



WaterSMART Environmental Water
Resources Projects for Fiscal Year 2023
Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project

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Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project

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1. Technical Proposal & Evaluation Criteria

1.1 Executive Summary

Date: March 27, 2023

Applicant Name: American Rivers, a Category B applicant in partnership with Category A applicant, Ward Water Group

Project Location: Portland, Ouray County, Colorado

Proposal Summary

The Uncompahgre Multi-Benefit Project will restore and enhance the aquatic, riparian, and upland riparian habitats along one mile of the Uncompahgre River in Portland, Colorado. Irrigation infrastructure upgrades, invasive plant removal, and native plant revegetation will restore and enhance 31.6 acres of riparian habitat. In-channel work will restore one mile of the river by stabilizing the channel, bank, and irrigation inlet, improving floodplain connectivity, and providing habitat diversity with scour pools and other small habitat improvements. The project will create self-sustaining habitat restoration while avoiding increases in flood elevation or extent for the 100-year flood to protect safety and property. A partnership between American Rivers, the Ward Water Group, and local landowners will implement the project. The project will address goals within the 2018 Uncompahgre Watershed Plan.

Length of Project Time: The project will take approximately 18 months to complete once we receive confirmation of the awards from Reclamation and match funding from the Colorado Water Conservation Board and Colorado River District grants (expected by September 2023). Final permitting and compliance will begin immediately but only after September 30, 2023. Designs will be finalized by the end of fall 2023. At least 90 days should be allowed for the 404 Permit application and review and up to 9 months for the Environmental Assessment work for NEPA, which can likely coincide with the development of final construction sheets and specifications. Consequently, plans should be ready for permitting in June of the construction year (2024), with engineering beginning by May 2024. Low flows are necessary for construction; therefore, the project construction will begin in mid-September 2024 and spread over two years, ending in 2025.

Estimated Completion Date for Project: December 2025

Federal Facility/Land Involvement:

The project is primarily on private land. However, approximately 4.5 acres of the 50.88-acre project area are on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. Within that 4.5 acres, 0.5 acres is acknowledged by BLM as the right-of-way for the Ward Ditch and necessary access road (see letter of acknowledgment attached).

1.2 Project Location

The Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project is in Portland, Ouray County, Colorado. The ditch headgate is located on the Upper Uncompahgre River, approximately 4 miles north of Ouray, Colorado. The project latitude is 38.068561°, and the longitude is -107.695424°. A map of the project location is provided in Figure 1. The Uncompahgre River is part of the Gunnison Basin district 68, Colorado River drainage system.

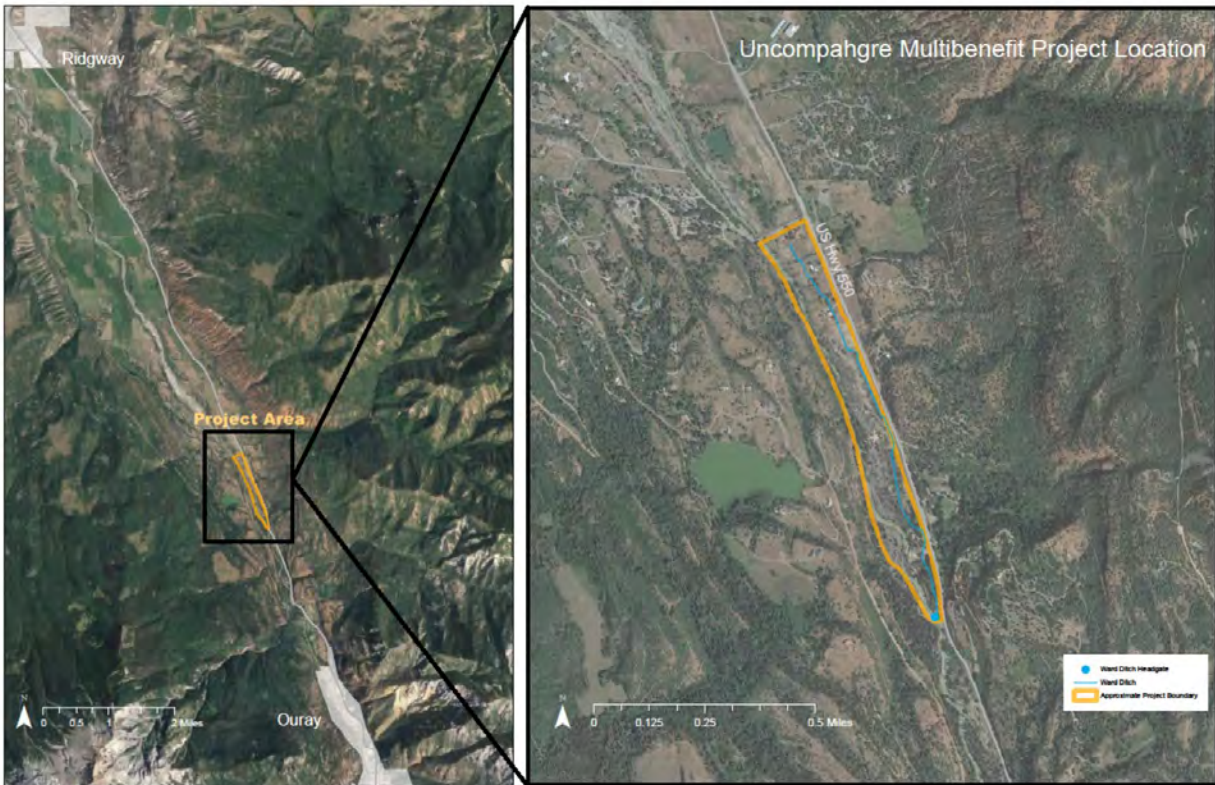


Figure 1: Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project Location

1.3 Technical Project Description

This project focuses on irrigation infrastructure upgrades, instream channel restoration, floodplain reconnection, and riparian and upland revegetation. The project will benefit instream and riparian habitat while improving and making recreational opportunities safer. The project will also allow irrigators to improve their headgate and ditch systems, allowing water deliveries to be more reliable and efficient while reducing sedimentation and erosion issues.

Headgate and Ditch Improvements:

The Ward Water Group diversion at the upstream end of the reach diverts flows for irrigation. Its current design consists of a push-up dam of rock, concrete scraps, and river materials that divert flow into a cast-in-place diversion headgate. The diversion

requires regular rebuilding as high flows degrade the push-up berm and frequent cleanouts are necessary at the inlet as fine sediment and floatables readily collect there.

Not only is the frequent rebuilding costly for the irrigators, but it also creates stream channel and aquatic life disturbance. In the long-term perspective, the turnout has developed a wide shallow cross-section that has over-widened the active channel of the Uncompahgre River. This altered cross-section has diminished the sediment transport capacity of the stream and perpetuated over-widening downstream. The widened channel is prone to lateral migration and considerable downstream bank erosion. It also increases the stream's potential to migrate around the hardened push-up berm at the irrigation turnout.

The project will alter the configuration of the irrigation turnout to be more stable and provide a more acceptable channel shape, making the proposed bank and channel cross-section repairs more sustainable and reducing the lateral erosion and sediment-loading to the stream.

The recommended design for the irrigation turnout is a step-pool system of cross-vane weirs that maintain the elevation required for the turnout but help focus shear stress and sediment carrying capacity at the center of the stream. Vane arms and buried wings will help prevent over-widening and center shear stress to the middle of the channel. In this case, building buried sills across the floodplain will be helpful to prevent the channel from migrating. The cross-vane configuration should improve both aquatic organism passage and recreational use. It will be essential to provide a sluice gate cleanout on the irrigation inlet arm that can be opened to allow flows to clean out sediment accumulating in front of the inlet gate during high flows. Boulders will be large enough to remain in place during high discharges.

In-Channel Structures and Floodplain Reconnection:

The section of the Uncompahgre River below the headgate is more stable. However, the presence of the remnant berm increases shear in the channel and can initiate a headcut under high flow conditions. The berm also cuts off the stream's access to the floodplain in all but the highest flow conditions. This lack of frequent rewetting of the floodplain is limiting riparian revegetation establishment and growth.

The project will only breach the existing middle reach berms in areas where flooding is suitable, such as old channel swales or other unoccupied areas already within the FEMA-mapped 100-year floodplain, which was cut off by the construction of the berms. Flooding into these areas will be relatively frequent (1.5 to 5 years recurrence interval) to help native riparian vegetation thrive. The majority of the berm and its existing vegetation will be left intact. The project design will counter higher mid-channel shear stress in these areas by installing cross-vane weirs for grade control.

Throughout the stream, there is a lack of aquatic habitat diversity. Deeper pools are absent in the straight reach, and there needs to be more substrate diversity to encourage both invertebrates and fish to utilize the area. Aquatic life is nearly nonexistent in this stretch currently. Given the history of the Uncompahgre River, it is

suspected that the lack of heterogeneous habitat has resulted from historic efforts to clean large debris and other materials from the stream bed. The project will reestablish habitat heterogeneity in the channel by installing boulder clusters, cross-vane weirs, and j-hook structures that form pools and velocity gradients to sort substrate. These structures should establish features that aquatic life and recreationists can utilize during low flows and that won't be disturbed when the river is at bankfull and higher flows.

The installed structures will reduce bank erosion and help train the channel to a more natural 50 to 60-foot bankfull width, addressing challenges in the reach downstream of the irrigation inlet. Vane arms will refocus shear stress away from the banks. Bankfull-level benches along the toe of eroding banks will be planted with native vegetation, helping to prevent lateral migration of the channel, which could threaten homes and agricultural lands. The material to build the benches should come from excavating one of the bankfull channels in the reach.

Revegetation:

The project restores thirteen acres of riparian habitat through the revegetation of native riparian species and the removal of invasive species, including bull thistle, cheatgrass, sweet clover, and Russian olive. The riparian restoration will occur between the summer mean flows (49 cubic feet per second) and 2-year flood flows (1014 cubic feet per second). For context, bankfull flows occur at 835 cubic feet per second.



Figure 2.

Restoring the upland riparian habitat through irrigation water in the Ward Ditch on private property will be made possible by the improvements to the headgate, irrigation ditch, and earthwork improvements and the willingness of landowners to grade and terrace their irrigated lands and use their water rights for this beneficial use. Irrigation

infrastructure upgrades, invasive plant removal, and native plant revegetation will restore and enhance 31.6 acres of riparian habitat. Native species will be planted, including narrowleaf cottonwoods, alder, box elder, mountain rose, chicory, wildflowers, and grasses. One property within the project location began some upland riparian habitat revegetation work in 2021 and has seen significant success, as seen in Figures 2 and 3. This working example has dramatically influenced the other property owners' interest in participating in this project.



Figure 3.

The 50.88-acre project area covers seven private properties and adjacent BLM land. These property owners support the project and have granted the right-of-way access for construction and streambank revegetation. Five of these property owners will participate in upland restoration work, including all members of the Ward Water Group. The Ward Water Group is made up of four private property owners with Ward Ditch water rights.

The proposed work will cover approximately one mile of the Uncompahgre River. The work focuses on 1) stabilizing the irrigation inlet and reducing its geomorphic impacts with a design that is more capable of carrying sediment downstream; 2) reversing the downstream impacts of channel migration caused by the irrigation diversion through bank and channel stabilization; 3) improving floodplain connectivity by selective removal of an old berm along the channel; and, 4) improving habitat heterogeneity by creating scour pools and other minor habitat improvements. All of the improvements can utilize features built of large rocks in combination with native vegetation for bioengineering. The project will create self-sustaining habitat improvements while avoiding increases in flood elevation or extent for the 100-year flood as determined by current FEMA flood maps.

The concept design for the project is attached.

