

Rio Grande Basin Roundtable  
623 Fourth Street  
Alamosa, CO 81101  
[cwcd1971@hotmail.com](mailto:cwcd1971@hotmail.com)

March 17, 2016

Mr. Craig Godbout and CWCB Board Chair  
Colorado Water Conservation Board  
1313 Sherman St., Room 721  
Denver, CO 80203

Re: WSRA Application for the Upper Rio Grande Assessment

Dear Mr. Godbout,

On behalf of the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable (Roundtable), please accept this letter of support for the Upper Rio Grande Assessment (Assessment) sponsored by the Colorado Rio Grande Restoration Foundation. The Water Supply Reserve Account Application for the Assessment was evaluated by the Roundtable and was approved by voting members at the March 8, 2016 BRT meeting. The Assessment received support from all but one of the BRT members. The member opposed funding the Assessment because they do not think it will help provide additional real water supplies for agriculture, which he feels should be the Rio Grande BRT's primary goal. That being said the Roundtable does support this project's application for WSRA funding.

The Roundtable recognizes that the Assessment will be a valuable tool that will inform future decision-making and project development in the Rio Grande Basin. The Assessment will document the ecological condition of the uplands and key riparian areas in the upper Rio Grande Watershed, identify causes of concern and prioritize projects that will address environmental, agricultural, municipal, and industrial water needs. The Assessment and prioritized projects will meet the following Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan Goals (Rio Grande BIP):

- 1.. Protect, preserve, and/or restore the sustainability of the Rio Grande Basin watersheds by focusing on watershed health and ecosystem function.
2. Protect and preserve the doctrine of prior appropriation and vested water rights, and fully utilize Colorado's compact entitlements as specified under the Rio Grande and Costilla Creek Compacts.
4. Operate, maintain, rehabilitate, and create necessary infrastructure to meet the Basin's long-term water needs including storage.
6. Support the development of projects and methods that have multiple benefits for agricultural, municipal and industrial, and environmental and recreational water needs.
7. Meet new demands for water, to the extent practicable, without impacting existing water rights and compact obligations.
9. Make progress towards meeting applicable water quality standards throughout the Basin.
10. Promote water management and administrative practices that are adaptive, flexible, and

responsive to optimize multiple benefits.

11. Protect, preserve, and enhance terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitats throughout the basin.
12. Conserve, restore, and maintain wetlands and riparian areas for the benefit of a healthy watershed.
13. Work to sustain active river flows throughout the year in cooperation with water users and administrators to restore and sustain ecological function of the rivers and floodplain habitats within the context of existing water rights and compact obligations.
14. Maintain and enhance water dependent recreational activities.

In addition to meeting many of the Rio Grande BIP goals, this project aligns the Colorado Water Plan's policy to identify and implement environmental and recreational projects and methods, and to cover priority watersheds with watershed protection plans.

Thank you for your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "N. Coombs".

Nathan Coombs  
Chair, Rio Grande Basin Roundtable