

Yampa White Green Basins Roundtable

June 3, 2016

Re: City of Steamboat Springs Yampa River Stream Management Plan

Mr. Godbout,

At the May 11th, 2016 meeting of the Yampa White Green Basin Roundtable, the membership voted unanimously to support the aforementioned project.

The City of Steamboat Springs proposes to develop a Stream Management Plan that supports a resilient and healthy river and appropriate river recreation along a highly used reach of the Yampa River from the Chuck Lewis State Wildlife Area to the Steamboat Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Yampa River is the last remaining wild free flowing river in the Colorado River Basin and one of the last free flowing rivers in the Western United States. It is home to a variety of aquatic life including native and non-native fish and other organisms, as well as riparian vegetation. The river is also heavily used by recreationalists for activities including boating, tubing, swimming, and fishing and is used as a source of drinking water for the communities of the Yampa Valley.

The City prepared and adopted a Yampa River Management Plan in 2003, but significant accomplishments and policy changes in the past 13-years warrant an update to the plan. Warming temperatures have emerged as a water quality concern and this reach of the river was recently listed on the State's 303d Impaired Waterbody List. Temperature and the concern that nutrients, channel geometry, and over-use by recreation are putting our unique waterbody at risk are evidence that our community must develop a Stream Management Plan that advises how to prevent our river from crossing a threshold that cannot be reversed.

Acting upon the guidance of the 2003 Yampa River Management Plan, the State of the Watershed Report, and the Yampa/White/Green's Basin Implementation Plan, and by assessing water quality, aquatic life, and channel morphology, the project will refine flow targets that are data-based and that fit within the context water rights administration. The updated plan will concentrate on protecting the health and longevity of the Yampa River, while remaining an important recreation amenity for people.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Jackie Brown

Jackie Brown, Vice- Chair
(970) 819-2484
jbrown@tristategt.org

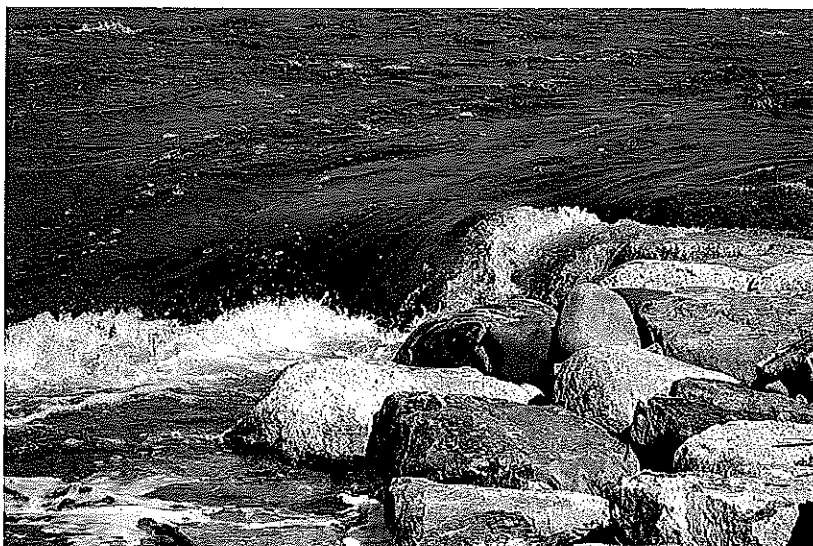


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39°

Fair
Hi 59° Lo 29°



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The Routt County Board of Commissioners agreed April 19 to supply a \$5,000 matching grant toward a new Yampa River plan meant to make the river more drought resistant.

Commissioners are on board with matching grant for new Yampa River Study

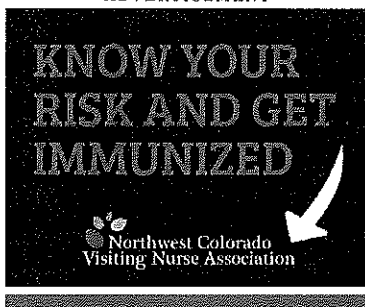
By Tom Ross

Updated April 20, 2016 at 2:25 p.m.