1.4 Applicant Category and Eligibility of Applicant

American Rivers is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) conservation organization and is therefore eligible to apply as a Category B applicant. American Rivers' Category A partner for the Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project is the Ward Water Group, a Colorado ditch company and 501c12 organization with water delivery authority and, therefore, eligible as a Category A partner.

1.5 Performance Measures

The five-year monitoring plan, which will be developed by early 2024, is anticipated to include actions such as photo monitoring, water quality sampling, and seasonal qualitative observations with the involvement of the Ward Water Group. American Rivers will provide a copy of the monitoring plan to BOR once completed.

Section E.1.5. Evaluation Criterion E: Performance Measures provides more details.

1.6 Evaluation Criteria

1.6.1 Evaluation Criterion A: Project Benefits (25 Points)

Subcriterion A.1: Project Benefits

General Project Benefits

Explain how the project will benefit ecological values that have a nexus to water resources or water resources management, including benefits to plant and animal species, fish and wildlife habitat, riparian areas, and ecosystems that are supported by rivers, streams, or other water sources, or that are directly influenced by water resources management. In your response, identify the specific ecological values benefitted and how those ecological values depend on or are influenced by water resources or water resources management. Explain whether the project will increase water supply reliability for ecological values by improving the timing or quantity of water available; improving water quality and temperature; or improving stream or riparian conditions for the benefit of plant and animal species, fish and wildlife habitat, riparian areas, and ecosystems; or through similar approaches.

The project's restoration actions will stabilize the river corridor and improve water quality, recreation, climate change resilience, and aquatic, riparian, and upland habitat.

Russian olive, cheatgrass, bull thistle, and sweet clover are becoming more prevalent in the watershed, out-competing native species experiencing stress due to drought and climate change conditions (UWP, n.d.). The project will reestablish native plant species, including cottonwood, blue spruce, thinleaf alder, aspen, Rocky Mountain willow, Drummond willow, ponderosa pine, chokecherry, Rocky Mountain maple, and serviceberry (Lyon et al. 1999).

This project will increase climate change resilience for irrigated agriculture and aquatic species. The project's channel work will increase habitat diversity within the river

channel by adding small, deeper pools that provide refuge for aquatic species from hot temperatures and low flows. Reconnecting the river to its floodplain will provide an opportunity to recharge the aquifer and re-time flows, allowing water to be released later in the season. This re-timing could increase flows during the later summer months when low flows are more common. Reconnecting the floodplain can also improve the ability to capture floodwaters and sediment and slow stream velocities. This benefits not only the habitat but also infrastructure in the immediate area and downstream.

Besides the well-established ecosystem services offered by riparian areas, such as "flood attenuation and storage, sediment and nutrient retention and removal, shoreline stabilization, and groundwater discharge/recharge" (UWP, 2022), the benefits to fish and wildlife should also be noted. "It has been estimated that 75% to 80% of wildlife species in the area are dependent on riparian zones for at least part of their lives." Additionally, the project will create seasonal ponds, providing waterfowl habitat, which is important to note as "most of the waterfowl habitat in the region is concentrated in wetlands along the Uncompahgre River." (UWP, 2022)

Will the project improve watershed health in a river basin adversely impacted by a Reclamation water project?

Reclamation's Ridgway Reservoir is 12 miles downstream (north) of the project site and did not adversely impact the project area.

Is the project for the purpose of meeting existing environmental mitigation or compliance obligations under Federal or State law?

The project was not undertaken as a part of an environmental mitigation or compliance obligation.

If the project will benefit aquatic or riparian ecosystems within the watershed, explain the extent of those benefits (i.e., magnitude and geographic extent). Estimate expected project benefits to ecosystems and provide documentation and support for this estimate, including a detailed explanation of how the estimate was determined.

This project will benefit aquatic and riparian ecosystems along one mile of the Uncompahgre River, which is significantly degraded and largely detached from its floodplain by berms. The channel will be more complex, and access to the floodplain will increase. The Ward Water Group will use the improved ditch to provide water for native riparian vegetation, supporting biodiversity and agricultural production. This project will help reduce sedimentation, improve water quality, and also help recharge the floodplain and aquifer.

If the project will benefit specific species and habitats, describe the species and/or type of habitat that will benefit and the status of the species or habitat. Describe the extent (i.e., magnitude and geographic extent) to which the project will benefit the species or habitat, including an estimate of expected project benefits and documentation and support for the estimate.

The project will increase biodiversity in both the river channel and the riparian area. Due to the degradation of habitat and water quality (high aluminum and iron oxide levels from legacy mines), the channel supports very little aquatic life. This project will improve the quality of in-channel habitat, enabling fish to return to this one-mile stretch of river,

especially in combination with other entities' upstream efforts to reduce the pollution from legacy mines. The project will improve riparian biodiversity by removing invasive vegetation, planting native species, and improving conditions for native plants to flourish due to enhanced connectivity to the floodplain.

This stretch of river, where the Uncompahgre floodplain widens after falling rapidly through the canyons of the San Juan Mountains, is a critical migration corridor that extends from the Cimarron Mountains to this portion of the river. People often see large herds of elk, mule deer, and wild turkeys within this stretch of river floodplain. Fox, coyote, mountain lion, black bear, beaver, and many other mammals are familiar sites, as are bald eagles, golden eagles, American dippers, kingfishers, Canadian geese, red-tailed hawks, and many other bird species. The project's improvements to habitat will support and benefit all of these species.

The monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is a candidate for federal listing and is currently present in the immediate area. It is not required to consult with US Fish & Wildlife Service about the presence of monarchs as the species' federal listing is not yet proposed. However, they recommend conservation actions whenever possible. Several landowners in the project area have been actively revegetating their properties with pollinator/native grassland species. Three property owners have found monarch butterflies on their properties (Figure 3), and the density and diversity of mammals, birds, butterflies, and other insects have increased in the last two years. Substantial ecological uplift is already occurring. The activities within this project will further these efforts to support monarch habitat.



Figure 3. A monarch using restored pollinator habitat within the project area in August 2021.

If the proposed project will benefit federally listed threatened or endangered species, address the following: Is the species subject to a recovery plan or conservation plan under the ESA? What is the relationship of the species to water supply? What is the extent of the proposed project that would reduce the likelihood of listing or would otherwise improve the status of the species? Is the species adversely affected by a Reclamation project?

The project location does not overlap with any critical habitat for federally listed threatened or endangered species. However, Table 1 shows the federally listed

threatened or endangered species that could potentially return to the area and would benefit from the restored aquatic and riparian restoration activities.

Species	Status
Mammals	
Canada lynx (<i>Lynx canadensis</i>)	Threatened
Gray wolf (<i>Canis lupus</i>)	Endangered
Birds	
Mexican spotted owl (<i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i>)	Threatened
Yellow-billed cuckoo (<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>)	Threatened
Insects	
Monarch butterfly (<i>Danaus plexippus</i>)	Candidate
Silverspot (<i>Speyeria nokomis nokomis</i>)	Proposed Threatened

Table 1. Federally-listed species potentially in the area. There are no critical habitats within the project location.

Will the project address drought conditions or drought-related impacts on water supplies, habitat, species, or the ecosystem as a whole? If yes, describe past and current drought conditions and impacts and forecasted drought conditions and anticipated impacts. How will this project help build resilience to drought?

Western Colorado has already experienced significant warming and reduced streamflows due to climate change (Eilperin, 2020). Specifically, this project will increase climate change resilience for irrigated agriculture and aquatic species on the Uncompahgre River. The headgate and ditch improvements will allow landowners to get their water more efficiently at lower river flows and with less water loss. The channel work will increase habitat diversity within the river channel by creating small pools for aquatic species during warmer summer months. Reconnecting the river to its floodplain will potentially re-time flows by recharging the aquifer and releasing the water later in the season. This re-timing could increase flows during the later summer months when low flows are more common.

If the project will result in long-term improvements to water quality, explain the extent of those benefits. Estimate the expected project benefits to water quality and provide documentation and support for this estimate, including a detailed explanation of how the estimate was determined.

"The Uncompahgre River Watershed is experiencing population growth, development, increased use, drought, and climate change. These mostly human-caused pressures are combined with historic mining impacts that have left a majority of water sources contaminated by metals. Consequently, the Uncompahgre River and its watershed require careful management and planning for projects to improve water quality and supply." (UWP, 2022b) The Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project will do just that by increasing the river's sinuosity and connectivity with the floodplain while also revegetating the riparian areas with native plant species. Together these actions will slow streamflows and allow for the natural filtering of pollutants, including heavy metals

from upstream historic mines. The resulting aquatic habitat improvements will enable fish to return to this one-mile stretch of river, particularly in combination with current upstream efforts to reduce the pollution from legacy mines.

Are there project benefits not addressed in the preceding questions? If so, what are these benefits?

The project's location along US Hwy 550 creates excellent educational opportunities, including service-learning projects for local schools and youth and community groups. Local school groups, such as the one in Figure 4, have already assisted with the revegetation project within the project area at Claddagh Farms. By highlighting the project in this way, the proponents hope to elicit interest from neighboring property owners to undertake similar efforts to improve conditions on the Uncompahgre River.



Figure 4. Ouray Kindergarteners helped to plant native trees and spread native grass and wildflower seeds within the project area in 2022.

Water Conservation and Efficiency Project Benefits

Water conservation on this project includes piping some of the Ward Ditch and ditch laterals and installing gated pipes on portions of irrigated lands. The piping will help reduce open water in the ditch, thus reducing evaporation. All properties along the Ward Ditch will have lateral channels providing diversion back to the river. This allows increased return flow to the river when ditch water is not needed. Using native grasses, forbs, and wildflowers will also reduce the amount of ditch water required to irrigate these lands.

Water Management and Infrastructure Improvements Benefits

The project is unlikely to increase instream flows. However, it is likely to beneficially re-time flows by detaining water in the floodplain and releasing it later in the season. This could increase flows during the summer when there are often problematic lower flows.

Restoration Project Benefits

Invasive Species – Vegetation

Invasive species, including Russian olive, bull thistle, cheatgrass, and sweet clover, will be removed from the project site. Invasive regrowth will be managed by revegetating native trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and grasses. The removal of invasive vegetation will support riparian biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

Invasive Species – Other Taxa

Acidic and metal-laden water from the historic mines upstream has significantly impacted aquatic life, which has limited the spread of invasive species as much as it has limited desirable native fish and wildlife. There are several restoration efforts underway in the Upper Uncompahgre River watershed that will improve water quality. These improvements will make the river suitable for native and non-native species alike. Ridgway Reservoir, downstream of the project site, has Kokanee salmon and brown and rainbow trout, desirable, non-native species that could move upstream.

Forest Fuels Management Activities

This project does not include fuel management activities. However, five landowners along the Ward Ditch have thinned and cut down dead trees from the floodplain. This clearing has been completed on over 20 acres and has significantly reduced the fire hazard in this area.

Post-Wildland Fire Sediment Removal:

The watershed has not experienced a recent wildland fire, but with climate change and drought, it is only a matter of time. The project's instream and riparian restoration structures, revegetation, increased sinuosity, and improved floodplain connectivity will support sediment capture following potential future wildland fires. The restoration activities will help to protect sediment impacts on downstream infrastructure, including BOR's Ridgway Reservoir.

Subcriterion A.2: Multiple Benefits

If the project will benefit multiple water uses, explain how and to what extent the project will benefit multiple water uses.

The project benefits ecological, agricultural, and recreational water uses.

Ecological- The revegetation and in-channel work will improve aquatic, riparian, and upland habitats, restoring ecological function.

Agricultural- The Ward Ditch is managed by the Ward Water Group, comprised of 4 families that are property owners in southwestern Colorado's Ouray County. The water rights on the Ward ditch of 2.33 cfs were adjudicated in 1905 (.33cfs) and 1942 (2cfs). The ditch users use the water to irrigate 30 acres of land and for domestic purposes. Ditch users are interested in converting their irrigated lands to include primarily native species for grassland pasture, pollinator, and riparian habitats. The project will upgrade the irrigation infrastructure, improving the efficiency of water delivery. Horses currently graze on some of the properties, and the landowners intend to graze the land with livestock when the grasslands are healthy enough to support this use. One landowner in

the area plans to grow potatoes, huckleberries, and herbs once the soil and irrigated areas are suitable for these crops.

