



CLEAR CREEK WATERSHED CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

2023 WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed
Management Program Phase I Grant Application

ABSTRACT

Through this proposal, the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership hopes to strengthen our coalition of diverse stakeholders and form local solutions to the current and future threats facing the Clear Creek Watershed. This proposal will help our watershed communities better combat water quality degradation from historic mining operations, potential catastrophic wildfires and post-fire impacts, and other water quality and quantity stressors from drought and climate change.

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TITLE PAGE

Project Title:

Clear Creek Watershed Capacity Building Project

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Organization Type:

Existing Watershed Group
EIN: 47-2144690
UEI: PFELJAJUP9A1
HUC Code: 10190004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To advance implementation of stream restoration and protection projects that will make the Clear Creek Watershed more resilient to climate change, the [Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership](#) (CCWFHP) is requesting a 3-year term WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I grant. WaterSMART funding will go towards evaluating and advancing CCWFHP's pathway towards becoming a stand-alone 501c3 not-for-profit organization, developing the necessary operational policies, procedures, and action plans to ensure the organization's long-term sustainability, and increasing capacity to implement a prioritized watershed plan to protect and restore the Clear Creek Watershed. Our proposed planning efforts are not focused on a federal facility, although approximately 65% of the land in

the upper watershed is within the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests. CCWFHP is working with United States Forest Service (USFS) partners to communicate about and coordinate project development and implementation. The members of CCWFHP signed a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership as an informal collaborative organization. The original CCWFHP MOU was completed by signatories in September 2022. The MOU was entered into by and between the City of Arvada, the City of Black Hawk, the County of Clear Creek, the Clear Creek Fire Authority, the Town of Empire, the County of Gilpin, the City of Golden, the County of Jefferson, the City of Thornton, and the City of Westminster. Additional municipalities have expressed interest in entering the MOU, including the City of Northglenn and the City of Idaho Springs, which rely on Clear Creek for drinking water. CCWFHP's office is in Jefferson County, Golden, Colorado. A separate subsequent Memorandum of Understanding for Collaboration and Coordination in Wildfire Risk Mitigation and Forest Health Projects within the Clear Creek Watershed with the USFS has been finalized. It is in the process of gathering signatures of the original Partnership signatories and the Colorado State Forest Service.

PROJECT LOCATION

The Clear Creek Watershed (HUC 10190004) is located west of Denver. The 575-square mile Clear Creek Watershed spans from 14,000-foot mountain peaks at its western edge on the Continental Divide down to the urbanized plains at its confluence with the South Platte River just north of the mile-high city of Denver. Often referred to as the gateway to the Rockies, the Clear Creek Watershed is the source of drinking for more than 400,000 people. Clear Creek also provides water for irrigation, recreation, and industry. The Upper Basin of the watershed is the portion above the headgates for three canals that carry water to Standley Lake, supplying drinking water to residents in the Cities of Northglenn, Thornton, and Westminster. 400-square miles of the watershed are in the mountains west of Golden, and two-thirds of the upper Clear Creek Watershed lies within the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests.

