costilla, Conejos, Mosca-Hooper, and Rio Grande Conservation Districts – each of which are organizations constituting the Rio Grande Watershed Association of Conservation Districts.

RGWCEI offers both education and conservation programs to youth, young adults, landowners and agricultural producers. The producer programs that have been sponsored addressed the San Luis Valley's declining aquifer issues that have occurred since 2002. These programs partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in the development and administration of the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program and the Targeted Conservation Proposal. Each of these multi-year programs focused on implementing soil and water conservation within the farm unit, and collectively brought \$4.2 million to the Basin.

Over the past 8 years RGWCEI has taken the lead in Roundtable outreach efforts and in collaboration with the Roundtable Education Committee has established a comprehensive

education and outreach program. These outreach efforts have been recognized by the Colorado Water Conservation Board and its constituents and as a result the Rio Grande Basins efforts are among the best in the state.

RGWCEI under the direction of Judy Lopez, and the Roundtable's Education Committee, have worked to expand knowledge, improve educational resources, and increase public understanding in a variety of CWCB's outreach initiatives to include the Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan and the Colorado Water Plan.

The Water Plan process has established the need for, and the importance of, ongoing education and outreach as it pertains to all water concerns. *"Article VII of the Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) by-laws address the formation of workgroups to assist it in its deliberations and functions. The Public Education, Participation, and Outreach (PEPO) workgroup is charged with creating a process to inform, involve, and educate the public on the IBCC's activities and progress of the interbasin compact negotiations, and create a mechanism by which public input and feedback can be relayed to the IBCC and compact negotiators. It is the only workgroup written into the legislation (C.R.S. 37-75-106)."*

As a result of these processes the R.G.R.T. Is charged with providing ongoing education and outreach for the Roundtable. The purpose the Project covered by this WSRA request is to continue these efforts over the next three years.

The proposed Project will implement established outreach and education efforts:

- Monthly newspaper articles written by local authorities on a variety of water subjects. (The publishing opportunity is provided to the Roundtable by both the Valley Courier and Valley Publishing at no cost.)
- Monthly Radio Programs provided by local topic authorities on a variety of water topics. (The opportunity is provided by KSLV and KRZA at no cost as a public service.)
- Necessary updating of the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable Webpage (www.riograndewaterplan.com)
- Public Meetings in addition to the regular monthly Roundtable meetings.

In addition to these established practices, the Project will also develop:

- A mechanism to create video vignettes that capture the importance and purpose of the State and Basin Water Plans as well as addressing subjects such as consumptive uses (Agricultural, Municipal and Industrial), non-consumptive uses (Environmental and Recreational), Water Management (Colorado Water Law, Compacts, Well Rules and Regulations and the Groundwater Management Subdistrict Process), and the social aspects of water. These vignettes will be available for use by a variety of constituents that could include: R.G.R.T. Members and attendees, local and regional governments, community groups, universities and schools and private organizations. The goal would be consistent messaging.
- The Project would also create a Project Tours Schedule as a public information follow-up for all WSRA funded projects.

RGWCEI is requesting \$45,300.00 over three years from WSRA Rio Grande Basin Account Funds. WSRA funds are 29% of the total Project cost of \$156,000.00. Matching funds are as follows: \$24,000.00 or 15% from the RGWCEI; \$27,000.00 or 17% from the match in the production of the vignettes; \$59,700 or 39% from In-kind services. The attached Budget identifies the various Tasks and their associated costs and composition.

At the regular R.G.R.T. meeting on April 14, 2015 the R.G.R.T. Members unanimously approved that this request for funding from the Rio Grande Basin WSRA of \$45,300.00, over a three (3) period, be forwarded to the CWCB for their approval. The R.G.R.T. urges the CWB Board to approve this request.

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)

Cc: Judy Lopez w/Attachment

BUDGET

Summary Budget for Meeting the Rio Grande Basin Roundtables Public Education and Public Outreach Goals Project						
Project Tasks	Total	WSRA	Match	Vignette Partners		Total
				RT Partners	RGWCEI	
Task 1: Current Outreach and Education	40,200	7,500	7,500	25,200	-	40,200
Task 2: Water Video Vignettes	46,800	19,800	27,000	-	-	46,800
Task 3: Public Engagement	30,000	3,000	-	27,000	-	30,000
Task 4: PEPO Outcomes	39,000	15,000	24,000	-	-	39,000
TOTAL \$	156,000	\$ 45,300	\$ 58,500	\$ 27,000	\$ 25,200	\$ -
Percent of Project Cost		29%	71%			0%
						100%