

Rio Grande Basin Roundtable
623 Fourth Street
Alamosa, CO 81101
cwcd1971@hotmail.com

March 20, 2017

James Eklund 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. Eklund,

On behalf of the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable (Roundtable), please accept this letter of support for the Rio Grande State Wildlife Area (RGSWA) Design Project sponsored by the Colorado Rio Grande Restoration Foundation (CRGRF). The Water Supply Reserve Account Application for the RGSWA Design Project was evaluated by the Roundtable and was approved by voting members at the March 14, 2017 Roundtable meeting.

The Roundtable recognizes that the RGSWA Design Project addresses both agricultural and environmental and recreational Basin needs. The Project will result in the survey, design, and permitting for improvements to the SLV Canal Headgate, Centennial Ditch Diversion, and the Rio Grande 2 Diversion, resulting in three shovel ready diversion improvement projects. The implementation of these projects, partnered with streambank stabilization and riparian restoration, will significantly improve river health and water quality for the fisheries and other beneficiaries, support a safer river for recreation, increase agricultural diversion efficiency, and protect the water supply to the complex wetland system on the RGSWA. The RGSWA Project meets the following Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan Goals:

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.
5. Manage water use to sustain optimal agricultural economy throughout the Basin's communities.
6. Support the development of projects and methods that have multiple benefits for agricultural, municipal and industrial, and environmental and recreational water needs.
9. Make progress towards meeting applicable water quality standards throughout the Basin.
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.
14. Maintain and enhance water dependent recreational activities.

In addition to meeting many of the BIP goals, this project aligns the Colorado Water Plan's policy to identify and implement projects to meet community and agricultural water needs, while balance the needs of the environment, and recreation.

Thank you for your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

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

Nathan Coombs
Chair, Rio Grande Basin Roundtable