

**WATERSMART: COOPERATIVE  
WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROGRAM  
(CWMP) FOR FY 2012  
GRANT APPLICATION TECHNICAL  
PROPOSAL**

**COPY**

Submitted by:

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DISTRICT**

Date:

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# **1 TECHNICAL PROPOSAL**

## **1.1 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

The Spanish Peaks/Purgatoire River Conservation District (SP/PRCD) is an Entity of State Government that has its authority under Colorado Soil Conservation Act- Title 35 Agriculture/Soil Conservation/Conservation Districts-Article 70 Conservation Districts. They are not part of the USDA-NRCS but work in cooperation with the federal agency. The conservation district is physically located in the USDA Service Center in Trinidad, Colorado. The SP/PRCD meets the eligibility requirements outlined in Section III.A. Eligible Applicants of Announcement No. R12SF80035.

The USDA-NRCS currently provides technical assistance in all natural resource concerns in the watershed. These concerns are addressed on all natural land uses with concerns directly related to soil, water, animals, plants and air. The NRCS work through Farm Bill Programs to assist financially with the implementation of conservation on the ground. The programs include the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) and provide technical assistance to the USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA) with the implementation of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Work done through the conservation district meets eligibility requirements significantly affecting and being affected by the quality and quantity of water in the Purgatoire Watershed and promotes the sustainable use of water resources.

The SP/PRCD has authority with respect to the watershed to take on the role as the fiscal agent and the official entity used to establish the new Purgatoire Watershed group. The watershed group being established will meet the qualifications as defined in Section 6001 of the Cooperative Watershed Management Act, Subtitle A of Title IX of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. The group will work as a self-sustaining, cooperative watershed-wide group that is comprised of representatives of the affected stakeholders of the relevant watershed, which incorporates the perspectives of a diverse array of stakeholders to the maximum extent practicable. The participation of landowners in watershed management is critical to the success of the organization. The SP/PRCD is the preeminent local organization that can bring influential landowners to the table.

The established group will be a grassroots, non-regulatory entity that addresses water availability and quality issues within the relevant watershed. The group will be capable of promoting the sustainable use of water resources in the watershed and improving the functioning condition of rivers and streams through: water conservation, improved water quality, ecological resiliency, all of which are decisions made on a consensus basis defined by the bylaws of the watershed group. The group will focus on community education and outreach to reduce conflicts over water and the development of watershed enhancement projects that are mutually benefitting multiple stakeholders.

## **1.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Several stakeholders within the Purgatoire Watershed have assembled over the past several months to discuss the need for establishing a Purgatoire Watershed Group to address various environmental concerns. A total of six (6) meetings have been conducted from early November 2011 through late June 2012 with attendance from various stakeholders including landowners, local businesses, ditch companies, students, county attorneys, county commissioners, oil and gas operators, environmental consultants, USDA NRCS, Trout Unlimited, Purgatoire Water Conservancy District, Colorado Watershed Assembly, Trinidad

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Community Foundation, Southern Colorado Environmental Council, Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, and Culebra Range Community Coalition. Goals and objectives discussed by this diverse group of stakeholders include the following:

- Mitigating conflict in the watershed by building trust amongst stakeholder groups;
- Improving river health, both quality and quantity;
- Understanding and mitigating the impacts from oil and gas development;
- Decrease nutrient loading in the Purgatoire River and tributaries;
- Improving bank stabilization to reduce erosion and sediment loading;
- Promote water conservation and understand the limits of the Kansas Compact;
- Protection of water rights, both surface water and groundwater;
- Reduce/Remove invasive species such as Tamarisk and Russian olive;
- Protection of land and wildlife;
- Improve land values;
- Preserve/Promote healthy forests;
- Take inventory of existent documents and studies that have been done in the Purgatoire;
- Share all watershed information with local LCCs.

## **1.3 APPROACH**

### **1.3.1 Information Gathering**

Information will be gathered through database searches, inventory review, GIS analysis and communication with stakeholders. Existent data will be compiled and used to establish the framework of the Purgatoire Watershed Group and complete all activities required by the grant as a direct outcome of identifying gaps within the data. Priorities of information gathering include gaining knowledge of the watershed's diverse resources and needs through stakeholder development and coordination with the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) in order to incorporate mutual values into the needs of the Purgatoire Watershed. The Purgatoire River is a tributary to the Arkansas River which flows into Kansas. Currently, there is a great lack of understanding among farmers and ranchers in the Purgatoire Watershed of the limits of the Colorado/Kansas Compact that regulates the quantity of water that must be legally delivered to Kansas. Information must be compiled and disseminated to landowners about how water can be conserved while still meeting the requirements of the Compact.

There is also a great lack of understanding concerning the safety and quality of both ground and surface water resources with respect to coal bed methane development. Local natural gas companies have expressed an interest in participating in the organization of a watershed group. They will be helpful in disseminating information about the protection of water quality from gas development.

### **1.3.2 Mission Statement Development**

A key part of the establishment of the Purgatoire Watershed Group is the development of a mission statement. The mission statement will be developed as a cooperative effort by all stakeholders to better represent all parties' interests. An experienced coordinator or facilitator will assist the group in drafting a mission statement that will provide the Purgatoire Watershed Group guidance for the actions of the organization and guide the group in its decision-making process.

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### **1.3.3 Developing Legal Framework**

The establishment of the Purgatoire Watershed Group will function under the Spanish Peaks/ Purgatoire River Conservation District. The group will in time decide if it wishes to become its own 501(c) 3, or continue to function under the conservation district. The development of the legal framework will be a decision of the group. Additionally, the formation of bylaws and regulations that enable the group to work as a non-discriminatory and fair entity will also be developed and agreed upon by the group.

#### **1.3.3.1 Stakeholder Expansion**

Upon acceptance of grant monies the group will begin expanding stakeholder involvement, including involvement with the Southern Rockies LCC and the Great Plains LCC, and their steering committee members. Stakeholder expansion will be an ongoing goal of the group for the duration of its existence. Stakeholders that have been recognized as key players, though who have yet to attend meetings will be contacted by phone, mail, and e-mail. Outreach activities to gain stakeholder participation will include radio and newspaper advertising as well as educational booths at local events such as town festivals.

#### **1.3.4 Hiring a Coordinator**

A watershed group coordinator and/or consultant will be hired as part of the establishment of the Purgatoire Watershed Group. The coordinator will be responsible for the development of the group's mission statement, following the mission statement development details outlined above in section 1.3.2. The coordinator will be responsible for promoting the public image and goals of the group and will encourage greater stakeholder participation through public outreach events within the watershed and partnership building. A watershed education outreach program will be developed and implemented by the coordinator to bring awareness of the health of the watershed to the community. The coordinator will build relationships with local, state, and federal agencies, industries, academic institutions, and citizen groups. The coordinator will utilize grant writing skills to secure funding for watershed management projects. The coordinator may be hired locally or contracted out depending on the needs of the stakeholders.

#### **1.3.5 Membership Establishment**

A broad-based membership will be established to ensure the diversity of the Purgatoire Watershed Group. Public outreach will be conducted throughout the watershed, providing educational information about the health of the watershed and the mission and goals of the Purgatoire Watershed Group. Encouraged members of the Purgatoire Watershed group include but are not limited to landowners, agricultural and environmental groups, ditch companies, local, state, and federal agency representatives, local Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC), lead entities in the watershed, watershed planning units including land development leaders, local industry representatives, and recreational and tourism representatives.

#### **1.3.6 Watershed Needs and Concerns**

The Purgatoire Watershed is made up of a diverse group of citizens, as indicated in section 1.2. One of the main outcomes of the development of the Purgatoire Watershed Group will be the establishment of trust to mitigate conflicts amongst stakeholders. Promoting trust will ensure more successful environmental planning efforts throughout the watershed in the future that will include and benefit a variety of stakeholders.

The Purgatoire Watershed Group will identify existing problems and needs within the Purgatoire Watershed as part of the establishment of the group. Environmental concerns brought forth by all Purgatoire Watershed Group stakeholders will be discussed and prioritized. An inventory of existing

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studies and assessments of the Purgatoire Watershed will be conducted and serve as the foundation for project development. Initial primary concerns include oil and gas development, coal mining, the expansion of the military's Pinon Canyon Maneuvering Site, and water conservation with respect to the Colorado/Kansas Compact, which are all ongoing issues of controversy within the watershed.

Increased population growth is a concern of the basin. A primary concern of the Purgatoire stakeholders is that water quantity in the basin during drought years is enough to meet the needs of the community. Water rights in times of drought have made the issue of water quantity a precarious issue.

Colorado watersheds, especially in areas that suffer extreme drought, are susceptible to destruction posed by widespread forest fires. The Purgatoire River Watershed's forested areas have been mismanaged for decades, and community concerns have unveiled both the need for sustainable forestry practices to be addressed when developing a watershed restoration plan. Healthy forests are a necessary component of a healthy watershed because forested areas are located at the head of the watershed and at its tributaries. When forested areas are impacted upstream it directly affects downstream areas. There is an exorbitant cost associated with fighting large wildfires and the cleanup of the aftermath. At present, there is an increasing movement to address forest health at the national level in the U.S. however there is a limited amount of education and information available for stakeholders, and within the field of forest inventory and planning. The direction on how to address these concerns, and resources through government, non-government organizations and private land owners is lacking physically and financially. A broad range of stakeholders in the Purgatoire Watershed provide likely partners who can address different needs and challenges.

A rapid assessment of the Purgatoire Watershed was conducted by the USDA NRCS in 2007 to increase the speed and efficiency of generating information to guide conservation implementation by local decision makers. Information found in the rapid assessment will be utilized by the Purgatoire Watershed Group as part of the watershed plan development process.

#### **1.3.6.1 Existing Documents Search**

The coordinator will be tasked with finding important documents (i.e. surveys, studies, literature) on the watershed to prepare the group for the development of project concepts and the watershed restoration plan. Literature review done by the watershed coordinator will occur simultaneously with the development of project concepts. The Purgatoire Watershed Group meetings, in addition to the research the coordinator will be doing, will unveil gaps in existent watershed data. The gaps will help the coordinator emphasize project concepts that the group should focus on and seek to address through the use of the watershed restoration plan.

#### **1.3.7 Development of a Watershed Restoration Plan**

Since the late 1980's, watershed organizations, tribes, and federal and state agencies have moved toward managing water quality through a watershed approach. A *watershed approach* is a flexible framework for managing water resource quality and quantity within specified drainage areas, or watersheds. This approach includes stakeholder involvement and management actions supported by sound science and appropriate technology. The Purgatoire watershed plan will work within this framework by using a series of cooperative, iterative steps to characterize existing conditions, identify and prioritize problems, define management objectives, develop protection or remediation strategies, and implement and adapt selected actions as necessary. The outcomes of this process will be documented or referenced in the watershed plan. The *watershed plan* is a strategy that provides assessment and management information for a

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geographically defined watershed, including the analyses, actions, participants, and resources related to developing and implementing the plan. The development of the watershed plan will require a certain level of technical expertise and the participation of a variety of people with diverse skills and knowledge.