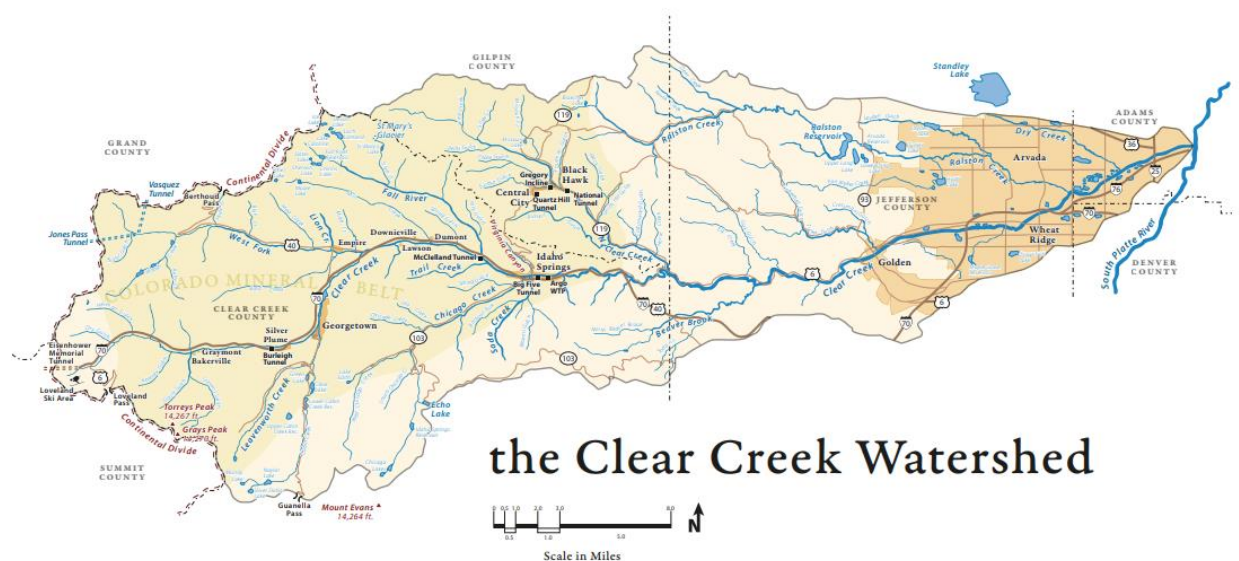


Figure 1 - Clear Creek Watershed Map

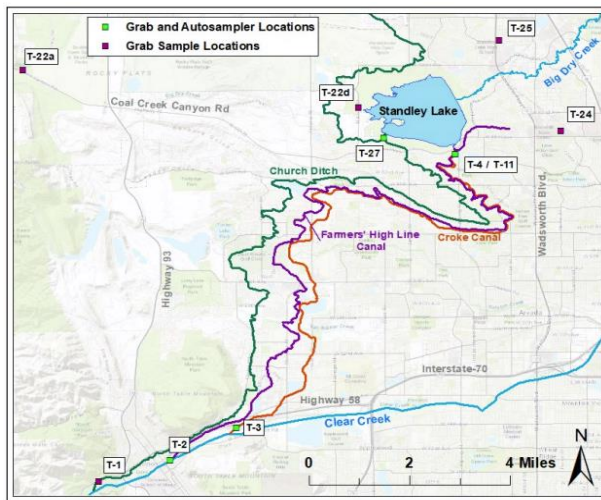


Figure 2 - Map of three canals supplying Standley Lake from Clear Creek Main Stem

Major tributaries that feed into the Clear Creek Watershed include the North, South and West Forks; Leavenworth, Lion, Trail, Chicago, Soda, and Ralston Creeks; Fall River; and Beaver Brook. The mainstem flows eastward along the Interstate-70 (I-70) corridor through several mountain communities, along approximately 12 miles of the Highway 6 corridor through Clear Creek Canyon, and then back along the I-70 corridor through several Denver Front Range communities.

APPLICANT CATEGORY

The Clear Creek Watershed and Forest Health Partnership is seeking funding as an existing watershed group. The CCWFHP's origins began in 2020 in response to project implementation needs identified through the Upper Clear Creek Pre-Wildfire Planning Study. Implementing flood and wildfire mitigation at the watershed scale demands a collaborative approach due to the cross-boundary nature, scale, and resource requirements of the problem. An existing watershed group, the Upper Clear Creek Watershed Association or UCCWA commissioned the study, but as they went through the development process, they felt that implementing watershed restoration projects (applying for and managing grants, hiring, and managing contractors, etc.) fell out of their scope as a 208 Clean Water Act Watershed Management Agency. Thus, the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership was established to ensure this restoration plan for Clear Creek wouldn't turn into a PDF report that sat on a shelf and wasn't implemented on the ground.

Previous studies and efforts include:

- [Upper Clear Creek Watershed Pre-Wildfire Planning Study](#) by Matrix Design Group. The Pre-fire Planning Study conducted a stakeholder engagement program between Upper Clear Creek Watershed Association (UCCWA) membership and relevant external entities, including the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB), and the emergency management community.
- [Upper Clear Creek Watershed Plan – 2006](#)
- [2007 Clear Creek Watershed Report: Exploring Watershed Sustainability](#)
- [Upper Clear Creek Watershed Plan Update 2014](#)
- [Clear and Bear Creek Wildfire Watershed Assessment 2013](#)

- Community Wildfire Protection Plans ([Clear Creek County](#), [Gilpin County](#), [Jefferson County](#), Empire, Idaho Springs, Echo Hills, Fall River, Floyd Hill, Georgetown, Georgetown Loop, Upper Bear Creek)
- [Clear Creek/Stamley Lake Watershed Agreement Annual Reports](#)
- Source Water Protection Plans (Georgetown, Idaho Springs, Stanley Lake Cities)
- [USFS High Peaks to Headwaters Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Environmental Assessment](#)
- Projects completed under the Clear Creek Watershed Foundation which dissolved in 2019 ([Clear Creek Watershed Foundation — Colorado Watershed Assembly](#))

ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANT

The Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership is an existing watershed partnership exploring the next step of becoming a standalone nonprofit watershed group located in the State of Colorado. CCWFHP was formed to coordinate flood and wildfire risk mitigation efforts and implement water quality and quantity risk-reduction projects across the drainage area. The Partnership requires investment and development of its organizational structure and increased, dedicated funding to build capacity and increase stakeholder outreach and engagement. The CCWFHP is an affiliate of [Coalitions and Collaboratives, Inc. \(COCO\)](#), which is a legally incorporated non-profit entity the mission to advance healthy and resilient communities through collaborative conservation and restoration. COCO works as the umbrella nonprofit and mentor for the CCWFHP and COCO will be the fiscal agent for this project.

