

# Expansion of the San Miguel Watershed Coalition

**Submitted By:**



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## Table of Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background Data</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Project Location</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Technical Project Description</b> .....	<b>7</b>
4.1	Applicant Category.....	7
4.2	Eligibility of Applicant.....	8
4.3	Goals.....	9
4.4	Approach.....	10
4.4.1	Task A—Watershed Group Development.....	10
4.4.2	Task B—Watershed Restoration Plan.....	11
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Evaluation Criteria</b> .....	<b>12</b>
5.1	Evaluation Criteria A—Watershed Group Diversity and Geographic Scope.....	12
5.1.1	Sub-criterion No. A1. Watershed Group Diversity.....	12
5.1.2	Sub-criterion No. A2. Geographic Scope.....	14
5.2	Evaluation Criterion B—Addressing Critical Watershed Needs.....	16
5.2.1	Sub-criterion No. B1. Critical Watershed Needs or Issues.....	16
5.2.2	Sub-criterion No. B2. Developing Strategies to Address Critical Watershed Needs or Issues.....	18
5.3	Evaluation Criteria C—Implementation and Results.....	21
5.3.1	Sub-criterion No. C1. Understanding of and Ability to Meet Program Requirements.....	21
5.3.2	Sub-criterion No. C2. Building on Relevant Federal, State, or Regional Planning Efforts.....	21
5.4	Evaluation Criteria D—Nexus to Department of the Interior Initiatives.....	22
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Required Permits or Approvals</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Budget Proposal</b> .....	<b>23</b>
8.1	Budget Proposal.....	23
8.2	Budget Narrative.....	24
8.2.1	Salary and Wages.....	24
8.2.2	Fringe Benefits.....	24
8.2.3	Travel.....	24
8.2.4	Materials and Supplies.....	24
8.2.5	Contractual.....	25
8.2.6	Indirect Costs.....	25
8.2.7	Total Costs.....	25
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Official Resolution</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>10.0</b>	<b>Letters of Project Support</b> .....	<b>27</b>

# 1.0 Executive Summary

January 10, 2018

San Miguel Watershed Coalition

Telluride, San Miguel County, Colorado

The San Miguel Watershed Coalition (SMWC) is a stakeholder-directed local watershed organization serving the entirety of the San Miguel Watershed in southwest Colorado. The Coalition is requesting \$99,303 to hire a full-time Program Coordinator, expand stakeholder involvement within the organization, identify watershed projects and priorities, and execute a Watershed Restoration Plan. WaterSMART support will help to fund the Program Coordinator's stakeholder outreach efforts, analysis of available reports and data, and outreach to stakeholders and agencies for input on priority river reaches and the development of watershed management project concepts. Grant support will enable the Coalition to gather additional water quality and quantity information for baseline data and fund the Coordinator and a consultant to complete a Watershed Restoration Plan. The expansion of the San Miguel Watershed Coalition contributes to the goals and priorities of the WaterSMART program. The San Miguel Watershed contains diverse, rural communities that can, at times, have disparate views on the management of the watershed's resources. This project provides the opportunity to create a meaningful stakeholder engagement process that will instill community trust within the Coalition and create buy-in to the Cooperative Watershed Management Program's conservation stewardship principles. In addition, the community-driven restoration plan provides an avenue to support the sustainable development of water resources, improvement of the ecological health of the San Miguel and its tributaries, and the conservation of water for multiple uses. The proposed activities will occur over a two-year time period with an estimated completion date of September 2020. The proposed project is not located on a Federal facility.

## 2.0 Background Data

The free-flowing San Miguel River extends for 80 miles from high alpine headwaters in the San Juan Mountains above Telluride, CO through scenic valleys and canyons to a confluence with the Dolores River in red rock desert country near the Utah border (Image 1). The river, located in with Southwest corner of Colorado, is one of the last remaining ecologically and hydrologically intact river systems in Colorado, with no dams on its main stem. The San Miguel River Watershed is about one million acres in size, with the majority of land being controlled by the United States Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The watershed spans San Miguel County and the west end of Montrose County. The river runs through a rural, remote part of Colorado and approximately 8,450 people live and work in the entire watershed.

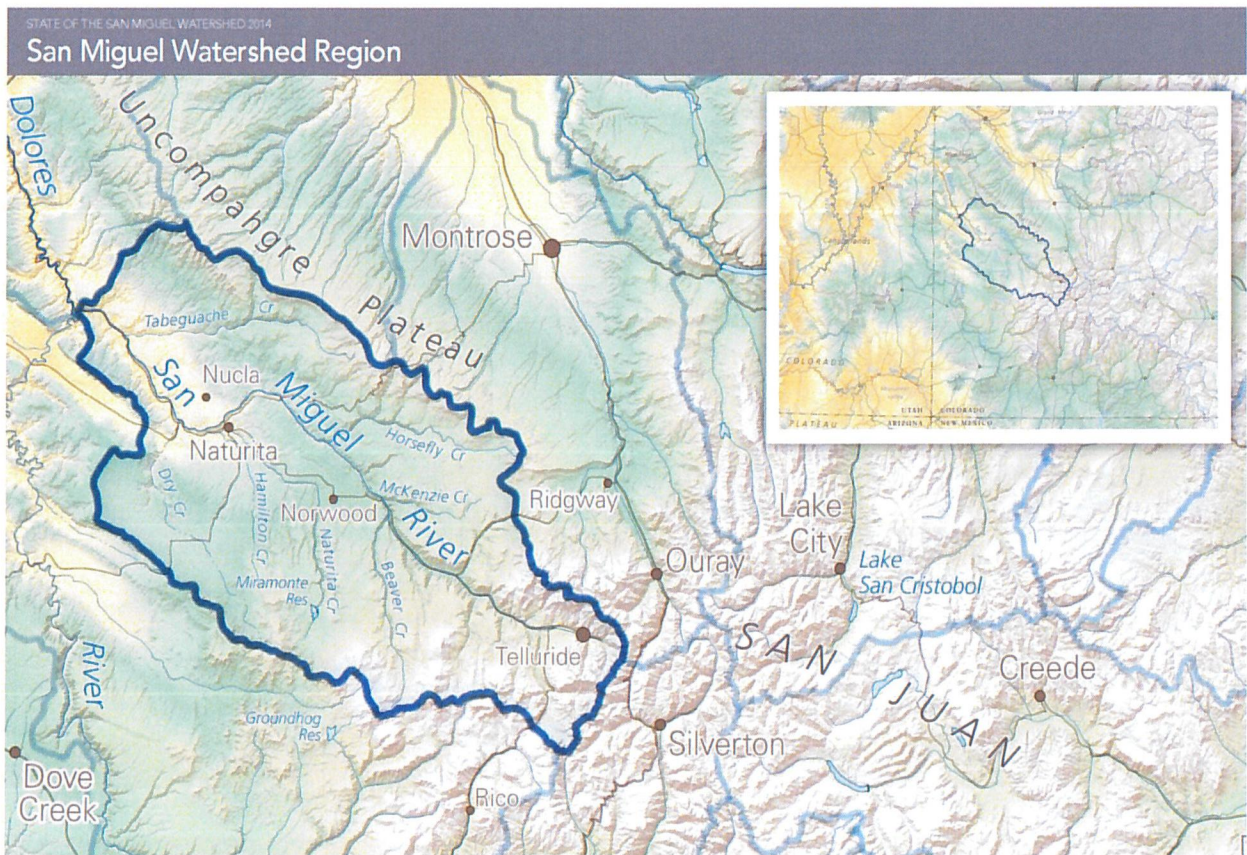


Image 1. San Miguel Watershed

There are a wide variety of water uses of the river including agricultural, municipal, domestic, industrial, instream, environmental and recreational uses. Irrigation is the dominate water use in the San Miguel Watershed and accounts for 96% of water withdrawals in San Miguel County and 98% in Montrose County<sup>1</sup> (See Table 1). The Southwest Basin, in which the San Miguel Watershed is located, is expected to see a 44% increase in M&I water demands by 2050 while experiencing a 3-5% decrease in irrigated acres<sup>2</sup>. The San Miguel Basin is estimated to experience a 53-69% agricultural water use demand shortage by 2050. There are 137 in the San Miguel Watershed, the eight largest water users are listed below in Table 2.