One of the key characteristics of the watershed planning process is the implementation of a watershed plan which includes diverse stakeholder input. Research has shown that diverse stakeholder input, when brought into the process at the beginning stages of planning, has a greater chance of success. Community members, when encouraged to express and address their concerns from early on, will be more likely to participate in developing management options and supporting plan implementation. Therefore, the Purgatoire watershed plan will continue to engage multiple stakeholders at the beginning and throughout the process.

Using a watershed approach to restore impaired water bodies is beneficial because it addresses the problems in a holistic manner and the stakeholders in the watershed are actively involved in selecting the management strategies that will be implemented to solve the problems. A component of the watershed plan will be nonpoint source pollution because that poses the greatest threat to water quality and is the most significant source of water quality impairment in the nation. Therefore, the plan will also address the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) nine elements as presented in the Clean Water Act section 319 guidelines used to develop effective watershed plans for threatened and impaired waters. Such programs feature local stakeholders joining forces to develop and implement watershed plans that make sense for the conditions found in local communities. The watershed restoration plan will incorporate all stakeholders' interests and goals and will focus on the improvement of watershed health and will be written in accordance with the mission statement's vision.

Although this watershed plan will emphasize individual issues and reflect the unique goals and management strategies of the Purgatoire Basin, the common features of iterative, holistic, geographically defined, integrated, and collaborative processes will be included. The watershed plan will strive to address all the sources and causes of water body impairment but also any pollutants and sources of pollutants that need to be addressed to ensure the long-term health of the watershed. A holistic watershed plan approach will be implemented to provide the most technically sound and economically efficient means of addressing water problems and is strengthened through the involvement of stakeholders. This approach will address all the beneficial uses of the water body, the criteria needed to protect the use, and the strategies required to restore or prevent degradation. This approach will help to expedite cooperative, integrated water resource planning and successful implementation of needed management. For example, watershed plans that incorporate a full range of other resource management activities, such as source water protection for drinking water, forest or rangeland management planning, agricultural resource management systems, and parkland or greens pace management will be better able to address the various challenges and opportunities related to water resource restoration or protection.

The geographic boundary of the watershed plan will be the Purgatoire River Watershed and is identified by the U.S. Geographical Survey (USGS) as a medium sub-basin of the Arkansas River with the Hydrological Unit Code (HUC) 11020010. The plan will group subwatersheds of the Purgatoire to utilize planning and implementation efficiency and the strategic use of administrative resources. The plan will be integrated with the planning efforts of the Water Conservancy District, the Soils Conservation District, the Forest Service, the BLM, Source Water Protection Plans, the State Water Quality Control Division, the Arkansas Basin Roundtable, regional NGO's and other relevant entities.

### 1.3.8 Final Report Development

Strategic evaluation will be conducted throughout the course of the two year funding period. A progress report will be done semi-annually, and the compilation from progress reports will be used to help develop a final report. The watershed group's work (i.e. steps taken, efforts made, outcomes, progress to date, etc.) will be clearly documented in a standardized way to insure it can be replicated by future group members who take on this role. The data and observations noted will be used to create the final report and will further help the group to evaluate what aspects of their planning and implementation were beneficial and should be repeated in the future. The group will also be able to recognize what did not work, and what needs to be improved upon.

### 1.3.9 Implementation of Mandatory Activities Timing

The mandatory activities outlined as tasks in **Table 1. Mandatory Activities Timeframe** have been drafted under the assumption that grant funding, if awarded in September 2012, will be available by July 1, 2013; within 9 months of the award.

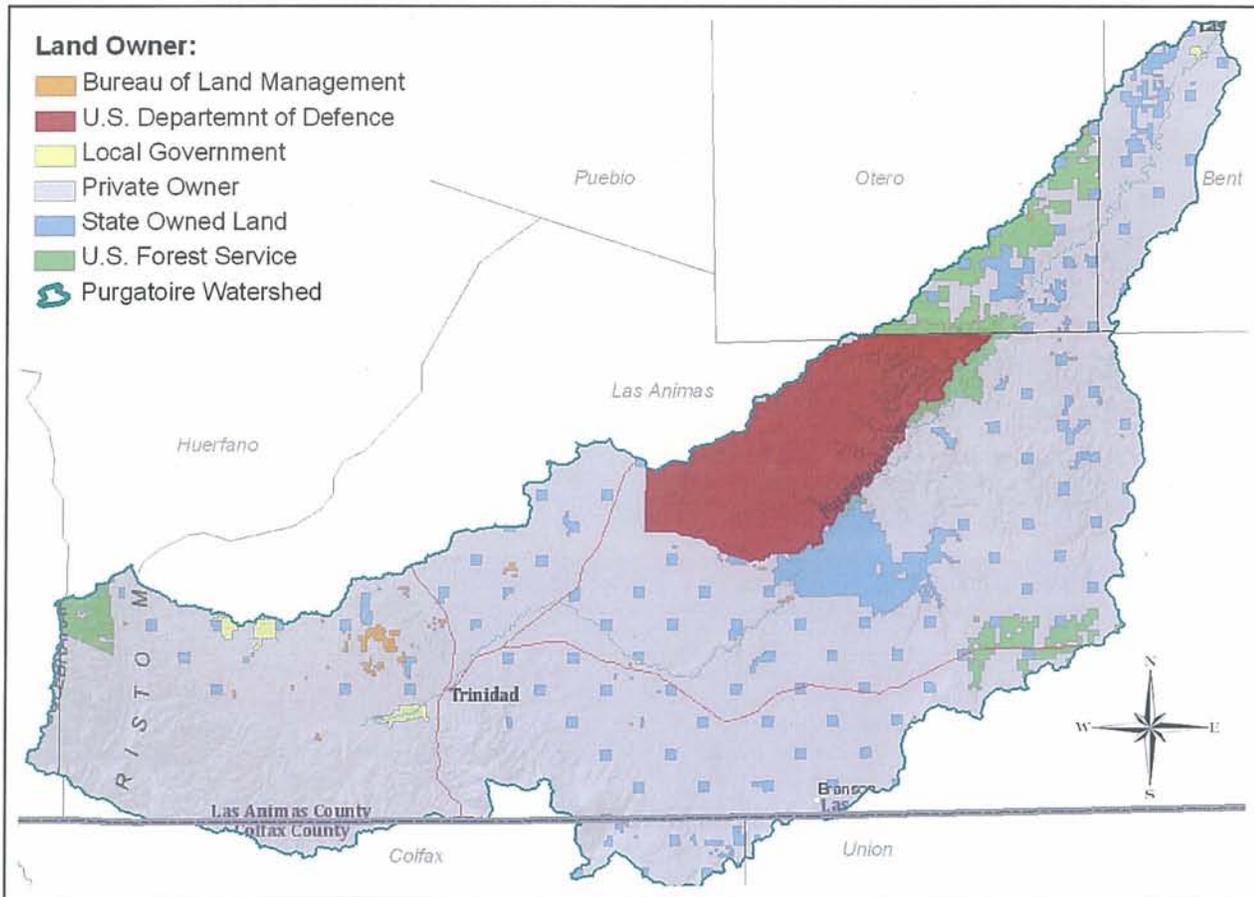
**Table 1. Mandatory Activities Timeframe**

Task	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2013	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 2013	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2014	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2014	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2014	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 2014	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2015	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2015
Stakeholder Involvement								
Hire Coordinator								
Mission Statement								
Project Concepts								
Watershed plan								
Reporting								

## 2 BACKGROUND DATA

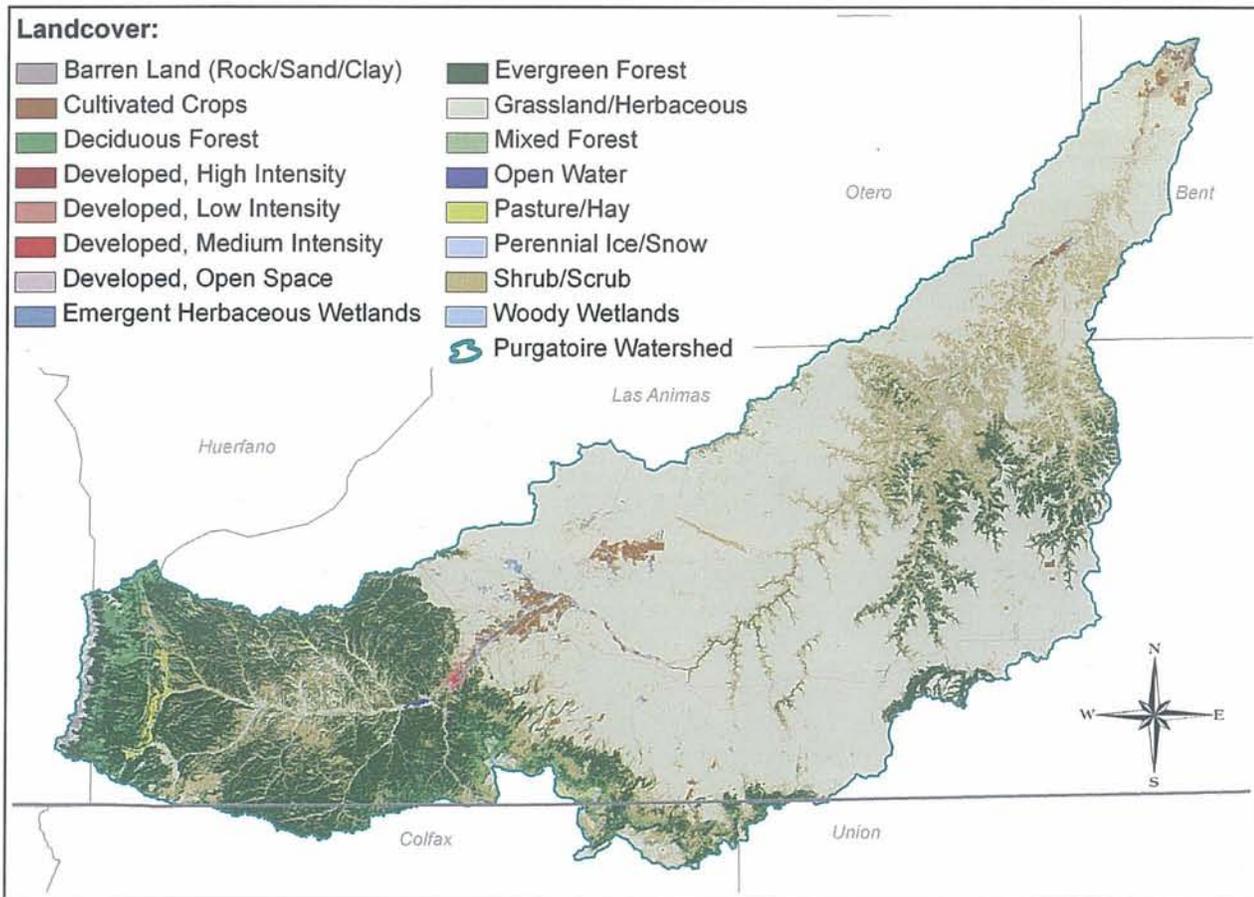
### 2.1 WATERSHED DESCRIPTION

The Purgatoire River Watershed is one of the furthest southern watersheds to originate in the state of Colorado. The total area of the River Basin is 2,206,204 acres (3,449 square miles). The elevation of the watershed is an average of 6,008 feet with a maximum elevation of 13,570 feet and a minimum elevation of 4,321 feet.



