



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Chris Sturm, Watershed and Flood Protection Section

DATE: February 25, 2021

AGENDA ITEM: Agenda Item 22. March 10-11, 2021 Board Meeting
Program Guidance for the Special Release of the Colorado
Watershed Restoration Program

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board Approve the Program Guidance for the Special Release of the Colorado Watershed Restoration Program.

Introduction

The Colorado Watershed Restoration Program (CWRP) is designed to provide planning and project implementation funding for watershed and stream restoration and protection efforts. The program supports stakeholder driven collaboratives committed to restoring and protecting the ecological processes that connect land and water. The CWRP guidance document and application was approved by the Board in September 2008. The Board approved revisions to the program in May 2012 and July 2015. The Board also approved a Special Release of the Colorado Watershed Restoration Program in October 2013 to address planning needs associated with the September 2013 Front Range floods.

Discussion

In anticipation of potential legislation, staff is proposing a special release of the CWRP grant program (special release) to address post-wildfire recovery needs for areas affected by wildfire in 2020. The special release CWRP guidance is attached. The guidance also includes an application template. The special release outlines funding for stakeholder engagement, engineering, and project implementation.

Draft SB21-054 proposes an appropriation of \$4,000,000 for the CWCB Colorado Watershed Restoration Program. Additional funding for FY22 is also being deliberated. The special release proposes submittal of applications to the CWCB as soon as funds are authorized and monthly thereafter until available funds are depleted. The exact dates are to be decided pending the passing of the proposed legislation. Established non-profit organizations, watershed coalitions, local governments, conservation and water conservancy districts, and Colorado's tribal governments are eligible for funding. Funding from the special release will not exceed 50% of the total cost of fire recovery efforts in a specific fire footprint. This is consistent with the CWCB match requirement effort for other fire recovery efforts, including the 2018 416 and Spring Creek fires.



**COLORADO WATERSHED RESTORATION PROGRAM
GRANT GUIDANCE and APPLICATION
Special Release Spring 2021**

1. Introduction

The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) has approved a special release of the Colorado Watershed Restoration Program. The CWCB is now accepting applications from areas affected by wildfires in 2020. These fires include but are not limited to the East Troublesome, Cameron Peak, Grizzly Creek, Pine Gulch, Calwood, Mullen (in Colorado), and Williams Fork Fires.

Draft SB21-054 proposes an appropriation of \$4,000,000 for the CWCB Colorado Watershed Restoration Program. The bill states that the funds shall be used “to support post-fire recovery and mitigation efforts”.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Interested parties are strongly encouraged to contact the CWCB to discuss potential applications.

For more information, please contact:

Chris Sturm

chris.sturm@state.co.us

2. Background

CWCB staff, consultants, and local fire recovery stakeholders have developed models for some fires that will facilitate the prioritization of projects. Additional technical assistance is still available, and more information can be found in the Disaster Recovery Resources section of the CWCB’s Watershed Health webpage (<https://cwcb.colorado.gov/focus-areas/ecosystem-health/watershed-protection-and-restoration>).

Applications will be accepted for fire recovery planning, engineering, and implementation associated with the 2020 wildfires. Examples include:

- a. Capacity Building to establish a stakeholder group represented by all interested parties in fire affected areas. Funds can be used by stakeholder groups to support outreach, organization, communication, and management of recovery efforts including stakeholder coordination for recovery planning associated the wildfire.
- b. Engineering projects such as hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, fluvial hazard zone mapping, sediment yield and transport evaluations, risk assessment, project identification and prioritization, project design, permitting, and construction oversight, and

- c. Implementation projects such as distribution of wood straw mulch to mitigate upland erosion, gully stabilization, sediment catchment, sediment and debris removal, streambank stabilization, revegetation, floodplain connectivity enhancement, low water road crossings, culvert replacement, culvert protection and debris catchments, diversion protection and/or reconstruction, and associated project monitoring.

3. Eligible Entities

Established non-profit organizations, watershed coalitions, local governments, conservation and water conservancy districts, and Colorado's tribal governments are eligible. Federal agencies and private landowners are not eligible to receive grant funds; however, projects may be conducted on private, state, or federal lands with appropriate permissions and under the sponsorship of an eligible entity. Local governments that do not participate in the National Flood Insurance Program will not be eligible for funding.

Applicants are strongly advised to consult with the Colorado State Forest Service regarding the use of Colorado specific forest products for project implementation. CSFS will provide a list of Colorado specific forest product companies. In many instances, contact with forest product supply companies in Colorado will be essential to develop accurate budget estimates.

All successful applicants for project implementation will pursue the use of Colorado specific forest products and materials when applicable. Parties wishing to import forest products from other states will be required to submit a justification for review and approval.

CSFS contact information:

Tim Reader

Program Specialist
Wood Products Utilization & Marketing
Colorado State Forest Service
Durango, Colorado
tim.reader@colostate.edu
(970)759.2443 cell
(970)247.5250 Office Ext. #6

4. Match Funding Requirements

CWCB funds from the 2021 Special Release of the Colorado Watershed Restoration Program shall not exceed 50% of the total cost of fire recovery efforts in a specific fire footprint. Project costs may consist of a combination of in-kind and cash match, but no more than half of the match may be in the form of in-kind services.