Table 1. Montrose and San Miguel County Water Use (Mgal/d)

County	Crop Irrigation	Public Supply	Domestic	Industrial	Livestock	Mining
Montrose	679.13	8.87	0.86	1.77	0.62	0.62
San Miguel	27.27	0.75	0.14	0	0.09	0.04

Source: USGS Estimated Water Use in 2005 (Kenny et.al, 2009)

<sup>1</sup> Kenny, J.F., Barber, N.L., Hutson, S.S., Linsey, K.S., Lovelace, J.K., and Maupin, M.A., 2009, Estimated use of water in the United States in 2005: U.S. Geological Survey Circular 1344. <http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/1344/>

<sup>2</sup>CDM. 2004c. Statewide Water Supply Initiative report. Chapter 5: Projected Water Use. Prepared for Colorado Water Conservation Board. <http://cwcb.stale.co.us/IWMD/PhasclReport.hlm>.

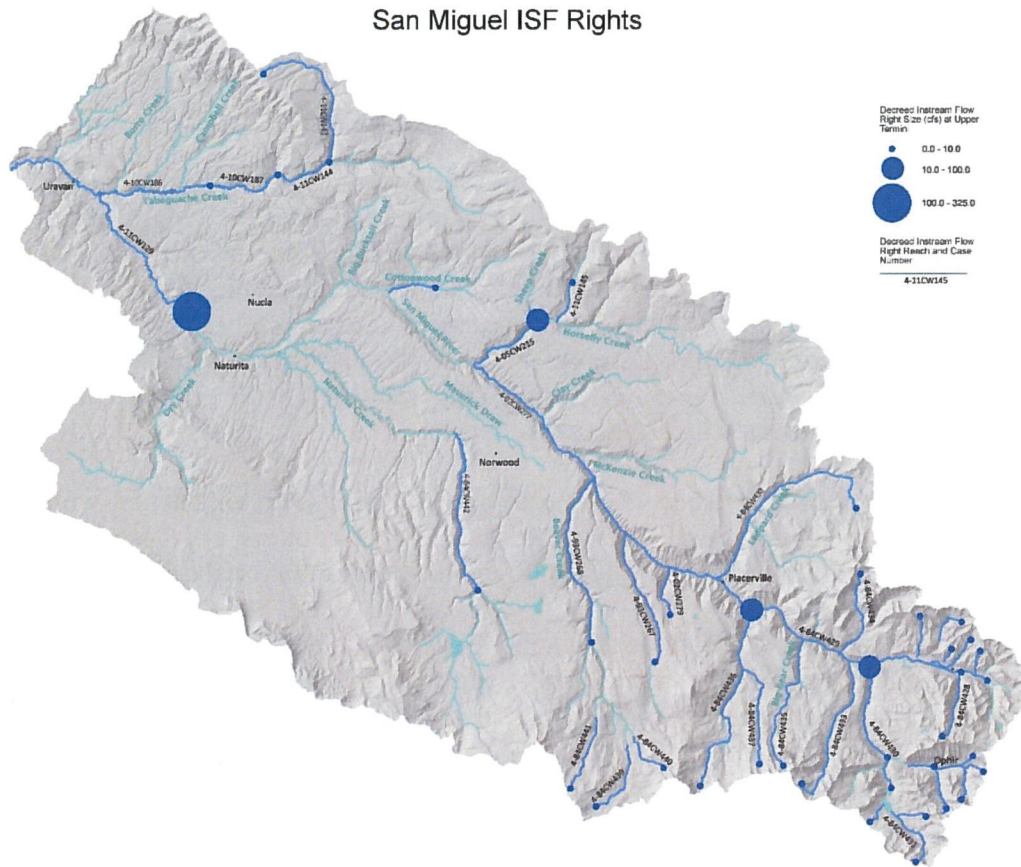
Table 2. Major water users in the San Miguel Watershed

Structure ID	Structure Name	Type	Decreed Rate Total (CFS)
511	AMES ILIUM HYDRO PROJ	Pipeline	83
633	HIGHLINE CANAL	Ditch	265.0592
670	LILYLANDS CANAL	Ditch	121.52
672	LONE CONE DITCH	Ditch	287.87
707	NATURITA CANAL	Ditch	1051
1100	SAN MIGUEL POWER CO CNL	Ditch	240
2119	SAN MIGUEL RIVER	Minimum Flow	325
1950	SAN MIGUEL RIVER	Minimum Flow	93

Source: <http://cdss.state.co.us/DNNNewData/StructuresDiversionsIstaid/75/Default.aspx>

There are 43 unique instream water rights within the San Miguel River Watershed, for native fish and in one instance, riparian vegetation along the river corridor (Image 2). These needs are often not met due to the water demands of senior rights during low-flow periods.

Image 2. San Miguel Watershed Instream Flow Rights



Areas of water quality concern include impacts from resource extraction, both past and present, residential and commercial development, agriculture, industry, naturally occurring metal inputs and municipal discharges. The Colorado Water Quality Control division has identified 15 segments of impaired streams in the San Miguel Watershed. There are currently 4 impaired stream segments identified on the 303(d) list--this number is expected to increase with the publication of an updated list in 2018. Ten of those sites are included because of high levels of heavy metals, six are listed due to concerns over temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, and *E.coli*, and two for aquatic life.

Three BLM sensitive fish species exist in the watershed: bluehead sucker, flannelmouth sucker, and roundtail chub. All three species are native, endemic warm-water species to the Colorado River Basin and all have seen substantial population declines throughout their range. Cutthroat trout and mottled sculpin represent the native cold-water community on the San Miguel River. Cutthroat trout were once present in most of the high elevation streams, but there were extirpated by human-related impacts. Currently, seven genetically pure cutthroat trout conservation populations live in the watershed in addition to eleven other cutthroat trout populations.

In the greater Southwest Basin, there is an estimated current agricultural demand shortage of 189,000 (AFY). As noted above, the shortage is expected to reach 53-69% by 2050. Shortfalls in water supply occur during the summer irrigation season. There are segments of the lower river that are completely dewatered when major water users pull from the river during low flow conditions. It is a high priority to address these dewatering issues.

Native plants still dominate the flora community of the San Miguel River Watershed, but trend patterns indicate that non-natives are increasing across the landscape while native species are stressed by environmental variables. Tamarisk and oxeye daisy are extremely invasive in riparian areas in the watershed and removal efforts have begun and are ongoing. Approximately 35 plant species listed as invasive by the State of Colorado are present in the watershed; however, no comprehensive vegetation monitoring program exists for the entire watershed. Nor is there a comprehensive monitoring plan for forest health in the watershed, and insects, disease and drought conditions continue to threaten the health of the forests.

The San Miguel River Watershed is home to the recently listed threatened wildlife species Gunnison sage grouse, reintroduced endangered species of river otters, and Canada lynx. Bighorn sheep, mule deer, and elk populations also exist and are being monitored here.

Important uses of the river also include recreation for a ski area, boating, bird watching and fishing; environmental uses for wildlife and bird habitat and riparian habitat; and municipal uses. While mining and milling uses were once predominant, no significant mining activity currently exists in the watershed.

### **3.0 Project Location**

The San Miguel Watershed Coalition (SMWC) operates within the entire San Miguel Watershed (HUC 14030003) and projects funded by the WaterSMART program will occur throughout the

basin. The San Miguel Watershed is located in Southwest Colorado and spans both Montrose and San Miguel Counties. The Watershed is in a remote, rural part of Colorado, approximately 360 miles from Denver.

Within the boundaries of the San Miguel River Watershed are the distinctly different communities of Nucla, Naturita, Norwood, Placerville, Sawpit, Telluride, Mountain Village, and Ophir. Telluride, a ski resort town, is the largest community within the watershed and has a population of 2,444 residents.