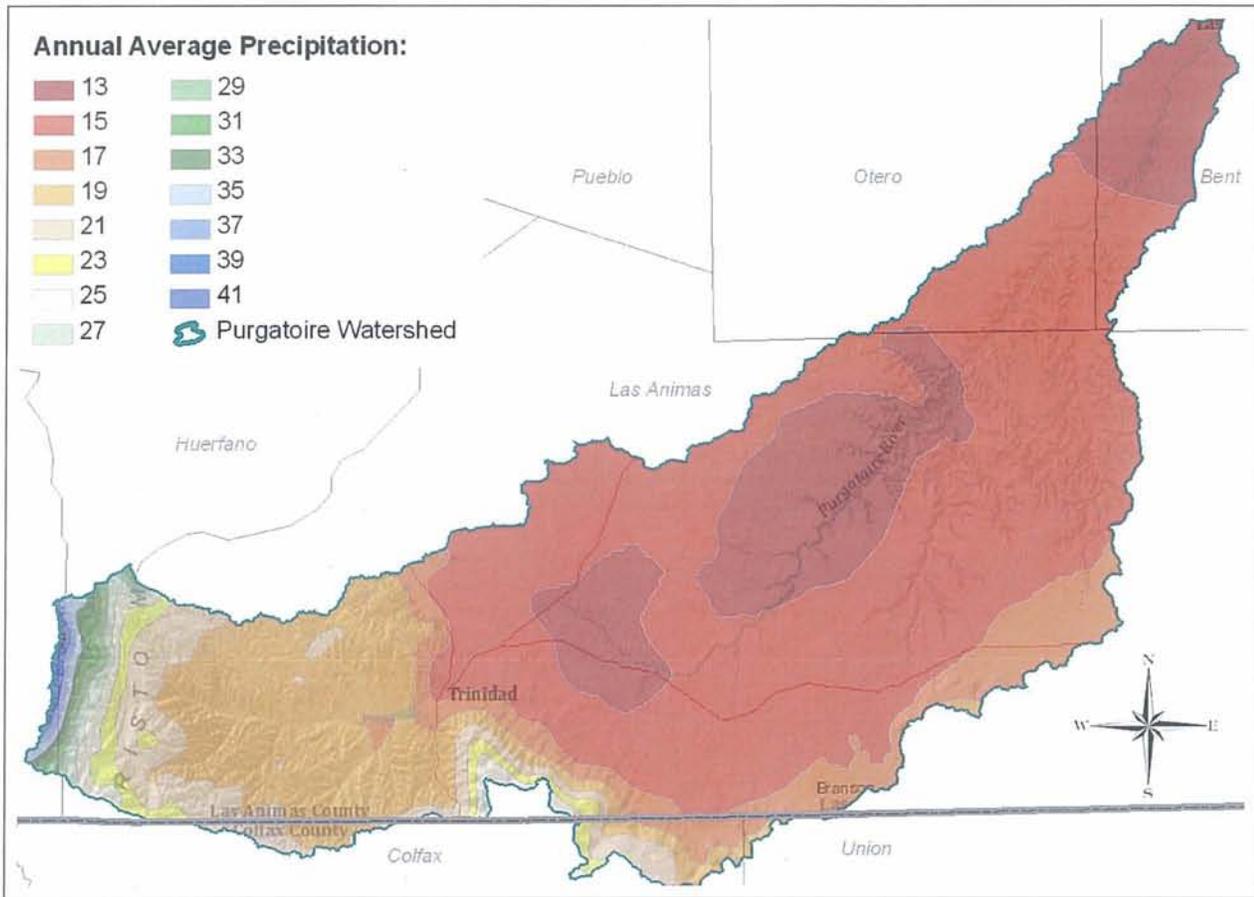
**Figure 2.1 Landowner Map**

The majority of land in the basin is privately owned, accounting for 1,724,329 acres or 78.2%. The Department of Defense owns the second highest amount of land with 212,195 acres or 9.6%. The state owns 156,914 acres or 7.1%, the U.S. Forest Service owns 97,167 acres or 4.4%, and local government owns 8,360 acres or 0.4% and the Bureau of Land Management owns 7,239 acres or 0.3%. Private land ownership is significantly higher than all other ownership in the Purgatoire Watershed.



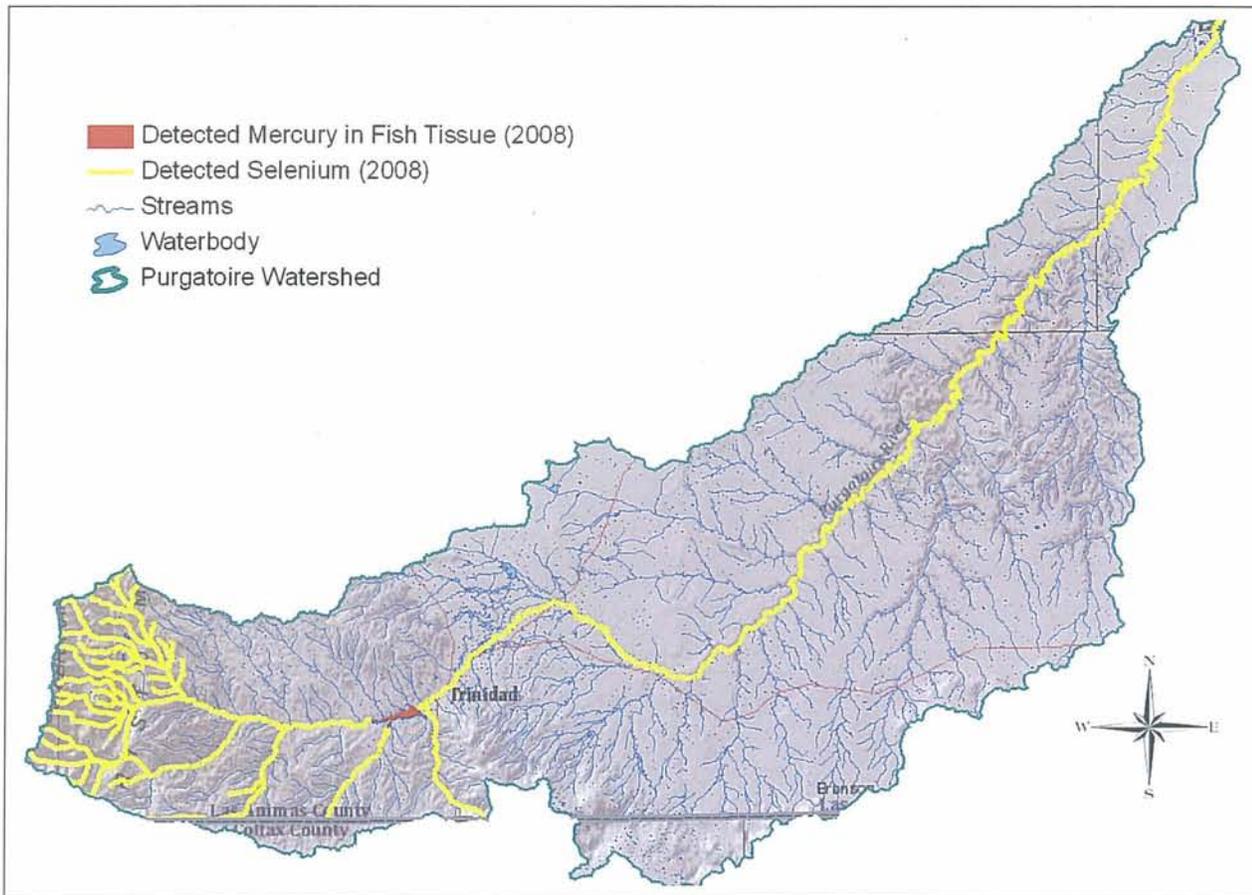
**Figure 2.2. Landcover Map**

Over half of the Purgatoire Watershed consists of grassland/herbaceous cover at 55.7%. The next two largest landcovers in the watershed are shrub/scrub with 20.0% cover and evergreen forest with 18.4% cover. The remaining 5.9% of landcover in the Purgatoire Watershed consists of deciduous forest, cultivated crops, woody wetlands, mixed forest, developed open space, emergent herbaceous wetlands, barren land, pasture and hay, developed low intensity, open water, and developed medium intensity.



**Figure 2.3 Average Annual Precipitation**

Average annual precipitation in the Purgatoire Watershed ranges from 41 inches per year at the headwaters to 13 inches per year at the lower end of the watershed. Almost half of the precipitation (47.9%) falls within the 15-17 inches per year range, with 88.7% of precipitation in the Purgatoire Watershed under 21 inches per year.



**Figure 2.4 Water Quality**

Two main water quality concerns in the Purgatoire Watershed are selenium and mercury. Selenium has been detected in most of the Purgatoire River. Additionally, mercury was detected in the fish tissue at the Trinidad Lake near Trinidad, Colorado.

## 2.2 WATER SUPPLY SOURCE

The headwaters of the Purgatoire River Watershed are located within the mountains of the Sangre de Christos. Snow melt is the main source of water supply available to the Purgatoire Watershed. Headwaters are formed in the Sangre de Cristo and Cuelbra Mountain Ranges, and snowpack from both contribute to the water supplying the basin area.

The Purgatoire River includes the North Fork of the Purgatoire River and the South Fork of the Purgatoire River emerging near the town of Weston, CO forming the main stem of the Purgatoire River. The main tributaries that supply water to the watershed include; Lorencito Canyon, Widow Women Canyon, Wet Canyon, Sarcillo Canyon, Burro Canyon, Riley Canyon, Raton Creek, Frijole Creek, San Francisco Creek, San Isidro Creek, Trinchera Creek, Trementina Creek, Chacuaco Creek, Smith Canyon, Chicosa Canyon, Leitensdorfer Arroyo, Luning Arroyo, Van Bremer Arroyo, Taylor Arroyo, Lockwood Canyon, and Red Rock Canyon.

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## 2.3 WATER RIGHTS

Colorado water law is based on the doctrine of prior appropriation or “first in time – first in right”. The system gives older or senior water rights priority over newer or more junior water rights. Water rights can be established for both surface and groundwater and are administered by the Colorado State Engineer. The system is designed to protect holders of senior water rights from injury by holders of more junior water rights. Injury to senior water rights can be mitigated by stopping diversions of surface water or replacing out of priority surface water depletions caused by pumping groundwater.