Cash Match

Actual expenditures paid directly with cash funds from the grantee to a vendor. Examples are supplies, services, and necessary equipment purchase or rental.

In-Kind Match

Materials, services, and labor provided by grantee to perform all or part of the approved project scope of work, including necessary project administration. This can include standard direct and indirect personnel fringe benefits. Volunteer services provided at no cost to the applicant by firms or individuals consistent with the approved scope of work will be valued for in-kind match at local prevailing wage rates. Project specific land acquisition or access agreement costs may also be claimed as in-kind contributions and credited against the minimum requirement. Costs that CAN NOT be considered include: general organization operating costs such as utilities, operating supplies and services, amortized costs or rental costs for buildings and equipment used for the general operation of the organization, and general property and liability insurance costs, nor will overhead percent charges to cover such items be allowed. These business expenses are NOT reimbursable costs and may not be claimed as matching contributions.

5. Evaluation Criteria

CWCB staff will select the projects to fund from applications that best meet the basic applicant qualifications and evaluation criteria below. CWCB staff reserves the right to negotiate with successful applicants to modify the scope and/or budget of their projects to better meet CWCB objectives and fund availability. An evaluation team will review the applications and recommend projects to senior CWCB staff. The evaluation team will consist of at least three members. The CWCB Director will have approval authority for funding recommendations. Applications that ultimately cannot meet basic qualifications and evaluation criteria below may not be selected for funding.

Basic Applicant Qualifications

Grant applicants must demonstrate:

- a commitment to collaborative approaches, involving locally and/or regionally based diverse interests within the watershed in question, with participation open to all interested persons in the watershed;
- a commitment to restoring or protecting ecological processes that connect land and water while protecting life and property from flood hazards;
- that the purpose of the application is to implement or plan for a project intended to (1) restore and/or protect the water, lands and other natural resources within the watershed, (2) mitigate flood hazards, and/or (3) integrate a multi-objective approach;
- a broad based involvement in and/or support for the grant application, including relevant local, state, or federal governmental entities; and
- an ability to provide the appropriate in-kind or cash match for the activities proposed.
- Connection to direct impacts from wildfires that occurred in 2020 that can be mitigated through this program.

Grant applications that do not demonstrate the above criteria will be disqualified from the application review process.

The information below is summary of what must be included in an application for funding from the 2021 Special Release of the Colorado Watershed Restoration Program. Proposals shall address all sections (A-E) listed below.

All applications should be submitted electronically via email to chris.sturm@state.co.us

Logistical questions about submitting applications should be directed to Chris Sturm (303-866-3441, ext. 3236 or chris.sturm@state.co.us).

The entire application must be submitted as one file, e.g. word .doc or .pdf. Files larger than 20mb cannot be received via email.

Please address all of the criteria below.

APPLICATION BEGINS HERE

A. PROJECT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Please list the following on the summary sheet:

- Project Title
- Project Location (include map and/or latitude/longitude if applicable)
- Grant Request/Amount
- Cash Match Funding Secured
- Cash Match Funding Pending
- In-kind Match Funding
- Project Sponsor(s) (identify the fiscal agent if different from the project sponsor)
- Contact person name, email address, and phone number
- Brief description of the project

All of the above information should fit on one page. Please use a font size no smaller than 11 point.

B. APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS (30 points)

- b.1 Identify the lead project sponsor and describe the other stakeholders' level of participation and involvement.
- b.2 What information is the project sponsor using to develop the proposed plan or project? Include any relevant information regarding existing fire recovery plans and models.
- b.3 Specify in-kind services and cash contributions (match) amount for proposed activities in the fire affected area. Discuss whether other funding sources are secured or pending.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY (30 points)

- c.1 What is the applicant organization's history of accomplishments in the watershed? Provide several past project examples. List partner organizations and agencies with which applicant worked to implement past projects.
- c.2 What level of staffing will be directed toward the implementation of the proposed project/planning effort? Discuss the number of staff and amount of time dedicated for the project. Will volunteers be utilized, and if so, how?

D. EFFECTIVENESS OF PROPOSAL (40 points)

- d.1 Demonstrate that the project budget and schedule are realistic. All projects shall be completed by **(date pending legislation)**. Please use the attached budget/timeline spreadsheet.
- d.2 Discuss the multi-objective aspects of the project and how they relate to each other. Provide a description of the project, its purpose, and a summary of goals and objectives, specifically note whether the project is intended to (1) restore and/or protect the water, lands and other natural resources within the watershed, (2) mitigate flood hazards, and/or (3) integrate a multi-objective approach that also addresses (1) or (2).
- d.3 Describe other fire recovery activities in the fire affected and how this application complements those activities.

E ATTACHMENTS – Please complete the attached scope of work and budget template. Other documents may be attached to the application in order to support the request for funding. These may include:

- Letters of support from other entities and letters of financial commitment
- Pertinent still photos
- Maps and reports from other similar or related projects

END OF APPLICATION

6. Application Deadlines

The CWCB will accept applications submitted by **(date pending legislation)** and monthly on the first Thursday of each month thereafter until available funds are depleted. *(All dates will be added upon bill approval)*