## 4.0 Technical Project Description

### 4.1 Applicant Category

The San Miguel Watershed Coalition is seeking funding as an Existing Watershed Group. SMWC was formed in 1998 as a 501(C)(3) nonprofit watershed group. From 1998 to 2013, the Coalition primarily tested water quality and gathered water quantity data at a number of sites throughout the entire watershed. In addition, SMWC took on small river improvement projects with partners. The group had its ups and downs and was on the verge of being disbanded twice within that timeframe. However, beginning in 2013, recognizing the importance of a watershed group for the San Miguel River Basin to address pressing water quality and quantity needs, the Coalition began an intensive process of rebuilding. That process has included a scientific review and analysis of past water quality testing, revising its water quality testing plan, uploading its water quality data into the Colorado Data Sharing Network to make it available publicly, hiring a part-time Program Coordinator in May 2016, and forming a Stakeholder Committee of diverse watershed stakeholders in October 2017.

The San Miguel Watershed Coalition’s recent and ongoing projects include:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
2015 State of the San Miguel Watershed	Comprehensive review of the state of the San Miguel River, including: water quantity, water quality, soil, riparian vegetation, aquatic species, air quality, and land use	Completed December 2015
San Miguel River Streamside Living Guide	Brochure outlining best practices for streamside property owners	Completed August 2016
San Miguel Watershed Forum	Community forum where citizens, nonprofits and Federal, state and local governments discuss important issues facing the San Miguel River	Annual event

San Miguel River Contingency Plan	Planning document outlining mining and hazmat threats facing the San Miguel River and mitigation efforts	Ongoing, scheduled to be completed 12/2019
2018 Update to State of the San Miguel Watershed	Update to the 2015 report with current data; update watershed ratings and trends	Project begins 2/2018
Watershed characterization	Expanded water quality program to identify baseline data pertaining to nonpoint source pollution issues and water quantity concerns	Project begins 5/2018
San Juan Mining and Reclamation Conference	Regional conference to discuss mining reclamation and water quality concerns	Annual event
San Miguel Stream Management Plan	Environmental and recreation water supply needs assessment	Ongoing, scheduled to be completed 12/2018

## 4.2 Eligibility

The Coalition is a grassroots, non-regulatory entity that addresses water availability and quality issues within the San Miguel River Watershed. SMWC has collected water quality and quantity data on the San Miguel River for 19 years and provides public access to the data through the Colorado Data Sharing Network (CDSN).

SMWC is capable of promoting the sustainable use of the water resources of the San Miguel River Watershed and improving the functioning condition of rivers and streams through water conservation, improved water quality, ecological resiliency, and the reduction of water conflicts. The Coalition has done so through working with a number of partners on watershed projects and studies, such as removal of a small dam to improve habitat for native fish; restructuring of a large diversion structure to improve its efficiency and increase boater safety; and an ongoing environmental and recreation needs assessment.

In 2016, SMWC began a process to create an Stakeholder Committee in order to promote better representation of the watershed's diverse stakeholders within the Coalition. The first Committee meeting was held in October 2017 and has individual members that represent a wide group of stakeholders, including irrigated agriculture, livestock grazing, environmental conservation, youth education, municipal water supplies, private property owners, and Federal, state and local governments. SMWC is actively reaching out to additional individuals to participate on the Committee and hopes to recruit representatives for recreation, commercial timber production and mining in 2018. Decisions are made on a consensus basis by the Stakeholder Committee, as defined by the existing bylaws of the San Miguel Watershed Coalition. Current Stakeholder Committee members include:



Federal Agencies: US Forest Service—GMUG National Forest; Bureau of Land Management; The Nature Conservancy

State Agencies: Colorado Parks and Wildfire

Agricultural organizations: Colorado Cooperative Ditch Company, Lone Cone Ditch Company

Municipal Water: Norwood Water Commission

Local Governments: San Miguel County, Town of Telluride, Town of Mountain Village, Town of Norwood, Town of Ophir, Town of Naturita, Town of Nucla

Conservation: Sheep Mountain Alliance, San Miguel Conservation Foundation

Education: Watershed Education Program

### 4.3 Goals

**Goal 1:** Strengthen and ensure the long-term sustainability of the San Miguel Watershed Coalition

**Objective 1:** Create a stable, visible presence within the watershed's communities

**Tasks:** Convert the current half-time Program Coordinator position to a full-time role; Expand SMWC's current community outreach program, including additional informational materials

**Objective 2:** Promote increased participation of diverse stakeholders within the watershed. Ensure all geographic areas and major interests within the watershed are represented on the Coalition.

**Task:** Program Coordinator will continue stakeholder outreach efforts, focusing on groups that have been underrepresented within the Coalition

**Goal 2:** Conduct Watershed Restoration pre-planning

**Objective 1:** Watershed characterization

**Tasks:** Continue SMWC's expanded water quality testing program to gain additional baseline water quantity and quality data; Program Coordinator will work with federal, state and local agencies to gather existing watershed data and analyses

**Objective 2:** Gather stakeholder input on potential restoration projects

**Tasks:** Distribute watershed characterization data to stakeholders; host stakeholder meetings to discuss restoration concepts and geographic locations within the watershed that are suitable or unsuitable for inclusion in the plan

**Goal 3:** Develop the San Miguel River Watershed Restoration Plan

**Objective 1:** Develop restoration plan goals and benchmarks that are consistent with the

values of all watershed communities and interests

**Tasks:** Program Coordinator will work with stakeholders and agencies to ensure all pertinent topics and issues are included in project concepts; provide ample opportunity for stakeholder input throughout the entire planning process; host a public meeting to introduce the plan to the community

## 4.4 Approach

The expansion of the San Miguel Watershed Coalition will include the following steps:

### 4.4.1 Task A—Watershed Group Development

**Hire a watershed group coordinator:** Since hiring a half-time Program Coordinator in May 2016, the Coalition has expanded its presence within the San Miguel Watershed. SMWC is eager to build upon this growth and funding from this grant will be used to convert the role into a full-time position. The Coordinator will be responsible for recruiting additional stakeholders, fostering community and stakeholder trust and engagement, and creating informational materials. In addition, the Coordinator will oversee all watershed restoration pre-planning and plan development activities. The Coordinator will build upon SMWC's past partnerships and renew local momentum for projects in the San Miguel Basin.

**Establish broad-based, diverse membership:** The Coalition's goal is a self-sustaining stakeholder group that is able to work across geographical and ideological differences to develop the organization, procure stable funding, and implement collaborative restoration projects.

SMWC will use its recently developed Stakeholder Committee as a platform to engage additional stakeholders within the watershed and fill gaps that currently exist on the Committee. The Coalition developed a comprehensive outreach and engagement plan in 2016—the Coordinator will continue to utilize this plan to recruit stakeholders. Specifically, it is important for SMWC to focus on engaging representatives from downriver communities. These downriver communities have a rich agricultural tradition and several large, important ditch companies with senior water rights on the San Miguel. There has been friction between upper watershed and lower watershed communities over the years regarding instream flows, Wild and Scenic designations, and the general direction of the Coalition. Recent efforts to reengage the lower watershed communities in SMWC affairs has helped to repair these relationships. In order to execute successful expansion and watershed restoration planning, SMWC will have to continue to develop these relationships. To promote trust with downriver stakeholders, SMWC will familiarize them with its mission, accomplishments, stakeholder process and non-regulatory goals. The Coordinator will continue to develop information materials, SMWC's website and a bi-monthly newsletter to achieve this goal.

Currently, SMWC's Stakeholder Committee meets biannually and its Executive Board meets monthly. The Coordinator will help the group form a Watershed Restoration Plan sub-committee (comprised of Stakeholder Committee members) to oversee the project. Additional

stakeholder meetings and workshops will be held throughout the watershed restoration planning process.

New membership of the San Miguel Watershed Coalition will be solicited from the following: National Resource Conservation Service, Farmer's Water Development Company, local mining operation, commercial timber outfit, San Miguel Power Association, Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety, Colorado Water Quality Control Division, Colorado State Forest Service, Telluride Ski Resort, and Montrose County

**Watershed Restoration Pre-planning: identify water quality and quantity issues and develop watershed restoration needs:** The Coordinator will begin the pre-planning process by conducting a thorough review of existing watershed plans, reports and restoration activities. Studies, monitoring and restoration projects related to water quality and quantity will be compiled and shared at stakeholder meetings. Using GIS software, the Coordinator will create a visual representation of all restoration activities that have occurred within the watershed since 2000. In addition, all gathered information will be available via an online portal for increased transparency. A summary of restoration needs will be developed, in part, based on the information gathered in this step.