A water right may be held by any legal entity, including an individual, group of individuals, organization, corporation, government agency, etc. The only restriction on who can hold a water right concerns instream flow rights which can only be held by the Colorado Water Conservation Board. In Colorado beneficial uses include agricultural, domestic, industrial, groundwater recharge and municipal uses.

Beneficial uses for water rights in the Purgatoire watershed include augmentation, commercial, domestic, federal reserved, fire, fishery, household use only, industrial, irrigation, minimum streamflow, municipal, recharge, recreation, snow making, stock, storage, wildlife, and other (CDWR, 2012). With such diverse uses of water rights, protection of both surface and groundwater is important to all stakeholders in the Purgatoire watershed.

### 2.3.1 Colorado Kansas Compact

In 1948 the Kansas- Colorado Arkansas River Compact was negotiated between Colorado and Kansas and facilitated by the federal government. The Compact’s purpose is to (1) settle existing disputes and remove causes of future controversy between Colorado and Kansas, and (2) equitably divide and apportion waters of the Arkansas River between Kansas and Colorado, along with arising benefits of the John Martin Reservoir. The compact established the Arkansas River Compact Administration (ARCA) to administer its provisions and is composed of Colorado, Kansas, and federal representatives.

In 1985 Kansas filed *Kansas v. Colorado*, No.105, Original to enforce the compact’s terms. In 1995 it was determined by the Supreme Court that Colorado had violated Article IV-D of the compact for post-compact well pumping in Colorado. As a result Colorado paid Kansas more than \$34 million for violating the compact from 1950 to 1999. Colorado also paid Kansas more than \$1.1 million for costs related to litigating this case before the Supreme Court.

Kansas and Colorado developed a decree containing several appendices including the hydrologic-institutional model and accounting procedures to determine if Colorado is in compliance with the compact. This judgment and decree was incorporated in the special master’s fifth and final report which was entered by the Court in March 2009. An appendix to the judgment and decree was adapted in 2009 as a result of an evaluation of the replacement requirements for Colorado well users along the Arkansas River between Pueblo, Colorado, and the Colorado-Kansas state line. The states submitted the adapted appendix to the Court in August 2009, ending the active litigation before the court. Colorado’s compliance is evaluated by technical experts and Kansas staff on an annual basis. The water accounting for the prior 10-year period is reviewed each year. Colorado has been in compliance for each of the 10-year compliance periods reviewed to date.

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## 2.4 WATER USE

Primary water uses in the Purgatoire Watershed include agriculture, industrial, municipal, environmental, and recreational.

**Agriculture** Main water uses related to agriculture are for irrigation crop production, which includes the production of hay land, corn, and oats, and contributes to approximately 30,300 acres. Livestock water uses approximately 1,885,935 acres.

**Industry** Industry within the Purgatoire Watershed is predominately coalbed methane gas production, and coal mining.

**Municipal** Towns of Stone Wall, Weston, Primero, Sagundo, Hoehne, and the City of Trinidad. Trinidad is the largest city in the Purgatoire Watershed. Trinidad's drinking water is provided by the North Lake Reservoir, which has the capacity to provide 4,300 acre feet of water to the city. The city's secondary water source comes from Monument Lake which has the capacity to provide 1,400 acre feet of water to the city per year. In 2011 Trinidad consumed approximated 2,800 acre feet of water.

**Environmental** This would be all land uses, water users, municipalities, industries, etc.

**Recreational** Trinidad Lake State Park, fishing, hunting, hiking, bird watching, etc. The Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation operate Trinidad State Park at the Reservoir site and provides a wide array of recreational opportunities.

## 2.5 WATER ISSUES

**Water Quality** Water from the Purgatoire River Watershed is divided into two sections by the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission. There is the Purgatoire River composed of the Mainstream, North, and South Forks where water uses are defined as Agriculture, Aquatic Life Class 1- Cold Water, Domestic Use, and Recreation Primary Contact. The Purgatoire River from I-25 to the Arkansas River and its defined uses are Agriculture, Aquatic Life Class 2-Warm Water, and Recreation Primary Contact. Water quality impacts in the Purgatoire Watershed are often from the geologic makeup of the watershed. There is a large amount of naturally suspended silt in the water column due to the natural land formation. They are often present in ponds and other stagnant water bodies. These suspended soils often act as a host for other imperatives to attach to. In many areas of the Purgatoire Watershed there are high sediment loads from past conditions caused by wild fires, drought, construction areas, bare soils, etc. The sediment loads are more prevalent in the spring during snow melt, and in the summer months during high intensity storms. In the late summer months when the natural flows in the river and creeks are minimal, there are visual indications of higher amounts of bacteria in the water bodies.

**Water Quantity** The amount of water in the watershed is limited based on snow fall in higher elevations that provide the irrigation water to all the irrigated cropland in the watershed and recreation water to Trinidad Lake. Areas above Trinidad Lake rely on the direct flow from the Purgatoire River to provide irrigation water. The Trinidad Lake provides irrigation storage for downstream irrigated area managed by the irrigation companies in cooperation with the Purgatoire River Water Conservancy District.

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***Riparian Areas*** In the past many of the riparian areas have been mismanaged through over grazing and construction activities (e.g. misplacement of structures). The riparian areas are overgrown with invasive species such as tamarisk, Russian olive, Mexican locust, and elm. Native vegetation such as willows, cottonwoods, sedges, rushes and other hydrophitic vegetation have been reduced and in many areas are no longer found in natural settings to provide beneficial outcomes to ecosystems. In some areas farm land is up to the edge of the riparian area and is being lost to stream bank erosion.

***Forested Land*** Much like most of Colorado, the Purgatoire River Watershed has suffered from improper and mismanaged forestry practices arising from expansion and development in the western United States. The health of forested lands in the watershed directly affects the water quality and quantity and impacted upstream waters can cause negative alterations in downstream locations. There is an extremely high estimated cost associated with the fighting of widespread fires, along with the potential post fire cleanup of sedimentation and debris that would fill Trinidad Lake reservoir, and drinking water supplies in North Lake and Monument Lake. Increased drought conditions and warming climate increase the risk of fires in this area. There is a need within the watershed to stress the importance of proactive measures to prevent or at least mitigate destruction.

### **2.5.1 Shortfall of Water Supply**

Drought in the Purgatoire River Watershed as a result of low precipitation has led to increased shortfalls of water supply. As water supply within the Purgatoire River Watershed decreases it cannot meet the needs of the ever growing demand.

Shortfalls of Water Supply: 2002 was the driest year on record since the US Geological Survey (USGS) began collecting streamflow data at the Purgatoire River at Madrid, CO gaging station in 1972. Therefore, 2011 represents a conservative scenario of hydrologic and water quality conditions in the watershed when discharges are occurring during extreme low flow.

Future irrigation demand was examined by assuming that historical climate conditions will continue. The analysis assumed that agricultural demand is directly and linearly related to the number of acres irrigated. In other words, the future condition did not project changes in crop types or irrigation practices that would affect elements of the analysis such as growing season, crop needs, or irrigation efficiency.

### **2.5.2 Endangered Species**

There are a number of endangered species, classified as either state or federally endangered species, occurring within the Purgatoire River Watershed. The only amphibian considered endangered is the boreal toad. Birds include the whooping crane, least tern, southwestern willow flycatcher, and plains sharp-tailed grouse. Fish species include the bonytail, razorback sucker, humpback chub, Colorado pikeminnow, Rio Grande sucker, lake chub, Plains minnow, suckermouth minnow, northern redbelly dace, and southern redbelly dace. Mammals include the gray wolf, black-footed ferret, grizzly bear, lynx, wolverine, and kit fox.

### **2.5.3 Environmental Issues**

All stakeholders have a direct impact on the watershed and any process which adversely affects natural resources in the basin can directly or indirectly affect the watershed in some way. Natural resource concerns identified by the SP/PRCD are forestry health, range health, water quality and quantity, irrigation demands and delivery, industrial impacts to the watershed, noxious weed and invasive plant infestation on all land uses, recreational impact on water quality.

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### **2.5.3.1 Environmental Issues – Industry**

#### **Pioneer/ XTO CBM Development**

The Raton Basin has a long history of coal mining, dating back to the 1800s, which includes the production of water and venting of coalbed methane gas. In the 1970s and 1980s some oil and gas exploration occurred in the basin, but it was not until the mid-1990s that the production of coalbed methane proved economic. In the 1990s there were about a dozen companies developing coalbed methane in the Raton Basin. Eventually some projects were abandoned and ownership of others consolidated. Today, three companies account for all the production of coalbed methane in the basin. Pioneer Natural Resources USA Inc. is the largest producer in the basin. With approximately 2300 wells, Pioneer produces about 200 million cubic feet of natural gas (methane) and about 125,000 barrels (or 5.2 million gallons) of water per day. Approximately 60-70% of this water is surface discharged under permits issued by the State of Colorado. Once surface discharged, this produced water becomes part of the waters of the State. The water produced from coalbed methane wells in the Raton Basin is among the highest quality water ever produced from a commercial natural gas field in the U.S. The water is suitable for stock-watering and can be a valuable source of water for wildlife, such as on the Bosque del Oso State Wildlife Area. Blended with natural runoff, the water can be suitable for irrigation, water supply and other uses. In recent years, Pioneer's water production in the basin has declined for several reasons, most importantly because of the recent low price for natural gas

#### **Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site**

The Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site (PCMS) is located in northeast of Trinidad, Colorado. It functions as an active military training post servicing Ft. Carson and other Army installations to accommodate a full range of maneuver training, including brigade-level used for both small arms weapons qualification and convoy deployment. The PCMS primary mission is to conduct live fire exercises on weapons training ranges and tactical vehicle maneuver operations for all assigned combat brigades attached to Ft. Carson.

PCMS consists of 234,000 acres with the Purgatoire River as its eastern boundary. The Purgatoire River flows in a 300-400 feet deep canyon and its tributaries have cut steep arroyos into the terrain. Prior to becoming a maneuver site in the 1980's, this region was devoted to ranching and livestock grazing. Historically the 234,000 acres PCMS sits on has contributed highly variable levels of sediment/surface soil to the Purgatoire River Basin, ranging from 20,000 tons to several hundred tons of sediment and soils. This level of contribution to the river basin system is highly dependent on the variable rainfall patterns the region receives, amount of maneuver training conducted; and the Army's internal land management procedures.

A significant opposition to the expansion of Pinon Canyon has been organized by landowners in the area and nationwide who feel that the loss of agricultural property for military purposes by eminent domain is unnecessary and an infringement on their property rights. Shortgrass prairie ecosystems make up approximately one third of Colorado, and only about 40% of this prairie remains. Much of what is left is degraded because of development, highways, and water projects and in this watershed the biggest threat to the ecosystem is perceived to be from the Army.