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Steamboat Springs — The last time the community funded a Yampa River management plan, in 2004, it was all about balancing the health of the town stretch of the Yampa with recreation. More than a decade later, plans are underway for a new river management plan, and this time there is more emphasis on protecting the health of the river to help ensure ample water for the community in times of drought.

“In part, this is an update of the 2004 plan. But it’s more of a streamflow management

plan where we’ll be looking for target flows that support aquatic life and water quality,” city of Steamboat Springs Water Resources Manager Kelly Heaney said Tuesday after meeting with Routt County officials. “It’s almost like a drought resiliency plan for the river.”

And the new study will take in a longer stretch of the river – from the Chuck Lewis State Wildlife Area downstream to the city’s wastewater treatment plant west of town.

The Routt County Board
of Commissioners (BOC)

agreed Tuesday to earmark \$5,000 in its 2017 budget for a contribution toward a 50 percent local match of a \$51,875 grant to fund the new management plan. The grant is part of \$1 million allocated to the Colorado Water Conservation Board in accordance with one of the measurable objectives in Colorado's landmark 2015 state water plan.

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"I think it's probably a small price for Routt County to pay for something as important as guarding the health of the Yampa River," Commissioner Tim Corrigan said.

He was joined by commissioners Doug Monger and Cari Hermacinski in affirming the county's support for the \$5,000 share of the grant match.

The 2015 Water Plan set the goal of covering 80 percent of a list of locally prioritized rivers with new Stream Management Plans (SMP) by 2030.

Heaney told the BOC that with this grant, the Yampa will be among the first in the state to be the subject of such a study.

There is a plan underway on the Crystal River (upstream from Carbondale), Aspen and Pitkin County have begun work on a plan for the Roaring Fork, and plans are in the works for the Colorado river and the San Miguel on the western side of the San Juan Mountains, Heaney reported.

"We're kind of like pioneers along with them," she said.

Heaney said the Colorado Water Trust, which has in the past facilitated efforts to secure supplemental summer flows for the Yampa in drought years like 2002 and 2012, will participate in the study. 2002 and 2012 Colorado Parks and Wildlife put a voluntary ban on fishing in the town stretch of the Yampa in place because the shallow flows were too warm to hold desirable levels of dissolved oxygen for trout.

Water temperature and dissolved oxygen will be a part of the new new river study, which will include a streamflow management plan meant to manage for target flows that support both aquatic life and water quality, Heaney said.

"We're working with the Colorado Water Trust to get us to a place where we have a sustainable plan," Heaney said.

The Water Trust will undertake a legal analysis of the city's water rights and advise on different strategies to make the best use of them, she said. For example, strategies could include securing storage contracts, stream improvement projects and re-timing flows through wetlands.

To reach Tom Ross, call 970-871-4205, email tross@SteamboatToday.com or follow him on Twitter @ThomasSRoss1

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Ginger Scott

From: Kelly Romero-Heaney
Sent: Friday, May 27, 2016 9:42 AM
To: Ginger Scott
Subject: FW: YVF--Yampa River Stream Management Plan

FYI

From: Bruce Carta [<mailto:logovudu@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, May 09, 2016 12:55 PM
To: Kelly Romero-Heaney
Subject: Re: YVF--Yampa River Stream Management Plan

We will be providing you with this; \$5,000 to match the WSRA Application

Bruce Carta

President
Yampa Valley Fly Fishers / Trout Unlimited
970-819-3633 Cell
logovudu@gmail.com
www.yvfftu.org

On Wed, Mar 30, 2016 at 12:42 PM, Kelly Romero-Heaney <kromeroheaney@steamboatsprings.net> wrote:

Hi Bruce,

I thought I'd check back in with you and the Flyfishers to see if you've had any additional discussions about YVF's level of involvement with the proposed Stream Management Plan. I am really hoping that the Flyfishers will want to play a key role in improving the resiliency of the Yampa River to withstand drought.

Let me know if you need anything else from me.

Thanks,

K



October 14, 2015

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Chris Sturm
Colorado Water Conservation Board
1313 Sherman Street, Room 721
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Mr. Sturm,

Please receive this letter of support for the City of Steamboat Spring's Yampa River Management Plan update grant application.