The Coordinator will engage the organization's membership, industry and agricultural interests, recreation outfitters, and government agency representatives to gain additional input on restoration needs. This step is also designed to build collaborations and reduce conflicts. This will be a crucial step in the pre-planning process and will be achieved through sustained communication and a transparent restoration needs development process. SMWC will kickstart this effort by hosting a public Watershed Forum to discuss and analyze the available data, review information gaps, and brainstorm win-win, collaborative restoration projects. The Forum will be an opportunity to identify watershed concerns not addressed in existing reports. Follow-up meetings will be held to refine restoration needs and start developing project concepts.

#### **4.4.2 Task B—Watershed Restoration Plan**

**Watershed Characterization and Data Gathering:** The San Miguel Watershed Coalition has a nineteen-year history of water quality monitoring. A 2013 review process refined the sites where water quality and quantity are measured and the Coalition is currently working with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, via its nonpoint source pollution program, to further develop its monitoring protocol. The Coalition will hire a contractor to perform water quality monitoring, as outlined in the annual water quality monitoring plan. SMWC is the only entity within the watershed that is able or willing to perform basin-wide water quality sampling and analysis. With many competing interests and viewpoints in the watershed, there are bound to be moments of contention when discussing project concepts. SMWC firmly believes that it is necessary to center these difficult conversations around objective science-driven principles and data.

**Project Concept Development:** SMWC will use the information and input gathered in the pre-planning phase to create a draft list of restoration projects for the entire watershed. The Coordinator will review this list with the stakeholder group at an identified meeting. A refined second draft will be circulated to the stakeholder group, Federal and state land management agencies, and local governments for final comment and review. The Coordinator will compile the final input into a summary of project concepts.

**Watershed Restoration Plan:** SMWC will employ its Coordinator and a consultant to assist with the development of the Restoration Plan. The plan will be based on the watershed management project concepts developed through input from stakeholders and agencies. A first draft will be circulated to all stakeholders and relevant agencies with time allotted for an official comment period. The final draft will be made available online and the Coalition will host a public meeting to introduce the plan to the watershed's communities

The Watershed Restoration Plan will be a comprehensive document that contains a description of its development process. This description will review the expansion of the Coalition; stakeholder process; meeting dates and purposes; materials reviewed; stakeholder input summaries; development of project concepts; and pertinent data collection and mapping. The Coalition will strive to produce a document that addresses critical watershed needs and has wide-spread buy-in from stakeholders and the community.

## **5.0 Evaluation Criteria**

### **5.1 Evaluation Criterion A—Watershed Group Diversity and Geographic Scope**

#### **5.1.1 Sub-criterion No. A1. Watershed Group Diversity**

##### **Partnerships**

SMWC has a nineteen-year history of working with partners to implement projects that benefit multiple uses. Partners have included:

- Environmental Protection Agency
- Bureau of Land Management
- USDA Forest Service
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- CO Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety
- Colorado Water Conservation Board
- Southwest Basin Roundtable
- Southwestern Water Conservation District
- San Miguel County
- Montrose County
- Trout Unlimited
- Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership
- Mountain Studies Institute
- Telluride Foundation
- Colorado Cooperative Ditch Company

- CO Dept. of Public Health and Environment
- CO Division of Natural Resources
- Tamarisk Coalition
- Colorado State University
- Sheep Mountain Alliance

Within the last two years, SMWC has focused on increasing its partnerships and has begun to work with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety. SMWC recognizes the value of partner relationships and will continue to develop them in the future.

**Stakeholders**

While the Coalition has recently made great strides to diversify its membership, there is still work to be done. SMWC revised its bylaws and undertook a board restructuring process in 2016 with the specific aim of diversifying its membership. The Executive Board outlined the creation of a diverse Stakeholder Committee and identified stakeholders within the watershed that affect or are affected by water quality and quantity. The Program Coordinator began outreaching to potential members in early 2017 and the first SMWC Stakeholder Committee meeting was held in October 2017. Of the 25 identified seats (Table 1) on the Stakeholder Committee, 12 have been filled so far.

Table 1. Stakeholder Committee Seats

Local governments	Commercial forestry
State and federal agencies	Energy
Conservation	Business
Recreation	Landowners
Agriculture	Education
Mining	At-large

Current Stakeholder Committee members include:

Federal Agencies: US Forest Service—GMUG National Forest; Bureau of Land Management; The Nature Conservancy

State Agencies: Colorado Parks and Wildfire

Agriculture: Colorado Cooperative Ditch Company

Municipal Water: Norwood Water Commission

Landowner: Earl Reams

Local Governments: San Miguel County, Town of Telluride, Town of Mountain Village, Town of Norwood, Town of Ophir, Town of Naturita, Town of Nucla

Conservation: Sheep Mountain Alliance

Education: Watershed Education Program

At-Large: Chris Hazen, San Miguel Conservation Foundation

## **Outreach**

SMWC will use WaterSMART funding to secure membership from additional Federal and state land management agencies, Montrose County, mining interests, commercial forestry operations, local businesses, river outfitters, San Miguel Power Association, and Farmer's Water Supply Company. In order to do so, the Coalition will continue to implement its 2016 outreach plan. The Program Coordinator will request individual meetings with prospective stakeholders in order to describe SMWC's new board structure, define the Coalition's mission and goals, and review the opportunities for participation and watershed planning within the organization. In addition, the Program Coordinator will continue to produce and disseminate informational and promotional materials to watershed communities and organizations. These include bimonthly newsletters and electronic materials (blog, community calendar, email blasts). As membership from the lower watershed has lagged in recent years, recruiting stakeholders from those communities is a top priority. Targeting lower watershed stakeholders will help to restore trust in the Coalition and its mission.

The Watershed Coalition provides the only avenue for Federal, state, local governments, and local communities to convene on a regular basis and discuss watershed issues within the basin. Federal, state and local stakeholders have the opportunity to meet monthly (via the Executive Board) or biannually (via the Stakeholder Committee) and plan for the future of the watershed.

By increasing the diversity of stakeholders, SMWC will bolster the quality of communication and watershed planning. The San Miguel Watershed is diverse—geographically, economically and socially. These differences have acted as barriers in the past and, certainly, finding common ground when discussing water quality and quantity can be difficult. However, the Coalition has successfully implemented restoration projects with diverse partners before and believes that assembling a more diverse stakeholder group will elevate the legitimacy and effectiveness of the organization.

### **5.1.2 Sub-criterion No. A2. Geographic Scope**

The San Miguel Watershed Coalition's outreach and watershed restoration planning activities will cover the entire geographic extent of the San Miguel Watershed (HUC 14030003). Since its inception the Coalition has operated within the entire watershed and will continue to do so.