#### **New Elk Mine**

New Elk Coal Mine is owned by Cline and located in Trinidad, Colorado. The mine has a measured and indicated metallurgical coal resource of 388.5 million tons of in-place coal. The mine was opened in 1951 by the CF&I Steel Company to provide metallurgical coking coal for steel production and blast furnace

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iron. In 1981 CF&I was converted to direct electrolytic reduction of steel and no longer producing coking coal. In 1984 a coal preparation plant was built to improve product coal specification and ran off of coal from nearby mines. The mine was sold to Wyoming Fuels in 1989 and ran as a coal preparation plant until 1996.

The New Elk Coal Mine began production in 2010 and will continue to produce 2.75 million tons of metallurgical saleable coal throughout 2012, with an expected production of 3 million tons of coal for 2013 and thereafter. Coal quality in the seams is described as low-sulfur, high-volatile B bituminous metallurgical coking coals medium-to-high fluidity.

### **2.5.3.2 Environmental Issues - Invasive Species**

The most invasive species in the Purgatoire watershed is tamarisk. Tamarisk is native to central Asia and the Mediterranean. The plant is a water-loving shrub with an extensive, deep root system well suited to the hot, arid climates and alkaline soils common in the western U.S. Tamarisk roots can extend down to 100 feet, much farther than healthy cottonwoods and willows stands, which reach a depth of only about 10 feet. This allows it to grow further back from the river, occupy a larger area, and use more water across the floodplain than native species.

Tamarisk was introduced to the western U.S. in the early nineteenth century for use as an ornamental, in windbreaks, and for erosion control. In 2005 and 2006, on behalf of the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB), the Tamarisk Coalition performed an inventory of tamarisk infestations on the Arkansas River and Purgatoire River watersheds and their main tributaries. According to the CWCB, the Purgatoire River from the Arkansas River confluence to Trinidad Lake Dam (179 miles) has approximately 9,250 total acres of tamarisk infestation at approximately 30% average density. The major tributaries for the Purgatoire River had an additional 763 acres of infestation with an average density of approximately 26%. Tamarisk populations develop in dense thickets, with as many as 3,000 plants per acre that can prevent the establishment of native vegetation.

Infestation of tamarisk in the Purgatoire watershed increases non-beneficial water consumption, widens the floodplain, and increases sediment deposition. It significantly contributes to salt loading within the Purgatoire watershed because it is a non-native deciduous shrub with salt-tolerant and water-loving characteristics. The increased saline conditions and salt deposits along the stream banks make it increasingly difficult for native species (e.g. cottonwood and willow) to thrive.

Management of tamarisk is important to the stakeholders in the Purgatoire Watershed. Management strategies for tamarisk infestations and eradication/mitigation efforts are highly site specific and will vary according to local conditions such as soil type, land use, and the extent of the infestation. Strategies under consideration for the Purgatoire watershed include constant inventory/mapping and monitoring, tamarisk biomass reduction, revegetation, mechanical soil-mixing treatments, and ongoing monitoring and maintenance.

## **3 LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR ESTABLISHING A WATERSHED GROUP**

A diverse group of stakeholders are in support of the WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program grant opportunity and have provided letters of support to include in this grant application. These letters of support can be found in Appendix A on the following pages:

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- Spanish Peaks/ Purgatoire River Conservation District
  - Trout Unlimited
  - Southern Colorado Environmental Council
  - Culebra Range Community Coalition
  - Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservation District
  - Department of Army
  - Pioneer Natural Resources
  - City of Trinidad
  - Trinidad & Las Animas County Chamber of Commerce
  - Natural Resources Conservation Service

## **4 PHASE I CWMP EVALUATION CRITERIA**

### **4.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA A: WATERSHED GROUP DIVERSITY AND GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE**

#### **4.1.1 Subcriterion No. A1-Watershed Group Diversity**

The Purgatoire Watershed is comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders due to the various land uses throughout the watershed. Several preliminary meetings have already taken place over the last six months and interest is high with regards to organizing a local citizen group that could help generate consensus on typically contentious and complicated water issues. There is much that can be done in this watershed to mitigate conflicts and build trust among unlikely partners that could result in mutually-benefitting projects. Stakeholders represent landowners, local businesses, ditch companies, students, county attorneys, state and federal agencies, county commissioners, oil and gas operators, the Arkansas Basin Roundtable, environmental consultants, USDA NRCS, Trout Unlimited, Colorado Watershed Assembly, coal miners, Trinidad Community Foundation, Southern Colorado Environmental Council, Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and Culebra Range Community Coalition.

#### **4.1.2 Subcriterion No. A2-Geographic Scope**

The Purgatoire Watershed is identified by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) with the Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 11020010, and is a medium sub-basin of the Arkansas River watershed. The establishment of a watershed group and its associated activities will work to develop watershed plans that encompass the full extent of the watershed. Within the watershed land ownerships include the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of Defense, private, state, and U.S. Forest Service. The watershed contains over 3 million acres located primarily within Las Animas County but also includes Bent, Otero, and a sliver of Costilla counties. All have varied economic characteristics, demographics, and agricultural uses. The land types within the watershed include high mountain tundra, spruce forests, pinyon and juniper scrubland, irrigated cropland, rangeland/grassland, and riparian.

#### **4.1.3 Subcriterion No. A3-Increasing/ Establishing Diversity or Geographic Scope**

All stakeholders within the Purgatoire Watershed are invited to watershed meetings and encouraged to participate. In past meetings, a diverse group of stakeholders have attended, however several stakeholder groups not in attendance have been identified and need to be encouraged further. Stakeholders that are not yet engaged will be personally contacted and encouraged to take part in decision making and planning for the future sustainability of the watershed group. The current members will make phone calls, send e-mails, broadcast over the radio, setup education booths at local events, and advertise in the local newspaper to inform all affected stakeholders.

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## **4.2 EVALUATION CRITERIA B: ADDRESSING CRITICAL WATERSHED NEEDS**

### **4.2.1 Subcriterion No. B1-Critical Watershed Needs or Issues**

Selenium and Mercury concentrations exceed legal limits in areas of the Purgatoire and in these areas water quality standards as presented by the EPA are impaired. There are a total of 195 stream reaches and 420.8 miles impaired by selenium. An exceeded concentration of mercury in fish was detected in 2 stream reaches at 1,382.4 acres.

Ongoing issues of controversy within the Purgatoire Watershed include the expansion of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, coal production, mismanagement of forest lands and conflicts with the Kansas Compact. A critical issue that incorporates all stakeholder groups is the protection of water quality and quantity. Stream segments throughout the watershed have been listed as impaired under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (Figure 2.4). The impairment comes from Selenium (Se) and Iron (Fe) concentrations exceeding water quality standards and result in the impairment of aquatic life. The impaired segments listed include Lorencito Canyon Creek located above Trinidad (Fe & Se), the Purgatoire River from Trinidad to the Confluence of the Arkansas River (Se), Trinchera Creek (Fe & Se) and Smith Canyon Creek (Fe & Se). Recent droughts contribute to water shortages, limiting quantity and further complicating water rights and the delivery of water to Kansas.

Oil and gas development and the fracking process are generating great concern nationwide and the Purgatoire watershed is no exception. There have been accusations and hearings of degraded water quality due to fracking. Wildfires, degraded riparian areas and a natural erodible geology are increasing sedimentation into rivers, streams and reservoirs. Tamarisk and other invasive species are reducing riparian diversity and creating monocultures.

### **4.2.2 Subcriterion No. B2-Contributions that Address Watershed Needs or Issues**

The concept of creating a citizen-based watershed group that can work in a collaborative manner cooperatively outside of the typical silos that agencies and special districts find themselves in is particularly intriguing to the stakeholders looking for partners. Throughout the U.S. it has become essential to develop partnerships and coalitions to leverage resources in order to implement projects. The Purgatoire watershed has many needs and little resources to accomplish them. A coordinating organization that can open dialogues across agencies, industry and local government is recognized by many as precisely what this watershed needs.

Initial suspicion has given way to general enthusiasm demonstrated by the participation and generosity of many stakeholders. This is a poor county with very limited resources with a median income for a household in Las Animas County of \$28,273. A local natural gas company, Pioneer Natural Resources, has pledged \$25,000 in cash and in-kind donations to see this through. A local consulting firm, Norwest Corporation, has pledged \$4,000 in GIS and technical support. The local conservation district Board has stepped up to sponsor this initiative and provide office space. County Commissioners have regularly made calls or promoted this project to other stakeholders. Several stakeholder groups are working behind the scenes to promote this.

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## 4.3 EVALUATION CRITERIA C: IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

### 4.3.1 Subcriterion No. C1-Project Planning

Included below are past, current, and future project plans on the Purgatoire Watershed. The basin is roughly 2.2 million acres and though there is evidence of past, current, and future planning there is a lot of uncertainty around these activities and all stakeholders involved.

The Spanish Peaks/Purgatoire River Conservation District and the Branson/Trinchera Conservation District, both located in Las Animas County, are currently implementing a number of grants to address natural resource concerns on rangeland health through the development of Livestock Watering Facilities and Fencing. Work with the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) is being done to address invasive species control in the watershed on Tamarisk and Russian Olive removal. The CSFS works with the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory (RMBO) on Prescribed Fire for rangeland health. The USDA-NRCS provide technical assistance to the conservation district in carrying out conservation measures in these grants.

The Colorado Water Conservation Board's Arkansas Basin Round Table completed a Statewide Water Supply Initiative in 2010. The report listed a project in the Trinidad/ Purgatoire River Reach 4 Demonstration Project that was approved 2011. The project goal is to improve the aquatic habitat and riparian areas of approximately ½ mile of the Purgatoire River in downtown Trinidad, Colorado. The improvements will provide cover, velocity shelter and quality habitat that is usable for resident trout during high flow summer months. Installation of in-channel habitat and a new handicap accessible trail along the river will be installed to provide fishing access for persons with disabilities.

(<http://cwcb.state.co.us/water-management/basin-roundtables/Documents/Arkansas/ArkansasBasinNeedsAssessmentReport.pdf>)

Purgatoire River Water Conservancy District: The Purgatoire River Water Conservancy District (PRWCD) was created to provide a legal entity capable of contracting with the U.S. for repayment of municipal, irrigation and industrial components assigned to the Trinidad Project and to oversee the project. The project's main objective is the Trinidad Dam located west of the city of Trinidad on the Purgatoire River in Las Animas County, CO. The dam was constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers is 208 feet above the stream bed, and its crest elevation is 6,298 feet above average sea level. The reservoir created by the dam has a total capacity of 125,9667 acre feet. The dams primary uses include flood control, irrigation & M & I, permanent recreation & fishery, and joint use & sediment pool. The irrigation and joint use pools are used to provide storage for the irrigation by ten project ditches, or up to 19,499 acres in the project area, and for municipal use Trinidad. Each participating ditch has a repayment contract with the PRWCD whereby annual payments are made based upon available water during the year.