Recreational- Heavy metal-laden water from legacy mines has caused this segment of the Uncompahgre River to be inhospitable to fish. This project's activities, and those of a Trout Unlimited project immediately upstream, will improve the fishery, providing expanded recreational opportunities for anglers. The instream channel work will provide additional habitat for fish species and make small waves for kayakers. Improvements will allow for safer boating by improving the hydraulics at the headgate and reducing river debris.

If the project will provide multiple restoration benefits, explain how.

River channel improvements, invasive plant removal, native plant revegetation, and floodplain reconnection will provide multiple restoration benefits, including improved water quality, aquatic and riparian habitat for fish and wildlife, increased plant and animal biodiversity, ecosystem function, and angling opportunities. Additionally, this stretch of the river, which is already popular with boaters, will provide an enhanced experience thanks to improved safety, aesthetics, and wildlife viewing opportunities following the project's completion.

Will the project reduce water conflicts within the watershed? If so, explain how.

The watershed has not experienced significant water conflicts.

1.6.2 Evaluation Criterion B: Collaborative Planning (20 Points)

Strategy or Plan: Is your proposed project supported by a specific strategy or planning document? If so, identify the strategy or planning document by name and address the following questions: When was the plan or strategy prepared and for what purpose? What types of issues are addressed in the plan? For example, does the plan address water quantity issues, water quality issues, and/or issues related to ecosystem and watershed health or the health of species and habitat within the watershed? Is one of the purposes of the strategy or plan to increase the reliability of a water supply for ecological values?

The study most directly related to this project is the 2018 Uncompahgre Watershed Plan, completed by the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership. While not a direct project team member, the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership enthusiastically supports this project and the benefits it will have on the whole watershed. This project will address several problems identified in the plan related to watershed health and irrigation improvements. Specifically, the plan identified altered sediment dynamics that lead to river instability and limited in-stream and riparian habitat in the Uncompahgre River from Ouray to Ridgway, which includes the project area. This project will directly address these problems in this area by implementing irrigation infrastructure and river channel improvements and improving the connection to the floodplain, which will benefit riparian habitat. The plan is available at: <https://www.uncompahgrewatershed.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Uncompahgre-Watershed-Plan-2022.pdf>

This project also responds to the Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan (BIP), updated in 2020 from the original 2015 plan. The Gunnison BIP offers solutions to the basin's growing demand for water for agricultural, municipal, industrial, recreational, and

environmental uses. It describes options to improve water supply reliability while minimizing losses of land and water for agriculture. The Gunnison BIP is available here: https://dnrweblink.state.co.us/cwcbsearch/0/edoc/216709/Gunnison_BIP_Volume1_2022.pdf

Finally, the project responds to the Colorado Water Plan, first released in 2015 and updated in 2023. It guides collaborative action to secure water supplies for drinking water, agriculture, and streams' ecological and recreational values, making for a more water-resilient state. The Water Plan is available here: https://dnrweblink.state.co.us/CWCB/0/edoc/219188/Colorado_WaterPlan_2023_Digital.pdf.

Strategy or Plan Development: Was the strategy or plan developed through a collaborative process? Was the strategy or plan developed as part of a collaborative process by a watershed group, as defined in Section 6001(6) of the Cooperative Watershed Management Act? Or a water user and one or more stakeholders with diverse interests?

The Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership, a nonprofit watershed group as defined in Section 6001(6) of the Cooperative Watershed Management Act, developed the Uncompahgre Watershed Plan. The Ouray County Planning Department assisted the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership in further refining the plan.

The Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan was developed by the Gunnison Basin Roundtable, which represents diverse interests, including agricultural, municipal, recreational, and environmental water uses.

The Colorado Water Plan was informed by robust statewide stakeholder outreach as well as data and modeling to understand the current water supply and potential future scenarios. The Plan highlights Colorado's values which are incorporated into the themes of Thriving Watersheds, Resilient Planning, Vibrant Communities, and Robust Agriculture. Additionally, the Water Plan incorporates the Basin Implementation Plans from the eight different basins across the state. The Water Plan was made possible through a collaborative process and is updated every ten years to review the visions, actions, analysis, and technical updates.

Describe who was involved in preparing the plan and whether the plan was prepared with input from stakeholders with diverse interests? Describe the process used for interested stakeholders to provide input during the development of the strategy or plan.

The following organizations, which represent diverse interests, participated in the development of the Uncompahgre Watershed Plan: Ridgway Ouray Community Council, Uncompahgre Valley Association, Selenium Task Force, Painted Sky RC&D, Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association, Tri-County Water Conservancy District, Mosaic Community Project, City and County of Montrose, Ouray County, Town of Ridgway, City of Ouray, Delta County, City of Delta, Friends of the River Uncompahgre, Colorado River District, Uncompahgre Plateau Project, Trust for Land Reclamation, Red Mountain Project, CSU Extension, Black Canyon Land Trust, Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, US Geological Survey, Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment, Water Quality Control Division, US Bureau of Reclamation, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado Division of Reclamation Mining & Safety, Western Hardrock Watershed Team,

San Juan Corridors Coalition, Gunnison Gorge Anglers, Ridgway State Park, RIGGS, Bio-Logic Inc., Western Stream Works LLC., City of Ouray Library, Mountain Studies Institute, Idaho Mining. In developing the plan, the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership hosted meetings, conferences, and public forums in Ridgway, Montrose, and Delta to gather and understand stakeholders' concerns and watershed issues.

The Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan was developed through public meetings of the Gunnison Basin Roundtable, which meets monthly, and the Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan Subcommittee. The Gunnison Basin Roundtable "held targeted technical outreach meetings with specific groups of stakeholders (farmers and ranchers, municipal & industrial providers, recreational interests, and environmental interests, among others) to update current project data and identify new projects for the BIP Update." (GBRT 2022, p40)

The Colorado Water Plan was written and developed by the Colorado Water Conservation Board, with robust statewide stakeholder outreach, including specific outreach to each of the eight Basin Roundtables. The Water Plan includes statewide actions and information from each of the Basin Implementation Plans updated by the appropriate basin roundtable. Each Basin Roundtable utilizes a slightly different process to develop its Plan, but each must use a collaborative approach to represent diverse stakeholders from that basin.

If the strategy or plan was prepared by an entity other than the applicant, explain why it is applicable to the proposed project. Describe whether and how the applicant was involved in the development of the strategy or plan. If the applicant was not involved in the development, explain why.

Entities other than American Rivers created the Uncompahgre Watershed Plan, the Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan (BIP), and the Colorado Water Plan. However, the plans are relevant as significant collaborative efforts supporting the Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project.

American Rivers (AR) participated in the stakeholder process to develop the Colorado Water Plan and the Water Plan update. AR provided comments and suggestions on how the Water Plan - and Basin Implementation Plans, like the Gunnison BIP - can further incorporate river restoration and agricultural improvements to help with drought resilience, water security, and habitat improvement. While AR was not involved in developing the Uncompahgre Watershed Plan, its findings align with AR's goals. As such, AR is pleased to be working to implement aspects of the Uncompahgre Watershed Plan with many different stakeholders. The Uncompahgre River Multibenefit Project is an excellent example of the types of projects called out in the Colorado Water Plan, Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan, and the Uncompahgre Watershed Plan.

For Tribal strategies or plans that were developed collaboratively with multiple Tribal interests, but did not include collaboration with external entities, explain why collaboration with entities external to the Tribe were not involved in the development of the strategy or plan.

N/A

Strategy or Plan Support for Project: Describe how the plan or strategy supports your proposed project. Does the proposed project implement a goal or need identified in the plan? Describe how the proposed project is prioritized in the referenced plan or strategy.

This project supports the watershed health and agricultural water supply/viability goals of statewide and Gunnison Basin water planning efforts and the Uncompahgre Watershed Plan.

Uncompahgre Watershed Plan

The Uncompahgre Watershed Plan addresses water supply and watershed health concerns. Problems and relevant critical areas identified in the 2018 Uncompahgre Watershed Plan include

- *Problem: State water planners have forecast gaps in water supplies which may impair existing water uses* (Section 8, page 8-1), with "irrigation inefficiencies" listed as a source of the problem and Ouray County and agricultural areas listed as critical areas.
- *Problem: Altered sediment dynamics lead to river instability* (Section 8, page 8-15), with the Uncompahgre River from Ouray to Ridgway (the project is in this area) and the KOA near Ouray (adjacent to the project) listed as critical areas.
- *Problem: In-stream and riparian habitat are limited* (Section 8, page 8-16), with the Uncompahgre River from Ouray to Ridgway (pools and stream cover) listed as a critical area.

This project will directly address these problems in an identified critical area by implementing irrigation infrastructure and river channel improvements, as well as improving the connection to the floodplain, which will also benefit riparian habitat.

Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan

The 2022 Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan includes the following goals (page 13):

- Improve agricultural water supplies to reduce shortages.
- Quantify and protect environmental and recreational uses.
- Maintain or, where necessary, improve water quality throughout the Gunnison Basin.
- Describe and encourage relationships between agricultural and environmental/recreational water uses.

This project responds to the first three goals by implementing measures to improve access to irrigation water and improve an impaired section of the stream through river restoration and improved water quality. It responds to the fourth by demonstrating how agricultural water users can collaborate on a project that benefits both water access and watershed health.

Colorado Water Plan

This project responds directly to the vision and partner actions articulated in the Colorado Water Plan for thriving watersheds and robust agriculture.

Thriving Watersheds

The Colorado Water Plan's vision for thriving watersheds states that "*Colorado will continue to follow a shared stewardship ethic to plan and implement multi-benefit projects to enhance the health of our watersheds.*" (p. 177)

In the section on partner actions to realize this vision, the plan explicitly lists projects to "*Rehabilitate streams to improve habitat, reduce erosion, and meet needs: Flow enhancement projects and projects that reconnect streams with their floodplains can improve stream and riparian habitat as well as water quality for the benefit of all water sectors...*" (p. 205)

Robust Agriculture

The Colorado Water Plan vision for robust agriculture states, "*Collaborative partnerships among agriculture, environmental groups, and municipal water providers should be used to create multi-purpose projects that help keep irrigated lands in production and maintain ecosystem services.*" (p. 176)

One of the partner actions listed to help realize this vision is "*Replacing diversion structures: ... Replacing aging and inefficient diversion structures, and where possible enhancing their design, can provide additional supplies to irrigators while benefiting habitat and recreation on rivers and streams.*" (p. 194)

This project is precisely the kind of partner action described in the Colorado Water Plan, providing benefits to watershed health and robust agriculture through collaboration to enhance stream and riparian function and water delivery infrastructure.

1.6.3 Evaluation Criterion C: Stakeholder Support for Proposed Project (15 Points)

Describe the level of stakeholder support for the proposed project. Are letters of support from stakeholders provided? Are any stakeholders providing support for the project through cost-share contributions or other types of contributions to the project?

Bureau of Land Management, Colorado Water Conservation Board, Colorado River District, Ouray County Board of County Commissioners, Trout Unlimited, the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership, the ditch owners, and local private landowners submitted letters of support for the project. The Colorado Water Conservation Board and the Colorado River District have already provided financial support for the design phase of this project, as has the Ward Water Group. Additional anticipated contributions are listed in the budget. Staff from the Bureau of Land Management, Ouray County, the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership, and the local landowners have also reviewed and provided input on draft project plans.

Explain whether the project is supported by a diverse set of stakeholders, as appropriate, given the types of interested stakeholders within the project area and the scale, type, and complexity of the proposed project.

