

Metro Roundtable Guidelines for Water Supply Reserve Fund Grant Application and Requests for Letters of Support February 2021

Introduction

The Metro Roundtable (MRT) plays a major role in allocating state funds for water projects in the Denver Metro area and portions of the South Platte River Basin. The Colorado Water Conservation Board's (CWCB) Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF) Program provides two types of grants to assist Colorado water users in addressing their critical water supply issues and interests. The funds help eligible entities complete water activities, which may include competitive grants for:

- Technical assistance regarding permitting, feasibility studies and environmental compliance;
- Studies or analysis of structural, nonstructural, consumptive and nonconsumptive water needs, projects or activities; and
- Structural and nonstructural water projects or activities.

The two types of WSRF grants are Basin Account grants and Statewide Account grants. The Basin Accounts fund activities within a specific roundtable, and are managed by each of the nine roundtables; the Statewide Account funds grants competitively across all nine basin roundtables. All MRT Water Supply Reserve Fund grant applications must first be reviewed and approved by the MRT before the CWCB makes a final decision.

Eligibility requirements and application instructions for the CWCB's WSRF grants are located here:

<https://cwcb.colorado.gov/loans-grants/water-supply-reserve-fund-grants>

Metro Roundtable Vision

As a majority of Colorado's Municipal and Industrial (M&I) water supply gap is expected to occur in the South Platte Basin, efforts to meet M&I demands continue to be a high priority for the MRT. The MRT is focused on delivering on-the-ground solutions to the M&I gap, but doing so in a manner that minimizes the negative impacts to agriculture, the environment, and recreation. All projects seeking MRT WSRF funding should demonstrate how the project would encourage collaboration while providing multiple benefits that meet the MRT Priorities.

Metro Roundtable Priorities

The MRT seeks WSRF grant proposals for projects that support the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan, a copy of which is located here <https://southplattebasin.com/documents/bip/>. The MRT encourages projects of statewide and local basin significance to address existing and future M&I demands while also meeting goals related to the long-term sustainability of agricultural economies and the natural environment.

The MRT membership has approved the prioritization of its WSRF Basin Account funds based on five specific topic areas related to the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan. WSRF grant requests are facilitated by the MRT WSRF Needs Committee (Needs Committee), which is comprised of the

MRT membership. The Needs Committee members and the priority topic areas for which each provides support are as follows:

MRT WSRF Needs Committee Chair	Emily Hunt, Emily.Hunt@thorntonco.gov
Conceptual Projects – In-Basin and Transbasin	Eric Hecox, Eric.Hecox@sheapropties.com
Conservation and Reuse	Rick Marsicek, Rick.Marsicek@denverwater.org
Environment and Recreation	David Nickum, DNickum@tu.org
Implementation of IP&Ps	Barbara Biggs, Barbara@roxwater.org
Education and Outreach	Casey Davenhill, casey@coloradowater.org

see pages 5-12 for additional information on topic areas

Purpose of Guidelines

- Supplement the CWCB WSRF Criteria and Guidelines located here: <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/loans-grants/water-supply-reserve-fund-grants>
- Document the MRT’s requirements and priorities for WSRF grant applications
- Maximize applicant success in pursuit of MRT WSRF grants from both the Statewide and Basin Accounts.
- Aid grant applicants in understanding the requirements of the WSRF grant application process and facilitate communication with applicants, the CWCB, and the MRT in order to align projects with MRT priorities and strengthen the applications.
- Provide an evaluation methodology that gives the greatest preference to projects that support the principles and goals of the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan.

Call for Projects

The MRT Needs Committee considers projects twice a year. At times, the Needs Committee may consider or actively seek applications or projects that address elevated MRT priorities.

Application Step	Cycle 1 Deadline	Cycle 2 Deadline
CWCB Approval Meeting	September	March
Final Application due to CWCB & MRT	June 1	December 1
Consideration at MRT Meeting	May	November
Draft Application due to MRT Needs Committee	April 15	October 15
One page summary due to MRT Needs Committee	March 15	September 15

How to Apply

Review CWCB WSRF grant application eligibility requirements, application instructions and funding deadlines located here: <https://cwcb.colorado.gov/loans-grants/water-supply-reserve-fund-grants>. The applicant is also encouraged to contact the CWCB to discuss the project and other funding opportunities.

