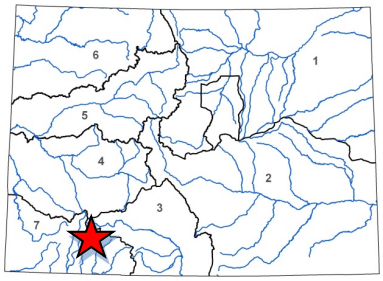
COLORADO
Colorado Water Conservation Board
Department of Natural Resources

Animas River Removal & Replacement of Invasive Phreatophytes, Phase II Southwest Conservation Corps

March 2022 Board Meeting

Water Plan Grant Program Application



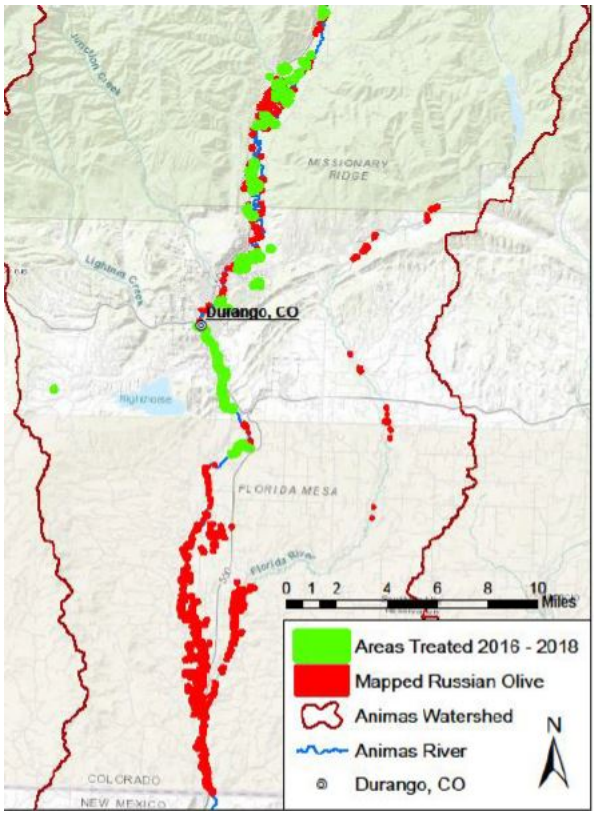
LOCATION	
County/Counties:	La Plata
Drainage Basin:	Southwest

DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	$278,900
WPG Request:	$177,603
Recommended amount:	$138,514
Other CWCB Funding:	$0
Other Funding Amount:	$184,074
Applicant Match:	$0
Project Type(s): Stream Restoration	
Project Category(Categories): Environment & Recreation	
Measurable Result: 180 acres of TRO removal and retreatment	

The Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) will remove Russian olive and tamarisk in two San Juan Basin tributaries: the Animas and La Plata Rivers. This project builds on the previous success of the partnership between SCC, Mountain Studies Institute, private landowners, businesses, the City of Durango, and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe to control invasive phreatophytes along these two rivers.

The project will support four specific activities:

1. Removal and retreatment of approximately 180 acres throughout the duration of the project using SCC crews
2. Annual monitoring for regrowth by coordinating with MSI and empowering landowners to monitor their parcels
3. Coordination through SCC and MSI for development of restoration
4. Education of landowners and business owners about the impacts of invasive species and treatment options



The objectives of this project are to reduce Russian olive and tamarisk populations in the Animas River watershed, as well as enhancing riparian habitat and improving water quality and reducing groundwater consumption and replanting native vegetation to improve riparian vegetation biodiversity and wildlife habitat.

Last Updated: July 2017

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan Grant Application

Instructions

To receive funding for a Water Plan Grant, applicant must demonstrate how the project, activity, or process (collectively referred to as "project") funded by the CWCB will help meet the measurable objectives and critical actions in the Water Plan. Grant guidelines are available on the CWCB website.

If you have questions, please contact CWCB at (303) 866-3441 or email the following staff to assist you with applications in the following areas:

Supply and Demand Gap Projects	Gregory.Johnson@state.co.us
Water Storage Projects	Anna.Mauss@state.co.us
Conservation, Land Use Planning	Kevin.Reidy@state.co.us
Engagement & Innovation Activities	Mara.MacKillop@state.co.us
Agricultural Projects	Brent.Newman@state.co.us
Environmental & Recreation Projects	Linda.Bassi@state.co.us

Applicants interested in submitting an 'Intent to Apply' in the future are encouraged to check here ☐ and fill in all sections with the best information available at the time. Exhibits may be excluded.

This "Intent to Apply" will help CWCB prioritize Projects that are not ready for fully completed Water Plan Grant Application due to the initial timeframe and required deadlines.

FINAL SUBMISSION: Submit all application materials to *waterplan.grants@state.co.us* in the original file formats [Application (word); Statement of Work (word); Budget/Schedule (excel)]. Please do not combine documents.

Water Project Summary

Name of Applicant	Southwest Conservation Corps – Conservation Legacy: Nate Peters
Name of Water Project	Animas River Removal and Replacement of Invasive Phreatophytes, Phase II
CWP Grant Request Amount	$177,602.50
Other Funding Sources: Southern Ute Indian Tribe	$18,020
Other Funding Sources: Walton Family Foundation	$10,814
Other Funding Sources: La Plata County and Private landowners	$3,430
In-Kind Funds: Conservation Legacy and Private landowners	$80,167
Applicant Funding Contribution: CWCB WRP Grant	$66,400

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Water Project Summary	
Total Project Cost	$361,076

Applicant & Grantee Information	
Name of Grantee(s)	Conservation Legacy – Southwest Conservation Corps
Mailing Address	701 Camino Del Rio, Durango, CO 81301
FEIN	84-1450808
Organization Contact	Kevin Heiner
Position/Title	Corps Director
Email	kevin@conservationlegacy.org
Phone	(970) 759-3935
Grant Management Contact	Nate Peters
Position/Title	Watershed Programs Manager
Email	npeters@conservationlegacy.org
Phone	(970) 903-0839
Name of Applicant (if different than grantee)	
Mailing Address	
Position/Title	
Email	
Phone	

Description of Grantee/Applicant
Provide a brief description of the grantee's organization (100 words or less).

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The Southwest Conservation Corps is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Conservation Legacy program based in Durango, CO. SCC operates conservation service programs that encourage stewardship, foster community, emphasize experiential learning, and serve a diverse population including youth, graduates, veterans, and a cross-section of ethnicities and income levels.

Type of Eligible Entity (check one)	
	Public (Government): Municipalities, enterprises, counties, and State of Colorado agencies. Federal agencies are encouraged to work with local entities. Federal agencies are eligible, but only if they can make a compelling case for why a local partner cannot be the grant recipient.
	Public (Districts): Authorities, Title 32/special districts (conservancy, conservation, and irrigation districts), and water activity enterprises.
	Private Incorporated: Mutual ditch companies, homeowners associations, corporations.
	Private Individuals, Partnerships, and Sole Proprietors: Private parties may be eligible for funding.
X	**Non-governmental organizations (NGO):** Organization that is not part of the government and is non-profit in nature.
	Covered Entity: As defined in Section 37-60-126 Colorado Revised Statutes.