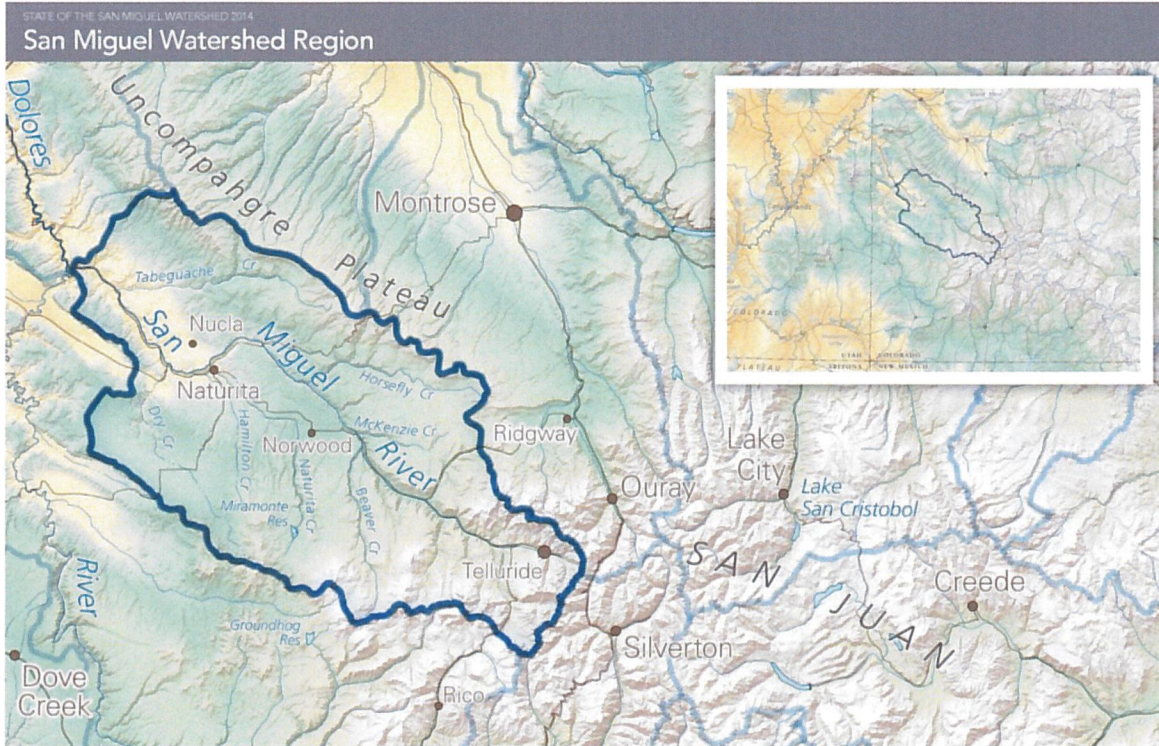


Image 1. San Miguel Watershed Boundary

A large portion of both the upper and lower watershed is comprised of federally owned land. The USFS and BLM are the largest land-owning stakeholders that exist on SMWC’s Stakeholder Committee. The lower watershed, which includes the communities of Norwood, Nucla, and Naturita has a large agricultural base with land dedicated to livestock and hay production. The three major ditch companies that exist are located in the lower watershed. The upper watershed’s economy is largely centered around tourism and includes the Telluride Ski Resort and several river outfitters. The entire watershed has a long legacy of mining—hardrock mining occurred in the upper watershed while uranium extraction was prominent around Nucla and Naturita. Forest cover dominates the majority of the landscape and commercial forestry once flourished. The lower watershed contains ponderosa pine, pinyon and juniper forests while the upper watershed is dominated by aspen, spruce-fir and douglas fir.

When devising its 2016 outreach plan, SMWC considered the geographic scope of the watershed—its primary goal was to attract membership from all communities within the watershed. The Coalition recognized its stakeholder membership was primarily comprised of upper watershed representatives and therefore put a big focus on recruiting new members from lower watershed communities and interests.

SMWC’s planned membership will cover the full geographic extent of the watershed. All communities and counties located within the basin will have membership in the Coalition. In addition, all Federal and state land management agencies that operate within the watershed will have membership in the Coalition

## 5.2 Evaluation Criterion B—Addressing Critical Watershed Needs

### 5.2.1 Sub-criterion No. B1. Critical Watershed Needs or Issues

#### Water Quality

The Colorado Water Quality Control Division has identified 15 stream segments on the San Miguel River and its tributaries on the impaired list and monitoring and evaluation list per section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act.

Table 3. Impaired Stream Segments

<b>WBID</b>	<b>Portion</b>	<b>Colorado's Monitoring &amp; Evaluation Parameter(s)</b>	<b>Clean Water Act Section 303(d) Impairment</b>
COGUSM02	Bear Creek	Pb	Cd, Zn
COGUSM02	Cornet Creek	Pb	
COGUSM02	Howard Fork above Swamp Canyon		pH, D.O.
COGUSM03b	all	Pb	
COGUSM04a	From South Fork San Miguel to confluence with Leopard Creek	Pb	
COGUSM06a	all	Mn, Cu	
COGUSM06b	all	Cu	
COGUSM07	Chapman Creek	Fe(Trec)	
COGUSM07	Iron Bog Creek	pH, D.O.	
COGUSM08	all	Mn	
COGUSM10	Naturita Creek	D.O., <i>E. coli</i> , Temperature	
COGUSM12a	Mesa Creek	Se	
COGUSM12a	Maverick Draw		Aquatic Life (provisional)
COGUSM12a	MaKenzie Creek		Aquatic Life (provisional)
COGUSM12a	Specie Creek	D.O.	
COGUSM12b	all	Temperature	
COGUSM20	Miramonte Reservoir		D.O. (Temperature)

Source: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/impaired-waters>

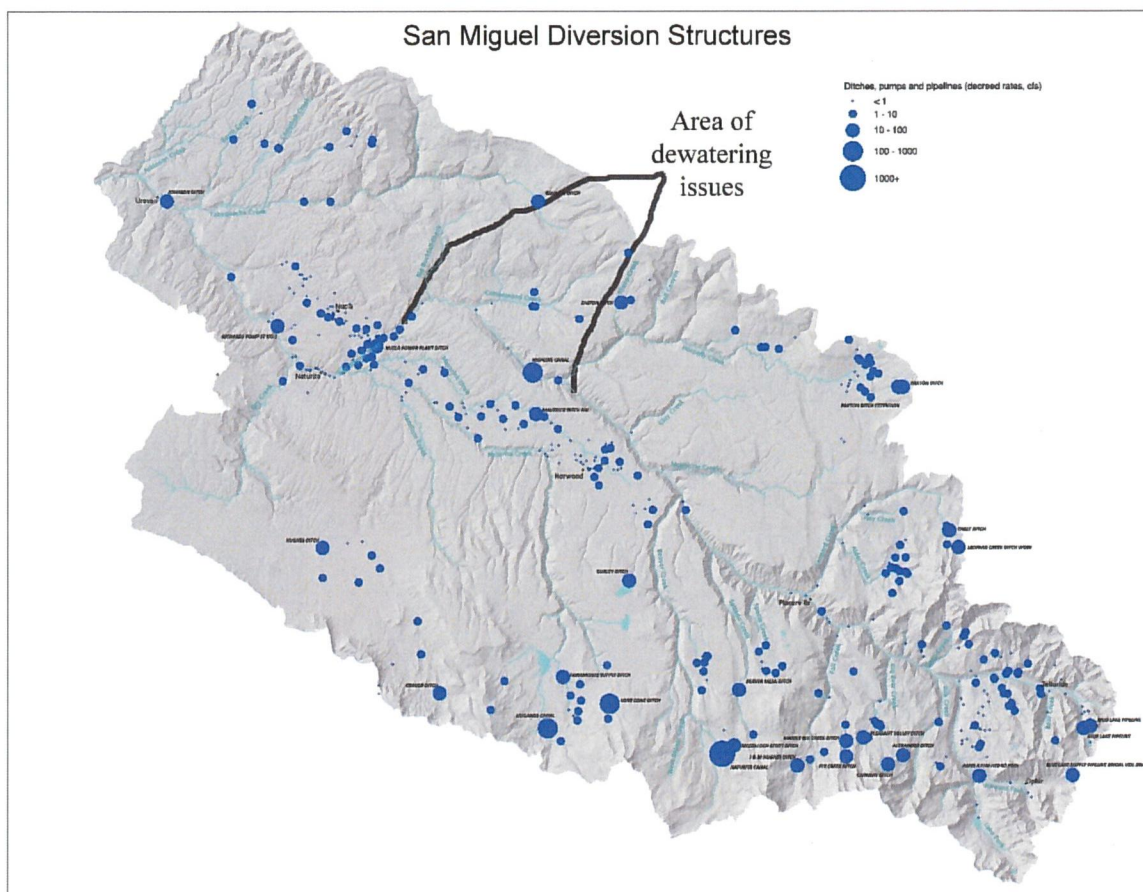
Upper watershed water quality issues derive from heavy metal inputs from mine adits and waste piles in the headwaters of the San Miguel River. The lower watershed is listed for temperature, dissolved oxygen, selenium and aquatic life impairments. These issues result from low discharge levels, dewatering, livestock grazing and agricultural inputs.