The PRWCD surveys existent water resources and basin rivers, constructing of water reservoirs, entering into contracts with other water agencies (such as the Bureau of Reclamation), takes on legal responsibilities and takes action to "secure and insure an adequate supply of water- present and future." On February 10, 1967 the PRWCD entered a repayment contract with the U.S. whereby it assumed a debt of \$6,465,600.00 to be repaid over the course of 70 years. <http://www.prwcd.org/>

Trout Unlimited: The Purgatoire River Anglers (PRA) Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU) was organized in the Fall of 2009. PRA TU partnered with the Purgatoire River Water Conservancy District (PRWCD), the City of Trinidad, Pioneer Natural Resources, and others to complete the first phase of the project in Spring

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2012. This Demonstration Project enhanced the habitat in the Purgatoire River from the I-25 overpass to below Commercial Street by providing structure for high velocity flows. Handicapped accessible trails were built. Water quality monitoring was done, and rainbow trout were stocked in this section of the river for the first time in May.

The next section of the project, downstream to Linden Street, will begin in late 2012, funded again by PRWCD and Pioneer Natural Resources. Eventually, PRA TU plans to work on the upstream section, if the City of Trinidad is able to purchase the remaining private property in the Boulevard area in order to create a nature trail and park. PRA projects in the Purgatoire River below the dam are focused on improving access and adding high flow velocity structure to allow a seasonal fishery to provide recreation and attract tourism during the summer months.

There has been some discussion of volunteer work projects above the lake in Trinidad Lake State Park and on the South Fork of the Purgatoire in the Bosque de Oso Wildlife area. It is felt that improvements in the habitat and in access in those two areas that already have fairly good fishing can be made fairly easily and inexpensively. Specific, detailed plans for those areas are not yet formulated.

**Tetra Tech/ Pioneer Monitoring:** Tetra Tech an environmental consulting firm, contracted by Pioneer Natural Resources, established a monitoring program in April 2010 to collect and evaluate surface water data in areas of the Purgatoire Watershed influenced by coal bed methane operations in Las Animas County, west of the town of Trinidad. The study area includes nine gaging stations and monthly surface water sample collection from 27 sites over 640 square miles of land located between Interstate 25 and the Sangre de Cristo mountain range. Streamflow and water quality data is summarized and evaluated to create an annual report which can be accessed at [www.purgatoirewatershed.org](http://www.purgatoirewatershed.org).

The goals of the monitoring program are to evaluate changes in water quality in the Purgatoire River, evaluate coal bed methane discharge influences on surface water flow and quality in stream stretches classified as having multiple beneficial uses (aquatic life, water supply, agriculture, and recreation including stretches in the mainstem of the Purgatoire, upstream of the Trinidad Reservoir, and in the Middle, South, and North Forks of the Purgatoire), evaluate trends in concentration and loading of analytes throughout the basin and compare the concentration to those of water quality standards adopted by the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission), and to evaluate how seasonal changes in hydrologic conditions influence analyte concentrations within the basin.

#### **4.3.2 Subcriterion No. C2-Readiness to Proceed**

Current stakeholders will be providing both cash and in-kind donations that coupled with the grant funding will enable the group to proceed with project plans immediately. The group will be ready to begin interviewing for the watershed coordinator position and working to expand stakeholder involvement once funding is rewarded.

### **4.4 EVALUATION CRITERIA D: WATERSHED GROUP/LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION COOPERATIVES (LCC) NEXUS**

#### **4.4.1 Subcriterion No. D1-Active Participation in an LCC**

The Purgatoire Watershed group does not participate in any LCC activities nor fill any roles within the LCC to date. Currently, the group is working to build connections with the Great Plains and Southern

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Rockies LCCs and involve them as stakeholders. The local LCCs have not done any past projects specific to the Purgatoire River Watershed in the past.

#### **4.4.2 Subcriterion No. D2-Direct Relationship to LCC Activities**

The Purgatoire Watershed covers a diverse geographic scope which must work to incorporate all land uses with landscape level conservation and restoration. A main component of work done by the LCC is to identify common resource conservation needs, and shared priority interests over a landscape level. A goal of the Purgatoire Watershed group as it is established is to identify common resource conservation needs and apply them throughout the landscape of the watershed. A goal of the watershed group is to cooperate in a mutually beneficial information and data sharing relationship with local LCCs.

#### **4.4.3 Subcriterion No. D3-Goals of Watershed Group Complementary to LCC Goals or Activities**

The Purgatoire Watershed group and the LCC share similar goals. The LCC represents a multitude of stakeholder interests to create on-the-ground watershed improvements to sustain human life and natural resources and the Purgatoire Watershed group will strive to do the same. The LCC believes in using science and management expertise to support sustainable outcome-based conservation delivery. The Purgatoire Watershed group plans to utilize a watershed coordinator and/or consultant to be properly advised on the best scientific and management techniques needed to develop a watershed plan, and its implementation which will ultimately support sustainable outcome-based conservation delivery throughout the watershed. Through monitoring and evaluating the work that is implemented, the LCC is able to communicate and educate partners and users. The Purgatoire Watershed group plans to monitor and evaluate the overall progress of its establishment, along with all activities and efforts conducted throughout its lifetime to be able to communicate and educate all outcomes to stakeholders, government parties, and policy and decision makers. Additionally, as drought and climate change persist, risk of wildfire increases within the Purgatoire River Watershed. It is critical that public land managers and federal projects work to develop landscape-scale planning to provide sustainable forestry practices. The Purgatoire Watershed group plans to work with the LCC in the future and utilize the structure and skill set that the LCC advocates.

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## **APPENDIX A LETTERS OF SUPPORT**

## **APPENDIX B ENVIRONMENTAL AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE**

No environmental compliance is associated with the planning activities the Purgatoire Watershed group intends to accomplish. Actions include developing a mission statement, project concepts and a watershed restoration plan.

- 1) The proposed activities will not impact the surrounding environment.
- 2) Endangered and threatened species in the work area include the boreal toad, whooping crane, least tern, southwestern willow flycatcher, plains sharp-tailed grouse, bonytail, razorback sucker, humpback chub, Colorado pikeminnow, Rio Grande sucker, lake chub, Plains minnow, suckermouth minnow, northern redbelly dace, southern redbelly dace, gray wolf, black-footed ferret, grizzly bear, lynx, wolverine, and kit fox though they will not be impacted by the proposed activities.
- 3) Species will not be affected by any activities associated with the proposed work.
- 4) There are (not) wetlands inside the project boundaries. The amount of acres that are wetlands is unknown and something through the watershed restoration plan and inventory of studies the Purgatoire watershed group hopes to discover. However, wetland area will not be impacted by the proposed activities.
- 5) There are no archeological sites in the proposed work area.
- 6) The proposed activities will not result in any modification of or effects to, individual features of a water delivery system.

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## **APPENDIX C REQUIRED PERMITS OF APPROVALS**

There will be no required permits of approvals in this phase of planning for the watershed group.

## **APPENDIX D FUNDING PLAN**

- (1) There is no additional funding being requested or that has been received from other Federal Partners.
- (2) The Spanish Peaks/ Purgatoire River Conservation District will be providing in-kind contributions totaling \$22,000 in the form of office space, telephone and internet use, administrative accounting and fiscal management.
- (3) In-kind costs that have incurred prior to the anticipated project start date include volunteer hours in the form of meeting attendance.
  - a. There are no associated project expenses incurred to date.
  - b. The meetings benefitted the project because they established a steering committee, identified stakeholder concerns pertaining to the watershed, and began building the structure of the watershed group.
  - c. The amount of expenses in the form of volunteer hours is approximately \$3,780. This number was derived using the national volunteer rate of \$21 per hour, with an average of 15 members in attendance, for 2 hours over the course of 6 meetings.
  - d. Meeting dates include October 3, 2011, October 15, 2011, January 5, 2012, February 9, 2012, April 12, 2012, and June 21, 2012.
- (4) Pioneer Natural Resources has offered the Purgatoire Watershed group \$10,000 cash in addition to \$15,000 in-kind donations in the form of a used vehicle, GIS support and technical support, and a computer (lap or desktop) to be used by the future watershed coordinator. Norwest has offered \$4,000 in-kind support towards GIS and technical support.

**APPENDIX E  
BUDGET PROPOSAL**

**IV.D.10. Budget Proposal**

BUDGET DESCRIPTIONS	ITEM	COMPUTATION		RECIPIENT FUNDING	RECLAMATION FUNDING	OTHER FEDERAL FUNDING	TOTAL COST
		\$/Unit and Unit	Quantity				
<b>SALARIES AND WAGES</b>							
Watershed Coordinator		\$22.5K/yr	2 yrs	\$10,000	\$35,000		\$45,000
Watershed plan consultant/facilitator		\$20K/yr	2 yrs		\$40,000		\$40,000
GIS/tech support - Norwest			LS	\$4,000			\$4,000
VISTA volunteer		\$7,000/yr	1 yr	\$7,000			\$7,000
Steering Committee in-kind volunteer time		10 people \$21/hr x 2 hrs/meet	24 meetings	\$10,000			\$10,000
<b>TRAVEL</b>							
Coordinator		Vehicle donated	Actual expense	\$13,000	\$6,000		\$19,000
Consultant/facilitator		\$.50/mi	750 mi x 12 trips		\$9,000		\$9,000
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>							
Website development & hosting			LS	\$1,000			\$1,000
Office space		\$500/mo	24 mos	\$12,000			\$12,000
Computer & printer			LS	\$2,000			\$2,000
<b>SUPPLIES/MATERIALS</b>							
Office Supplies		\$500/yr	2 yrs	\$1,000			\$1,000
Item 1							
Item 2							
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE<sup>1</sup></b>							
<b>OTHER</b>							
Fiscal administration /Reporting		10%/yr	2 yrs		\$10,000		\$10,000

<b>TOTAL DIRECT COSTS</b>						
<b>INDIRECT COSTS-%</b>						
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COSTS</b>		2 yrs	\$60,000	\$100,000		\$160,000

**Budget Narrative Format**

*Salaries and Wages:* At this early stage in the development of the watershed group it is unclear how salaries and wages will be distributed between a local watershed coordinator and a watershed planning consultant. Ideally, the coordinator and the planner will be the same person but the expertise needed to compile, develop and facilitate the plan may not exist in this rural area. Therefore, an assumption has been made that there will be two individuals to perform the tasks needed to establish the group; facilitate and draft the mission statement; compile conceptual projects and develop an implementation plan. The distribution of salaries and wages will be dependent upon the human resources available in the area.

