



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Nora Flynn, Water Supply Planning Section

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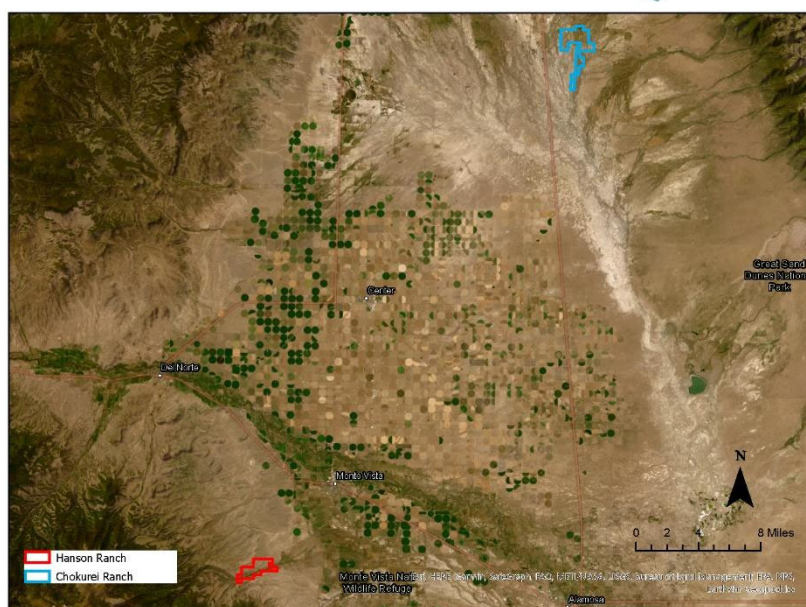
CONSENT AGENDA ITEM 4: Scope of work change for Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust project: San Luis Creek Conservation Partnership

Introduction

At the March 2022 board meeting ([agenda item 26b](#)), the board approved \$450,000 in water plan grant funding to support the Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust project: San Luis Creek Conservation Partnership. The goal of the project was to establish four conservation easements in the northern part of the San Luis Valley. One of the landowners originally enrolled in the process had a change of heart and Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust is requesting to move the funding allocated for this task (\$150,000.00) from the Chokurei Ranch to the Hanson Ranch Conservation Easement acquisition project. The other three conservation easements originally proposed are moving along as planned.

The canceled conservation easement was approximately 2,000 acres in the Upper San Luis Valley including wetlands, uplands and rangeland as well as riparian area. The new project, Hanson Ranch, is located southwest of Monte Vista, near the headwaters of Rock Creek in the San Juan foothills (see map). The property is 1,120 acres in total and includes over a mile of Rock Creek and associated riparian areas; 123 acres of wetlands, including flood-irrigated meadows and freshwater-emergent wetlands; and upland meadows, native grasses, and productive rangeland. The current property use includes cattle grazing and hay production. Conservation values of the project are numerous: scenic views, open space, wildlife habitat,

CWCB San Luis Creek Conservation Partnership
Removal of the Chokurei Ranch and addition of the Hanson Ranch



riparian/wetland area, and historic significance, but the most important conservation value in this property is in its connectivity to public and privately conserved lands. This Ranch will be the second to last property to be protected along Rock Creek, conserving the corridor and migratory pathways for multiple species up into Forest Service and BLM managed lands.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the change in scope of work for this project because the overall goal of the project remains the same: to preserve land and water for agriculture, wildlife, wetland area, and other conservation values. With the location change, from the San Luis Creek area to south of Monte Vista, the project retains the above goals.