The project has support from Ouray County, Trout Unlimited, the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership, and the water rights holders and private landowners. These groups represent local government and the area's primary environmental, recreational, and agricultural users.

Is the project supported by entities responsible for managing land, water, fish and wildlife, recreation, or forestry within the project area? Is the project consistent with the policies of those agencies?

The Bureau of Land Management, Colorado Water Conservation Board, and Colorado River District support the project. The project is consistent with the policies and missions of each of these entities.

Is there opposition to the proposed project?

There is no known or expected opposition to the proposed project.

1.6.4 Evaluation Criterion D: Readiness to Proceed (20 Points)

Task	Timeline	Milestones
Project Design, Compliance & Management	Summer 2023-Spring 2024	Environmental Assessment
		Headgate & revegetation site analysis
		Army Corps of Engineers NW27 Permit, HEC-RAS Analysis, and No Rise Certification
		Cultural Compliance
Rebuild & Improve Ward Ditch Headgate	Fall 2024	Install/construct 2 cross-vane weirs, 82 linear feet of rock sills, a concrete stoplog bypass, 37 linear feet of toe rock, and regrade the turnout
Fish/Habitat, Channel Structures, and Riparian Corridor Revegetation	Fall 2025	Install 7 cross-vane weirs, 6 J-hook vanes, 4 rock vanes, 32 boulder clusters, and 490 linear feet of rock sills.
		Create meanders and benches.
		Breach the berm to reconnect the floodplain to the river.
		Revegetate the banks and meanders using 827 willow pole clusters and 2,077 riparian plant species plugs.
Ditch/Irrigation Efficiencies, Earthwork & Structure Installation	Spring-Fall 2024	Grade the irrigated fields to support riparian/pollinator habitat.
		Excavate/create irrigated riparian habitat.
		Install irrigation (100 linear feet of culverts, splitter boxes/irrigation gates, and 5,600 linear feet of pipeline).
Upper Floodplain	Spring - Fall 2024	Clear 30 acres of Russian olive, bull thistle, cheatgrass, and sweet clover.

(Private Land) Revegetation		Plant 3,000 rush/sedge plugs.
		Plant 1,500 willow clusters.
		Plant 2,000 riparian tree and shrub species (cottonwood, alder, aspen, serviceberry)
		Plant 750 upland riparian species (ponderosa pine, blue spruce, chokecherry, Rocky Mountain maple).
		Spread 240lbs of riparian and upland seed mix.
Monitoring & Maintenance	Winter 2024-Spring 2025	Continue mechanical & chemical weeding maintenance.
		Design a revegetation and fish/aquatic habitat monitoring plan.
		Implement the monitoring plan.

Proposals with a budget and budget narrative that reasonably explain project costs will be prioritized under this criterion.

A budget and budget narrative are provided.

Describe any permits and agency approvals that will be required along with the process and timeframe for obtaining such permits or approvals.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): Work completed directly around the headgate, within the right-of-way established by the Bureau of Land Management (see attached letter of acknowledgment), will only require a Categorical Exclusion (CE). The other portion of the project on BLM lands will require an Environmental Assessment (EA). BOR has indicated that, if this grant is awarded, they will be the lead agency for the EA and will work in cooperation with BLM. BOR estimated the EA process would take 7-8 months, including the public comment period and necessary coordination with BLM. NEPA compliance work will begin upon the announcement of the grant award.

US Army Corps of Engineers, 404 Permit: The Army Corps of Engineers has indicated that work immediately surrounding the headgate and Ward Ditch will fall under an exemption to 404 permits, as the project's result will keep water rights intact and irrigation infrastructure efficient. The restoration work along the river will require a Nationwide 27 Permit. The 404 Permit application and review are estimated to take 90 days.

No-Rise Certification will be required to indicate that there will be no increase in the elevation or extent of flooding at the 100-year floodplain established by FEMA. Hydraulic modeling has been completed at the irrigation diversion to support the no-rise. The necessary hydraulic modeling for the downstream in-channel components of the project will be completed as the final designs are developed. The Ouray County

floodplain manager will review hydraulic modeling before implementation begins. Post-construction, the engineer will conduct an as-built survey of the installed practices to utilize in a final hydraulic model for the no-rise certification to the floodplain manager.

Identify and describe any engineering or design work supporting the proposed project. If additional design is required, describe the planned process and timeline for completing the design. Priority will be given to projects further along in the design process and ready for implementation.

Ward Water Group, American Rivers, and Natural Channel Design (the design team) prepared the initial plan concept and subsequently shared them with additional stakeholders, including the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership, Trout Unlimited, and local landowners, which contributed additional information. The design team also shared the concept plans with local planning officials and local (Ouray County and Colorado River District), state (Colorado Division of Water Resources), and federal agencies (Bureau of Land Management) for input and advice. The design team will share the concept plans with the Colorado Water Conservation Board in April 2023.

Does the applicant have access to the land or water source where the project is located? Has the applicant obtained any easements that are required for the project? If so, provide documentation. If the applicant does not yet have permission to access the project location, describe the process and timeframe for obtaining such permission.

The project is on private property owned by members of the Ward Water Group (the Category A partner for the project), surrounding neighbors, and the Bureau of Land Management. All property owners have granted access to the location for project implementation. Letters expressing the right to access are included in the attachments.

Identify whether the applicant has contacted the local Reclamation office to discuss the project's potential environmental and cultural resource compliance requirements and associated costs. Has a line item been included in the budget for costs associated with compliance? If a contractor will need to complete some of the compliance activities, separate line items should be included in the budget for Reclamation's costs and the contractor's costs.

Yes, American Rivers and Ward Water Group have met with the Bureau of Reclamation to discuss the project and its potential environmental and cultural resource compliance requirements, which are included in the budget.

Is the project completely or partially located on Federal land or at a Federal facility? If so, explain whether the agency supports the project and has granted access to the Federal land or facility, whether the agency will contribute toward the project, and why the Federal agency is not completing the project. Note: Other sources of Federal funding cannot be included within the scope of the project proposed for Reclamation funding under this NOFO. Other Federal agencies can contribute toward the completion of environmental and cultural resource compliance, provide access to land, and provide project oversight as necessary; however, any costs associated with these activities should not be included in the project budget.

A small portion of the project is on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM supports the project (please see a letter of support attached) and has provided an acknowledgment of the right-of-way for the Ward Ditch and the access road necessary for the operation and maintenance of the Ward Ditch (see right-of-way letter

attached). BLM is not completing this project themselves as the majority of the project is located on and of primary benefit to the private landowners.

1.6.5 Evaluation Criterion E: Performance Measures (5 Points)

Describe the performance measures that will be used to quantitatively or qualitatively define actual project benefits upon completion. Include support for why the specific performance measures were chosen.

The project team will measure the success of the project through the following:

1. The successful installation of 5 cross-vane weirs, 6 J-hook vanes, 4 rock vanes, 30 boulder clusters, and 490 linear feet of rock sills.
2. Evidence of improved aquatic habitat, such as the presence of diverse macroinvertebrates, fish, and other aquatic species.
3. Reduced stream temperature and increased water quality.
4. The successful establishment of native plants and the absence of invasive plant species on 31.6 acres of land.
5. A reconnected floodplain as evidenced by flooding in selected areas every 1.5-5 years.
6. An increased presence of pollinating insect species, birds, and mammals on the upper floodplain and irrigated fields following revegetation with native grasses and flowers.
7. A reduced need for regular maintenance at the Ward Headgate indicating the headgate design's success in stabilizing the river, reducing headcut erosion, and preventing debris build-up.

A monitoring plan will be developed by early 2024 and completed before the project implementation begins in 2024. Photo-monitoring and qualitative observations will be performed by the Ward Water Group for at least five years, including initial photo-monitoring of the pre-restoration landscape. Funding from this grant will support the first six months of monitoring. Water quality testing will be conducted for the first six months following project completion. The monitoring plan will identify the water quality testing needs beyond six months. [Colorado River Watch](#) stations are within a few miles up and downstream of the project area, providing publicly available baseline data through the [Colorado Data Sharing Network](#). The project team can use this data for long-term water quality monitoring of the project and the surrounding area.

All applicants must include information about plans to monitor improved streamflows, aquatic habitat, or other expected project benefits. Describe the plan to monitor the benefits over a 5-year period once the project has been completed. Provide details on the steps to be taken to carry out the plan.

The five-year monitoring plan, which will be developed by early 2024, is anticipated to include actions such as photo-monitoring, water quality testing (including temperature, dissolved oxygen, and pH), and seasonal qualitative observations with the involvement of the Ward Water Group. American Rivers can provide a copy of the monitoring plan to BOR once completed.

1.6.6 Evaluation Criterion F: Presidential and DOI Priorities (15 points)

Subcriterion E1: Climate Change

How will the project build long-term resilience to drought? How many years will the project continue to provide benefits? Estimate the extent to which the project will build resilience to drought and provide support for your estimate.

The restored ecosystem will support groundwater recharge and water storage by reconnecting the floodplain, making the project area more resilient to drought. Aquatic ecosystems will experience the most benefit from the project during drier years, as water that reaches the floodplain during spring runoff will return to the river slowly through the soil, supporting late-season flows. A quantitative estimate of the extent of groundwater recharge is not available without modeling, which has not been completed.

In addition to drought resiliency measures, does the proposed project include other natural hazard risk reductions for hazards such as wildfires or floods?

By improving floodplain connectivity, this project will increase the safety and resilience of local private property and ecosystems impacted by the high and low streamflow extremes brought about by climate change. During high flows, enhanced connectivity to the floodplain will give the river room to spread out and dissipate energy, reducing flooding risks for downstream properties.

Will the proposed project establish and use a renewable energy source?

No

Will the proposed project reduce greenhouse gas emissions by sequestering carbon in soils, grasses, trees, and other vegetation?

The project restores 31.6 acres of riparian and upland habitat. This restoration will improve ecosystem function, supporting carbon sequestration in the enhanced soils, grasses, trees, and other vegetation.

Does the proposed project include green or sustainable infrastructure to improve community climate resilience, such as reducing the urban heat island effect, lowering building energy demands, or reducing the energy needed to manage water? Does this infrastructure complement other green solutions implemented throughout the region or watershed?

Due to its location in a rural area, this project does not address urban climate change contributions or impacts. Water management will rely on gravity, as it does currently, so energy needs for water management are not a factor. This project will, however, complement other green solutions being implemented upstream, such as efforts to address pollution from historic mining.

Does the proposed project seek to reduce or mitigate climate pollutions, such as air or water pollution?

No

Does the proposed project have a conservation or management component that will promote healthy lands and soils or serve to protect water supplies and its associated uses?

The project activities increase biodiversity, improve aquatic and riparian habitat, reconnect the floodplain, and improve irrigation efficiency, all of which will promote healthy lands and soils and aid in protecting water supplies.

Does the proposed project contribute to climate change resiliency in other ways not described above?

No

Subcriterion E2: Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities

The project does not directly serve an economically disadvantaged or underserved community.

Subcriterion E.3: Tribal Benefits

The project does not directly serve or benefit a Tribe or improve water management for a tribe.

References

- Colorado Water Conservation Board, Colorado Water Plan (2023). Denver, CO.
- Eilperin, J. (2020, August 7). 2°C: Beyond The Limit: This giant climate hot spot is robbing the West of its water. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved March 22, 2023, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/national/climate-environment/climate-change-colorado-utah-hot-spot/>.
- Gunnison Basin Roundtable (GBRT). (2022). *Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan* (Vol. 1).
- Lyon, P., Stephens, T., Siemers, J., Culver, D., Pineda, P., & Zoerner, J. (1999). *The Uncompahgre River Basin: A Natural Heritage Assessment* (Vol. I). Colorado Natural Heritage Program.
- Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership (UWP). (n.d.). *The Uncompahgre River Watershed in Ouray County: The Basics & a Little Bit More*. Ridgway, Colorado; Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership.
- Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership (UWP). (2022a). *Uncompahgre Watershed Plan*.
- Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership (UWP). (2022b). *The Health and State of the Uncompahgre River, its tributaries, and its watershed*. Ridgway Colorado; Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership.