The greatest need for Reclamation funding will be in the category of salaries and wages and therefore, 75% of the available funding will go toward that cost item. Pioneer Natural Resources will donate \$10,000 in cash and that will also go towards salaries and wages for a local coordinator. In addition, Norwest Corporation will donate \$4,000 worth of technical and GIS support throughout the project and the Colorado Watershed Assembly will work with the group to provide a VISTA volunteer that will assist the Coordinator with this project. A detailed work plan will need to be developed by the watershed group before a VISTA volunteer can be assigned to the organization. The Watershed Assembly will assist the group in the development of the work plan. It costs \$7,000/year to hire a VISTA volunteer and it will be raised locally.

A Steering Committee has been established to govern the group as it moves forward. The volunteer time required to sit on this committee has been estimated to be 2 hours per month throughout the grant period. The accepted federal volunteer rate of \$21/hour for an average of 10 individuals per meeting has been used to estimate the \$10,000 in-kind value for these volunteers.

*Fringe Benefits:* Both the local watershed coordinator and the consultant will be hired on a contractual basis. They will be responsible for their own taxes and health insurance.

*Travel:* The watershed coordinator will have travel requirements both locally and throughout the region. Organizing and coordinating the various interests in the watershed will require attendance at local Board meetings of the Water Conservancy District and the Conservation District, municipal and county meetings, visiting with local landowners, traveling to adjacent counties in the watershed and possibly attending the Arkansas Basin Roundtable meetings in Pueblo. There will likely be meetings in Denver with state and federal agencies and attendance at the annual state watershed conference will provide

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networking opportunities with other watershed coordinators. Pioneer Natural Resources has pledged the donation of a used pickup truck to be used by the coordinator. Reclamation funding will be used for actual expenses (gas and maintenance) associated with the Coordinator's travel needs.

If a consultant is hired it is likely that the consultant will have to travel often to attend and facilitate meetings in Trinidad. The current budget calls for attending 12 meetings over the 24 month grant period.

*Equipment:* The Spanish Peaks/Purgatoire River Conservation District will provide office space, telephone and internet for the Coordinator at a value of \$500/month. Pioneer Natural Resources will donate a computer and printer for the Coordinator at a value of \$2,000.

Education and outreach to the community will be vital to the successful establishment and sustainability of the watershed group. A website will need to be developed and \$1,000 will be raised locally towards the development and hosting of the website.

*Materials and Supplies:* It is estimated that this new group will need approximately \$500/year of miscellaneous office supplies. A total of \$1,000 for two years will be raised locally for this item.

*Contractual:* A watershed planning consultant/facilitator may be needed for this project. \$20,000/year for two years has been estimated for this task at the approximate rate of \$60/hour.

*Environmental and Regulatory Compliance Costs:* There are no costs associated with Environmental and regulatory compliances.

*Reporting:* It is expected that the Coordinator will draft semi-annual and final progress reports. The Conservation District will provide administrative accounting and fiscal management services for 10% of the grant award from Reclamation for a total of \$10,000 over the two year period.

*Other:* None

*Indirect Costs:* None

*Total Cost:* Total project cost over the two year period will be \$160,000 with \$100,000 coming from Reclamation and \$60,000 in cash and in-kind contributions coming from multiple stakeholders. It is expected that additional contributions in the form of both cash and in-kind services will be attained as the project proceeds.

**Spanish Peaks - Purgatoire River**  
*Conservation District*



**President:** Billie Adams

**Vice President:** Albert Blasi

**Secretary:** Bill Wilkinson

**Treasurer:** Thomas Miller

**Members:** Jarrod Tortorelli and Doug Taylor

3590 E. Main St.  
Trinidad, CO 81082-5002

Phone: (719) 846-3681 x 117  
Fax: (719) 846-0525

July 5, 2012

Bureau of Reclamation  
Financial Assistance Services  
Attn: Michelle Maher  
Mail Code: 84-27850  
PO Box 25007  
Denver, CO 80225

Dear Ms. Maher:

The Spanish Peaks/ Purgatoire River Conservation District (SP/PRCD) is an Entity of State Government that has its authority under Colorado Soil Conservation Act- Title 35 Agriculture/Soil Conservation/Conservation District- Article 70 Conservation Districts. We work in cooperation with the USDA-NRCS but are not part of this federal agency. The USDA-NRCS currently provides technical assistance in all natural resource concerns in the Purgatoire Watershed. These concerns address soil, water, animals, plants and air on all natural lands. The NRCS works through Farm Bill Programs to assist financially with the implementation of on the ground conservation. The conservation district promotes the sustainable use of water resources which significantly affect the quality and quantity of water in the Purgatoire Watershed.

We support the efforts of the Purgatoire Watershed Group to establish their watershed group by creating a mission statement, developing project concepts, and developing a watershed plan for the Purgatoire River Watershed. The SP/PRCD commits to the financial and legal obligations associated with the potential awarding of funds through the Cooperative Watershed Management Grant. The Board of Directors supports the submission of the grant application and has the legal authority to enter into an agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation. The SP/PRCD will work with the Purgatoire Watershed Group to successfully meet the requirements and deadlines associated with entering into a cooperative agreement.

Please address all questions to our District Manager, Jonnalea Tortorelli

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Billie Adams".

Billie Adams, President

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*Working together to protect and preserve America's precious Natural Resources*  
*"People . . . owe their existence to a 6-inch layer of topsoil, and the fact that it rains*  
*and the sun shines." -- Anonymous*

2672 Espinoza St.  
Trinidad, CO 81082  
[www.pratu.org](http://www.pratu.org)  
Email [trout@pratu.org](mailto:trout@pratu.org)



June 17, 2012

Michelle Maher  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Mail Code: 84-27850  
Denver Federal Center, Bldg 67, Rm 152  
6th Avenue and Kipling Street  
Denver, Colorado 80225

Dear Ms. Maher:

Purgatoire River Anglers Trout Unlimited Chapter 100 is a stakeholder within the Purgatoire River watershed. Since 1959, Trout Unlimited has worked to conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

A diverse group of stakeholders within the Purgatoire River watershed have expressed an interest in forming a watershed-wide cooperative group to improve the functioning condition of the Purgatoire River and its tributaries through water conservation, improved water quality, enhanced ecological resiliency, and the reduction of water conflicts. We would like to see a watershed-wide cooperative group established. This proposed new group would be a non-regulatory grassroots organization dedicated to the sustainable use of natural resources and would make decisions on a consensus basis.

Trout Unlimited fully supports the grant application for funding from the Cooperative Watershed Management Program for the establishment of a new watershed group.

Sincerely,

Jim Muzzulin  
Purgatoire River Anglers  
Trout Unlimited Chapter 100 President  
719-846-7307  
[jmuzzulin@gmail.com](mailto:jmuzzulin@gmail.com)

**SOUTHERN COLORADO ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL  
618 EAST GODDING AVENUE  
TRINIDAD, COLORADO 81082**

June 17, 2012

Michelle Maher  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. 67, Rm 152  
6th Avenue and Kipling Street  
Denver, Colorado 80225

As a member of the Purgatoire River Watershed Stakeholders Coalition, the Southern Colorado Environmental Council is participating in the organizing and development of a watershed cooperative plan to protect and improve the waters of the Purgatoire River. Through development of a watershed plan it will allow our area to work at good conservation methods, cooperative efforts of sustaining a very healthy eco-system of the Purgatoire Water Shed which encompasses over two million acres and brings together representation of all stakeholders in our area.

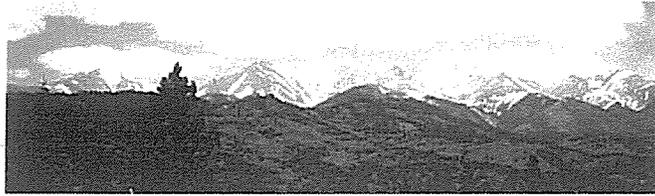
The Southern Colorado Environmental Council strongly supports our local region's submission of an application to the Bureau of Reclamation through which we can continue to establish a mission statement and watershed management projects and watershed restoration plan.

We ask that the Bureau of Reclamation accepts our application and awards a grant to our local area to develop a very viable watershed program for the Purgatoire River and her tributaries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paula Ozzello". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paula Ozzello, Chairperson  
Southern Colorado Environmental Council  
719-859-4048  
Email address: [pozzello@gmail.com](mailto:pozzello@gmail.com)



**CULEBRA RANGE COMMUNITY COALITION**

Tom Perry, President 612 South Chestnut Street, Trinidad, CO 81082  
tomandlindaperry@gmail.com

Michelle Maher  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Mail Code: 84-27850  
Denver Federal Center, Bldg 67, Room 152  
6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Kipling Street  
Denver, Colorado 80225

June 20, 2012

Ms. Maher,

I am writing this letter in support of funding from the Cooperative Watershed Management Program for the establishment of a new watershed group in the Upper Purgatoire River watershed. This proposed new group will be a non-regulatory grassroots organization; composed of a broad based, diverse group of collaborative stakeholders who are forming to improve the functioning condition of the Purgatoire River and its tributaries through water conservation, improved water quality, enhanced ecological resiliency, and the reduction of water conflicts.

The objectives of the grant will be the establishment of this new watershed group, development of a mission statement, development of watershed management projects, and the development of a watershed restoration plan.

Thank you for your consideration,

Tom Perry, President  
Culebra Range Community Coalition

*Lower Arkansas Valley* *Serving Bent, Crowley, Otero, Prowers and Pueblo counties*  
WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT



June 25, 2012

Michelle Maher  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. 67, Rm 152  
6th Avenue and Kipling Street  
Denver, Colorado 80225

As a member of the Purgatoire River Watershed Stakeholders Coalition, the Southern Colorado Environmental Council is participating in the organizing and development of a watershed cooperative plan to protect and improve the waters of the Purgatoire River. Through development of a watershed plan it will allow our area to work at good conservation methods, cooperative efforts of sustaining a very healthy eco-system of the Purgatoire Water Shed which encompasses over two million acres and brings together representation of all stakeholders in our area.

The Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District strongly supports our local region's submission of an application to the Bureau of Reclamation through which we can continue to establish a mission statement and watershed management projects and watershed restoration plan.

We ask that the Bureau of Reclamation accepts our application and awards a grant to our local area to develop a very viable watershed program for the Purgatoire River and her tributaries.

Sincerely,



Jay Winner, General Manager  
Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District  
719-254-5115  
Email address: [jwinner@centurytel.net](mailto:jwinner@centurytel.net)



REPLY TO  
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
INSTALLATION MANAGEMENT COMMAND  
DIRECTORATE OF PUBLIC WORKS  
1626 EVANS STREET, BLDG. 1219  
FORT CARSON, CO 80913-4362

June 20, 2012

Directorate of Public Works  
Environmental Division

SUBJECT: Purgatoire River Watershed

The United States Army, Fort Carson and the Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site (PCMS) are aware of the ongoing community efforts, including participation by local governments, the US Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Colorado Division of Wildlife, USACE Albuquerque District, and others to protect the Purgatoire River Watershed through the formation of a Purgatoire River Watershed Coalition. We are totally committed to the protection and preservation of the Purgatoire River ecosystem and thus, are fully supportive of the ongoing project. In fact, we request continued membership status in this watershed cooperative project.