Several CCWFHP partners are water providers with significant vulnerable water resources and infrastructure in the basin whose water quality is affected by forest health and upstream activities and events. Other partners include county governments, fire protection districts, and other land management entities (e.g., Gilpin County Colorado Extension office, Jefferson County Colorado Open Space, Colorado State Forest Service, United States Forest Service, etc.).

In 2019, the Upper Clear Creek Watershed Association (UCCWA), a Clean Water Act 208 Management Agency responsible for reviewing proposed actions that may impact water quality in the watershed, commissioned a pre-wildfire risk evaluation study that identified specific vulnerabilities, priority mitigation project options to manage fuels, stream channels, Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), and the need to establish a watershed stakeholder coalition to address these issues. This study highlighted how at-risk water resources and critical water infrastructure in the Clear Creek Watershed is to catastrophic wildfire and post-fire impacts such as debris flows, sediment loading, and short-term and long-term water quality impairments and degradation. The entire upper Clear Creek Watershed is within an existing EPA Superfund site due to thousands of historic mining sites. While there has been significant improvement in treating acid mine drainage in the watershed over the last 3 decades, there is still much to be done and the potential for massive metals transport and contamination in the watershed if there was a catastrophic wildfire event.

Drinking water utilities and communities relying on surface water supplies from forested watersheds are increasingly confronted with the threat of wildfires. Water providers and communities experience severe consequences from burns in source watersheds, including immediate and long-term water quality degradation and destructive post-fire storm runoff. A report from the Colorado School of Mines (CSM), [“Wildfire Planning and Risk Mitigation: Increasing the Resilience of Public Drinking Water Systems \(link\),”](#) reviewed case studies of three water utilities in the State of Colorado who recently experienced wildfires that impacted their systems. Interviews with the utilities revealed that “None of the water providers interviewed had individually implemented wildfire risk mitigation projects in their watersheds for three major reasons: the scale of watershed management is beyond any of the utilities’ available resource capacity, utilities do not usually employ experts on forest health or wildfire mitigation actions, and they do not own all of the relevant land in their source watersheds.” The report revealed that the utilities all relied on watershed and forest health organizations to implement wildfire mitigation projects and all the water utilities in the study collaborated with the watershed and forest health organizations to protect their facilities. The CSM Report made clear, “Post-fire storm runoff may contain damaging levels of ash, sediment, and debris (Calkin et. Al 2015), and may also be contaminated with heavy metals, hydrocarbons, increased nutrients, and dissolved organic carbon (Martin 2016). These source water disturbances can compromise critical water supply infrastructure and water treatment systems.” Being in the heart of the Colorado mineral belt, the communities in the Clear Creek Watershed are at greater risk of increased metals in storm runoff.

Building from the Upper Clear Creek Pre-Wildfire Planning Study, stakeholders living in or depending on the Clear Creek Watershed have completed a major round of data collection, assessment, planning, and risk area prioritization. Our partners understand that successful watershed management necessitates a pragmatic approach that includes coalition-building, data collection, planning, prioritization, and implementation, and they have voluntarily come together to build that foundation.

The CCWFHP has had strong momentum as a watershed group since 2020 and we continue to add stakeholders to our coalition. The WaterSMART funding from the Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I would be a much-needed investment in the governance structure and the capacity of our organization and would ensure we continue to carry this momentum forward and continue to promote the protection and sustainable use of water resources within the Clear Creek basin. The Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership’s current need is to build a sturdy coalition and governance structure that will develop, fund, and implement identified watershed and forest health projects long-term. The immediate purpose of CCWFHP was to establish an organizational and financial structure to implement flood risk-reduction and pre-wildfire projects in the upper watershed and support efforts in community education and outreach. The Partnership has made significant progress fulfilling that purpose the last three years by finalizing the memorandum of understanding to establish the CCWFHP and by finding a fiscal agent for the organization through Coalitions and Collaboratives, Inc. (COCO). As our organization has developed, we’ve identified barriers with

our current governance structure that impede watershed restoration project development and implementation. The CCWFHP needs the WaterSMART funding to develop the organizational structure and capacity to overcome those barriers. A primary goal with the WaterSMART funding is to create a strategic plan for long-term organizational sustainability for the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership.

The Clear Creek Watershed has vital drinking water sources for over 400,000 residents on the Front Range. Both upper watershed counties, Gilpin County and Clear Creek County, have high elevation forests with infrequent, intense fire regimes. The 2020 fire season and Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaborative Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment (QWRA) show increasing vulnerability and risk to WUI communities and infrastructure, highlighting the need for critical funding to address capacity needs in each county for mitigation planning and fundraising. Implementing forest mitigation work in the Clear Creek Watershed is incredibly difficult due to fragmented land ownership and steep topography. This makes transformative, landscape-scale forest mitigation in the watershed complex, and it will take significant time to implement, it is unlikely to happen before a major wildfire event. Understanding this risk, the CCWFHP knows we need to make the watershed more resilient to post-fire events and degradation through an aggressive program (pace and scale) of watershed restoration and preservation projects.