The Colorado Water Trust is a private, non-profit organization that engages in and supports voluntary efforts to restore and protect streamflows in Colorado to sustain healthy aquatic ecosystems. These efforts include water acquisitions, other creative transfers of water, on-the-ground physical solutions, and providing technical assistance to land trusts.

Since 2012, we have worked closely with water users, including the City of Steamboat Springs, on restoring flows to the Yampa River downstream of Stagecoach Reservoir. An important part of that work is to define the preferred flow through the City – particularly in times of drought – that will best support the Yampa River as a healthy place for fish to live and people to recreate. With that goal established, the Water Trust can better utilize its tools to support the City and the river.

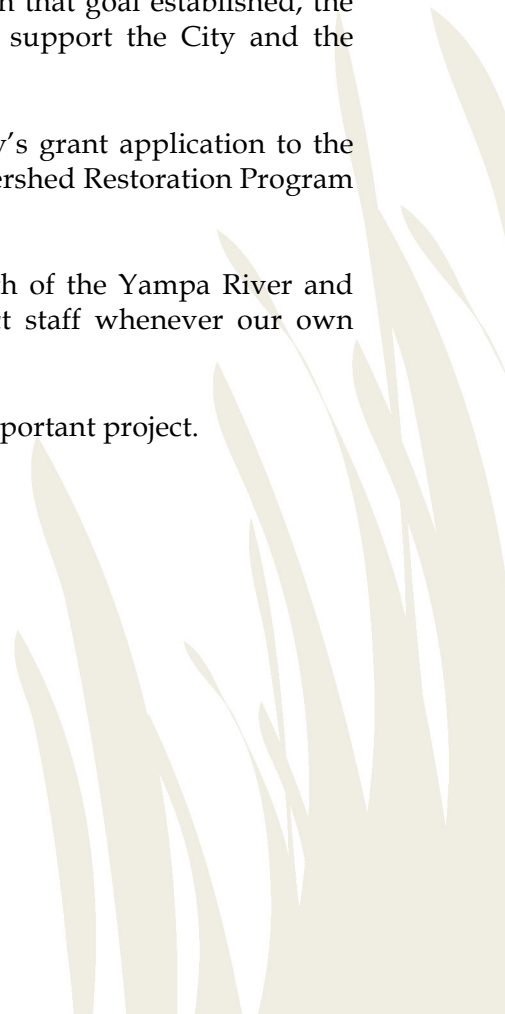
As such, we are in full support of the City's grant application to the Colorado Water Conservation Board's Watershed Restoration Program to create a Yampa River Management Plan.

The Water Trust is committed to the health of the Yampa River and will be available to City and other project staff whenever our own expertise is needed.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,

Zach Smith, Staff Attorney
Colorado Water Trust





UPPER YAMPA RIVER WATERSHED GROUP

October 14, 2015

Colorado Water Conservation Board
1313 Sherman Street, Rm 721
Denver, CO 80203

Attn: Chris Sturm

Dear Mr. Sturm,

Please accept this letter from the Upper Yampa River Watershed Group (UYRWG) in support of the City of Steamboat Springs' grant request to fund an update of the 2003 Yampa River Management Plan for the reach between the Chuck Lewis State Wildlife Area and the Steamboat Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant. A stream management plan that focuses on maintaining a healthy watershed is a priority for our group. The UYRWG is committed to being a resource through this process by providing scientific information on water quality and quantity; providing guidance for the management of human development and the environment; restoring and maintaining habitat and riparian health; addressing water storage; and managing non-consumptive uses.

The UYRWG is an organization comprised of representatives from local government, water suppliers, environmental organizations, the US Forest Service, Colorado Parks & Wildlife, industry, and other stakeholders in the Upper Yampa Basin. The UYRWG recently published the 2014 State of the Watershed Report (SOTWR) and is currently drafting a Watershed Implementation Plan that identifies and prioritizes projects and strategies that will help support the health of the watershed.