2. Project budget

The Project Budget is attached separately.

3. Environmental and cultural resources compliance

Will the proposed project impact the surrounding environment (e.g., soil [dust], air, water [quality and quantity], animal habitat)? Briefly describe all earth-disturbing work and any work that will affect the air, water, or animal habitat in the project area. Explain the impacts of such work on the surrounding environment and any steps that could be taken to minimize the impacts.

Construction of the project will require heavy equipment working on both the bank and within the channel of the Uncompahgre River. There will be a need for access corridors and staging areas for equipment and materials. Careful marking of specific areas for travel and storage can minimize impacts on surrounding areas. The contractor will restore all storage and travel areas upon completion of work to reduce soil compaction and loss of vegetation. Proper cleaning of equipment before entering the site and sourcing materials from weed-free areas will reduce the need for weed management after construction. However, the monitoring plan will outline the required invasive species monitoring and treatment for at least two growing seasons after construction. If weed-free rock sources are not readily available, the contractor will treat the rocks with pre-emergent herbicides before installation.

Work within the channel will produce sediment. However, sediment loads are generally no greater than those experienced during high water events, and impacts should be temporary during construction, ultimately leading to long-term improvements over the current conditions. Work within the wetted channel should be limited to that which is absolutely necessary to achieve the desired result. Most work can be accomplished with the excavator stationed outside of the stream. No fueling or maintenance will occur outside of the staging area, and each machine will be outfitted with a spill kit while working near the water.

Dust will be mitigated by watering down the access road to the headgate. The contractor will grade when irrigation water flows in the ditch and can be used to wet down the fields for dust mitigation. Finally, the contractor will minimize grading work during high winds.

Are you aware of any species listed or proposed to be listed as a Federal threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat in the project area? If so, would they be affected by any activities associated with the proposed project?

The project location does not overlap with any critical habitat for federally-listed threatened or endangered species.

Are there wetlands or other surface waters inside the project boundaries that potentially fall under CWA jurisdiction as "Waters of the United States"? If so, describe and estimate any impacts the proposed project may have.

The Uncompahgre River falls under CWA jurisdiction as "Waters of the United States." The project will follow all necessary permitting procedures to ensure CWA compliance. The project's impacts are limited to channel stability, habitat enhancement, and riparian revegetation activities.

When was the water delivery system constructed?

It is assumed that the ditch was constructed in or around 1897 when the water rights were appropriated.

Will the proposed project result in any modification of, or effects to, individual features of an irrigation system (e.g., headgates, canals, or flumes)? If so, state when those features were constructed and describe the nature and timing of any extensive alterations or modifications to those features completed previously.

Yes, the project will modify the Ward Ditch and the area surrounding the headgate in the fall of 2024. The headgate has been in place for decades but was reconstructed in the early 1990s. Since then, it has required regular maintenance, and the proposed modifications will reduce ongoing maintenance and prolong the life of the headgate far into the future. The improvements will include the installation of two cross-vane weirs, 82 linear feet of rock sills, a concrete stop-log bypass, 37 linear feet of toe rock, and regrading of the turnout. The proposed improvements to the Ward Ditch down from the headgate are part of a continued effort to better manage the ditch and comply with state decrees, particularly during a call from the Colorado Division of Water Resources. In the past three years, the Ward Water Group has installed a splitter box at the junction with the Rewalt-Plummer Ditch, cleaned and maintained the ditch, improved access along the right of way, and installed gates on lateral ditches.

Are any buildings, structures, or features in the irrigation district listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places? A cultural resources specialist at your local Reclamation office or the State Historic Preservation Office can assist in answering this question.

No.

Are there any known archeological sites in the proposed project area?

An archeological survey has not been completed but will be required and completed as a part of the EA.

Will the proposed project have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low-income or minority populations?

No.

Will the proposed project limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites or result in other impacts on Tribal lands?

No, the project will not limit access. On the contrary, one of the landowners in the project area will allow Ute Tribal elders to pray and collect medicinal plants reestablished as a result of this project.

Will the proposed project contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area?

No.

4. Required permits or approvals

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): Work completed directly around the headgate, within the right-of-way established by the Bureau of Land Management (see attached letter of acknowledgment), will only require a Categorical Exclusion (CE). The other portion of the project on BLM lands will require an Environmental Assessment (EA). BOR has indicated that, if this grant is awarded, they will be the lead agency for the EA and will work in cooperation with BLM. BOR estimated the EA process would take 7-8 months, including the public comment period and necessary coordination with BLM. NEPA compliance work will begin upon the announcement of the grant award.

US Army Corps of Engineers, 404 Permit: The Army Corps of Engineers has indicated that work immediately surrounding the headgate and Ward Ditch will fall under an exemption to 404 permits, as the work keeps water rights intact and irrigation infrastructure efficient. The restoration work along the river will require a Nationwide 27 Permit. The 404 permit application and review will take approximately 90 days.

No-Rise Certification will be required to indicate that there will be no increase in the elevation or extent of flooding at the 100-year floodplain established by FEMA. Hydraulic modeling has been completed at the irrigation diversion to support the no-rise. The necessary hydraulic modeling for the downstream in-channel components of the project will be completed as the final designs are developed. The Ouray County floodplain manager will review hydraulic modeling before implementation begins. Post-construction, the engineer will conduct an as-built survey of the installed practices to utilize in a final hydraulic model for the no-rise certification to the floodplain manager.

5. Official resolution

Attached

6. Letters of support and Letters of Partnership

Attached from Ouray County Board of County Commissioners, Colorado River Water Conservation District, Colorado Water Conservation Board, Bureau of Land Management, Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership, Trout Unlimited, members of the Ward Water Group and local landowners.

Attached from Category A Partner, Ward Water Group

7. Conflict of interest disclosure statement

At the time of submission, American Rivers has no actual or potential conflict of interest, as outlined in 2 CFR §1402.112, related to the Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project.

One of the contractors for the design of the project, Fred Phillips of Fred Phillips Consulting, is also a local landowner and member/current president of the Ward Water Group.

American Rivers and Ward Water Group and their employees will continue to take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest in their responsibilities under or concerning Federal financial assistance agreements and in procuring supplies, equipment, construction, and services as provided in 2 CFR§200.318.

The project manager, American Rivers, will monitor the areas of risk for conflict of interest (procurement of supplies, equipment, construction, and services) and identify, disclose, and mitigate or eliminate the conflicts of interest. If a conflict of interest arises during the project period, Fay Hartman will notify the Bureau of Reclamation in writing.

As a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, American Rivers has strict limitations on its lobbying activities. Furthermore, no federal grant funds will be utilized for lobbying activities.

8. Uniform audit reporting statement

American Rivers expended \$1,305,166 in federal funding in the fiscal year 2022. Therefore, a Single Audit Report was required and was filed on 2/10/2023 (file name 21179820221). However, this audit was filed under an incorrect EIN (27-7305963), which American Rivers is working to address immediately. When BOR reviews this application, the audit could be posted under the mistaken EIN (27-7305963) or the correct EIN (23-7305963).

9. Overlap or duplication of effort statement

There is no overlap or duplication of effort created by the Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit project.

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-1

**A RESOLUTION OF THE AMERICAN RIVERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING
THE APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS
FOR THE UNCOMPAGRE RIVER MULTI-BENEFIT PROJECT**

WHEREAS, the President of the United States and the United States Department of the Interior have provided funds for the WaterSMART Program; and

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Reclamation has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of this grant program, establishing necessary procedures; and

WHEREAS, said procedures established by the Bureau of Reclamation require a resolution certifying the approval of application(s) by the applicant's governing board before submission of said application(s); and

WHEREAS, the applicant, if selected, will enter into an agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation to carry out the activities as described in the proposal.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT:

SECTION 1.

Approves the filing of an application for the WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Projects for Fiscal Year 2023 by American Rivers, requesting funding support for the completion of the Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project; and

SECTION 2.

Appoints the Chief Financial Officer to execute and sign all contractually binding documents and designates Fay Hartman, Conservation Director, Southwest Regional Program to conduct all negotiations, and submit all documents included, but not limited to applications, agreements, payment requests and any other grant required correspondence, which may be necessary for the completion of the aforementioned project.

SECTION 3.

Certifies that the American Rivers has sufficient funds available to provide 25% of the total project costs as matching funds/in-kind contributions; and

SECTION 4.

Certifies that American Rivers will work with the Bureau of Reclamation to meet established deadlines for entering into a cooperative agreement; and

SECTION 5.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately from and after its passage and publication as required by law.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 2ND DAY OF MARCH, 2023.

AMERICAN RIVERS, INC.

Assistant Secretary for the
Governing Board



**Ward Water Group
Ouray Colorado**

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
WaterSMART – Environmental Water Resources Project Funding Opportunity, March 2023
Sponsors Commitment Letter (Category A) on behalf of American Rivers

March 26th, 2023

Dear Reclamation Grant Reviewers,

The Ward Water Group is pleased to write this Sponsorship Commitment Letter on behalf of American Rivers' WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Project (EWRP) application: *Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project*. This collaborative, multi-benefit project seeks to improve habitat, water quality, water management and late season flows along an incised, degraded stretch of the Uncompahgre River between Ouray and Ridgway.

The ward water group is a 501c12 organization. It is comprised of 4 families that that are property owners in Ouray county in southwestern Colorado. The Ward ditch is managed by the Ward Water Group. The ditch headgate is located on the upper Uncompahgre River approximately 4 miles north of the town of Ouray Colorado. The Uncompahgre river is part of the Gunnison Basin district 68, Colorado River drainage system. The ditch has been on continuous operation since before 1905 when the first water rights were adjudicated. The water rights on the ward ditch of 2.33 CFS were adjudicated in 1905 (.33cfs) and 1942 (2cfs). The water is used for agriculture and riparian habitat restoration.

The Ward Water Group and American Rivers have worked together on the development of the project design and cost. The Ward Water Group is knowledgeable on the full scope of the funding request and has been engaged in the project planning and design. We qualify as a Category A applicant and are pleased to be working in partnership with American Rivers (Category B applicant) for our proposed Environmental Water Resources Partnership.

As the Category A applicant, we are supportive and working in partnership with American Rivers on the *Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project*. We fully support and agree with the content of this grant application. The Ward Water Group will directly benefit from this project. We will continue to communicate and work with American Rivers during the implementation of this project to ensure success. The Ward Water Group looks forward to continuing our active participation in this project and our continued work with American Rivers.

Please reach out to me if you have any questions regarding the Ward Water Group's qualifications and willingness to act as a Category A applicant and sponsor of American Rivers' WaterSMART application.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of this project.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Fred Phillips', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Fred Phillips, President
Ward Water Group
17285 Hwy 550
Ridgway, Co 81432
M 928-380-5058
fphillips@fredphillipsconsulting.com

Other Ward Water Group Members that support this letter

Craig Tessum
Rick Colpitts
Tara Colpitts
Russ Stodieck
Beth Stodieck



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Uncompahgre Field Office
2465 South Townsend Ave
Montrose, CO 81401

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
WaterSMART – Environmental Water Resources Project Funding Opportunity, March 2023
Letter of Support for American Rivers' Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project Application

3/16/2023

Dear Reclamation Grant Reviewers,

The Bureau of Land Management is pleased to support American Rivers' WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Project (EWRP) application: *Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project*. This collaborative, multi-benefit project seeks to improve habitat, water quality, water management and late season flows along an incised, degraded stretch of the Uncompahgre River between Ouray and Ridgway.