With the current limited capacity, CCWFHP outreach and initiatives are mostly carried forward by volunteers from our partner entities. For CCWFHP to solidify its transition into a not-for-profit entity, we must increase capacity by establishing a critical paid position. Additional capacity will help us develop strategies and projects and educate our communities on the importance of protecting sustainable water resources and preparing our stream corridors to be more resilient against increasing pressures of climate change. Resource limitations and the complexity of mixed land ownership and jurisdictions in our upper watershed, mineral-rich communities primarily settled during the gold rush, increase the challenges associated with stakeholder outreach and highlight the need for additional resources to address those challenges.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Under this grant, the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership will focus mostly on project Task A: Watershed Group Development as well as some activities from Task B: Watershed Restoration Planning and Task C: Watershed Management Project Design. Much of the project will be completed by hiring a Watershed Coordinator for the CCWFHP to focus on the tasks and activities detailed below. A portion of this project will be completed by hiring professional facilitation services to help our watershed group navigate conversations about strategic planning, governance structure, and long-term financial sustainability.

The activities the CCWFHP will focus on under Task A: Watershed Group Development include developing articles of incorporation and an operations manual that will include the organization's operating policies and procedures. The CCWFHP currently has a set of bylaws, but this will need to be updated if the CCWFHP becomes a legally incorporated nonprofit entity.

The CCWFHP will also work on several activities focused on conducting outreach. The CCWFHP will conduct outreach by developing and implementing a community engagement plan, which will include the development of information materials about the watershed and the purpose of the watershed group. We will table at local community events, coordinate with local governments and municipalities on educational events, coordinate on regional education and outreach initiatives, conduct joint workshops and forums with academic institutions, and participate in relevant community engagement activities. The CCWFHP will also be utilizing professional facilitation services to help with outreach and coalition building and to have conversations about our governance structure, long-term funding needs, and financial planning. In addition to these conversations about what the CCWFHP needs for organizational sustainability, we will continue to gather information about the needs and issues related to water quality, water quantity and restoration needs in the watershed to how our organization can develop in a way to address those needs. We will attend relevant seminars, workshops, forums, and conferences to keep up to date on emerging threats to natural resources and new strategies on how to address existing and future watershed and water stressors.

The activities the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership will complete under Task B: Watershed Restoration Planning include interviewing watershed group members and stakeholders to gain an idea of projects that would improve the watershed. The Upper Clear Creek Watershed Pre-Wildfire Planning study developed a series of 181 prioritized projects to make the Clear Creek Watershed more resilient to catastrophic wildfire that included several project types such as forest management, stream corridor preservation, stream restoration, flood risk reduction, and water quality and debris flow facilities. These projects are suggestions and not at a concept level, so the CCWFHP needs to conduct stakeholder outreach to see where there is community support and funding for these projects and where we are most likely to complete impactful watershed restoration work to protect water resources. Another activity the CCWFHP will focus on is working with our existing watershed group members, landowners, federal agencies, and state or local governments to determine how the watershed can be improved.

Under Task C: Watershed Management Project Design, the CCWFHP will research the site-specific environmental compliance needed to implement watershed restoration projects. As mentioned earlier, the CCWFHP is working with a list of prioritized projects throughout the watershed, but these projects need research and a better understanding of the design resources needed before they can get to a point where they can be implemented. About two-thirds of the upper watershed is on federal lands within the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests, so many of the restoration projects we would like to implement will be partially, if not fully on federal lands. Better understanding the environmental compliance needed for specific projects will be critical in determining capacity and design needs to move projects forward. The CCWFHP also hopes to continue to apply for federal funding for implementation of projects, so we will need site-specific environmental compliance research for that as well.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Watershed Group Diversity and Geographic Scope

An informal collaborative organizational MOU establishing the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership was entered into by and between the City of Arvada, the City of Black Hawk, the County of Clear Creek, the Clear Creek Fire Authority, the Town of Empire, the County of Gilpin, the City of Golden, the County of Jefferson, the City of Thornton, and the City of Westminster. The CCWFHP meets every other month and has a set of bylaws that describe how the organization currently functions and makes decisions. There is a Steering Committee composed of at minimum a Chair and a Vice Chair. Decisions are made by simple majority vote. Additional local governments and stakeholders have expressed interest in becoming a part of the CCWFHP. Any local government, county, state agency, Front Range water provider or other stakeholder is eligible to become a voting member. New members must agree and sign on to the terms of the “New Member MOU”, must be approved by the Steering Committee, and must meet any other requirement that may be established in Partnership bylaws. The 501c3 nonprofit organization Coalitions and Collaboratives, Inc. (COCO) acts as the fiscal agent for CCWFHP.

