



COLORADO
**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**
Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Chris Strum, Stream Restoration Coordinator,
Watershed Protection and Flood Mitigation Section

DATE: November 18-19, 2015 Board Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: 19b. Non-Reimbursable Investment Request
Colorado Watershed Restoration Program

Introduction

The CWCB supports watershed restoration projects presented by multiple stakeholders with diverse interests. The results are plans and projects designed to satisfy a range of non-consumptive and consumptive water use objectives. Many of these efforts are completed on small budgets funded through several sources of local, state and/or federal funds. There is often a community volunteer component that contributes in-kind services through donated materials and time. The Colorado Watershed Restoration Program (CWRP) has funded 36 projects with over \$1,300,000 since its first grant cycle in January 2009. The projects have leveraged over \$5.50 for every \$1.00 contributed by CWRP.

In recent years Colorado has experienced catastrophic floods, mega-fires, and floods exacerbated by fire scars that have de-stabilized many rivers. Staff is requesting that the Colorado Watershed Restoration Program continue to be funded to aid in post-flood and fire restoration. Staff also requests that the funds be used for non disaster related watershed and stream protection and restoration efforts throughout the state.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board request the General Assembly to authorize to the Department of Natural Resources for allocation to the Colorado Water conservation Board, the sum of \$1,500,000 or so much as may be necessary in order to restore the unencumbered balance up to 1,500,000 from the Severance Tax Perpetual Base Fund for the Colorado Watershed Restoration Program.



The Program objective is to provide funding for watershed restoration studies and projects. Special consideration is given to projects that reduce flood hazards, protect infrastructure, stabilize post-fire watersheds, and increase benefits for water supply. Past projects successfully completed with aid from the Construction Fund include post-fire channel stabilization on Trail Creek in the Hayman burn area, channel stabilization and restoration on the North Fork Gunnison River in Paonia, and channel design planning on the Lake Fork of the Gunnison River. Program funding has also been used in conjunction with funding from the Water Quality Control Division to develop a Measureable Results Program (MRP). Studies and projects resulting from this program can have far reaching benefits for water supply, flood protection, forest restoration (including post-fire), enhancement of aesthetic and environmental quality, recreation, and increased economic benefit. The CWCB has not had access to a regular and reliable source of funding for this Program in past years. Instead, special allocations on an annual basis from Severance Tax and Construction Fund investments have provided support for the Program. The Program has funded 36 projects since the first grant cycle in January 2009. Total project funding exceeds \$1,300,000. The projects have leveraged \$5.5 for every \$1 contributed by the Program. Twenty-three of the thirty-two projects funded have been mapped with focus areas identified in the Non-Consumptive Needs Assessment. The Program is intended for statewide benefit. For an example of the geographic spread of the projects, the map below displays projects funded from 2009-2012.

P R O J E C T D E T A I L S	
<i>Project Cost:</i>	Up to 50% Cost Share
<i>NRI Funding Request:</i>	\$1,500,000
<i>Funding Source:</i>	Severance Tax Fund
<i>Project Type:</i>	Watershed Restoration
<i>Type of Grantee:</i>	State Government

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