The one-mile segment of the Uncompahgre River between the Ward Ditch Diversion and County Road 23 bridge near the town of Ouray has been heavily impacted by dredging and riprap, resulting in an incised, unnaturally straight river that is disconnected from the floodplain, and lacking in diverse habitat. Native riparian trees are dying off and invasive trees are establishing. Additionally, nearby wells have run dry in recent years, and the Ward Ditch headgate is unable to divert and deliver water when flows are below 250 cubic feet/ second.

Funding from the WaterSMART EWRP grant would support the implementation of a multi-benefit project that will improve access to and management of water for users of the Ward Ditch through headgate and ditch improvements, while also restoring in-stream and riparian habitat through river channel improvements and better connectivity with the floodplain. This project can serve as a demonstration project to guide future restoration and agriculture infrastructure improvements within the Uncompahgre watershed.

This project aligns with the goals of WaterSMART EWRP – to improve water management through infrastructure improvements that benefit agriculture, ecological values and watershed health. The Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project achieves all of these goals. More locally, this project also achieves the goals laid out in Colorado's Water Plan, the Gunnison River Basin Roundtable's Basin Implementation Plan as well as the Uncompahgre Watershed Plan.

We support this project because a portion of the project is located on BLM land. We will contribute to this project or use the results of this project by responding to the temporary right-of-way application, ensuring National Environmental Policy Act requirements are met, and providing the analysis to the public for comment.

In summary, we strongly support the project goals as well as the coalition's strong partnership across water users, conservation organizations and local government. Thank you for your consideration of supporting the Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project.

Sincerely,

Jedd Sondergard, Hydrologist, BLM



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources
1313 Sherman Street, Room 718
Denver, CO 80203

March 20, 2023

Dear Reclamation Grant Reviewers,

The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) is pleased to support American Rivers' WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Project (EWRP) application: *Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project*. This collaborative, multi-benefit project seeks to improve habitat, water quality, water management and late season flows along an incised, degraded stretch of the Uncompahgre River between Ouray and Ridgway.

The one-mile segment of the Uncompahgre River between the Ward Ditch Diversion and County Road 23 bridge near the town of Ouray has been heavily impacted by dredging and riprap, resulting in an incised, unnaturally straight river that is disconnected from the floodplain, and lacking in diverse habitat. Native riparian trees are dying off and invasive trees are establishing. Additionally, nearby wells have run dry in recent years, and the Ward Ditch headgate is unable to divert and deliver water when flows are below 250 cubic feet/ second.

Funding from the WaterSMART EWRP grant would support the implementation of a multi-benefit project that will improve access to and management of water for users of the Ward Ditch through headgate and ditch improvements, while also restoring in-stream and riparian habitat through river channel improvements and better connectivity with the floodplain. This project can serve as a demonstration project to guide future restoration and agriculture infrastructure improvements within the Uncompahgre watershed.

This project aligns with the goals of WaterSMART EWRP – to improve water management through infrastructure improvements that benefit agriculture, ecological values and watershed health. The Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project achieves all of these goals. More locally, this project also achieves the goals laid out in Colorado's Water Plan, the Gunnison River Basin Roundtable's Basin Implementation Plan as well as the Uncompahgre Watershed Plan.

The Colorado Water Conservation Board supports projects designed to restore and protect watersheds. The CWCB partners with numerous organizations to plan and implement multi-objective projects designed to reconnect streams and floodplains, stabilize and restore stream channels, provide habitat, reduce erosion, mitigate flood risk, and increase the capacity to utilize water.

Sincerely,
Chris Sturm
Watershed Program Director
Colorado Water Conservation Board





COLORADO RIVER DISTRICT
PROTECTING WESTERN COLORADO WATER SINCE 1937

March 10, 2023

Via electronic mail

Bureau of Reclamation
ATTN: Ms. Avra Morgan and Ms. Robin Graber
PO Box 25007
Denver Federal Center
Denver, CO 80225-0007

RE: Support Letter: Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project

Dear Ms. Morgan and Ms. Graber:

The Colorado River Water Conservation District (“River District”) is pleased to support American Rivers’ WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Project (“EWRP”) application regarding the Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project.

This collaborative, multi-benefit project seeks to improve habitat, water quality, water management and late season flows along an incised, degraded stretch of the Uncompahgre River between Ouray and Ridgway. The one-mile segment of the Uncompahgre River has been heavily impacted by dredging and riprap, resulting in an incised and disconnected river lacking diverse habitat. Additionally, nearby wells have run dry in recent years and have negatively impacted the neighboring Ward Ditch. Funding from the WaterSMART EWRP grant would support the implementation of a multi-benefit project that will improve access to, and management of, water for users of the Ward Ditch through headgate and ditch improvements, while restoring in-stream and riparian habitat through river channel improvements and better connectivity with the floodplain.

In June 2022, the River District launched our Accelerator Grant program to provide grant-writing, feasibility, design, preliminary environmental review, benefits analysis, and engineering to support federal funding applications made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This program is made possible through the River District’s Community Funding Partnership Program (“CFP”), which was created in 2021 to fund multi-purpose water projects on the Western Slope. In September 2022, the River District awarded American Rivers a \$25,000 Accelerator Grant to support Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project.

Support Letter: Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project

March 10, 2023

Page 2



The River District promotes, encourages, and supports the wise and efficient use of all of Colorado's water resources. This project will restore the one-mile segment of the Uncompahgre River while serving as a model for future river restoration collaborative projects.

We strongly support Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project and the coalition of partners working together to restore the Uncompahgre River.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew A. Mueller', written in a cursive style.

Andrew A. Mueller
General Manager



JAKE NIECE
MICHELLE NAUER
LYNN PADGETT

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

541 4th Street • P.O. Box C • Ouray, Colorado 81427 • 970-325-7320 • FAX: 970-325-0452

March 7, 2023

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
WaterSMART – Environmental Water Resources Project Funding Opportunity, March 2023
Letter of Support for American Rivers' Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project Application

Dear Reclamation Grant Reviewers,

Ouray County Board of County Commissioners is pleased to support American Rivers' WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Project (EWRP) application: *Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project*. This collaborative, multi-benefit project seeks to improve habitat, water quality, water management and late season flows along an incised, degraded stretch of the Uncompahgre River between Ouray and Ridgway.

The one-mile segment of the Uncompahgre River between the Ward Ditch Diversion and County Road 23 bridge near the town of Ouray has been heavily impacted by dredging and riprap, resulting in an incised, unnaturally straight river that is disconnected from the floodplain, and lacking in diverse habitat. Native riparian trees are dying off and invasive trees are establishing. Additionally, nearby wells have run dry in recent years, and the Ward Ditch headgate is unable to divert and deliver water when flows are below 250 cubic feet/ second.

Funding from the WaterSMART EWRP grant would support the implementation of a multi-benefit project that will improve access to and management of water for users of the Ward Ditch through headgate and ditch improvements, while also restoring in-stream and riparian habitat through river channel improvements and better connectivity with the floodplain. This project can serve as a demonstration project to guide future restoration and agriculture infrastructure improvements within the Uncompahgre watershed.


This project aligns with the goals of WaterSMART EWRP – to improve water management through infrastructure improvements that benefit agriculture, ecological values and watershed health. The Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project achieves all of these goals. More locally, this project also achieves the goals laid out in Colorado's Water Plan, the Gunnison River Basin Roundtable's Basin Implementation Plan as well as the Uncompahgre Watershed Plan.

In summary, the Ouray County Board of County Commissioners strongly support the project goals as well as the coalition's strong partnership across water users, conservation organizations and local government. Thank you for your consideration of supporting the Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project.

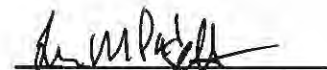
Sincerely,



Jake Niece, Chair



Michelle Nauer, Vice-Chair



Lynn M. Padgett, Member



U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
WaterSMART – Environmental Water Resources Project Funding Opportunity, March 2023
Letter of Support for American Rivers’ Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project Application

03/13/2023

Dear Reclamation Grant Reviewers,

Trout Unlimited (TU) is pleased to support American Rivers’ WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Project (EWRP) application: *Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project*. This collaborative, multi-benefit project seeks to improve habitat, water quality, water management and late season flows along an incised, degraded stretch of the Uncompahgre River between Ouray and Ridgway.

The one-mile segment of the Uncompahgre River between the Ward Ditch Diversion and County Road 23 bridge near the town of Ouray has been heavily impacted by dredging and riprap, resulting in an incised, unnaturally straight river that is disconnected from the floodplain, and lacking in diverse habitat. Native riparian trees are dying off and invasive trees are establishing. Additionally, nearby wells have run dry in recent years, and the Ward Ditch headgate is unable to divert and deliver water when flows are below 250 cubic feet/ second.

Funding from the WaterSMART EWRP grant would support the implementation of a multi-benefit project that will improve water availability and management for users of the Ward Ditch through headgate and ditch improvements, while also restoring in-stream and riparian habitat through river channel improvements and better connectivity with the floodplain. This project can serve as a demonstration project to guide future restoration and agriculture infrastructure improvements within the Uncompahgre watershed.

This project aligns with the goals of WaterSMART EWRP – to improve water management through infrastructure improvements that benefit agriculture, ecological conditions, and watershed health. The Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project achieves all of these goals. More locally, this project also achieves the goals laid out in Colorado’s Water Plan, the Gunnison River Basin Roundtable’s Basin Implementation Plan as well as the Uncompahgre Watershed Plan.

This project relates to the mission of Trout Unlimited to restore and protect cold water fisheries. TU will use the results of this project to increase awareness of this highly degraded stream reach and promote future projects between landowners and the conservation community to improve water management that benefits local agricultural and the environment.

In summary, TU strongly supports the project goals as well as the coalition’s strong partnership across water users, conservation organizations and local government. Thank you for your consideration of supporting the Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project.

Sincerely,

Luke Laurita



March 15, 2023

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
WaterSMART – Environmental Water Resources Project Funding Opportunity, March 2023

RE: Letter of Support for American Rivers' Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project Application

Dear Reclamation Grant Reviewers,

The Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership, a Ouray County nonprofit with a mission of preserving and improving the natural, scenic and economic values of the Upper Uncompahgre River Watershed, is pleased to support American Rivers' WaterSMART Environmental Water Resources Project (EWRP) application: *Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project*. This collaborative, multi-benefit project seeks to improve habitat, water quality, water management and late season flows along an incised, degraded stretch of the Uncompahgre River between Ouray and Ridgway.

The one-mile segment of the Uncompahgre River between the Ward Ditch Diversion and County Road 23 bridge near the town of Ouray has been heavily impacted by dredging and riprap, resulting in an incised, unnaturally straight river that is disconnected from the floodplain, and lacking in diverse habitat. Native riparian trees are dying off and invasive trees are establishing. Additionally, nearby wells have run dry in recent years, and the Ward Ditch headgate is unable to divert and deliver water when flows are below 250 cubic feet/ second.

Funding from the WaterSMART EWRP grant would support the implementation of a multi-benefit project that will improve access to and management of water for users of the Ward Ditch through headgate and ditch improvements, while also restoring in-stream and riparian habitat through river channel improvements and better connectivity with the floodplain. This project can serve as a demonstration project to guide future restoration and agriculture infrastructure improvements within the Uncompahgre watershed.

We support this project because it aligns with our organization's mission and goals, including achieving goals laid out in the Uncompahgre Watershed Plan. We will watch the progress of this project and provide input as appropriate. We also look forward to opportunities to share information about the project's beneficial results with others in the watershed to encourage similar efforts.

Thank you for your consideration of supporting the Uncompahgre River Multi-benefit Project.