## Water Quantity

Water is arguably the most critical natural resource in any watershed. Within the San Miguel Watershed, it serves agricultural production, human water supply, and supports many ecosystems. Secondary uses include recreational activities and the intrinsic aesthetic that lakes and streams offer. The San Miguel River experiences dewatering events in the lower watershed. After runoff has peaked, large water diversions can dewater the river.

Image 2. Dewatered zones



There are 43 unique instream water rights within the San Miguel Watershed. The associated flows were developed based on discharge measurements collected for the last century and computer models that identify minimum flow requirements for native fish and, in one instance, riparian vegetation along the river corridor. Each section is evaluated thoroughly to determine if the water for an instream right is available and if that right can be filed without causing material injury to other water rights and their historical uses. Seven stream gauges provide continuous flow data within the San Miguel Watershed. Instream flows represent an estimation that allow for maintenance of stream functions and values, but these rights are often not met because of the water demands of senior rights during low-flow periods.

Water quantity scoring metrics rely on the assumption that the Instream Flow levels were developed to maintain environmental functions and values at a minimal level and that flows below these levels are detrimental to fisheries (compounding negatively if they remain low for consecutive weeks). The following grading rubric and scores were developed as a preliminary method for rating the water quantity regime in the San Miguel Watershed with the available data, which is limited to the two identified stream reaches that serve as reasonable proxies for the entire watershed, including tributaries, because the main-stem reaches are in the lower portions of the watershed and reflect cumulative flow volumes from the tributary creeks and streams.

Grading Rubric		
# of weeks below instream flow	Letter Grade	Grade Point
11+	F	1
zero flow for 1 week	F	1
8 to 10	D	2
3 consecutive	D	2
5 to 7	C	3
2 to 4	B	4
0 to 1	A	5

Uravan			
Year	# of weeks below instream flow	Letter Grade	Grade Point
2011	10	D	2
2012	21	F	1
2013	29	F	1
	<b>Average</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>1.33</b>

Placerville			
Year	# of weeks below instream flow	Letter Grade	Grade Point
2002	16	F	1
2003	16	F	1
2004	11	F	1
2005	6	C	3
2006	1	A	5
2007	13	F	1
2008	2	B	4
2009	8	D	2
2010	18	F	1
2011	4	B	4
2012	3	B	4
2013	22	F	1
	<b>Average</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>2.33</b>

Watershed Grade		
	Grade Point	Letter Grade
Watershed Average	2.1	D

### Fisheries

The San Miguel Watershed hosts three distinct fish populations that include native warm-water

species, native cold-water sculpin and cutthroat trout, and non-native cold-water sport fish. The lower San Miguel River and its tributaries are habitat for three native warm-water species: the roundtail chub, flannelmouth sucker, and bluehead sucker. Although Colorado Parks and Wildlife reports that these populations have increased steadily below the town of Norwood, all three remain on the Bureau of Land Management's Sensitive Species List because of a significant reduction of historic range and unprotected habitat. These fish serve as an indicator of overall health for the warm-water aquatic system and are the primary focus of ongoing conservation efforts.

## **5.2.2 Sub-criterion No. B2. Developing Strategies to Address Critical Watershed Needs or Issues**

### **Stakeholder Outreach and Partnership Building**

The San Miguel Watershed Coalition will address critical watershed issues by further developing partnerships with stakeholders in the San Miguel Watershed and incorporating stakeholder input into the development of watershed management project concepts. SMWC will develop these partnerships and gather input from stakeholders on critical watershed issues by expanding its Stakeholder Committee; holding stakeholder meetings and workshops; expanding capacity for outreach; developing and delivering outreach and information materials; and supporting data collection, research, and project planning activities.

The Watershed Coalition has strong relationships with its agency partners. SMWC works closely with the USFS, BLM, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety to produce the State of the San Miguel Watershed (usually published every five years). This project has created a tradition of data sharing and project brainstorming that will serve the watershed restoration planning process well. In addition, SMWC holds an annual San Miguel Watershed Forum, which is a platform for agency representatives, local governments, nonprofits and the public to discuss the state of the watershed. The Coalition is viewed by these partners as a convener and is therefore a natural choice to lead a watershed-wide restoration plan effort.

SMWC will continue to grow its relationships with local conservation groups that advocate for balanced stewardship, including Sheep Mountain Alliance and the San Miguel Conservation Foundation. These organizations currently have representatives on the Stakeholder Committee and their input on watershed restoration planning will be valuable. The Coalition plans to engage local chapters of Trout Unlimited and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation in the watershed planning process. These entities will be invited to participate in public meetings and the Watershed Forum and will be encouraged to provide comments on draft lists of potential restoration projects and project concepts.

## **Watershed Restoration Planning**

The Program Coordinator will conduct the majority of information gathering regarding the critical needs and issues of the watershed. Specifically, the Coordinator will review all of the pertinent plans and studies and compile them into an online project portal. In addition, relevant spatial data will be put into an ArcGIS Geodatabase for easy access. The Coordinator will contact government agencies for current monitoring data and restoration activities—all restoration activities since 2000 will be compiled in an ArcGIS map. From this data and stakeholder input, the Coordinator will create a draft list of restoration projects—this list will help inform the project concept planning process.

SMWC will hire a contractor to conduct six months of water quality monitoring. The contractor will read river flow, pH, DO, temperature and conductivity and sample for nutrients and metals at predetermined sites. They will be responsible for preparing a comprehensive water quality report and uploading data into the Colorado Data Sharing Network. SMWC will also hire a consultant to conduct modeling and complete an analysis to prioritize issues and projects within Watershed Restoration Plan.

During the watershed restoration planning process, SMWC will actively identify opportunities to resolve conflicts. This will be accomplished through facilitated stakeholder meetings and sub-committee work sessions. SMWC strives to promote win-win projects and the Program Coordinator will facilitate discussions around controversial projects.

The Coalition has been involved in the San Miguel Stream Management Plan Pilot Project since 2016. The project analyzes environmental and recreation water supply needs and gaps within the watershed. It is the first comprehensive effort to understand non-consumptive needs in the San Miguel Watershed and SMWC will build upon its efforts in the watershed restoration planning process. Specifically, the project has started basin-wide conversations about water supply gaps and the willingness of stakeholders to participate in voluntary water conservation measures. The progress made during these discussions will inform the conversations and debates that arise during the creation of the Watershed Restoration Plan.

### 5.3 Evaluation Criterion C—Implementation and Results

#### 5.3.1 Sub-criterion No. C1. Understanding of and Ability to Meet Program Requirements

See Sections 4.4 Approach and 8.1 Budget Proposal for further details.

Activity	Milestones	Cost	Timeline									
			FY18	FY 18	FY19	FY19	FY19	FY20	FY20			
			Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2		
<b>Task A. Watershed Group Development</b>												
Program Coordinator	Coordinator in place to execute stakeholder expansion	\$57,414	X	X	X	X						
Stakeholder Recruitment and outreach	All 25 Stakeholder Committee seats filled; Watershed Restoration sub-committee formed		X	X	X							
Watershed restoration pre-planning	Review of existing reports and plans complete; meeting with agency partners to discuss restoration efforts and policy; GIS map of previous restoration activities; stakeholder outreach; Watershed Forum			X	X	X	X					
<b>Task B. Watershed Restoration Plan</b>												
Program Coordinator	Coordinator in place to oversee Watershed Restoration Plan	\$73,414					X	X	X	X		
Watershed characterization and data gathering	Complete annual water quality testing program; data uploaded to the Colorado Data Sharing Network and EPA Storet		X			X	X					X
Project Concept Development	Final draft prepared incorporating stakeholder and agency comments					X	X					
Watershed restoration Plan	Final draft and map prepared; public education event							X	X	X		

#### 5.3.2 Sub-criterion No. C2. Building on Relevant Federal, State or Regional Planning Efforts

##### San Miguel River Environmental and Recreation Needs Assessment

The San Miguel River Environmental and Recreation Needs Assessment is being produced as a part of the San Miguel Stream Management Plan Pilot Project. Currently in draft form, the assessment outlines the water supply gaps that exist for current environmental conditions and recreation uses. SMWC’s Watershed Restoration Plan will complement the assessment as it will identify projects to help fill current water supply gaps.