1. Review the Topic Areas Funding Distribution and Grant Priorities on pages 5-12 of this document to determine if the project meets one or more of the MRT priority areas. Contact the topic area lead, or the Needs Committee Chair, to discuss project eligibility and determine whether funding is available.
2. If the project is eligible and funding is available, the applicant will be asked to provide a short (no more than two-page) summary of the project to the topic area lead or Needs Committee Chair. The summary should include:
 - a. Project description, timeline, and budget
 - b. Grant request
 - c. Discussion of how the project fits the MRT's priorities
3. The Needs Committee will review the project summary and will determine whether to request the applicant to apply for funding.
4. Upon request, submit the WSRF Grant Application form and an Executive Summary to the Needs Committee Chair, via email, by either the Cycle 1 or Cycle 2 deadlines. The Executive Summary should reference specific sections of the South Platte Basin Roundtable's Basin Implementation Plan that the project addresses. Applicants are encouraged to work with the topic area lead to ensure the completeness of the application prior to submission.
5. Attend the appropriate Cycle 1 or Cycle 2 MRT meeting to make a short presentation about the project and answer questions from the MRT membership.
6. The MRT will vote on approval, which requires a vote of 2/3 majority of the voting membership of the MRT.
7. If the project is approved, the applicant should provide a draft letter of recommendation to the CWCB to be signed by the MRT Chair. The letter of recommendation must specify the amount of grant funding requested from the Basin Account and/or the Statewide Account and describe how the water activity satisfies the statutory eligibility requirements.
8. The Applicant will work with CWCB staff to address any issues or additional information needed prior to CWCB Board review.

Colorado Water Plan Grant and other requests for MRT Letter of Support

Water Plan Grant funding is available to make progress on the critical actions identified in Colorado's Water Plan (CWP) and its Measurable Objectives. Water Plan Grants are administered by the CWCB. Application instructions and eligibility requirements are located here:

<https://cwcb.colorado.gov/colorados-water-plan-grants>.

Applicants for Water Plan Grants are encouraged to obtain a letter of support from the local basin roundtable. In addition, other CWCB funding opportunities may also encourage applicants to obtain a letter of support from the local basin roundtable.

Requests for letters of support from the MRT for can be made as follows:

1. Applicant should consult CWCB deadlines to ensure that a request for a letter of support occurs at a MRT meeting in advance of the grant deadline.
2. Send a one-page summary of the project to the Needs Committee Chair at least two weeks in advance of a MRT meeting. The summary should include:
 - a. Project description, timeline, and budget
 - b. Grant request
 - c. Discussion of how the project fits the MRT's and Water Plan priorities
3. Attend the MRT meeting. The request will be introduced by the Needs Committee Chair, and you will be asked to provide a brief (less than 5 minute) presentation of your request and take questions from the MRT membership.
4. The MRT membership will vote on the request for a letter of support.
5. Provide a draft letter of support to the MRT Chair for signature in advance of the CWCB application deadline.

Conceptual Projects

Topic Area Lead: Eric Hecox Eric.Hecox@sheapropties.com

The Metro Roundtable will solicit applications to implement the following recommendations from the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan:

Further Develop In-Basin Conceptual Projects and Methods – The Roundtables recommend additional development and analysis associated with the conceptual in-basin projects and methods presented in Section 4.6.2 (BIP, p. 6-17).

Further Develop New Colorado River Basin Supply Strategies – The Roundtables recommend additional conceptualization analysis of shared development of additional Colorado River Basin supplies and the projects and methods presented in Section 4.8.2 (BIP, p. 6-17).

In order to ensure that resources are not spread too thin, the Metro Roundtable will attempt to fund at least one effort per year to further develop each concept.

In order to ensure that each concept is advanced (and one is not prioritized over the other), the Metro Roundtable will attempt over time to provide approximately equal funding for advancing each concept.