Beyond voting members of the CCWFHP, there are many organizations that support and whom CCWFHP includes as engaged stakeholders, interested parties, and potential future project partners including the United States Forest Service (Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests), Colorado State Forest Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado Department of Transportation, Upper Clear Creek Watershed Association, Gilpin County CSU Extension Office, Jefferson County Open Space, Trout Unlimited (local and state chapters as well as TU National), Freeport-Mcmoran/Henderson Mine, Molson Coors Brewery, Xcel Energy, Loveland Ski Area, casinos of the City of Black Hawk and Central City, and the Clear Creek whitewater rafting and fishing industries. As a part of this project, the CCWFHP will develop and implement a program to increase our outreach and inclusion of private landowners as well as underserved members of our watershed communities.

Much of the upper Clear Creek Watershed is in the Colorado Enterprise Zone. The Colorado legislature created the [Enterprise Zone Program](#) to encourage development in economically distressed areas of the state. The 16 designated enterprise zones have high unemployment rates, low per capita income, or slow population growth. On the map, locations highlighted in color are in an enterprise zone. Clear Creek County is a checkered-colored area, making it an enhanced rural enterprise zone. Enterprise zone areas within rural counties that meet additional economic distress criteria receive enhanced rural enterprise zone status.

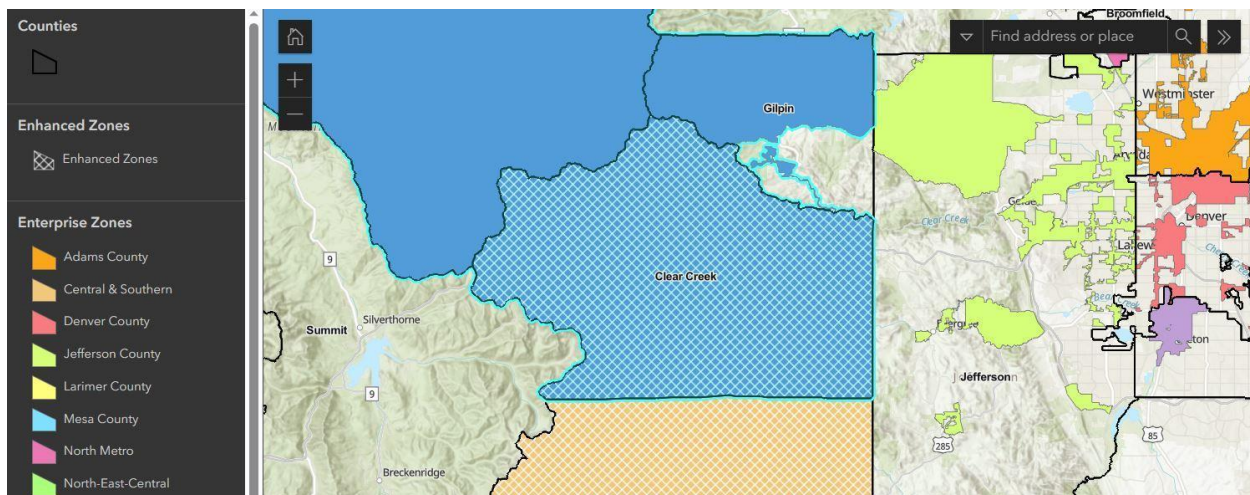


Figure 3 - Map of Upper Clear Creek Watershed Enterprise Zones

Using the [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool](#) (C&EJ), CCWFHP evaluated our watershed stakeholders' diversity and geographic scope. Looking at the four counties in the watershed, we reviewed the headwaters down to the confluence of Clear Creek with the South Platte River. The City of Idaho Springs in Clear Creek County is identified as disadvantaged. Their expected population loss rate for fatalities and injuries resulting from natural hazards each year is in the 98th percentile. Their projected flood risk to properties from projected floods, rain, riverine and storm surges within 30 years is in the 88th percentile. Flood risk is of greater concern in Clear Creek County, given they are in the 91st percentile listed within 5 kilometers of a superfund area.

In 1983, because of mining-related water quality problems, the EPA established the [Clear Creek/Central City Superfund Study Area](#) and placed it on the National Priority Clean-up list. This site was also listed by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). As of September 2022, The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and Environmental Protection Agency established an Operable Unit (OU) 5 for the Central City/Clear Creek Superfund Site. The purpose of OU5 is to evaluate potential exposures to heavy metals, primarily lead and arsenic, from mine waste piles in residential areas. The City of Idaho Springs was also flagged for people in households where income is less than or equal to twice the federal poverty level, not including students enrolled in higher education.

Clear Creek's projected wildfire risk to properties from wildfire from fire fuels, weather, humans, and fire movement in 30 years is in the 94th percentile. Gilpin and Clear Creek counties face high wildfire vulnerability, with Gilpin's populated areas having greater wildfire risk than 94% of Colorado counties and 36% of the population at high to the highest negative impact risk, and Clear Creek's populated areas having greater wildfire risk than 98% of Colorado counties and 48% of the population at high to the highest negative impact risk.