Type of Water Project (check all that apply)	
	Study
	Construction
	Identified Projects and Processes (IPP)
X	Other

Category of Water Project (check all that apply and include relevant tasks)

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	Supply and Demand Gap - Multi-beneficial projects and those projects identified in basin implementation plans to address the water supply and demand gap. *Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):*	
	Water Storage - Projects that facilitate the development of additional storage, artificial aquifer recharge, and dredging existing reservoirs to restore the reservoirs' full decreed capacity. *Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):*	
	Conservation and Land Use Planning - Activities and projects that implement long-term strategies for conservation, land use, and drought planning. *Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):*	
	Engagement & Innovation - Activities and projects that support water education, outreach, and innovation efforts. Please fill out the Supplemental Application on the website. *Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):*	
	Agricultural - Projects that provide technical assistance and improve agricultural efficiency. *Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):*	
X	Environmental & Recreation - Projects that promote watershed health, environmental health, and recreation. *Applicable Exhibit A Task(s):* **Removal of invasive phreatophytes**	
	Other	Explain:

Location of Water Project

Please provide the general county and coordinates of the proposed project below in **decimal degrees**. The Applicant shall also provide, in Exhibit C, a site map if applicable.

County/Counties	La Plata
Latitude	37° 16' 13.80" N
Longitude	107° 52' 43.32" W

Water Project Overview

Please provide a summary of the proposed water project (200 words or less). Include a description of the project and what the CWP Grant funding will be used for specifically (e.g., studies, permitting process, construction). Provide a description of the water supply source to be utilized or the water body affected by the project, where applicable. Include details such as acres under irrigation, types of crops irrigated, number of residential and commercial taps, length of ditch improvements, length of pipe installed, and area of habitat improvements, where applicable. If this project addresses multiple purposes or spans multiple basins, please explain.
The Applicant shall also provide, in Exhibit A, a detailed Statement of Work, Budget, Other Funding Sources/Amounts and Schedule.

Last Updated: July 2017

Water Project Overview

The Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) is requesting CWCB funding to support removal of Russian olive and tamarisk in two San Juan Basin tributaries: the Animas and La Plata Rivers. This project builds on the previous success of the partnership between SCC, Mountain Studies Institute (MSI), private landowners, businesses, the City of Durango (COD), and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT) to control invasive phreatophytes along these two rivers. This project aims to prevent these harmful species from multiplying into larger denser infestations, creating opportunity for native plant species to thrive while enhancing streamside habitat and reducing invasive phreatophyte seed sources that contribute to Russian olive and tamarisk infestations on the San Juan River. Areas within COD property have been identified where ornamental Russian olive can be replaced with appropriate landscaping species. SUIT has identified several parcels for removing Russian olive and tamarisk within the reservation. Finally, MSI currently has a waiting list of landowners that are willing and eager to remove Russian olive with the assistance of this program. Our objective is to improve a minimum of 180 acres over 3 years on private parcels in the southern part of the Animas Watershed using funds in this proposal. This effort compliments the other parts of this project, which includes additional work on private lands, work on Southern Ute Indian Tribe lands in the La Plata River drainage, and work on City of Durango properties. See Attachment E - Project Map for potential treatment locations (mapped in red).

Measurable Results

To catalog measurable results achieved with the CWP Grant funds, please provide any of the following values as applicable:

NA	New Storage Created (acre-feet)
NA	New Annual Water Supplies Developed or Conserved (acre-feet), Consumptive or Non-consumptive
NA	Existing Storage Preserved or Enhanced (acre-feet)
NA	Length of Stream Restored or Protected (linear feet)
NA	Efficiency Savings (indicate acre-feet/year OR dollars/year)
670	Area of Restored or Preserved Habitat (acres)
NA	Quantity of Water Shared through Alternative Transfer Mechanisms
NA	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Incorporating Water-Saving Actions into Land Use Planning
250	Number of Coloradans Impacted by Engagement Activity

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Measurable Results		
	Other	Explain:

Water Project Justification

Provide a description of how this water project supports the goals of Colorado's Water Plan, the most recent Statewide Water Supply Initiative, and the applicable Roundtable Basin Implementation Plan and Education Action Plan. The Applicant is required to reference specific needs, goals, themes, or Identified Projects and Processes (IPPs), including citations (e.g. document, chapters, sections, or page numbers).

Animas Watershed Plan 2011. This Plan identified the loss of native riparian habitat and function as a critical factor in the degradation of the Animas River. While impacts from mine pollution and other water quality degradation are the primary issues, loss of native habitat and stream flows were identified as key factors to address. Further, the following objectives were listed as critical to the Animas River's health: (1) improve riparian condition, including reduction of invasive species, (2) develop strategies to increase and protect stream flows, and (3) utilize conservation easements and habitat programs to create incentives for landowners (Best Management Practices (Animas Watershed Partnership, 2011, p. 39).

Southwest Basin Round Table, Basin Implementation Plan, 2015. This project addresses and contributes to the Measurable Outcomes of the following goals identified in the BIP.

- **A5 Maintain watershed health** by protecting and/or restoring watersheds that could affect critical infrastructure and/or environmental and recreational areas.
- **D1 Maintain, protect and enhance recreational values and economic values** to local and statewide economies derived from recreational water uses, such as fishing, boating, hunting, wildlife watching, camping, and hiking.
- **E1 Encourage and support restoration, recovery, and sustainability** of endangered, threatened, and imperiled aquatic and riparian dependent species and plant communities.
- **E2 Protect, maintain, monitor and improve the condition and natural function** of streams, lakes, wetlands, and riparian areas to promote self-sustaining fisheries, and to support native species and functional habitat in the long term, and adapt to changing condition.

Related Studies

Please provide a list of any related studies, including if the water project is complementary to or assists in the implementation of other CWCB programs.

City of Durango Community Forest Management Plan – This plan was adopted by the City of Durango in 2014, and calls out the need to eradicate Russian olive and Tamarisk within the city limits.

City of Durango Urban Forest Tree Inventory, 2004 – This study found that in 2004, there were 85 Russian olive and 3 tamarisk present. These numbers have presumably increased since the survey was completed. The majority of the Russian olive that were mapped are concentrated in the Bodo Industrial park. The inventory states that a "vital component of this inventory was the quantification of invasive and noxious species such as Russian olive and Tamarisk. These two species alone threaten to completely displace native plant and wildlife and have the potential to forever change the riparian corridor running along the Animas River. A plan will be developed to remove the noxious species from public property in the near future.

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Previous CWCB Grants, Loans or Other Funding
List all previous or current CWCB grants (including WSRF) awarded to both the Applicant and Grantee. Include: 1) Applicant name; 2) Water activity name; 3) Approving RT(s); 4) CWCB board meeting date; 5) Contract number or purchase order; 6) Percentage of other CWCB funding for your overall project.
2016 CWCB IPCP; Conservation Legacy; Riparian Restoration Projects along the Dolores River & Disappointment Creek in Southwestern Colorado; Southwest Basin Round Table; POGG1 PDAA 201700000358 2018 CWCB CWRP; Conservation Legacy; Dolores River Restoration Partnership (DRRP) – Ensuring Riparian Restoration following 8 years of accomplishments in Southwestern Colorado; Southwest Basin Round Table; CTGGI PDAA 2019*00196 2020 CWCB WSRF; Conservation Legacy; Dolores River Restoration and Outreach; Southwest Basin Round Table; POGG1 202000003157; Total award was $25,000, which was 48% of the total project cost. 2021 CWCB CWRP; Conservation Legacy; Animas River Invasive Phreatophyte Removal – Stewardship and Continued Restoration; Southwest Basin Round Table; POGG1 PDAA 202100002956; Total award was $136,635, which was 46% of the total project cost.