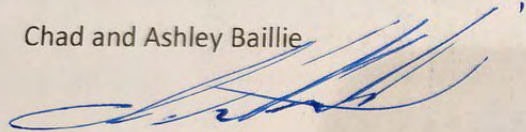
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis Murphy". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Dennis Murphy
UWP Board President

We support the goals of improving the Ward Ditch and the restorative vegetation along the Uncompahgre Rive. We also support the river improvements with the understanding that they will not change the flooding of our property or the floodplain designation of our property.

Chad and Ashley Baillie

A stylized, cursive handwritten signature in blue ink, likely belonging to Chad Baillie, positioned above the printed name.A handwritten signature in blue ink, clearly legible as "Ashley Baillie", positioned below the printed name.

3/7/2023

The Ward Ditch users, The Ward Water Group, support the budget, scope of work, and goals of the Colorado Water Conservation Board plan and Water Supply Reserve Fund Grants to improve the Ward Water Group head-gate, water flow, and restore the riparian and aquatic habitat in the Uncompagne river.

Signed,

Tara Colpitts, Ward Water Group

6.28.22

Nick Peck

16612 Hwy 950

Ridgway Co 81432

We as landowners along the Uncompagne River support the budget, scope of work, and goals of the Uncompagne River Multi-Benefit Project Overview (v 6/13/22) to improve the Ward Water Group head-gate, water flow, and restore the riparian and aquatic habitat along the Uncompagne river.

Signed,

Nick Peck

3/7/23

The Ward Ditch users, The Ward Water Group, support the budget, scope of work, and goals of the Colorado Water Conservation Board plan and Water Supply Reserve Fund Grants to improve the Ward Water Group head-gate, water flow, and restore the riparian and aquatic habitat in the Uncompagne river.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "J. H. H.", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

President
Ward Water Group

3/7/23

The Ward Ditch users, The Ward Water Group, support the budget, scope of work, and goals of the Colorado Water Conservation Board plan and Water Supply Reserve Fund Grants to improve the Ward Water Group head-gate, water flow, and restore the riparian and aquatic habitat in the Uncompagne river.

Signed,

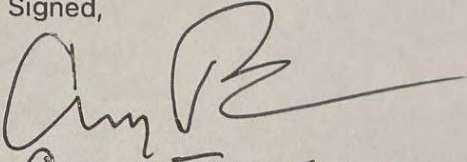
Russ Stodieck

Russ Stodieck
Ward Water Group

3/7/23

The Ward Ditch users, The Ward Water Group, support the budget, scope of work, and goals of the Colorado Water Conservation Board plan and Water Supply Reserve Fund Grants to improve the Ward Water Group head-gate, water flow, and restore the riparian and aquatic habitat in the Uncompagne river.

Signed,



CRAIG TESSEM
Ward Water Group

June 30, 2022

Amanda Gabrielson & Scott Hargreave

16585 HWY 550

Ridgway, CO 81432

Colorado Water Conservation District-Department of Natural Resources

Re: Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project

To Whom it May Concern,

We are fortunate to have the Uncompahgre River in our backyard and spend as much time as possible enjoying the sounds and sights of our riparian habitat. Saying that, from our back porch we can see metal and cement debris in the river and are aware there may be even more we can't see. There are times we do not feel comfortable letting our dog play in the river due to water quality concerns and lack of natural eddies and pools that he could swim to during higher flows. The lack of natural eddies and pools was also evident as we watched a young beaver trying to make its way up the river with much difficulty having no reprieve against the flow. The importance of restoring this section of river is valid and, therefore, we as landowners along the Uncompahgre River support the budget, scope of work, and goals of the Uncompahgre River Multi-Benefit Project Overview (v 6/13/22) to improve the Ward Water Group head-gate, water flow, and restore the riparian and aquatic habitat along the Uncompahgre River.

Signed,

Amanda Gabrielson & Scott Hargreave

2. Project budget

2.1 Funding plan

American Rivers will submit requests for non-federal funding totaling \$401,804. These requests will be made to the following entities as outlined:

Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB)	\$235,000
Colorado River District (CRD)	\$100,000
Gunnison Basin Water Supply Reserve Fund grants	\$50,000
Ward Water Group cash match	\$6,000
American Rivers in-kind	\$7,804
American Rivers cash match	\$3,000

CWCB and CRD provided funding (\$71,446 and \$25,000 respectively) for concept designs and planning in phase one of this project. These funds are not reflected in the WaterSMART budget. Both entities are aware of and in support of the project. CWCB and CRD provided letters of support for the project, which are attached. As the project accomplishes goals within the Gunnison Basin Implementation Plan, American Rivers will discuss the project with the Gunnison Basin Roundtable, which oversees the WSRF funds. American Rivers feels optimistic about funding from this source, given the connection to the BIP. Ward Water Group provided a cash match of \$6,000 in phase one and has committed to the additional \$6,000 match. American Rivers will also be providing in-kind (\$7,804) and cash match (\$3,000).

2.2 Budget proposal

Funding Sources	Amount
Non-Federal entities	
Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB)	\$235,000
Colorado River District (CRD)	\$100,000
Gunnison Basin Water Supply Reserve Fund	\$50,000
Ward Water Group	\$6,000
American Rivers (in-kind)	\$7,804
American Rivers (cash)	\$3,000
Non-Federal Subtotal	\$401,804
REQUESTED Reclamation Funding	\$1,198,376.21

Table 2. Summary of Non-Federal and Federal funding sources

Source	Amount
Costs to be reimbursed with the requested Federal funding	\$1,198,376.21
Costs to be paid by the applicant	\$10,804
Value of the third-party contributions	\$391,000
TOTAL project cost	\$1,600,180.21

Table 3. Total Project Cost Table

2.3 Budget Narrative

a. Personnel

Three American Rivers staff will work on the Uncompahgre Multi-Benefit Project, the conservation director, the project & policy associate director, and the regional director. American Rivers' Conservation Director, Fay Hartman, is the project's manager and will oversee contracting, grant administration, and fundraising and ensure the project is completed on time and within budget. American Rivers' Project and Policy Associate Director will focus on community outreach and project oversight to ensure timely completion. American Rivers' Regional Director oversees the project's overall direction, outcomes, and fundraising. The key personnel for the project are supported by administrative personnel, including financial and contracts specialists, whose time are included within the estimated indirect costs.

The Conservation Director will spend approximately 5 hours per week during the construction seasons in 2024 and 2025. She will also spend approximately 20 hours during pre-construction activities (including community engagement) and 20 hours for compliance with reporting requirements, including the final evaluation. The Policy and Projects Associate Director will spend approximately 8 hours per week during the construction seasons in 2024 and 2025, with 20 hours during pre-construction activities to assist with permitting and community outreach. The Regional Director will spend approximately 5 hours per week during the construction seasons in 2024 and 2025 and will assist with compliance and reporting post-construction.

Personnel Costs					
Employee	2024 Hourly Rate	2024 hours	2025 Hourly Rate	2025 hours	TOTAL
Fay Hartman, Conservation Director (Uncompahgre Multi-Benefit project manager)	\$ 44.28	80	\$ 46.49	40	\$ 5,402.00
Project & Policy Associate Director	\$ 38.60	80	\$ 40.53	40	\$ 4,709.20
Regional Director	\$ 58.77	40	\$ 61.70	40	\$ 4,818.80
Total Personnel					\$ 14,930.00

b. Fringe Benefits

American Rivers fringe benefits costs are estimated at 48% of employee compensation costs and consist of the following:

Fringe Benefits Rate		Fringe by Employee		
		Employee	Total Project Pay	Fringe at 48%
Paid Leave	21.50%			
SUI & SDI	1.00%			
FICA	7.00%			
Retirement Plan	3.00%			
Health & Dental Insurance	14.50%			
Other Insurance	1.00%			
TOTAL INDIRECT	48.00%		TOTAL	\$7,166.52
			\$14,930.25	

c. Travel

American Rivers will cover the following travel costs for American Rivers' staff as in-kind match. The mileage calculations are based upon 2 trips from Denver to Ouray (~680 miles roundtrip) and 4 trips from Grand Junction to Ouray (~200 miles roundtrip).

Travel				
	Unit Type	Qty	Unit Cost	TOTAL
Mileage (GSA 2023 rate)	mile	2160	\$0.655	\$ 1,414.80
Per diem (GSA 2023 rate)	day	6	\$157.00	\$ 942.00
Total Travel				\$ 2,356.80

d. Equipment

All equipment used in the project is included in *g. Construction* under "mobilization/demobilization." No equipment purchases or rentals are included in the project budget.

e. **Supplies**

No supplies other than those included under "Construction" are included in the budget.

f. **Contractual**

No contractors will be hired except for those reflected under "g. Construction-contractual services" in the project budget.

g. **Construction**

Equipment Use

Costs are based upon "Building Construction Costs with RS Means Data 2022."

Construction Equipment				
Equipment	Unit Type	Qty	Cost per Day	TOTAL
1.5 cubic yard excavator	day	155	\$ 786.00	\$ 121,830.00
1 cubic yard loader	day	97	\$ 346.09	\$ 33,570.73
Backhoe with Box Scraper	day	54	\$ 244.00	\$ 13,176.00
Chainsaw	day	5	\$ 45.00	\$ 225.00
Weedwhacker	day	10	\$ 45.00	\$ 450.00
Truck and trailer	day	15	\$ 150.00	\$ 2,250.00
Handheld survey/mapping unit (for weed monitoring)	day	6	\$ 57.00	\$ 342.00
Total Construction Equipment				\$ 171,843.73

Construction Materials

Costs are based upon current market for each item.

Construction Materials				
Material	Unit Type	Qty	Unit Cost	TOTAL
15" Culverts for ditch crossings	lf	100	\$ 17.00	\$ 1,700.00
Splitter boxes and irrigation gates for irrigated fields	ea	20	\$ 250.00	\$ 5,000.00
8" PVC pipe to bury in ditch/lateral areas for irrigation efficiency	lf	1,000	\$ 8.00	\$ 8,000.00
12' PVC to bury and replace open ditch	lf	3,000	\$ 16.00	\$ 48,000.00
8" Gated Pipe for field irrigation	lf	1,600	\$ 7.00	\$ 11,200.00
Marsh rush/sedge revegetation (3" plugs 3' O.C./4000 LF)	ea	3000	\$ 7.25	\$ 21,750.00
Exidua/Mountain/Bebbs Willow Clusters (100 Clusters/Acre x 15 acres)	ea	1500	\$ 18.50	\$ 27,750.00
Alder/Aspen/Service Berry Riparian Tree Planting (GH-72's/100 per acre x 10 acres)	ea	1000	\$ 18.50	\$ 18,500.00
Cottonwood Planting (GH-72's /50 Per acre x 100 acres)	ea	1000	\$ 18.50	\$ 18,500.00
Upland Riparian Revegetation (gh-72's Ponderosa Pine, Blue Spruce, Chokecherry, Rocky Mountain Maple 50 trees/acres 15 acres)	ea	750	\$ 30.00	\$ 22,500.00
Native seed mixes (riparian and upland 8 lbs acre x 30 acres)	lbs	272	\$ 50.00	\$ 13,600.00
Glyphosate (Ranger Pro) (3oz/gal /1000sf)	gallons	27	\$ 44.00	\$ 1,188.00
Supply 41" Rock (Feature)	ea	705	\$ 200.00	\$ 141,000.00
Supply 20" Rock (Footer)	ea	1218	\$ 35.00	\$ 42,630.00
24" Sill Rock (Feature)	ea	286	\$ 50.00	\$ 14,300.00
12" Sill Rock (Footer)	ea	572	\$ 15.00	\$ 8,580.00
24" D100 Rip Rap	cy	871	\$ 105.00	\$ 91,455.00
Double Net ECB	sy	900	\$ 1.65	\$ 1,485.00
Total Construction Materials				\$ 497,138.00

Contractual Services

American Rivers' purchasing policy (attached) identifies the procurement method for contractual services.

