

**Water Supply Reserve Account – Grant and Loan Program**  
**Water Activity Summary Sheet**  
**March 16-17, 2016**  
**Agenda Item 14(q)**

**Applicant & Fiscal Agent:** Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust

**Water Activity Name:** Nash Ranch Conservation Easement Project

**Water Activity Purpose:** Nonconsumptive

**County:** Rio Grande

**Drainage Basin:** Rio Grande

**Water Source:** Rio Grande River

**Amount Requested/Source of Funds:** \$10,000 Rio Grande Basin Account  
\$90,000 Statewide Account  
\$100,000 Total Grant Request

**Matching Funds:** Basin Account Match (\$10,000) = 10% of total grant request (meets 5% min);  
Applicant Match (\$400,000) = 400% of total grant request (meets 25% min);  
Basin Account & Applicant (\$410,000) = 410% of total project costs (\$500,000)  
(refer to *Funding Summary/Matching Funds* section)

<b>Staff Recommendation:</b>
Staff recommends approval of up to \$10,000 from the Rio Grande Basin Account and \$90,000 from the Statewide Account to help fund the project titled: Nash Conservation Easement Project.

**Water Activity Summary:** WSRA funds, if approved, will be expended to provide matching funds towards the purchase of a conservation easement on the Nash Ranch, a 198-acre working ranch, which includes both banks of almost one mile of the north channel of the Rio Grande river on the “Rio Grande Island,” just east of the town of Del Norte in Rio Grande County.

This conservation opportunity will directly protect a senior surface water right in order to help sustain the historic water use patterns along the Rio Grande, while securing agricultural productivity, which is the economic base in the San Luis Valley. The protection of river corridor ranches is also important for wildlife habitat, the flood plain function of the river corridor, and beauty of the scenic landscape. The conservation easement will tie 1 cfs of Rio Grande #2 water rights to the property. This water right supports the sprinkler irrigation of about 50 acres of alfalfa and grass mix and the flood irrigation of 35 acres of pasture. Much of the remainder of the property is riparian area near the river and remains productive for livestock grazing due to sub-irrigation.

The Rio Grande Initiative provides vital benefits to both consumptive and non-consumptive water needs in the Rio Grande Basin and contributes to the overall goal of the Roundtable to achieve water sustainability. The Rio Grande Initiative is a collaborative, community-based, landscape-scale effort

to protect the land and water along the Rio Grande river corridor through voluntary, incentive-based, permanent conservation easements, with over 25,000 acres and 47 river miles protected to date.

**Discussion:** This project aligns well with several of the Goals and Measurable Outcomes as addressed in the Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan (Chapter 3: Rio Grande Basin Goals #1, #2, #5, #6, #11, #12 & #13, pages 58-59). This effort is also specified as a Project and Method to meet the Basin's needs and goals (Chapter 6.2: Projects Fact Sheets, Rio Grande Initiative: Conservation Easements, page 142; & Chapter 6.3: Projects Meeting Basin's Needs and Goals, Table 8, #22, page 151). In addition this effort advances Agricultural Viability (CWP Chapter 6.5.2, pages 6-138 thru 6-144) and the Critical Goals and Actions of Colorado's Water Plan (CWP Chapter 10.3, page 10-12), such as: F. Critical Watershed Health, Environment, and Recreation Actions.

**Issues/Additional Needs:** No issues or additional needs have been identified.

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

**Tier 1-3 Evaluation Criteria:**

This project has undergone review and evaluation and staff has determined that this request satisfies the Evaluation Criteria. 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:**

	<u>Cash</u>	<u>In-kind</u>	<u>Total</u>
Great Outdoors Colorado	\$200,000	\$0	\$200,000
Nash Ranch Landowners	\$200,000	\$0	\$200,000
Subtotal matching funds	\$400,000	\$0	\$400,000
WSRA Rio Grande Basin Account	\$10,000	n/a	\$10,000
WSRA Statewide Account	\$90,000	n/a	\$90,000
<b>Total Project Costs</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

**CWCB Project Manager:** Craig Godbout

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.