Taxpayer Bill of Rights
The Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) may limit the amount of grant money an entity can receive. Please describe any relevant TABOR issues that may affect your application.
Not Applicable

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Submittal Checklist	
x	I acknowledge the Grantee will be able to contract with CWCB using the Standard Contract.
Exhibit A	
x	Statement of Work(1)
x	Budget & Schedule(1)
x	Letters of Matching and/or Pending 3rd Party Commitments(1)
Exhibit C	
x	Map (if applicable)(1)
x	Photos/Drawings/Reports
x	Letters of Support (Support letter from Basin Roundtable encouraged)
x	Certificate of Insurance (General, Auto, & Workers' Comp.) (2)
x	Certificate of Good Standing with Colorado Secretary of State(2)
x	W-9(2)
	Independent Contractor Form(2) (If applicant is individual, not company/organization)
Engagement & Innovation Grant Applicants ONLY	
	Engagement & Innovation Supplemental Application(1)

(1) Required with application.
(2) Required for contracting. While optional at the time of this application, submission can expedite contracting upon CWCB Board approval.

COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

Colorado Water Plan Grant Application

PROJECT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Project Title: Animas River Invasive Phreatophyte Removal – Stewardship and Continued Restoration Phase II

Project Location: The project is located in La Plata County, CO along the Animas River and La Plata River.

Grant Type: Water Plan Grant

Grant Request/Amount: $138,514.50

Cash Match Funding: $78,180

In-kind Match Funding: $62,205.96

Total Project Cost: $278,900.46

Project Sponsor: Conservation Legacy – Southwest Conservation Corps

Contact Persons: Nate Peters, npeters@conservationlegacy.org, (970) 903-0839

Brief Description of Project: The Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) is requesting CWCB funding to support removal of Russian olive and tamarisk in two San Juan Basin tributaries: the Animas and La Plata Rivers. This project builds on the previous success of the partnership between SCC, Mountain Studies Institute (MSI), private landowners, businesses, the City of Durango (COD), and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT) to control invasive phreatophytes along these two rivers. This project aims to prevent these harmful species from multiplying into larger denser infestations, creating opportunity for native plant species to thrive while enhancing streamside habitat and reducing invasive phreatophyte seed sources that contribute to Russian olive and tamarisk infestations on the San Juan River. Areas within COD property have been identified where ornamental Russian olive can be replaced with appropriate landscaping species. SUIT has identified several parcels for removing Russian olive and tamarisk within the reservation. Finally, MSI currently has a waiting list of landowners that are willing and eager to remove Russian olive with the assistance of this program. Our objective is to improve a minimum of 180 acres over 3 years on private parcels in the southern part of the Animas Watershed using funds in this proposal. This effort compliments the other parts of this project, which includes additional work on private lands, work on Southern Ute Indian Tribe lands in the La Plata River drainage, and work on City of Durango properties. See Exhibit E - Project Map for potential treatment locations (mapped in red). This project consists of 4 tasks.

(1) Removal and retreatment of 60 acres annually (total of 180 acres over 3 years) of Russian olive and tamarisk using SCC crews; **(2)** monitoring for re-sprouts by coordinating with MSI and empowering landowners; **(3)** coordination through SCC and MSI for development of restoration plans and education of landowners and business owners about the impacts of invasive species and treatment options.

Colorado Water Plan Grant Application
Animas River Invasive Phreatophyte Removal – Stewardship and Continued Restoration Phase II

Qualifications

Lead Project Sponsor, Project Team, & Collaboration. The Southwest Conservation Corps (the lead project sponsor) is a program of Conservation Legacy, a 501(c)(3) non-profit based in Durango, CO. Conservation Legacy is a national organization that supports locally based conservation corps programs that provide service and work opportunities for a diverse group of individuals to complete important conservation and community projects for the public benefit. Now in its 23rd year, Conservation Legacy has provided 1.3 million service hours and engages around 2,400 participants annually.

SCC operates conservation service programs that encourage environmental stewardship, foster community partnerships, and emphasize experiential learning. SCC will provide chainsaw crews to complete all labor. SCC staff will provide labor for crew training, including training on mapping software and equipment, as well as chainsaw and herbicide use. SCC provides crew transportation (vehicles), camping supplies, safety equipment, and necessary tools.

Our team partners include:

Mountain Studies Institute (MSI) is a nonprofit research and education institution in southwest Colorado. MSI participates in research, restoration, and monitoring projects to achieve stakeholder identified resource goals. MSI has assembled partners to advance a collaborative approach to address invasive phreatophytes in two tributaries of the San Juan Basin: Animas and La Plata rivers. From 2016-2021, MSI partnered with over 75 landowners and 10 local organizations to improve approximately 290 acres during Phase 1 of this effort (2016-2018) and 80 acres during Phase II (2019 only, acreage from 2020 project work not tallied as of this writing) within the Animas watershed. MSI has designed a multi-year, watershed-wide approach to restoration.

The City of Durango (COD) provides the city arborist, who assists with operations, and provides equipment. Although the City of Durango isn't providing cash or in-kind match for this phase of the project, they are still making notable contributions to the overall project goals. The City's arborist and crew have committed 120 hours of labor as an in-kind contribution and $10,600 in cash match for revegetation materials and a chipper/burning for slash from 2021-2023.

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT) will continue working with SCC to clear Russian olive along the La Plata River. MSI will continue to work with the tribe to provide access and environmental clearance for project work along the mainstem of the Animas River on tribal properties near the state line. These parcels are an integral part of our strategy for watershed restoration. We have support from the Southwest Basin Roundtable, as well as financial support from Colorado Parks and Wildlife and CWCB.

At present, MSI has a list of over 15 landowners with "chainsaw ready" projects, as well as permission to conduct retreatment activities on up to 600 acres on private parcels. The SUIT is already underway with treating 500 acres (matching funds from BIA). There are a minimum of 65 large, mature Russian Olive (City of Durango Urban Forest Tree Inventory, 2004) growing within the COD's right-of-way on 21 individual business parcels. In 2020, Russian Olive were removed from 4 of these parcels. MSI has already obtained permission from the remaining 17 businesses for removal work in 2021-2023 and additional parcels were identified which were not included in the 2004 tree inventory. MSI will continue to work with the additional business owners to ensure they will agree to removal of mature trees that serve as landscaping around their businesses. The COD has been actively engaged in this process and will continue to do so. A

minimum of 172 acres are identified for treatment on City of Durango property and rights-of-way. Please see the complete statement of work for this project in Exhibit A.