Transportation issues in Clear Creek County regarding diesel particulate matter exposure and traffic proximity and volume were not flagged by the C&EJ screening tool. A [March 2023](#)

[Colorado Department of Transportation news release](#) stated, “In 2022, an average of 35,000 vehicles passed through the tunnel a day with a total of 13 million vehicles through the year.” The I-70 corridor passes through the entirety of Clear Creek County from its border with Jefferson County to the County boundary at the Eisenhower Tunnel on the Continental Divide. I-70 has been a cause of concern for air pollution, sediment, and chlorides in the waterway for decades. The issue became so pronounced that in 2010, an [I-70 Clear Creek Corridor Sediment Control Action Plan](#) was implemented and needs an update due to ongoing I-70 construction projects. It is not surprising that Jefferson County, located in the foothills of the watershed where I-70 moves into the urban corridor, was flagged by the C&EJ screening tool for people who have been told they have asthma, which is above the 90th percentile. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) is a critical partner in the watershed stewardship matrix for Clear Creek Watershed planning.

Adams County, at the most eastern portion of the Clear Creek Watershed, is a historically underserved community, as reflected in the C&EJ screening tool. Much of Adams County that encompasses Clear Creek is classified as low income, where there is a high percentage of people ages 25 years or older whose high school education is less than a high school diploma and are considered linguistically isolated households where no one over age 14 speaks English very well. The watershed in Adams County is in the 98th percentile for proximity to superfund sites and in the 99th percentile for being within 5 kilometers of Risk Management Plan facilities.

The communities in the Adams County portion of the Clear Creek Watershed also ranked in the 97th percentile for diesel exhaust in the air. The traffic proximity and volume count of vehicles on major roads within 500 meters of the communities is in the 95th percentile. Many major road arteries causing these transportation issues run directly adjacent to the mainstem of Clear Creek.

Developing Strategies to Address Critical Watershed Needs

Critical Watershed Needs or Issues

In the 2007 Clear Creek Watershed Report: Exploring Watershed Sustainability, the most imminent threats to water quality and the overall sustainability of the Clear Creek Watershed were identified as I-70 expansion, potential large-scale wildfire, metals loading, sediment loading, nutrient loading, toxic spills/incidents, drought, and growth/development. The Colorado Mineral Belt traverses the upper part of the Clear Creek Watershed and is full of orphan mines and naturally occurring mineral sites.

With no major fires in the Clear Creek basin over the last three decades, the watershed is particularly vulnerable to catastrophic wildfire and post-wildfire flooding and water quality impairments, debris flows, and economic impacts. With the compounding impacts of climate change, communities in the watershed and communities dependent on Clear Creek for water resources face increasing wildfire risk. Post-fire flooding could cause critical waterway damage from sediment and metal loading.

Expansion is currently underway through Clear Creek County along I-70. The Upper Clear Creek Watershed Association (UCCWA), in partnership with Trout Unlimited (TU), is bringing concerns to the Colorado Department of Transportation to prevent further degradation of Clear Creek due to roadway deicing. The primary concern is the additional deicer to the Clear Creek corridor, which is predicted to be above already toxic levels for most aquatic life. I-70 expansion presents an opportunity for CDOT, the Clear Creek Watershed community, CCWFHP, UCCWA, the State, Trout Unlimited, etc., to collaborate and develop environmentally sound solutions for roadway deicer impacts. CCWFHP is interested in supporting and participating in this collaborative effort. At present, CCWFHP does not have the capacity.

In addition, ongoing demands on Clear Creek water continue to make it one of Colorado's most intensively managed and over-appropriated streams. Both Clear Creek and Gilpin Counties have dedicated resources to identify water storage opportunities in their counties. The [Upper Mountain Counties Aquifer Sustainability Project Report](#) (UMC study) prepared for the Upper Mountain Counties Water Need Consortium of Clear Creek County, Gilpin County, Jefferson County, and Park County in December 2010 reviewed population trends and the relationship on future water demands. As part of the study, population trends and future water demands were projected to 2050, including resident and transient recreational requirements. The current permanent resident population of the UMC study is estimated at 81,650, with approximately 5,450 part-time residents. The population of this area is projected to increase to approximately 128,000 - 148,000, with part-time residents increasing to about 8,000 by 2050. Water storage and redundancies in water supply systems are a growing concern in these mountain rural communities.

In October 2008, Applegate Group, Inc. for Clear Creek County completed a Water Storage Reservoir Feasibility Study 9-Sites Evaluation. This study was part of a South Platte Basin wide augmentation project to identify long-term storage and placement to beneficial use of trans-basin waters. Six of the nine sites evaluated have secured water decrees and are included in the Colorado Water Plan, [South Platte Basin Implementation Plan](#) (SP-2020-18).