While the recent SOTWR indicates that water quality of the Upper Yampa River Basin is generally good, potential concerns have been identified including within the sub-basin where the proposed project is located (see SOTWR at <http://routtcountycd.com/>). Accordingly, the UYRWG strongly supports the City's request for funding to create an updated Yampa River Management Plan as defined above to evaluate and address these concerns further.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this important project. I can be reached at 970.879.6323 should you have questions or additional needs.

Sincerely,

Lyn Halliday

Lyn Halliday, Member, Interim Coordinator
Upper Yampa River Watershed Group



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Parks and Wildlife- Steamboat
925 Weiss Drive
Steamboat Springs, CO 80487
P 970.871.2855

February 8, 2016

Re: Steamboat Springs Yampa River Management Plan

Yampa/White/Green Basin Roundtable
Chairwoman Mary Brown
PO Box 772975
Steamboat Springs, CO 80487

Dear Ms. Brown:

On February 4, 2016, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) staff and City of Steamboat Springs staff met to discuss the direction of the proposed Yampa River Management Plan. CPW staff would like to express interest in the future of the Yampa River Management Plan.

It is our understanding that the plan addresses water quality conditions of the Yampa River within the reach from the Chuck Lewis State Wildlife Area to the Steamboat Springs Waste Water Treatment Plant.

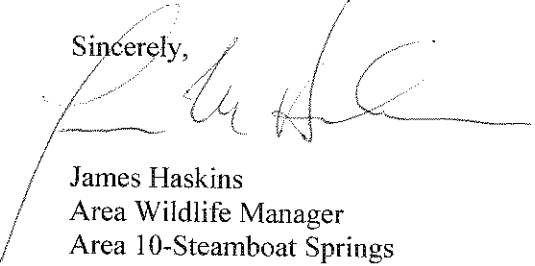
CPW staff is in support of the current scope of plans, as delineated by city staff, to assess water quality, aquatic life, and channel morphology on this reach of the Yampa River.

Varieties of efforts have been and continue to be made to monitor and improve this section of the Yampa River by CPW staff. Such efforts include river and riparian restoration activities, temperature monitoring and fish population monitoring in response to restoration activities, environmental influences and management actions.

In concert with the proposed Water Quality Management Plan CPW staff will continue to monitor water temperature through this corridor, as well as fish population dynamics on an annual or bi-annual basis, or as deemed necessary by CPW staff.

CPW staff is happy to discuss the direction of this project in the future. For any further questions regarding this matter, please contact District Wildlife Manager, Andrea Sponseller at 970-875-4303 and Bill Atkinson at 970-871-2868.

Sincerely,


James Haskins
Area Wildlife Manager
Area 10-Steamboat Springs
CC: Velarde, Haskins, Sponseller, Area file





Friends of the Yampa

PO Box 774703,
Steamboat Springs, CO 80477

May 4, 2016

Yampa/White/Green Roundtable
c/o Colorado Water Conservation Board
1313 Sherman Street, Room 718
Denver, CO 80203

Attn: Mary Brown, Chairperson

Dear Ms. Brown,

Please accept this letter from the Friends of the Yampa in support of the City of Steamboat Springs' effort to update the 2003 Yampa River Management Plan for the reach between the Chuck Lewis State Wildlife Area and the Steamboat Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant. A stream management plan that focuses on maintaining a healthy river flow is a priority for our organization. We are committed to providing input throughout the plan update process.

The Friends of the Yampa is a river advocacy group and movement based on one common passion, a shared love for the Yampa River. We are a 501(c)3 organization and have deep roots in the regional community. Established in 1981, we have a long standing history of working for the river by organizing clean ups, holding discussions about the Yampa's important and rare attributes, funding and helping build river features/habitats as well as participating in a variety of local, regional and national policy efforts and campaigns.

Friends of the Yampa strongly supports the City's request for funding to create an updated Yampa River Management Plan as defined above to evaluate and address these concerns further.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project. I can be reached at charliept@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Charlie Preston-Townsend
President, Friends of the Yampa Board of Directors

The Friends of the Yampa's mission is to protect and enhance the Yampa River's environmental and recreational integrity through stewardship, advocacy, education and partnerships.