Budget Overview

SCC respectfully requests $138,514.50 towards the success of this project. These funds will support a total of 12 weeks of saw crew labor to remove Russian olive and tamarisk, SCC staff time for project management and coordination, herbicide and indicator dye, and staff support for coordination for our partner organization, Mountain Studies Institute. SCC and our partners are bringing $78,180 in cash match as well as $62,205.96 in in-kind match to the project. The Southern Ute Indian Tribe will provide $64,401 in cash match to support 6 weeks of crew work, herbicide, project planning and field support. Conservation Legacy will provide additional in-kind match which consists of AmeriCorps member stipends and fringe is $53,997.96. Which is made up of fringe and AmeriCorps member stipends The Walton Family Foundation is providing $10,814 in cash match to support SCC staff labor. A large portion of the project work occurs on private landowners' parcels and this program is designed as a cost-share program with landowners. SCC anticipates that private landowners will contribute $2,500 in cash match to pay for chipper rentals, tree service (stump grinding, etc), and other services not provided by SCC crews. Additionally, landowners will provide $2,500 of in-kind match in the form of labor and owned equipment to complete removal efforts. Landowners are also tasked with annual monitoring for resprouts/tree survival and reporting to SCC. We estimate this effort at 200 hours over three years, for a value of $5,708 at the independent sector rate of $28.54 per hour for volunteers. Additional monitoring work is done by the SCC saw crews at the same time as removal work, through repeat photography and is included in Task 1. Tree replacement in the Bodo Industrial Park is administered by the City of Durango. The City of Durango committed $9,800 to tree replacement as match for the CWCB Watershed Restoration Program grant, awarded to SCC in 2021. At this time, no further cash has been committed, though additional funds from the City of Durango are expected over the duration of the project. Therefore, no additional funds for Task 3 are requested at this time. For a detailed breakdown of the project budget, see Exhibit C.

Organizational Capability

History of Accomplishments & Collaboration. SCC and our partners have worked together on multiple collaborative efforts since our organization's inceptions. This team has extensive experience in all elements of this project plan. The Animas River RIP Team has been working collaboratively with stakeholders on Russian olive and tamarisk removal for over a decade. Efforts to treat Russian olive within the Animas River watershed started in 2002, initiated by the Friends of the Animas River watershed group, which included current MSI staff and SCC. Friends of the Animas River and volunteers treated over 8+ miles of riverbank. This effort formalized in 2006 as the San Juan Watershed Woody-Invasive Initiative, partnering with over 60 entities from 4 states and 4 tribes.

Phase I and II Animas River Removal Program Accomplishments. Through previous CWCB and CPW funding, MSI has engaged 75+ landowners through participation in the program and has educated the public about woody invasives, beyond those that participated in the program. MSI Community Science Director, Amanda Kuenzi, has given power-point presentations to 12 citizen groups in the La Plata county community and coordinated outreach through local news media resulting in five published articles (Durango Herald and Southern Ute Drum). Ms. Kuenzi also gave a radio interview which was originally aired through KSJD, and a collective of radio stations across Colorado. MSI has established a relationship

with the community as regional experts on Russian olive control. MSI regularly receives phone calls from landowners in Durango, Cortez, and as far downstream as New Mexico and Utah.

SCC Capability. SCC has substantive experience leading riparian restoration projects, with the most notable initiative being the Dolores River Restoration Partnership (DRRP). The DRRP is a collaborative public-private restoration initiative that works across boundaries to treat invasive species and restore native vegetation along 175 miles (~ 1800 acres) of the Dolores River. SCC has been focused on removing invasive phreatophytes since 2013, launching the landowner education campaign driving this effort. SCC was integral to the success of Phase I and II of this project. SCC crews completed all removal activities, mapped projects using GPS, and established photo-points for monitoring. Not only did they complete all tasks, but also received glowing reviews from landowners. SCC crews will receive Forest Service equivalent S212 chainsaw operation training as well as herbicide technician training. SCC crews will be one of several outreach methods as they work closely with the landowners engaged in the project.

MSI's Capability for Project Planning & Public Outreach. MSI and our partners have invested in an open, transparent process to engage homeowners and the public in watershed restoration. MSI has an existing network of 200+ partners, private owners, organizations, and government agencies collaborating to improve Animas River watershed health. MSI provides project planning and overall coordination for this project alongside SCC staff. MSI will work directly with several organizations to reach landowners, including City of Durango, La Plata County, Trout Unlimited, Fort Lewis College, AmeriCorps volunteer trainings, school teachers, local service organizations (such as Rotary Club), and conservation districts.

Level of Staffing & Volunteer Involvement. This project involves a team effort from SCC, MSI, and COD. Specifically, Task 4 and Task 2 will be led by MSI (Amanda Kuenzi - Community Science Director, 561.5 hrs). For Task 1 and Task 3, saw crew leaders and members with help from SCC staff (Clara Moulton - Four Corners Director and Nate Peters - Watershed Programs Manager) will provide much of the labor for the removal, retreatment, and replanting tasks with 18 weeks of labor (6 weeks of 8-person crews per year for 3 years representing 5,760 service hours), with in-kind support from the COD arborist (120 hours). In-kind support from landowners and Conservation Legacy will contribute to all tasks.

Budget and Schedule. Using the lessons learned from our previous work, we can determine realistic estimates and outputs for SCC crew work. We have learned more hours are needed for landowner outreach and development of customized plans for each landowner. Further, we intend to break the 8-person SCC crews into small crews of 4 when working on smaller properties, allowing us to increase effectiveness and efficiency. Removal work will be timed to avoid bird migration and to increase effectiveness of treatment (i.e. Russian olive treatment is most effective in fall as plants draw energy down to the roots). Planting in areas requiring revegetation will be timed with the dormant season. A breakdown of the project schedule is included in Exhibit B.

Proposal Effectiveness

Prevention of invasive phreatophyte spread is a major component of integrated management and central to our plan. By removing heavy seed producing ornamental trees, we will limit seed dispersal and the re-introduction of invasive phreatophytes into treated areas. Replacement of invasive phreatophytes with native species will prevent weedy species from becoming re-established. Mechanical and chemical treatments will be paired during the removal phase of the project, as extensive removal on the New Mexico section of the Animas has shown this approach to have 75% or better success rate (Rhea-Grossman, 2005; San Juan Soil and Water, personal comm). The cut-stump method will be used, which involves using chainsaws or other tools to remove above-ground biomass, leaving a short stump where herbicide is applied to the cambium layer within a few minutes of removal. Herbicide application reduces re-sprouting from cut stumps and is most effective in the fall when trees are moving nutrients to their root systems to prepare for

winter. These tactics are most effectively used in combination, not only to reduce existing weed populations, but also to prevent regrowth and future infestation.

The Animas corridor infestations are often dispersed and low density, with Russian olive being more prevalent than tamarisk. Therefore, biological controls are not a viable option for our area. Native vegetation is usually sufficient at most sites for passive revegetation to be successful without planting or seeding. SCC hand crews deliver a sensitive approach to native vegetation and impacts to soils, reducing potential for establishment of secondary weeds. SCC crews cut Russian olive with chainsaws and apply herbicide to stumps in a timely manner and take care not to over-apply herbicide. Depending on site goals and feasibility, woody slash may be used as mulch, assembled in burn piles, or stacked to create wildlife piles. See Exhibit D for pictures of SCC crews performing this work in 2019 and 2020.

Several key strategies have been identified to expand this program and magnify its impact. Specifically, mapping and inventory data capturing the full distribution of infestations along the Animas by MSI allowed us to target the seed sources in the headwaters. More work remains in the northern portion of the mainstem Animas project area (see Exhibit E – Project Map). Our mapping has revealed that heavy infestations in the southern portion of the project area will require an intense effort. Large areas of ornamental trees were also found within the COD rights-of-way in the Bodo Industrial areas, adjacent to the river corridor.

MSI will employ the targeted outreach program and tools developed in previous years to engage landowners in the southern portion of the project area. We will use the monitoring procedures using digital tablets with GPS and ArcGIS capabilities for crews to continue to document treatment areas. To overcome landowner resistance to loss of valued landscaping, the partnership will offer replacement trees and removal services as incentives to landowners to participate in the program. This proposal offers an opportunity to implement the original vision of this partnership, with the clarity of recently learned lessons building upon momentum and good will that has already been built with the local community.