Successful applications will build upon the South Platte/Metro BIP per the details below.

Anticipated WSRF Funding needs:

- The Metro Roundtable anticipates advancing the Conceptual Projects in conjunction with the South Platte Roundtable and possibly other Basin Roundtables.
- The Roundtables could leverage their Basin Account Funds and target Statewide Account funds for each concept.
- Additionally, it is anticipated that in-kind or cash matches for each concept would be provided by Metro Roundtable members. Finally, it is anticipated that the Arkansas Basin Roundtable and potentially other Basin Roundtables would be interested in participating in the development of the New Colorado River Basin Supply Strategies concept.

Successful application to further develop **In-Basin** Conceptual Projects and Methods would build upon the following work in the BIP:

- Efforts to advance this concept should build on the recommendation in Executive Summary related to “Maximize use and effectiveness of native South Platte supplies” (BIP S.5.3, p.S-13). Specifically it should help “develop new, in-basin, multipurpose water storage and conveyance mechanisms, explore further integration of South Platte water supply systems to enhance yield and reliability, and develop methods to more effectively use groundwater.”
- Efforts to advance this concept should specifically reference and build upon Section 4.6.2 Conceptual Future In-Basin Multipurpose Project (BIP, p. 4-74 – 4-85).
- Additional work on this concept should build upon Portfolio B as described in Section 5.4.2 (BIP, p. 5-16) and subsequent analysis in Section 5.4.4.
- Finally, the successful application should describe how it advances the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan Elements #3 Maximize use and effectiveness of native South Platte

supplies (BIP Section 5.5.3, p. 5-25) and # 7 Promote multi-purpose storage projects that enhance other South Platte Basin solutions (BIP Section 5.5.8, p. 5-29).

Successful application to further develop **New Colorado River Basin Supply Strategies** would build upon the following work in the BIP:

- Additional work on this concept should build on the recommendation in the Executive Summary related to “Simultaneously advance the consideration and preservation of new Colorado River Basin supply options” (BIP S.5.6, p. S-14). Specifically it should help “promote additional conceptualization analysis of shared development of additional Colorado River Basin supplies [and] consider potential criteria for ‘State Water Projects’ including benefits and challenges.”
- Efforts to advance this concept should specifically reference and build upon Section 4.8 Interbasin Projects and Methods (BIP, p. 4-100 – 4-118).
- Efforts to advance this concept should examine how a specific new Colorado River Basin supply strategy would relate to the elements of the IBCC’s Conceptual Framework.
- Additional work on this concept should build upon Section 5.3.3 Collaborative Statewide Approach on Colorado River Basin Supplies, Colorado River Management and a State Water Project (BIP, p. 5-13).
- Additional work on this concept should build upon Portfolio C as described in Section 5.4.3 (BIP, p. 5-17) and subsequent analysis in Section 5.4.4.
- Finally, the successful application should describe how it advances the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan Elements #Simultaneously Advance Investigation, Preservation, and Development of New Colorado River Supply Options (BIP Section 5.5.6, p. 5-27) and # 7 Promote multi-purpose storage projects that enhance other South Platte Basin solutions (BIP Section 5.5.8, p. 5-29).

Conservation and Reuse

Topic Area Lead: Rick Marsicek Rick.Marsicek@denverwater.org

The governing criteria for grant requests concerning Conservation and Reuse will first be based on how such requests will meet Plan Element #2 of the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) – **Maintain leadership in conservation and reuse and implement additional measures to reduce water consumption rates**. To achieve this, the Metro Roundtable will consider WSRF grant requests that address the following:

- Water Conservation and Efficiency - Refine and normalize projected water conservation savings by municipal and industrial water use sectors to estimate future passive and active savings by 2050. Develop estimated ranges of practical stretch goal savings. Identify the relationships of these savings to reducing the M&I gap. Improve water efficiency by improving, optimizing, or rehabilitating municipal water systems, with priority given to small or disadvantaged systems.
- Reuse - Look towards advancing new or innovative technologies. Evaluate direct and indirect potable reuse and non-potable reuse potential in the basin, looking at available M&I supplies physically and legally available for reuse, planned uses of such supplies by current owners, factors affecting reuse availability and practicality (regulatory issues, benefits within and across water use sectors, impacts of enhanced conservation on reuse supplies and potential, and impacts to downstream water use).

