



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

1313 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203

P (303) 866-3441

F (303) 866-4474

John Hickenlooper, Governor

Mike King, DNR Executive Director

James Eklund, CWCB Director

TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Ted Kowalski and Steve Miller,
Interstate, Federal & Water Information Section

DATE: November 18 -19, 2015 Board Meeting

CONSENT AGENDA: Item 4. RCPP Funding Request Approvals

Background:

The 2015 CWCB Projects Bill authorized \$500,000 from the Construction Fund to provide technical assistance to applicants and participants in the USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). At the July 2015 Board meeting, the Board approved criteria for utilizing these funds. As a reminder, the criteria provided guidance so that the Executive Director could approve a funding request that was less than \$25,000, and required that the Staff seek approval by the Board (through a consent agenda item) if the funding request was more than \$25,000. The Staff seeks the Board's approval for a funding request received from the Colorado River Water Conservation District (CRWCD), as described below. This funding request would support implementation of their 2014 approved RCPP project.

Discussion:

In the 2014 RCPP selection process the Colorado River Water Conservation District was successful in obtaining a project focusing on water conservation in the Gunnison Basin. This successful grant provided up to \$8 million to the CRWCD to support agricultural efficiency projects that would have multiple benefits, from reduced water diversion requirements to water quality benefits. The District is now in the process of developing the detailed plans, designs, and environmental clearances to allow implementation to proceed. Some of this work is beyond the capacity of existing USDA staff, or District staff, to complete in a timely manner, and some of this work is not eligible for use of USDA funds. The request for funding is described below:

While the staff is still working with the Delta and Shavano Conservation Districts ("CD") on the final Scopes of Work, the staff has developed, in consultation with the CRWCD and the NRCS, general parameters of a \$100,000 program to provide technical support associated with implementing the RCPP grants in 2016. CWCB has developed a good working relationship with both CDs over the last 5 years and they have been effective partners in delivering CWCB supported services to agricultural producers in the Gunnison Basin.

The Delta CD is proposing to provide the following services to the RCPP Project, with estimated costs:

- Administrative management of CD activities for RCPP-\$10,000
- Soil Conservation Tech-\$7000
- IWM (irrigation water management) Specialist-\$3000
- Public outreach and education events-\$1,000
- Travel related to outreach and meetings-\$2,000
- Advertising and mailings-\$2,000
- Subtotal Delta CD = \$25,000



The Shavano CD is proposing to provide the following services to the RCPP Project, with estimated costs:

- Administrative management of CD activities for RCPP-\$4,800
 - Education and Outreach Coordinator-\$4,500
 - Public outreach and education events-\$1,000
 - Travel related to outreach and meetings-\$4,000
 - Advertising and mailings-\$3,000
 - Sponsorship of 2016 Soil Health Conference-\$2,700
 - Summer IWM interns-\$5,000
- Subtotal Shavano CD = \$25,000

In addition the two CD's will share in providing a new soil conservation technician who will split time between the two CD offices and work under the supervision of NRCS staff. This technician will function in essentially the same capacity as a Technical Service Provider (TSP), helping NRCS staff with new RCPP specific work tasks and accelerating the preparation of conservation plans for RCPP participants without impeding NRCS' existing EQIP obligations.

Subtotal Shared Conservation Tech = \$50,000

Total funding request = \$100,000.00

Staff recommendation: Staff recommends that the Board approve an expenditure of \$100,000 from the RCPP technical assistance fund to support the CRWCD's 2014 RCPP project as described above.