The majority of the PCMS lies within the Purgatoire River Watershed so it is critical for us to conserve this vital resource through proper management of our natural resources, application of proactive conservation measures and partnership with southern Colorado stakeholders.

The US Army Pinion Canyon Maneuver Site fully supports the local community's grant application for funding from the Bureau of Reclamation for the establishment and sustainment of the Purgatoire River Watershed Coalition.

The point of contact is the undersigned at phone number (719)526-6838.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carlos Rivero-deAguilar".

Carlos Rivero-deAguilar  
Chief, Environmental Division

# PIONEER

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## NATURAL RESOURCES

Pioneer Natural Resources USA, Inc.  
1401 17th Street, Suite 1200  
Denver, Colorado 80202  
Tel: (303) 298-8100 Fax: (303) 298-7800

Michelle Maher  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Mail Code: 84-27850  
Denver Federal Center, Bldg 67, Rm 152  
6th Avenue and Kipling Street  
Denver, Colorado 80225

Dear Ms. Maher:

Pioneer Natural Resources has had the opportunity to attend monthly meetings, starting in late 2011, of a group of diverse stakeholders interested in formalizing a watershed planning group in the Purgatoire River watershed in southeast Colorado. We are impressed with the interest in such an effort and fully supportive of the group's desire to formalize its organization and move forward to improve the watershed.

Based on the initial discussions and survey of stakeholders, the group believes it has an opportunity, through the organization and efforts of many stakeholders, to research and inventory the data that exists on the watershed, and to inventory and analyze the challenges and opportunities that exist within the watershed. With this list made, the group believes that they can winnow down the biggest concerns and issues and design solutions, seek funding and implement the program solutions to help increase awareness of water conservation opportunities, improve water quality and quantity, enhance wetlands and riparian areas, and generally enhance the ecology and ecosystem of the watershed. We also believe that this forum will significantly improve communications between stakeholders who might not normally communicate with one another reducing conflicts and enhancing collaboration around water issues.

The area where this group is forming is critical in the State of Colorado, in part due to its relationship to the Colorado-Kansas Compact and the requirements for the quality and quantity of water crossing the State line, part of which is derived from the Purgatoire River itself. Additionally, the fact that this Colorado watershed encompasses the poorest population in the state makes it unique. Like some other Colorado basins, the Purgatoire is an over appropriated basin in a semi-arid region which has seen prolonged dry-spells with traumatic drought conditions in 2002 and again this year. Everything that happens in this watershed counts to the people who live here, to those who live in Kansas and even to the State of Colorado itself.

This new group is seeking funding from the Cooperative Watershed Management Program for the establishment of a new watershed group. This proposed new group would be a non-regulatory grassroots organization dedicated to the sustainable use of natural resources and would make decisions on a consensus basis. The objectives of the grant proposal would be:

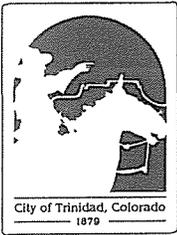
- the establishment of a new watershed group
- the development of a mission statement
- the development of watershed management project concepts, and
- the development of a watershed restoration plan

We ask your support through the award of a grant to this group to allow them to move forward in formalizing their organization. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Karen M. Brown  
Stakeholder Relations  
Pioneer Natural Resources  
1401 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1200  
Denver, CO 80202  
303-675-2603  
[Karen.Brown@pxd.com](mailto:Karen.Brown@pxd.com)



# CITY of TRINIDAD

P. O. Box 880  
TRINIDAD, COLORADO 81082  
TELEPHONE (719) 846-9843  
FAX NO. (719) 846-4140

July 3, 2012

Ms. Michelle Maher  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Mail Code: 84-27850  
Denver Federal Center, Bldg 67, Room 152  
6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Kipling Street  
Denver, CO 80225

**RE: STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR PURGATOIRE RIVER WATERSHED STAKEHOLDERS COALITION**

Dear Ms. Maher:

The City of Trinidad, Colorado (the "City"), recognizes that management of the Purgatoire River watershed is necessary to ensure a future of fresh, clean water and ecological resilience in the City and surrounding land areas. The City advocates the involvement of all interested parties and stakeholders to define the scope of Purgatoire River watershed planning efforts, establish water quality goals, identify possible watershed management strategies, and develop and implement a Purgatoire River watershed restoration plan. Therefore, with this letter, the City Council for the City of Trinidad desires to express its support for first-phase grant funding from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Cooperative Watershed Management Program for the establishment of a Purgatoire River watershed group.

The establishment of a Purgatoire River watershed group will facilitate the City's efforts to protect the City's potable water sources from hazardous pollutants. It will also facilitate the City's efforts to restore and develop the Purgatoire River riverbed as an environmental, ecological, and recreational amenity for the City's residents. Furthermore, the City believes that the establishment of a Purgatoire River watershed group is the most effective way to advance the goals of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar's WaterSMART (Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow) and Blueways System initiatives on a local level. For these reasons, the City Council for the City of Trinidad respectfully urges your consideration of the Purgatoire River Watershed Stakeholders Coalition's request for grant funding from the Cooperative Watershed Management Program.

Should you have questions regarding this Statement of Support or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact City of Trinidad representatives *via* telephone at (719) 846-9843.

Respectfully submitted,

  
John Rino, Mayor  
City of Trinidad, Colorado

cc: Ms. Paula Ozzello  
Southern Colorado Environmental Council  
618 East Godding Avenue  
Trinidad, CO 81082



TRINIDAD & LAS ANIMAS COUNTY  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

July 3, 2012

**Michelle Maher**

**Bureau of Reclamation**

**Mail Code-84-27850**

**Denver Federal Center, Bldg. 67, Rm 152**

**Denver, CO 80225**

Dear Maher,

The behalf of the Board of Directors of the Trinidad & Las Animas County Chamber of Commerce, I would like to take this opportunity to support the formation of the Purgatoire River Watershed Group.

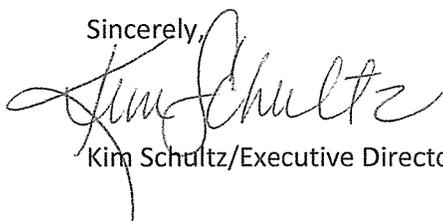
The group's mission is to improve the functioning condition of the Purgatoire River and its tributaries through water conservation, improved water quality, enhanced ecological resiliency, and the reduction of water conflicts.

This proposed new group would be a non-regulatory grassroots organization dedicated to the sustainable use of natural resources and would make decisions on a consensus basis. The objectives of the grant proposal would be:

- the establishment of a new watershed group
- the development of a mission statement
- the development of watershed management project concepts
- the development of a watershed restoration plan

I thank you in advance for your consideration of the establishment of the Purgatoire River Watershed Group, and if you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me at 719-846-9285.

Sincerely,



Kim Schultz/Executive Director & CEO

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
3590 East Main St.  
Trinidad, Colorado 81082  
(719) 846 3681 Ext. 3

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**DATE:** June 26, 2012

**RE:** Letter of Support - BOR Grant

**TO:** Michelle Maher  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. 67, RM 152  
6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Kipling Street  
Denver, CO 80225

The United States Department of Agriculture –Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) located in the Trinidad, Colorado Field Office, serving Las Animas County is in full support in the development of the Purgatorie River Watershed Plan. The application to the Bureau of Reclamation will assist in setting up the watershed planning group and developing the cooperative efforts from all stake holders that coincide within the watershed. The watershed plan will assist in identifying goals, objectives, inventories, outcomes, and participation of all stake holders in the Purgatorie River Watershed.

With the unique settings of the Purgatorie River Watershed cover approximately 2,122,000 acres, starting at the high mountain areas above 14,000 ft at the top of the Culebra Mountain Range of the Sangre de Cristo Rocky Mountain Range to the low lands at 3,875 feet at the confluence of the Purgatorie River and Arkansas River show the diversity in all aspects of the watershed. The impacts within the watershed crosses four counties, with the diversities including land uses such as alpine forest, forest, steep-shrub, rangeland, irrigation cropland, non irrigated cropland, pasture land and riparian areas, with agricultural setting of both farming and ranching, to smaller landownership of subdivisions, to urban setting in the municipalities of local city and towns, to industry include coal bed methane gas, utilities, railroad, etc. to government lands such as USFS, BLM, National Grasslands, US Army-PCMS, State of Colorado land and Colorado State Wildlife Areas.

The USDA-NRCS supports the action to request from the Bureau of Reclamation to accept the application and awards a grant to our local area to develop a watershed program on the Purgatorie River Watershed.

Sincerely;

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Levi D. Montoya".

Levi D. Montoya  
District Conservationist  
USDA-NRCS Trinidad Field Office  
3590 E. Main St.  
Trinidad, CO 81082  
(719) 846-3681X114 – Office  
(719) 846-0525 – Fax  
[levi.montoya@co.usda.gov](mailto:levi.montoya@co.usda.gov)

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# PIONEER

NATURAL RESOURCES

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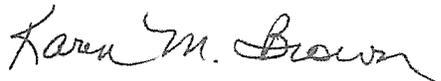
Pioneer Natural Resources USA, Inc.  
1401 17th Street, Suite 1200  
Denver, Colorado 80202  
Tel: (303) 298-8100 Fax: (303) 298-7800

Michelle Maher  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Mail Code: 84-27850  
Denver Federal Center, Bldg 67, Rm 152  
6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Kipling Street  
Denver, Colorado 80225

Dear Ms. Maher:

Pioneer Natural Resources is in full support of the formulation of a civilian watershed group in the Purgatoire River Watershed. Pioneer is willing to commit to \$10,000 in cash and in-kind support of an additional \$15,000 in the form of a used vehicle, computer (laptop and/or desktop), and GIS support to the watershed planning organization and for use by the future watershed coordinator hired by the group.

Thank you,



Karen M. Brown  
Stakeholder Relations  
Pioneer Natural Resources  
1401 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1200  
Denver, CO 80202  
303-675-2603  
[Karen.Brown@pxd.com](mailto:Karen.Brown@pxd.com)

# NORWEST

C O R P O R A T I O N

July 9, 2012

Michelle Maher  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Mail Code: 84-27850  
Denver Federal Center, Bldg 67, Rm 152  
6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Kipling Street  
Denver, Colorado 80225

Dear Ms. Maher:

Norwest Corporation is in full support of the formulation of a civilian watershed group in the Purgatoire River Watershed. Norwest is willing to commit \$4,000 worth of in-kind donations in the form of GIS support to the future watershed coordinator hired by the group.

Best regards,

**NORWEST CORPORATION**

Art O'Hayre, Ph.D.  
Vice President, Hydrology

In-kind contributions listed as Non-federal funding are provided by Norwest Corporation, Pioneer Natural Resources and the Spanish Peaks/ Purgatoire River Conservation District.