A grant request doesn't necessarily need to address all of the above aspects to be given funding consideration, but requests will be evaluated against these as selection criteria. Consideration will also be given to how a request addresses the issues identified in the BIP related to conservation and/or reuse, including:

- Successive use, conservation, and reuse – The dependence on successive use of return flows on the South Platte for M&I, agricultural, and environmental and recreational needs to be defined and considered (Section S.3.2).
- Passive and Active Conservation – Each type of conservation needs to be clearly defined and the application of any savings to meet the gap must be differentiated from savings to be used for other purpose (drought protection, factor of safety, climate change/variability, (public policy, etc.) (Section 4.3.1).
- Conservation Successes – Any analysis of estimated future conservation must objectively incorporate conservation programs and successes already in place to develop reasonable and achievable future savings (Section 4.3.1.).
- Reuse sources – Identification and differentiation of sources of reusable supply, including nonnative (TMD) water, agricultural-municipal transfers, nontributary groundwater, decreed reuse water (Section 4.3.2).
- Reuse limitations – Consideration of infrastructure needs, losses, timing, impacts to downstream rights, water quality, treatment and disposal, regulatory requirements for potable (direct and indirect) and non-potable uses (Section 4.3.2)

Environment & Recreation

Topic Area Lead: David Nickum DNickum@tu.org

The overall environmental and recreational goal of the South Platte/Metro Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) is to enhance the health and vitality of rivers and streams in the South Platte Basin, sustaining ecosystems and providing important environmental, societal, and economic benefits to the region. The environmental and recreational assets within the basin include high mountain stream, foothills stream and warm water stream habitats, metropolitan corridors and areas of recreational opportunity.

The (BIP) established the following goal for environmental and recreational values, and WSRF proposals should directly address this goal:

- Fully recognize the importance of, and support the development of environmental and recreational projects and multipurpose projects that support water availability for ecologically and economically important habitats and focus areas.

Project needs identified under the measurable outcomes for this goal include restoration, recovery and sustainability of endangered, threatened and imperiled aquatic, riparian and wetland dependent species and plant communities (MO#1), enhancement of economic values associated with environmental and recreational water uses such as fishing, boating, waterfowl hunting, wildlife watching, camping and hiking (MO#2), and improve conditions of streams, lakes, wetlands and riparian areas to promote self-sustaining fisheries and functional riparian and wetland habitat (MO#3).

Additionally, the BIP recognized the need to further assess environmental and recreational attributes, the projects and methods for their protection and enhancement, and the sufficiency of those projects and methods. Initial efforts should be directed toward the South Platte Focus Areas (p. 6-17).

Collaboration across water use sectors and multi-purpose projects were emphasized as priorities under plan elements 5 and 7:

- 5) Protect and enhance environmental and recreation attributes through collaboration with other water use sectors.
- 7) Promote multi-purpose storage projects that enhance other South Platte Basin solutions

In light of the needs for increased assessment, environmental and recreation projects and methods, and for collaboration on multi-purpose projects, we invite proposals in each of those three categories: stream management planning/assessment; environmental and recreation enhancements; and development of environmental and recreational components in multipurpose projects. The Metro Roundtable will attempt to prioritize funding for projects that have demonstration value, or projects for which WSRF funding is essential for completion.

Geographic scope. Proposals to the Metro Basin Roundtable should address projects and waterways that are located either within, or upstream and influencing, the watersheds within the Metro Roundtable boundaries. Projects with a broader scope in the South Platte watershed will also be considered for applicants seeking both Metro and South Platte Basin Roundtable support. Emphasis should be on identified environmental and recreational Focus Areas (an exception may be for restoration of priority imperiled species into suitable, but currently unoccupied habitat). A map showing South Platte BIP Environmental & Recreation Focus Areas is attached.