The City of Black Hawk commissioned ERO Consultants to conduct an alternatives analysis for the Black Hawk Water Supply Project, analyzing water supply options in both Gilpin and Clear Creek counties. The analysis was revised in December of 2021. The City of Blackhawk recognizes that the current firm demand will not meet their future demands. The analysis was designed to meet future demand by the year 2050. The projection is not based on a timeline and growth rate but instead on the estimated water needs of specific development projects currently planned. Black Hawk is identifying a series of water diversion and storage projects to address the reliability of firm supply to meet this future demand.

Project Benefits

The Clear Creek Watershed and its water supplies face ever-increasing threats from historical mining activities, anthropogenic use and development, and catastrophic wildfire and post-fire impacts. All these threats are compounded and intensified by climate change. CCWFHP relies on multiple plans, studies, and reports to inform our strategies to address critical watershed needs. A WaterSMART grant will allow CCWFHP to increase staff capacity for plan integration, coordination, community collaboration, project planning, and implementation, all of which will help our watershed group address our critical watershed issues.

Projects developed and implemented from added capacity will help prepare the landscapes in the Clear Creek Watershed for climate change conditions, address critical watershed needs, and recover from potential catastrophic impacts of flood and wildfire. Increasing landowner and community engagement and prioritizing projects in key locations at the right times are critical in translating the CCWFHP vision into strategy. Working closely with landowners to identify projects across jurisdictional boundaries work will socially prepare communities and prepare landscapes for floods and wildfires. This level of community engagement requires dedicated staff, which is a core need that will be addressed with this project.

Co-developing landscape, watershed-scale restoration and mitigation work with Clear Creek, Gilpin, Jefferson, and Adams counties is a benchmark of success. This is critical for developing the social license in the community for landscape-scale work to prepare the watershed to receive and recover from flood and wildfire and minimize catastrophic impacts. Over the 3-year timeline of this proposal, this will also support the transition of CCWFHP from a Partnership into an established not-for-profit organization.

The Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership started as a grassroots coalition of communities within the watershed and communities dependent on the watershed that wanted to actively address risks to water resources and work together to mitigate risks prior to experiencing a catastrophic wildfire. Non-governmental watershed organizations have demonstrable value in aggregating resources, expertise, and perspectives to provide effective place-based natural resource management. Clear Creek previously had an active and effective watershed non-profit, the Clear Creek Watershed Foundation (CCWF), that fulfilled that role, but the CCWF dissolved in 2019. The CCWFHP is poised to fill that space and need in the watershed for a collaborative organization where stakeholders tackle the ever-increasing threats to our water supplies and watershed communities and the Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I funding will help us get there.

Funding from this WaterSMART grant opportunity would be used for CCWFHP's education and outreach goals, including materials for organizing outreach, materials for conducting outreach and building the Partnership's presence in the communities through collaboration with other

watershed and wildfire groups, regular communication with stakeholders, and scoping projects so we can determine appropriate match funds and partners for grant applications.

The critical water concepts CCWFHP will disseminate through our public education and outreach efforts include that the physical and chemical properties of water are unique and constant, water is essential for life and our economy and a key component of healthy ecosystems, water is a scarce resource, limited and variable, water cycles naturally through Colorado's watersheds, often intercepted and manipulated through an extensive infrastructure system built by people, and that the quality and quantity of water, and the timing of its availability, are all directly impacted by human actions and natural events.

Readiness to Proceed

The Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership along with our fiscal agent, Coalitions and Collaboratives, Inc. have thoroughly reviewed the Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I grant and understand the program requirements, we are able to proceed with all our proposed activities upon entering into a financial assistance agreement, and we will be able to complete all our proposed activities in the required three-year time frame. To demonstrate our readiness to proceed, we have developed two project timelines and included them as attachments with our application package. A Preliminary Project Schedule and Gantt chart is provided as Attachment 9. This project schedule lays out all of our project's tasks linked to completion deadlines. A high-level timeline accompanies the Preliminary Project Schedule as Attachment 10 and highlights the major project milestones we plan to target throughout the three-year project timeframe.

Project Budget

The CCWFHP is requesting \$300,000 from the Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I grant opportunity. The bulk of the funding requested, \$161,554, will go towards Personnel expenses. Specifically, the CCWFHP will hire a Watershed Coordinator to complete the bulk of the tasks and activities identified in our application. The Watershed Coordinator position will be responsible for the following tasks: mid-year reports throughout the 3 year project period, the final report at the end of the grant period, attending weekly organization meetings, creating and disseminating agendas and meeting minutes for regular partnership meetings, attending bimonthly Partnership meetings, updating and integrating existing project plans, developing and implementing a community engagement plan, developing and implementing a social media plan, developing and implementing a program for underserved watershed residents, coordinating with municipalities and community groups on educational opportunities and events, attending workshops, trainings, seminars, conferences, participating in community engagement events, engaging in landowner outreach, creating a website portal for landowners, identifying multiple-parcel landscapes for projects, co-developing watershed-wide projects. \$56,544 of the funding will go towards fringe benefits for the Watershed Coordinator position. The CCWFHP is using Coalitions and Collaboratives, Inc as our fiscal agent

and they will be the legal entity hiring the watershed position. COCO's rate to cover fringe benefits is 35%. This will cover health insurance, leave, retirement, etc. for the position.