Contractual Services				
Contractor	Unit Type	Qty	Rate	TOTAL
Principal Restoration Ecologist	hourly	72	\$ 105.00	\$ 7,560.00
Wildlife Biologist/Botanist	hourly	120	\$ 73.00	\$ 8,760.00
Technical Assistant	hourly	62	\$ 95.00	\$ 5,890.00
Landscape Architect	hourly	32	\$ 95.00	\$ 3,040.00
Licensed Herbicide Applicator	hourly	120	\$ 65.00	\$ 7,800.00
Field Technician	hourly	40	\$ 44.00	\$ 1,760.00
Senior Civil Engineer	hourly	80	\$ 134.00	\$ 10,720.00
Civil Engineer	hourly	400	\$ 117.00	\$ 46,800.00
Aquatic Ecologist	hourly	365	\$ 104.00	\$ 37,960.00
Engineer in Training	hourly	370	\$ 99.00	\$ 36,630.00
Equipment operator for excavator*	per day	100	\$ 754.80	\$ 75,480.00
Equipment operator for loader*	per day	152	\$ 718.80	\$ 109,257.60
Equipment operator for backhoe*	per day	54	\$ 718.80	\$ 38,815.20
Laborer*	per day	165	\$ 543.00	\$ 89,595.00
Concrete Crew	lump sum	1	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00
Survey/Layout	lump sum	1	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 13,500.00
As-Built Survey (if required)	lump sum	1	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00
Mobilization/Demobilization	lump sum	1	\$ 32,000.00	\$ 32,000.00
Total Contractual Services				\$ 542,067.80

* = Rates based upon "Building Construction Costs with RS Means Data 2022."
All other rates based upon current quotes.

Other Construction-related Costs

Other Construction related Costs				
Contractor	Unit Type	Qty	Rate	TOTAL
Environmental Assessment/Section 7	lump sum	1	\$25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Final design & Floodplain Permitting	lump sum	1	\$87,000.00	\$ 87,000.00
Cultural compliance	lump sum	1	\$10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Contractor Mileage (11 trips of 750 miles + travel within the area x GSA 2023 mileage rate)	mile	8250	\$0.655	\$ 5,403.75
Contractor per diem (using 2023 GSA rate)	day	60	\$157.00	\$ 9,420.00
Contingency (does not include contractor travel, EA, or cultural compliance)	15% of all construction equipment, materials, services, final design, and construction		\$1,298,049.53	\$ 194,707.43
Total Other Construction-related Costs				\$ 331,531.18

The budget includes legally-required permitting and compliance. The pricing for each is based upon similar work in the recent past.

A 15% project contingency is included in the project to cover increases in materials, permitting, labor, etc. The 15% contingency is calculated on the items reflected in g. Construction except for the Environmental Assessment/Section 7 and cultural compliance work.

h. Other Direct Costs

No “other direct costs” are included in the budget.

i. Indirect Costs

American Rivers has a Federal negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) of 19% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which includes the first \$25,000 of each construction contract (there are 6 on this project). The NICRA letter is included as an attachment. Indirect costs were calculated as follows.

Indirect Costs			
Indirect Cost Items (as stipulated in agreement)	Total Cost	NICRA	TOTAL
Personnel	\$ 14,930.25	19%	\$ 2,836.75
Fringe	\$ 7,166.52	19%	\$ 1,361.64
Travel	\$ 2,356.80	19%	\$ 447.79
Supplies	\$ -	19%	\$ -
Construction Contracts (only charged on the first \$25,000 for each the 6 contracts)	\$ 150,000.00	19%	\$ 28,500.00
Total Indirect Costs			\$ 33,146.18

2.4 Letters of funding commitment

American Rivers will provide funding commitment letters to BOR as soon as they are received. These are expected to come from Colorado Water Conservation Board, Colorado River District, Gunnison Basin Roundtable, and Ward Water Group.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
ACQUISITION AND GRANTS OFFICE

August 19, 2021

Ms. Kristin May
Chief Financial Officer
American Rivers
1101 14th Street NW, Suite 1400
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. May:

This letter is in response to the required submission of an Indirect Cost Rate Proposal (Proposal), and the granting to your organization of an approved Federal indirect cost rate for use through fiscal year 2023.

The following information is provided for your organization's use:

RATE - FIXED RATE WITH CARRYFORWARD PROVISION

EFFECTIVE PERIOD 7/1/2019 – 9/30/2023

RATE (%) BASE*

19% MTDC

LOCATION APPLICABLE TO

ALL Programs

- Modified Total Direct Costs (MTOC) consist of all actual direct cost including direct salaries, wages, all fringe benefits, and all other direct cost inclusive of all sub-grants/subcontracts up to the first \$25,000 of each sub-grant or subcontract. Equipment and capital expenditures in excess of \$25,000 are excluded from MTDC.

SPECIAL REMARKS

TREATMENT OF FRINGE BENEFITS: All of the fringe benefits, including the vacation time, are charged to the indirect cost pool, then a predetermined fringe benefits rate is used to allocate between the direct and indirect fringe benefit costs.

TREATMENT OF PAID ABSENCES: Vacation, sick leave pay, and holiday pay are considered part of fringe benefits costs. Vacation leave earned but not used during each fiscal period is recorded as a cost in the time earned.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need anything else or if you have questions. I can be reached at 301.628.1308 or at lamar.revis@noaa.gov. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lamar Dwayne Revis
Grants Officer



PURCHASING POLICY

This policy requires American Rivers (AR) staff to conduct all purchasing transactions effectively and efficiently to increase quality and reduce the cost of the purchase and to ensure full and open competition to the greatest extent possible. The process of purchasing goods, services, and equipment, often called procurement, is distinct from subgranting which involves the passing through of funds to another organization to carry out a portion of a project or program. This policy *does not* apply to subgrants.

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO ALL PURCHASING REGARDLESS OF THE FUNDING SOURCE.

The following rules affect all purchasing:

- No Conflict of Interest. **Compliance with AR's conflict of interest policy is required in the selection** or acceptance of a contract for equipment, materials, supplies, or services.
- No Purchase of Items for Personal Use or Unnecessary Items. Equipment, materials, supplies, or services shall not be purchased or contracted for personal use or if unnecessary or duplicative.
- No Gratuities. No director, employee, or agent shall solicit or accept gratuities, favors, or anything of value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to agreements with AR.
- Approved Purchase. All purchases must be approved by the appropriate budget manager.
- Prequalified Contractors. In selecting and using a prequalified contractor the *Prequalified Contractor Policy* must be followed.
- A demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in the process of selecting Contractors as well as a commitment to working with Contractors that have established their own internal practices toward workforce equity. All necessary affirmative steps should be taken to assure that small and minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and areas of high unemployment designated by the government are used when possible. Such steps include soliciting potential or qualified small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprise and placing them on solicitation lists and establishing delivery schedules or dividing total requirements into smaller tasks to encourage participation by such enterprises. The US Small Business Administration and the Minority Business Development Agency of the Department of Commerce are resources for such solicitation. AR prime contractors must be required to follow this rule.
- No Prohibited Parties. AR must check two lists to ensure that the federal government has not prohibited contracting with that entity: Federal Exclusion Search *Through the [System for Award Management](#)* and Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) Search *Through the [Sanctions List Search](#)*

Requirements for Purchasing by Dollar Limit:

1. **MICRO PURCHASE:** Purchases for supplies and services for \$7,500 or less that do not include the exceptions below **may be transacted without submitting a contract or proposal through AR's contracting process** and without soliciting formal competitive bids or quotes. Director level or above may sign if there is no IP, insurance or high risk. **Exceptions:** Any transaction or agreement involving intellectual property (e.g., copyrights, trademarks), real estate, requiring insurance, **or involving risky activity must be submitted and approved through AR's contracting process.** Additionally, any agreement with a former AR employee, no matter the amount, must be have a contract and be submitted through AR's contracting process. To the extent practicable, AR must distribute these purchases equitably among qualified suppliers and/or small and minority businesses.
2. **SMALL PURCHASE:** All purchases for goods and services \$7,500.01 to \$249,999.99, including independent contractors, require price or rate quotation from at least two, preferably three, qualified sources. A **formal bid is not required; the quote may be a vendor's proposal**, a price list from a website, or notes of an online search or phone call. Complete the Contractor Justification section on page two of the Agreement Approval Request Form to record your selection process. Additionally, all small purchases require a written contract that must be **submitted and approved through AR's contracting process.** **NOTE:** Subscriptions with vendors who do not require a contract must be pre- approved by submittal of the Approval Request Sheet and any detailed pricing information prior to purchase.
3. **LARGE PURCHASE:** All purchases for goods and services equal to or greater than \$250,000, including independent professional services contractors, require formal competitive bidding. Please consult with the General Counsel in developing the RFP/RFQ. Additionally, the following requirements apply:
 - a) AR program staff must formulate their own estimate of what the purchase should cost before receiving bids or proposals for the large purchase;

- b) AR program staff must require vendors to list profit as a separate element of the price in their bid or proposal. To establish a fair and reasonable profit, consideration must be given to the complexity of the work to be performed, the risk borne by the contractor, the contractor's investment, the amount of subcontracting, the quality of its record of past performance, and industry profit rates in the surrounding geographical area for similar work;
- c) Requests for proposals must be publicized and identify all evaluation factors and their relative importance. Any response to publicized requests for proposals must be considered to the maximum extent practical;
- d) Proposals must be solicited from at least three qualified sources;
- e) A written evaluation method must be used for conducting technical evaluations of the proposals received and for selecting recipients;
- f) Contracts must be awarded to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the program, with price and other factors considered; and,
- g) AR may use competitive proposal procedures for qualifications-based purchasing of architectural/engineering (A/E) professional services whereby competitors' qualifications are evaluated and the most qualified competitor is selected, subject to negotiation of fair and reasonable compensation. The method, where price is not used as a selection factor, can only be used in purchasing of A/E professional services. It cannot be used to purchase other types of services, though A/E firms are a potential source to perform the proposed effort.
- h) Construction Contracts equal to or greater than \$250,000.
Please consult with the General Counsel for further requirements with these contracts.
 - i) The sealed bid method is the preferred method for procuring construction. Bids are publicly solicited and a firm fixed price contract (lump sum or unit price) is awarded to the qualified bidder whose bid, conforming to all the material terms and conditions of the invitation for bids, is the lowest in price.
 - ii) Bonding Required. Bonding is required for all construction or facility improvement contracts.

Process to Request a Waiver of Competitive Bidding or Request to “Sole Source”: Purchasing by noncompetitive proposals is purchasing from only one source and requires you to ask the contractor to isolate their profit as part of their price. SOLE SOURCING SHOULD BE USED RARELY AND ONLY UNDER THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES:

- a) The item or service is available from only one source and AR can provide documentation as to how it knows there is only one source; or
- b) The *public* exigency or emergency will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation; or
- c) The Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity expressly authorizes noncompetitive proposals in response to a written request from AR; or
- d) After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate, and AR can provide documentation to show why competition is impracticable.

When purchasing equipment and furniture, all purchases must be pre-approved by the Chief Financial Officer. All furniture and equipment purchased belongs to American Rivers, with the exception of cell phones. A list of all equipment owned by American Rivers shall be reported to the Chief Financial Officer. Records shall be kept showing the type of equipment, identification number, original cost, and if applicable, depreciated value.

- **Computer equipment and software should be purchased through American Rivers’ Director of Facilities and Technology.**
- When using federal funds, equipment means tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$5,000. Please contact the Director of Grants Management before purchasing equipment using federal funds.

Contractors will be paid through the accounts payable process with the appropriate budget or project manager approval attesting that AR’s Purchasing Policy has been followed.

Please send agreements and any contracting questions to contracts@americanrivers.org

For additional assistance, please reach out to Jennifer, jmarshall@amrivers.org and/or Nick, nregan@amrivers.org for more guidance before procuring.