Leveraging. Grants should emphasize leveraging of other matching resources (cash and/or in-kind) rather than relying on Basin WSRF funds as the primary financial support for a project. Examples of such leverage could include CWCB stream management plan grants, county funding through the Conservation Trust Fund, statewide WSRF allocations, Colorado Parks and Wildlife grant programs for wetlands and fishery enhancement, and matching resources from other water use sectors as part of multi-purpose projects.

Environmental and Recreation Grant Types

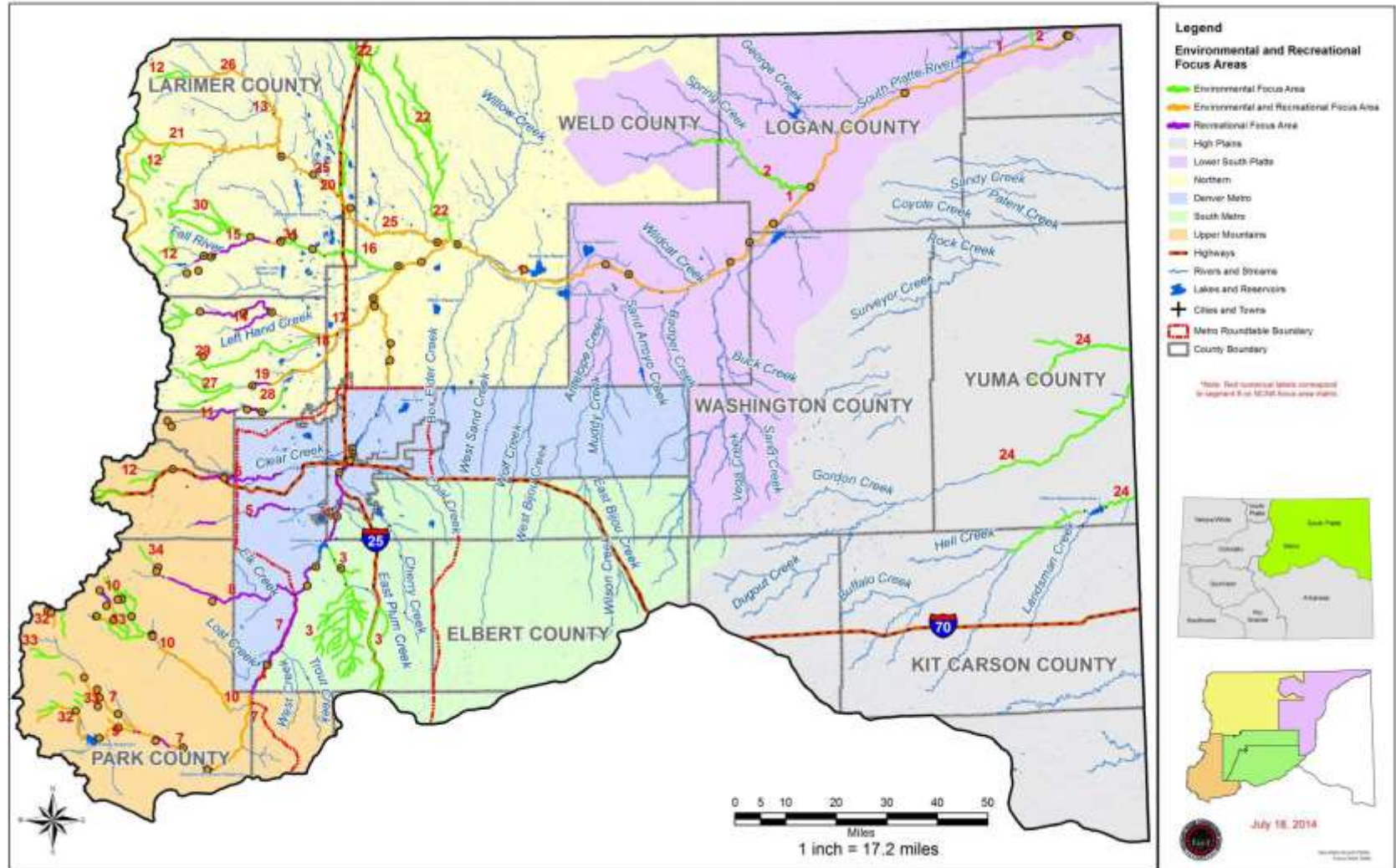
Assessment grants. Assessments of environmental and recreational needs should establish baseline understanding of those needs, and define projects and methods to avoid degradation of current conditions where they are adequate and to restore ecosystems to sustainable and resilient levels where feasible. These assessments should fill existing data gaps regarding protection of environmental and recreational attributes in order to better understand the adequacy of existing and future protections. We anticipate that these grants would be used in concert with other funds including the CWCB's Watershed Restoration Grants program for "stream management plans." Assessment work should emphasize Focus Areas where diverse stakeholders are engaged and where opportunities exist for collaborative projects (new, or through operation agreements on existing projects) to enhance habitat and/or flow conditions.