##### Colorado Water Plan and Southwest Basin Roundtable Basin Implementation Plan

The new Colorado Water Plan seeks to understand the state’s water needs, identify gaps in those needs, and promote projects and processes to meet those needs through the creation of a Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) for each of the eight basins of the Colorado River. The San Miguel

Watershed is a part of the Southwest Basin and the Watershed Coalition’s restoration activities are identified as a line item in the BIP. Therefore, successful restoration activities completed within the San Miguel Watershed will directly accomplish goals outlined in the Colorado Water Plan.

#### **USDA Forest Service, GMUG National Forest, Forest Plan**

The GMUG National Forest is in the midst of their Forest Plan revision process and has completed a rapid assessment of water quality concerns in the San Miguel Basin. The new Forest Plan will outline goals to improve water quality on USFS land. SMWC’s restoration planning activities will help to directly meet any water quality improvement goals outlined in the revised Forest Plan.

### **5.4 Evaluation Criterion D—Nexus to Department of the Interior Initiatives**

The San Miguel River Watershed has suffered from drought since at least 2002. Effects included reduced snowfall, early runoff, climate variability and associated impacts, leading to a “new normal” of reduced annual precipitation. Effects include reduced river flows, sometimes significant, reduced forest health, and reduced snowfall for our ski resort. The watershed has experienced moderate to extreme drought numerous (usually moderate to severe) times in the last 14 years, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. In addition, climate change models predict progressively more severe drought conditions for Southwest Colorado in the future.

Given the current long-term drought and climate change predictions, the Coalition will play an important role in obtaining drought resilience through its stream management plan’s management recommendations, its irrigation efficiency efforts, its work to remove old, unused dams, and its plan to develop a water management plan, which absolutely must include drought resilience recommendations, including working with local water providers to increase conservation. These efforts have the potential to support DOI initiatives such as the National Drought Resilience Partnership and the Colorado River Pilot System Conservation Program.

## **6.0 Environmental and Cultural Resources Compliance**

Environmental and cultural resources compliance is not required for work associated with the CWMP grant.

## **7.0 Required Permits or Approvals**

No permits or approvals are required for work associated with the CWMP grant.

## 8.0 Project Budget

### 8.1 Budget Proposal

Table 1. Summary of Federal and Non-Federal Funding Sources

Funding Source	Amount
<b>Non-Federal</b>	
Southwestern Water Conservation District	\$12,000
Telluride Foundation	\$7,000
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment	\$11,625
San Miguel Watershed Coalition (In-Kind)	\$900
<b>Federal</b>	
Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART	\$99,303
<b>Project Total:</b>	<b>\$130,828</b>

Table 2. Budget Proposal Detail

Budget Item Description	Computation		Quantity Type	Reclamation Funding	Non-Federal Cost Share	In-Kind Contributions	Total Cost
	\$/Unit	Quantity					
<b>Salaries and Wages</b>							
Program Coordinator	\$30.00	2,000	Hours	\$60,000			\$60,000
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>							
Fringe Benefits	15%	2,000	Hours	\$9,000			\$9,000
<b>Travel</b>							
Colorado Watershed Assembly Conference	\$500	2	Conference		\$1,000		\$1,000
Local Travel	\$0.54	2,500	Miles	\$1,350			\$1,350
<b>Equipment</b>							
N/A							\$0
<b>Supplies and Materials</b>							
ArcGIS (nonprofit license)	\$100	2	License	\$200			\$200
Printed Materials	\$0.50	2,500	Pages	\$625	\$625		\$1,250
Office Supplies (misc.)	\$400	1	Misc. Items	\$400		\$400	\$800
Desktop/projector	\$2,000	1	Unit	\$2,000			\$2,000
Events--food and beverage	\$50	10	Event			\$500	\$500
<b>Contractual</b>							
Water Quality Contractor	\$20	700	Hours	\$7,000	\$7,000		\$14,000
Water Quality Lab Analysis	\$7,000	2	Contract		\$14,000		\$14,000
Consultant	\$50	360	Hours	\$10,000	\$8,000		\$18,000
<b>Other</b>							
N/A							
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>							
<b>Indirect Costs</b>							
Indirect Costs	10%	1	Administrative	\$8,728			\$8,728
<b>Total Estimated Project Costs</b>				\$99,303	\$30,625	\$900	\$130,828

## **8.2 Budget Narrative**

### **8.2.1 Salaries and Wages**

The San Miguel Watershed Coalition currently employs a half-time Program Coordinator, Elizabeth Stuffings. SMWC will use WaterSMART funding to increase the role to a full-time position. The Program Coordinator receives a rate of \$30/hour and it is estimated that the tasks outlined in this technical proposal would require 2,000 hours of work over the two-year project period.

Program Coordinator tasks include:

- Meetings, work sessions, and site visits with stakeholders, local and regional partners, and consultants throughout the San Miguel Watershed; coordination of the Watershed Forum
- Coordination of the water quality testing program, including execution of water quality testing and laboratory contracts
- Development of outreach and informational materials such as brochures, website content, and videos
- Development of the Watershed Restoration Plan. This task includes: GIS mapping, working with the consultant to produce models, maps and project concepts

### **8.2.2 Fringe Benefits**

Fringe benefits are based on the hours for the wages of the Program Coordinator. The benefits are calculated at 15% of the \$30/hour rate for 2,000 hours of project work.

### **8.2.3 Travel**

Travel includes attendance by the Coordinator at the annual Colorado Watershed Assembly—Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference in Avon, CO (3 days). The conference costs include registration fees, mileage, and lodging. Travel within the watershed and southwestern Colorado is estimated at 1,250 miles per year at a rate of \$0.54/mile. Local travel includes site visits, stakeholder meetings, and regional meetings with partners.

### **8.2.4 Materials and Supplies**

Requested materials and supplies are for office use, producing and distributing hard copies of promotional materials, and facilitating stakeholder meetings. This includes purchasing an annual ESRI ArcGIS nonprofit license. The Coalition will purchase a desktop for the Program Coordinator (needed to conduct GIS mapping exercises) and a projector for stakeholder meetings. Other office materials and office rental space will be cost-shared by SMWC. Stakeholder meeting refreshments will be provided by SMWC.



### **8.2.5 Contractual**

Consultants will be hired as needed to provide technical services related to mapping, modeling, report editing, and development of watershed management project concepts. Average fees for local consultants are \$50/hour. The estimate would provide for 360 hours of professional assistance.

A water quality contractor will be hired on an annual basis to perform water sampling and monitoring at designated sites throughout the entire watershed. SMWC hires the contractor at a rate of \$20/hour and provides approximately 350 hours of work per year. In addition, SMWC contracts with a regional water quality laboratory to analyze water quality samples.

### **8.2.6 Indirect Costs**

The San Miguel Watershed Coalition administrative fee rate is 10% for this funding opportunity. Indirect costs include the staff time and materials needed to complete grant reporting and budgeting.

### **8.2.7 Total Costs**

Total Cost for the 2-year funding cycle is \$130,828, as shown in Tables 1 and 2. Requested reclamation funding is \$99,303 and non-Federal funding is \$31,525.

## 9.0 Official Resolution

### RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF SAN MIGUEL WATERSHED COALITION REGARDING COOPERATIVE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROGRAM GRANTS

WHEREAS, the San Miguel Watershed Coalition ("Coalition") Board of Directors ("Board") has submitted an application for a Cooperative Watershed Management Program Grant; and

WHEREAS, in support of such grant application, the Board hereby verifies the following:

- Interim Board President Lynn Padgett is legally authorized to enter into an agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation if a grant is awarded;
- The Board, including the Board President, has reviewed and supports the application submitted;
- The Coalition is able to provide the amount of funding specified in the funding plan; and
- The Coalition will work with Reclamation to meet established deadlines for entering into a financial assistance agreement.

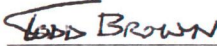
NOW THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board hereby verifies the statements made above in support of its grant application.

Approved this 24 day of January, 2018.