Existing Plans Relevant to the Project. The Animas Watershed Plan (2011) identified the loss of native riparian habitat and function as a critical factor in the degradation of the Animas River. While impacts from mine pollution and water quality degradation are the primary issues, loss of native habitat and stream flows were identified as key factors to address. The following objectives were listed as critical to the Animas River's health: (1) improve riparian condition, including reduction of invasive species, (2) develop strategies to increase and protect stream flows, (3) utilize conservation easements and habitat programs to create incentives for landowners (Best Management Practices, Animas Watershed Partnership, 2011, p. 39).

Southwest Basin Round Table, Basin Implementation Plan (2015). This project addresses and contributes to the Measurable Outcomes of the following goals identified in the BIP.

- A5 Maintain watershed health by protecting and/or restoring watersheds that could affect critical infrastructure and/or environmental and recreational areas.
- D1 Maintain, protect and enhance recreational values and economic values to local and statewide economies derived from recreational water uses, such as fishing, boating, hunting, wildlife watching, camping, and hiking.
- E1 Encourage and support restoration, recovery, and sustainability of endangered, threatened, and imperiled aquatic and riparian dependent species and plant communities.
- E2 Protect, maintain, monitor and improve the condition and natural function of streams, lakes, wetlands, and riparian areas to promote self-sustaining fisheries, and to support native species and functional habitat in the long term, and adapt to changing conditions.

Objectives

Multi-Objective Aspects of the Project. The ecological objective of this project is riparian restoration of the Animas and La Plata Rivers. The benefits include: improved water quality, restored stream channel capacity and reduced flooding hazards, and enhanced wildlife habitat for native species, including migratory neotropical songbirds and native fish, as well as threatened and endangered species which can occur in the area including the Southwest Willow Flycatcher, Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo, and New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse. Benefits to the community include education about river health and enhanced recreational access/experiences through improved river health and integrity. The Phase 1 replacement of ornamental invasive phreatophytes with less-water consumptive species and natives will reduce groundwater consumption, resulting in increased available water for all uses. An additional objective is to benefit local agriculture by controlling plants that invade pastures, fields, and irrigation ditch banks.

The project compliments, but does not duplicate, the efforts of the partners to educate the community and control phreatophytes. This partnership incorporates efforts of the SUIT, La Plata County, and City of Durango to address gaps and to leverage past and current work by extending efforts onto lands that have not yet been treated. There is currently no ornamental planting replacement program in the Animas Watershed of Colorado.

The Southwest Conservation Corps has been able to employ 50 members and leaders in this effort since 2016, allowing us to engage and train the next generation of water stewards. Individuals that go through our program and work on this project gain valuable life skills in project management, community engagement, and stream restoration tactics. Crew leaders and members gain training and certifications (chainsaw, herbicide use, wilderness medicine) as well as education about the importance of healthy ecosystems, helping them pursue careers in natural resource management. This project in particular teaches young people the value of community collaboration in river restoration work and gives the crews a sense of pride as they engage in stewardship of a critical water resource. See Attachment D for pictures of the SCC saw crews from previous years working on this project.

Monitoring, Implementation, & Success Measures. An integral part of this project is empowering landowners to monitor and retreat their own properties. MSI plans to engage in annual check-in's with landowners to monitor resprouting of Russian olive and tamarisk. If resprouts are found, they will be retreated as needed the next year. We have multiplied our effectiveness of monitoring by having landowners commit to conducting monitoring as a condition of participating in the program. MSI is currently tracking re-sprouts for the 2016-2021 work through communication with landowners. When landowners are not able to monitor their parcels, MSI staff and interns revisit the mapped, treated areas. The retreatment phase ensures complete restoration of the Animas River and helps us determine success. In previous phases of the project, MSI and SCC developed and fine-tuned mapping techniques using digital tablets and established photo-points. SCC crews also establish new photo-points for monitoring purposes as they complete removal and replanting at each parcel. We will use GIS to demonstrate our successes with reducing Russian olive and tamarisk population.

COLORADO
Colorado Water Conservation Board
Department of Natural Resources

Last Updated: May 2021

Colorado Water Conservation Board
Water Plan Grant – Statement of Work – Exhibit A

Statement Of Work	
Date:	**11/22/21**
Name of Grantee:	**Conservation Legacy – Southwest Conservation Corps**
Name of Water Project:	Animas River Invasive Phreatophytes Removal – Stewardship and Continued Restoration Phase II
Funding Source:	**CWCB WRP Grant, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Walton Family Foundation, La Plata County**

Water Project Overview:

The Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC) is respectfully requesting CWCB funding to support removal of Russian olive and tamarisk in two San Juan Basin tributaries: the Animas and La Plata Rivers. This project builds on the previous success of the partnership between SCC, Mountain Studies Institute (MSI), private landowners, businesses, the City of Durango (COD), and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT) to control invasive phreatophytes along these two rivers. This project's scope of work supports four specific activities:

(1) Removal and retreatment of approximately 60 acres annually of Russian olive and tamarisk (for a total deliverable of 180 acres throughout the duration of the project) using SCC crews; (2) annual monitoring for regrowth by coordinating with MSI and empowering landowners to monitor their parcels; (3) coordination through SCC and MSI for development of restoration plans and education of landowners and business owners about the impacts of invasive species and treatment options.

Project Objectives:

Our objectives are to: (1) reduce Russian Olive and tamarisk populations in the Animas River watershed, enhancing riparian habitat and improving water quality and reducing groundwater consumption; (2) replant native vegetation to improve riparian vegetation biodiversity and wildlife habitat; (3) continue to build on the momentum of this multi-year effort to empower private landowners to work towards ecological restoration in the region; and (4) create local jobs for young adults to engage in conservation service and stewardship.

Last Updated: May 2021

Tasks
Task 1 – Russian Olive and Tamarisk Removal and Retreatment
Description of Task:
SCC will work with MSI, the City of Durango and the Southern Ute Tribe for removal of Russian olive and tamarisk on multiple private and public properties. The work will support the training and deployment of SCC young adult crews to remove trees and apply herbicide. Identified potential treatment areas are mapped in red in Exhibit E - Project Map. SCC crews will utilize best management practices (see methods) to treat: private lands in the Animas River watershed (up to 600 acres of potential work identified), City of Durango managed lands in Bodo Industrial Park (up to 172 acres of potential work identified). Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT) proposes to treat tamarisk and Russian olive on tribally owned portions of land along the La Plata River (approximately 200 acres of potential work identified) and Animas River (approximately 300 acres of potential work identified). Treatment will involve cutting these invasive species to ground level or using a "frill cut", applying herbicide, piling slash, and burning slash piles. SUIT has completed all environmental compliance required for these tasks. MSI will coordinate with private landowners throughout the Animas River watershed and business owners in Bodo Industrial Park who have expressed interest in Russian olive and tamarisk eradication. MSI will offer assistance for eradication on a cost-share basis. Approximately 600 acres of private land have been identified for future project work, which includes previously treated acreage that may be in need of retreatment. Our objective for this project is to improve a minimum of 180 acres on private and public parcels and tribal lands over the course of 3 years. Funding will be used for landowner assistance to meet the needs of the program. As a continued part of Phase 1, ornamental invasive phreatophytes along right-of-ways and in riparian areas will be replaced by the City of Durango. (City funds were committed as match for SCC's Watershed Restoration Program grant.) SCC crews may also assist with plant willow and cottonwood plantings on Southern Ute Tribal lands, in areas in need of streambank stabilization or habitat replacement/enhancement.
Method/Procedure:

On all lands, treatment will involve using the following methods:

Cut-Stump treatment method

The cut-stump technique involves cutting the trees and shrubs to ground level and spraying stumps with herbicide (triclopyr or glyphosate) mixed with water or oil. Chainsaws, brush cutters, lopping shears and other hand tools will be used. Stumps will be sprayed using hand-held spray bottles, sprayers, or "painted on". The herbicide will be applied to the stump immediately following cutting to maximize efficiency of the treatment.