Environmental/recreational enhancement grants. These grants provide matching resources toward projects for direct enhancement of aquatic, riparian and/or wetlands habitat within identified Focus Areas. Examples of such projects would include restoration of stream channels to provide improved habitat; project for recovery of habitat for and/or reintroduction of imperiled species; restoration of riparian and other wetland habitat and vegetation. Emphasis will be on projects that address critical species and/or that provide benefits for multiple environmental and recreational attributes (eg, riparian wetlands and improved water quality for fish habitat; greenway recreation and aquatic/riparian species habitat; etc.)

Environmental/recreational multi-purpose project grants. Projects should include collaboration among different water use sectors in achieving BIP goals and maximizing the basin's ability to meet its diverse water needs within limited resources. Grants should provide seed money toward incorporation of environmental and recreational components with other new or existing projects. Examples could include:

- Environmental pools in reservoirs for in-reservoir habitats of concern and downstream flow management;
- Modernization of diversion structures with more river-friendly designs that facilitate aquatic life passage and natural river function;
- Development of cooperative operating agreements to maximize environmental and recreation benefit and delivery of water for other end uses.

South Platte Environmental and Recreational Focus Areas



Implementation of IP&P's

Topic Area Lead: Barbara Biggs Barbara@roxwater.org

The governing criteria for grant requests concerning Implementation of IP&P's will first be based on how such requests will meet Plan Element #2 of the SPBIP – **Maximize Implementation of IPPs**. In order to accomplish this, the unique nature of the Metro Roundtable must be considered:

- The Metro Roundtable is made up of generally very sophisticated project sponsors, so the role of the BRT in supporting successful implementation of IPPs needs to recognize the primary role of the water providers.
- The Metro Roundtable will solicit applications to support successful implementation of IPPs.
- The Metro Roundtable recognizes that there are projects that are not included in the IPPs that are consistent with the vision of BIP, and will consider grant requests for those projects. Priority will be given to projects involving small or disadvantaged water systems.
- The Metro Roundtable will attempt to prioritize funding for projects that have demonstration value, or projects for which WSRF funding is essential for completion.

To make progress toward meeting the BIP goal of maximizing the implementation, the Metro Roundtable will actively seek grant applications to assist water providers with projects that will implement their IPPs. In addition, the Metro Roundtable will actively work to, and participate in efforts to improve project implementation under Colorado's Water Plan and tasks undertaken under the next SWSI update to update and refine the IPPs of smaller water providers in the Metro region. Finally, the Metro Roundtable may want to poll proponents of IPPs of water users in the South Platte Basin to determine whether collaboration and education among the proponents on permitting processes could improve the efficiency the permitting processes for the IPPs. If the polling is promising, the Metro Roundtable may consider funding collaboration and education efforts to help improve permitting efficiency.

Education and Outreach

Topic Area Lead: Casey Davenport casey@coloradowater.org

Funding related to Education and Outreach Priorities will be consistent with the approved Metro Roundtable Education Action Plan and available for view or download [here](#).

Grant applicants seeking Education and Outreach funds will need to successfully demonstrate how their project ties to the recommendations in the Metro Roundtable Education Action Plan.