SAN MIGUEL WATERSHED COALITION

By   
Lynn Padgett, Interim President, Board of Directors

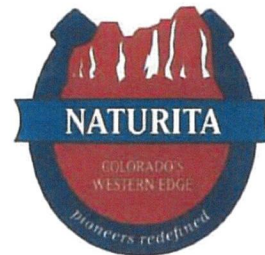
ATTEST:

  
Todd Brown, Treasurer, Board of Directors

## 10.0 Letters of Support

### TOWN OF NATURITA

P.O. Box 505, 222 EAST MAIN ST.  
NATURITA COLO. 81422  
(970)865-2286 FAX: (970)865-2815



January 26, 2018

Mr. Darren Olson  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Financial Assistance Operations Section  
Mail Code: 84-27852  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Mr. Olson:

Please accept this letter from the Town of Naturita supporting the San Miguel Watershed Coalition's WaterSMART application for capacity building and creation of a Watershed Restoration Plan. The Coalition's project will identify critical watershed needs and stakeholder-supported project concepts, as well as opportunities for collaborative work in the San Miguel watershed. This project will help create a comprehensive and inclusive process for watershed stakeholders to impact the future health of the San Miguel River. The requested WaterSMART funds will help the San Miguel Watershed Coalition build organizational capacity to conduct critical outreach in the San Miguel watershed during the development of a Watershed Restoration Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'John D. Riley'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Mayor  
Town of Naturita

# SAN MIGUEL COUNTY

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

HILARY COOPER      KRIS HOLSTROM      JOAN MAY

December 6, 2017

Mr. Darren Olson  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Financial Assistance Operations Section  
Mail Code: 84-27852  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Mr. Olson,

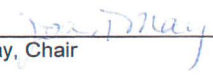
San Miguel County was a founding member of the San Miguel Watershed Coalition (SMWC) and has been a funding partner since the late 1990s. The County fully supports the Coalition's desire to grow its capacity and produce a comprehensive watershed restoration plan.

During the last three years, SMWC has been involved in an intensive organizational rebuilding process and has taken on a more robust role in working to understand the San Miguel Basin's water resources and challenges. The County would like to see this momentum continue and backs SMWC's bid for a WaterSMART Phase I grant. The WaterSMART program will help SMWC to sustain, and expand upon, its work within the watershed. Specifically, the Coalition will be able to convert its sole, part-time employee to a full-time employee; increase its education and outreach activities; conduct watershed characterization efforts to quantify water quality and quantity concerns better, and develop a watershed restoration plan. Moreover, the Coalition plays a key role in promoting engagement and trust among the diverse water users of the San Miguel Watershed—the WaterSMART program will help sustain this important function.

The County supports the Coalition and its efforts to address water resource challenges and champion conservation stewardship and ecological resilience within the San Miguel Watershed.

We are grateful for your time and consideration of this request.

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY, COLORADO  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Joan May, Chair



**TOWN OF NORWOOD**

*P.O. Box 528  
1670 Naturita Street  
Norwood, Colorado 81423  
[www.norwoodtown.com](http://www.norwoodtown.com)*

Mr. Darren Olson  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Financial Assistance Operations Section  
Mail Code: 84-27852  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Mr. Olson,

The Town of Norwood would like to express its support of the San Miguel Watershed Coalition (SMWC) and its efforts to develop as a watershed organization. While the Coalition has gone through several iterations in its 20-year history, SMWC has begun to play a more active and inclusive role in the watershed over the last two years. SMWC would greatly benefit from the WaterSMART program as it aims to further grow as a watershed nonprofit and execute successful watershed restoration planning.

Most importantly, a WaterSMART grant will allow the Coalition to build upon its recent efforts to create a sustainable stakeholder process within the San Miguel Watershed. SMWC established an Advisory Committee in October 2017. The Committee is comprised of community members from all reaches of the watershed and is designed to provide an avenue for diverse stakeholders to find solutions to water quantity and quality issues. The Town of Norwood believes the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) would be well served by supporting this initiative.

The Town has been pleased to see SMWC's recent successes and encourages the BOR in joining us in granting support to this important local organization.

Sincerely,

Kieffer Parrino, Mayor  
Town of Norwood



## United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
UNCOMPAHGRE FIELD OFFICE  
2465 South Townsend  
Montrose, CO 81401  
[www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/ufo.html](http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/ufo.html)

January 18, 2018

Mr. Darren Olson  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Financial Assistance Operations Section  
Mail Code: 84-27852  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Mr. Olson,

Please accept this letter from Bureau of Land Management, Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO) supporting the San Miguel Watershed Coalition's WaterSMART application for capacity building and creation of a Watershed Restoration Plan. The UFO has worked in partnership with the San Miguel Watershed Coalition on important watershed efforts on the San Miguel River for many years and will continue that work on the watershed restoration planning effort.

The Coalition's project will identify critical watershed needs and stakeholder-supported project concepts, as well as opportunities for collaborative work in the San Miguel watershed. This project will help create a comprehensive and inclusive process for watershed stakeholders to impact the future health of the San Miguel River. The requested WaterSMART funds will help the San Miguel Watershed Coalition build organizational capacity to conduct critical outreach in the San Miguel watershed during the development of a Watershed Restoration Plan.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jedd Sondergard  
Hydrologist  
Uncompahgre Field Office



Office of the Mayor  
Sean Murphy, Mayor

January 16, 2018

Mr. Darren Olson  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Financial Assistance Operations Section  
Mail Code: 84-27852  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Mr. Olson:

Living as we do at the headwaters of the main fork of the San Miguel River, the Town of Telluride counts itself as one of the best places in the county to enjoy nature. The Town has supported the San Miguel Watershed Coalition (SMWC) since its inception in 1998, and we believe that the Coalition is our best inter-governmental means to engage the entire watershed community, from headwaters to the confluence with the Dolores River. We are a Town highly dependent on tourism, from winter skiing to summer fishing and rafting, and a healthy river is a key component of our economic and environmental health. The Town is eager to see the Coalition expand its programmatic capacity and produce an up-to-date watershed restoration plan.

In the recent past, the Coalition struggled as an organization and its future was uncertain. However, SMWC's stakeholders recognized the importance of a watershed group for the San Miguel River Basin to address pressing water quality and quantity needs, and the Coalition began a comprehensive rebuilding process. Over the last three years, the Coalition has taken on an active role in watershed planning and watershed characterization and has greatly increased its efforts to promote participation, buy-in, and trust within all communities of the watershed. The WaterSMART Phase I grant will enable the Coalition to continue this important work and grow as an organization.

The Coalition is broadening its scientific reach and we heartily encourage the BOR in joining us in granting support to this regional organization.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean Murphy".

Sean Murphy  
Mayor  
Town of Telluride

P.O. Box 397 • Telluride, CO 81435 • 646-522-9900 • [smurphy@telluride-co.gov](mailto:smurphy@telluride-co.gov)



TOWN OF MOUNTAIN VILLAGE  
455 Mountain Village Blvd. Suite A  
Mountain Village, CO 81435  
970-369-6406  
970-728-4342 Fax  
mvclerk@mtnvillage.org

Mr. Darren Olson  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Financial Assistance Operations Section  
Mail Code: 84-27852  
P.O. Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Mr. Olson:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Town of Mountain Village Town Council. As a community which is positioned at the headwaters of the San Miguel River, water quality and habitat have been extremely important to our lifestyle.

Seeing the beauty of this river at its birth, as well as the canyon that it has created to travel to the Dolores River, makes us all realize the importance of a healthy watershed. We rely on this river for economic sustainability, its contributions to our tourism experience and economy, and the sustaining of our agricultural neighbors to the west. Without a healthy San Miguel River; our valley, our economy, and our community would be starkly different.

We have supported the San Miguel Watershed Coalition since its inception. This group has grown from one that is primarily a volunteer based group that collects data at various sites throughout the area, to one that has recently created a diverse Stakeholder Committee, and is poised to spearhead restoration planning efforts within the watershed. It is important that sufficient funding be available to promote further engagement of diverse watershed stakeholders as our local community's plan for the future of the river. We consider the San Miguel Watershed Coalition a worthy recipient of this grant and hope that you will as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Laila Benitez  
Mayor, Town of Mountain Village