Frill cut treatment method or "hack-and-squirt"

Using a hatchet, machete, or similar tool a frill cut will be made at a downward angle at proper spacing around the trunk (not completely girdling the tree). After striking, the hatchet will be pulled backwards to produce a "cup" to hold the herbicide. Cuts will be made to penetrate through the bark into living cambium tissue. Herbicide (triclopyr or glyphosate) mixed with water or oil, according to label, will be sprayed into the frill cuts using a squirt bottle or sprayer. This method will be used to control individual trees greater than five inches in diameter. This method is best for the protection of wildlife habitat due to no immediate canopy removal or disturbance. The standing dead trees left behind become good habitat trees.

Basal bark treatment method

This method is used to address younger plants and re-sprouts with stems no larger than 6 inches in diameter. Herbicide (triclopyr or glyphosate) mixed with water or oil will be sprayed onto 12-15 inches of bark around entire stem near the base of the plant.

All treatment methods will be applied after the plant has bloomed and prior to dormancy, between September and November for maximum effectiveness and to reduce re-sprouting. In most areas slash will be piled for burning when appropriate conditions allow. In some cases, slash will be hauled off site for burning or chipping.

Deliverable:

City of Durango (COD): Treatments to improve identified areas in Bodo Industrial Park (up to 172 acres). Retreatment areas may also include Hillcrest Golf Course, COD-owned wetland areas along Jenkins Ranch Road, COD City Reservoir, retreatments of re-sprouts along the Animas River recreation corridor, and other areas as identified by the COD.

SUIT lands: Treatments to improve identified areas within the reservation, which includes approximately 200 acres along the La Plata River and approximately 300 acres along the Animas River.

Private parcels: Treatments to improve private lands in the Animas River watershed. Some areas have been identified and additional private lands will be identified through outreach processes. Approximately 600 acres have currently been identified for initial treatment or retreatment on private parcels.

In addition, SCC will engage 1 crew per year for 3 years on this project (18-24 participants total).

Last Updated: May 2021

CWCB Deliverable
In total, invasive Russian olive and tamarisk will be removed from a minimum of 60 acres annually, for a project total of a minimum of 180 treated acres. SCC will provide annual invoices and interim reports every 6 months with documented accomplishments, including acres improved. A final report will include maps of all areas treated. Additionally, GIS shapefiles can be submitted to CWCB, if desired.

Tasks

Task 2 – Monitoring for Regrowth

Description of Task:

Monitoring will be conducted at all project sites to identify and address re-sprouting. SCC crews will provide "before and after" photos with GPS locations of all project sites so that repeat photography can be used for long-term monitoring.

City of Durango: MSI will coordinate with the COD arborist to monitor for re-sprouts. COD staff will treat resprouts on treated areas as appropriate.

SUIT lands: MSI will coordinate with SUIT Division of Wildlife staff to monitor for re-sprouts. SUIT will treat re-sprouts on treated areas as appropriate.

Private parcels: MSI will coordinate with private landowners to monitor for re-sprouts. As part of Task 4, MSI will educate landowners on identification and early eradication of re-sprouts. Landowners will be empowered to self-monitor and maintain their parcels. In some cases where necessary, SCC will retreat areas of vigorous resprouting.

Method/Procedure:

"Before and after" photo points will be established at each treatment site, as is the standard protocol for SCC crews. Photo points will be recorded using a handheld GIS enabled tablet.

Each area treated by SCC will be mapped using a handheld GIS enabled tablet. A standard GIS data form will be filled out at each site to document the number of stems treated, method employed, and total area treated. This data is paired with the geospatial data for future monitoring.

MSI will interface with all private landowners to ensure successful self-monitoring of project work on private parcels.

Retreatment will be scheduled based on the results of monitoring by all project partners.

Deliverable:

Monitoring will be conducted for a minimum of 60 acres annually. Photo points and GIS data will be recorded on a tablet and data archive for each site. Data sets will be shared with all project partners.

CWCB Deliverable

SCC will provide annual invoices and interim reports every 6 months with documented accomplishments, including acres improved. A final report will include maps of all areas treated.

Tasks

Task 3 – Coordination, Outreach, and Project Planning

Description of Task:

Staff from SCC and MSI will serve as the coordinators for the project. SCC will implement the training of crews, manage data collection and mapping, coordinate with partners where SCC crews will perform treatments, and create progress reports to CWCB. MSI will be responsible for mapping and data management as needed, outreach to landowners, coordination of partners. lining out SCC crews to work with landowners and the COD, and management of the tree replacement and monitoring portions of the project.

Outreach efforts will be focused on the business owners within Bodo Industrial Park (Bodo) and private landowners in the southern portion of the watershed. There are a minimum of 65 large, mature Russian olive (City of Durango Urban Forest Tree Inventory, 2004) growing within the City of Durango's (COD) right-of-way on 21 individual business parcels. In 2020, Russian olive were removed from 4 of these parcels. MSI has already obtained permission from the remaining 17 businesses for removal work in 2021-2023 and additional parcels were identified which were not included in the 2004 tree inventory. MSI will continue to work with the additional business owners to ensure they will agree to removal of mature trees that serve as landscaping around their businesses. The COD has been actively engaged in

this process and will continue to do so. SCC and MSI are uniquely positioned to handle this eradication effort as SCC crews have a proven track record of performing quality work in the community and MSI has created a public outreach campaign over the past several years, building momentum and public awareness around Russian olive and tamarisk eradication. Through recent publications, additional interest has been generated in the program (https://durangoherald.com/articles/347535-invasive-russian-olives-trees-removed-put-to-good-use; https://www.sudrum.com/top-stories/2020/09/25/southwest-conservation-corps-assists-tribe-with-invasive-tree-removal/).

Method/Procedure:

SCC will offer Forest Service S-212 equivalent chainsaw training to all crew leaders and members who participate on this project. Program participants will also go through SCC's herbicide technician training to learn how to safely and effectively use herbicide specifically for this project. With the help of MSI, SCC crews will also share best practices for safe and effective maintenance with landowners while working on their properties.

MSI will outreach to business owners, private landowners, the COD, and the community at large. They will raise awareness of the current threat of urban and ex-urban Russian olive and tamarisk seed sources that compromise riparian habitat, agricultural activities, and water security. MSI will utilize existing outreach materials to continue to build public support for removal of seed sources in both riparian areas and areas planted as ornamental landscape trees.

Deliverable:

Task 1,2,and 3 will be able to be implemented due to the pre-project planning and coordinating in this task. SCC will conduct training for herbicide and chainsaw use for all crew leaders and members (18-24 participants).

CWCB Deliverable

In total, invasive Russian olive and tamarisk will be removed from approximately 180 acres, over the three years of the project. SCC will provide annual invoices and interim reports every 6 months with documented accomplishments, including acres improved. A final report will include maps of all areas treated.

Budget and Schedule

This Statement of Work shall be accompanied by a combined Budget and Schedule that reflects the Tasks identified in the Statement of Work and shall be submitted to CWCB in excel format.

Last Updated: May 2021

Reporting Requirements

Progress Reports: The applicant shall provide the CWCB a progress report every 6 months, beginning from the date of issuance of a purchase order, or the execution of a contract. The progress report shall describe the status of the tasks identified in the statement of work, including a description of any major issues that have occurred and any corrective action taken to address these issues.

Final Report: At completion of the project, the applicant shall provide the CWCB a Final Report on the applicant's letterhead that:

- Summarizes the project and how the project was completed.
- Describes any obstacles encountered, and how these obstacles were overcome.
- Confirms that all matching commitments have been fulfilled.
- Includes photographs, summaries of meetings and engineering reports/designs.

The CWCB will pay out the last 10% of the budget when the Final Report is completed to the satisfaction of CWCB staff. Once the Final Report has been accepted, and final payment has been issued, the purchase order or grant will be closed without any further payment.

Payment

Payment will be made based on actual expenditures and must include invoices for all work completed. The request for payment must include a description of the work accomplished by task, an estimate of the percent completion for individual tasks and the entire Project in relation to the percentage of budget spent, identification of any major issues, and proposed or implemented corrective actions.

Costs incurred prior to the effective date of this contract are not reimbursable. The last 10% of the entire grant will be paid out when the final deliverable has been received. All products, data and information developed as a result of this contract must be provided to as part of the project documentation.

Performance Measures

Performance measures for this contract shall include the following:
(a) Performance standards and evaluation: Grantee will produce detailed deliverables for each task as specified. Grantee shall maintain receipts for all project expenses and documentation of the minimum in-kind contributions (if applicable) per the budget in Exhibit C. Per Grant Guidelines, the CWCB will pay out the last 10% of the budget when the Final Report is completed to the satisfaction of CWCB staff. Once the Final Report has been accepted, and final payment has been issued, the purchase order or grant will be closed without any further payment.
(b) Accountability: Per Grant Guidelines full documentation of project progress must be submitted with each invoice for reimbursement. Grantee must confirm that all grant conditions have been complied with on each invoice. In addition, per Grant Guidelines, Progress Reports must be submitted at least once every 6 months. A Final Report must be submitted and approved before final project payment.
(c) Monitoring Requirements: Grantee is responsible for ongoing monitoring of project progress per Exhibit A. Progress shall be detailed in each invoice and in each Progress Report, as detailed above. Additional inspections or field consultations will be arranged as may be necessary.
(d) Noncompliance Resolution: Payment will be withheld if grantee is not current on all grant conditions. Flagrant disregard for grant conditions will result in a stop work order and cancellation of the Grant Agreement.

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Department of Natural Resources

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Water Plan Grant
Project Schedule and Budget Summary

Prepared Date: 11/22/21

Name of Applicant: Southwest Conservation Corps - Conservation Legacy: Nate Peters

Name of Water Project: Animas River Invasive Phreatophyte Removal – Stewardship and Continued Restoration Phase II

Project Start Date: September 2022

Project End Date: December 2024

Task No.	Description	Start Date	Task End Date	Grant Funding Request	Match Funding	Total
1 - Russian Olive and Tamarisk Removal and Retreatment	6-8 person SCC chainsaw crew for 6 weeks in years 1, 2 and 3.	8/1/2022	12/31/2024	$133,257.00	$134,677.96	$267,934.96
2 - Monitoring	Landowner monitoring of removal sites for re□sprouting Russian olive and tamarisk	8/1/2022	4/30/2025	$0.00	$5,708.00	$5,708.00
3 - Outreach/Coordination	Coordination through SCC and MSI for development of restoration plans and education of landowners and business owners about the impacts of invasive species and treatment options	5/1/2022	4/30/2025	$5,257.50	$0.00	$5,257.50
			Total	$138,514.50	$140,385.96	$278,900.46

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Colorado Water Conservation Board

Exihibit C - Water Plan Grant Detailed Budget Estimate
Fair and Reasonable Estimate

Prepared Date: 11/22/2021
Name of Applicant: Southwest Conservation Corps - Conservation Legacy: Nate Peters
Name of Water Project: Animas River Invasive Phreatophyte Removal – Stewardship and Continued Restoration Phase II

Task 1 - Removal and Retreatment

Personnel	Total Weekly Cost	Number of weeks	CWCB Funds	Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Total	Notes
Saw Crew Year 1	$11,333	6	$ 25,500	$ 25,500	$ 16,998	$ 67,998	CWCB WRP Grant & SUIT = Cash Match. Conservation Legacy = In-Kind Match
Saw crew Year 2 2023	$12,000	6	$ 27,000	$ 27,000	$ 18,000	$ 72,000	CWCB WRP Grant = Cash Match. Conservation Legacy = In-Kind Match
Saw Crew Year 3 2024	$12,667	6	$ 57,000		$ 19,000	$ 76,000	Conservation Legacy = In-Kind Match
SCC Project Management	$1,294	18	$ 23,292	$ 10,814		$ 34,106	Walton Family Foundation = Cash Match
Southern Ute Labor, lump sum				$ 10,881		$ 10,881	SUIT = Cash Match
Landowner chipper rental and labor	$250	20		$ 2,500	$ 2,500	$ 5,000	Contribution from landowners

Expenses	Unit Cost	# Units	CWCB Funds	Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Total	Notes
Herbicide - Rodeo	$75	10	$375.00	$375.00		$750.00	La Plata County matches for half of herbicide
Herbicide - Indicator dye	$30	6	$90.00	$90.00		$180.00	La Plata County matches for half of herbicide
Herbicide Pathfinder (SUIT)	$170	6		$1,020.00		$1,020.00	Herbicide brought by SUIT = Cash Match

	CWCB Funds	Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Total
Task 1 Totals	$133,257.00	$78,180.00	$56,497.96	$267,934.96

Task 2 - Monitoring

Personnel	Hourly Rate	# Hours	CWCB Funds	Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Total	Notes
Before/After photos (included in task 1)							
Landowner monitoring	$28.54	200			$5,708.00	$5,708.00	Hourly rate at independent sector rate

				CWCB Funds	Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Total
Task 2 Totals						$5,708.00	$5,708.00

Task 3 - Outreach/Coordination

Personnel	**Hourly Rate**	**# Hours**	**CWCB Funds**	**Cash Match**	**In-Kind Match**	**Total**
MSI Project Coordinator	65	80	$5,200.00			$5,200.00
Expenses	**Unit Cost**	**# Units**	**CWCB Funds**	**Cash Match**	**In-Kind Match**	**Total**
MSI Project Coordinator Travel	0.575	100	$57.50			$57.50

	CWCB Funds	Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Total
Task 3 Totals	$5,257.50	$0.00	$0.00	$5,257.50

	CWCB Funds	Cash Mtatch	In-Kind Match	Total
Project Totals	$138,514.50	$78,180.00	$62,205.96	$278,900.46

EXHIBIT E

MAP

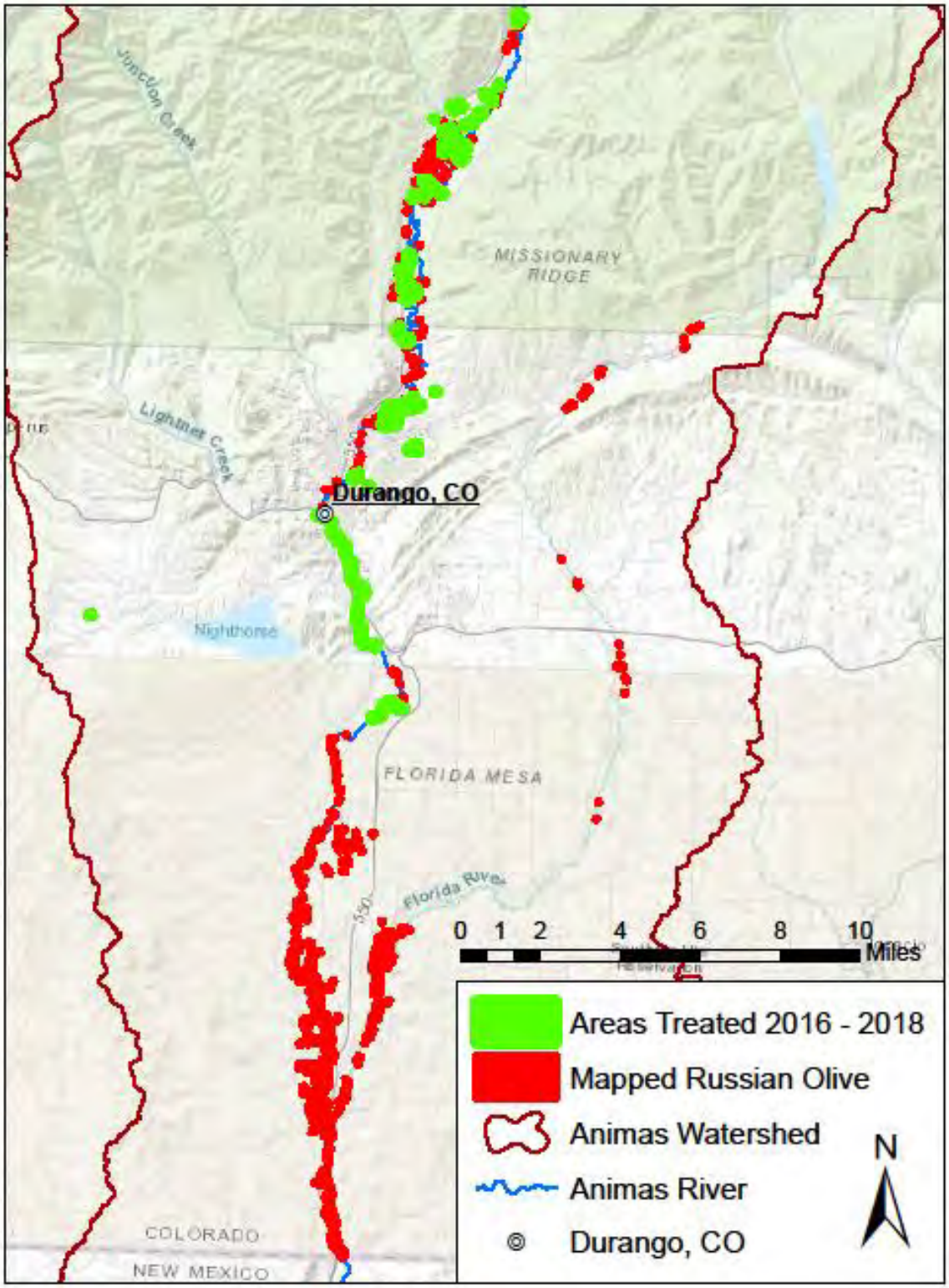

EXHIBIT D

PHOTOS

Figure 1: SCC Crew Member standing next to a slash pile from recently cut Russian Olive, fall 2020

Figure 2: SCC was able to employ an all female/non-binary crew for 2020 work. This crew removed Russian olive and tamarisk on SUIT, COD, and landowner property along the La Plata and Animas Rivers.

Figure 3: An SCC crew leader from 2019 sharpening his chainsaw after a day of cutting Russian olive. SCC participants learn valuable chain sawing skills, such as maintenance and sharpening, as part of this program.

Figure 4: 2020 SCC Saw crew members spraying the low stumps of Russian olive trees they just cut

Mountain Studies Institute
SAN JUAN MOUNTAINS COLORADO

November 28, 2021

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

Dear Colorado Water Conservation Board:

Mountain Studies Institute (MSI) would like to express our support for the *Animas River Invasive Phreatophyte Removal – Stewardship and Continued Restoration Phase II* project proposed by the Southwest Conservation Corps. Mountain Studies Institute has been working in partnership with Southwest Conservation Corps since our combined work under the Invasive Phreatophyte Control Program, first proposed in 2015. Now in Phase 2, our accomplishments are many, including treatment of over 370 acres, extensive outreach and education efforts, and the creation of solid partnerships with the Southern Ute Indian tribe and the City of Durango. Despite these gains, there is much work to do, and our program has more momentum now more than ever! Through our work with landowners, we now know the extent of Russian olive and tamarisk populations in the Animas River riparian corridor. Populations are denser than first conceptualized and appear to be spreading faster as temperatures continue to rise in southwest Colorado. We rely on the funds requested by Southwest Conservation Corps to continue improving watershed health in both the Animas River and La Plata River watersheds. MSI's ongoing outreach and coordination efforts with private landowners and business owners will be largely supported through secured funding from Colorado Water Conservation Board grant programs previously awarded to MSI.

The restoration of the Animas River and La Plata watersheds and the reduction of Russian olive and tamarisk are vital to MSI's climate resilience strategy for our beloved corner of southwest Colorado, and I strongly encourage the support of the Colorado Water Conservation Board for Southwest Conservation Corps' proposal. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important work.

Sincerely,

Amanda M. Kuenzi

Amanda M. Kuenzi
Community Science Director
Mountain Studies Institute

SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE

February 15, 2022

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

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this *revised* letter on behalf of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT) to express support for the Southwest Conservation Corps' (SCC) CWCB Colorado Water Plan Grant application: *Animas River Invasive Phreatophyte Removal – Stewardship and Continued Restoration Phase II.* In partnership with Mountain Studies Institute (MSI), this project follows up on and continues important invasive phreatophyte removal and riparian enhancement that began on the Animas River in 2017.

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe is committed to enhancing Animas River riparian habitat on tribal lands. SUIT supports the goals of this project as stated in SCC's application: to improve riparian ecology and biodiversity by reducing invasive phreatophytes and seed sources; improve wildlife habitat; enhance recreation access; protect water supplies and water quality; and empower young adults to be stewards of the land. The partnership between SUIT, SCC, and MSI provides a unique opportunity to cross boundaries and work towards a more complete restoration of the Animas River.

SUIT is currently applying for funding for invasive species management from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Pending award, SUIT commits a revised amount of $64,401 to this project over the next 2 years to hire SCC crews for removal of Russian olive and tamarisk along the Animas River on SUIT lands, based on three weeks of service per season (2022-2023), which represents an increase of one additional week per year over our commitment in past years. The protection of the Animas River watershed is of great importance, and we encourage the Colorado Water Conservation Board to fund this proposal. Please contact me if there are any questions.

Kind regards,

Ben Zimmerman

Ben Zimmerman
Fishery Biologist
Southern Ute Indian Tribe
(970) 563-0130