\$7,000 is included in our budget to cover travel expenses. The watershed coordinator position will require extensive travel throughout the entire Clear Creek watershed, which covers a 575 square mile area. There is also the potential for travel to other relevant meetings in areas outside the watershed, across the Front Range. This position will be required to work with stakeholders in the watershed including private landowners and local governments and will have to travel to meetings and this funding allows us to reimburse the position for gas mileage accrued through business travel. COCO has a financial policy in place to determine the per diem and mileage reimbursements rates for the travel associate with this position. This travel budget also allows for the position to travel to trainings or regional meetings that may be of use toward the position like the Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference.

\$4,902 of our grant request will cover supplies. The success of the Watershed Coordinator requires adequate supplies including a computer with the necessary software programs on it including ArcGIS, Forest Vegetation Simulator, and Microsoft Office Suite. The position will also require a cell phone for communication between stakeholders and Clear Creek Partnership members. Other office supplies will also be covered under this budget including printed communication materials, pens, paper, file management items, etc.

In addition to hiring a watershed coordinator, the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership would also like to utilize professional services to complete some project tasks including the development of the key policies and procedures for the organization including our operations manual, financial management plan, governance structure evaluation, development and implementation plan, and strategic management plan. \$40,000 has been allocated for contractual expenses during the project and covers the estimated project rate for a consultant to help with organizational development tasks over the project period.

The rest of the project budget, \$30,000, covers indirect expenses. As mentioned throughout the project narrative, COCO is the fiscal agent for the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership. They have a ten percent indirect rate for fiscal hosting.

PRESIDENTIAL AND DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR PRIORITIES

Using Colorado's Decision Support Systems, [Future Avoided Cost Explorer: Colorado Hazards Explore economic impacts of flood, drought, and wildfire in 2050](#), CCWFHP drew figures regarding drought, flood, and wildfire hazards for both moderate and more severe climate scenarios for Clear Creek, Gilpin, Jefferson, and Adams counties. The forecasts consider bridges, buildings, cattle, crops, rafting, skiing, and suppression. The forecasts include low, moderate, and high population growth scenarios.

The scenarios on drought in Clear Creek County, a rural mountain community at the Continental Divide headwaters, whose population is currently 9,400 residents, with moderate climate change and low population growth, forecast drought damages at \$9.1 million. Flood

damage with moderate climate change and low population growth is projected at \$7.0 million. A flood with more severe climate change and high population growth increases the damage estimate to \$9.0 million. A worst-case scenario for Clear Creek County with a more severe climate and high population growth by 2050 is total damages, all factors included, of \$24 million.

More extreme financial damage is expected downstream as the watershed enters the urban communities of Jefferson and Adams counties. The forecast for floods in Jefferson County in a more severe climate and high population growth by 2050 is estimated at \$20 million in total damages. Wildfire for Jefferson County for the same parameters, more severe climate, and population growth is estimated at \$54 million in total damages. Drought, flood, and wildfire combined for Jefferson County for this scenario is estimated at \$76 million in total damages.

Adams County forecasts include agriculture and cattle in their future climate scenarios of drought, flood, and wildfire. The forecast for drought in Adams County in a more severe climate and high population growth by 2050 is estimated at \$11 million in total damages. Flood for Adams County due to more severe climate and population growth is estimated at \$50 million in total damages. Drought, flood, and wildfire combined for Adams County for this scenario is estimated at \$65 million in total damages.

Nuances of climate change to be expected, as conveyed through the [Colorado Department of Natural Resources](#) webpage on climate, particularly relevant to flooding and water storage is the timing of runoff, which “...is projected to shift earlier in the spring, which may reduce late summer stream flows. Runoff timing changes will likely occur regardless of changes in precipitation.”

In the [Colorado Climate Change Vulnerability Study](#), a report submitted to the Colorado Energy Office tells us, “Because there are no major rivers that flow into Colorado (McKee et al. 1999), virtually all of this water originates from precipitation falling within Colorado, predominantly as snow west of the Continental Divide. Mountain snowpacks in the state provide natural reservoirs that release water throughout the spring and summer. Increasing temperatures are expected to cause earlier spring runoff, higher evaporation rates, and more rain instead of snow at lower elevations. Annual streamflow decreases under most of the climate projections, but the uncertainty in future precipitation means that increases in annual streamflow are also possible.” The study says, “If stream flows do decline in Colorado, as indicated by most climate projections, then hydrological droughts—as indicated by persistent below-normal stream flows—will likely increase in frequency and severity by mid-21st century.” Further, Colorado’s recently updated Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan estimates that Colorado will experience a major flooding disaster every five years (CWCB 2013b).

Academic institutions within the Clear Creek Watershed, which CCWFHP relies upon for research and practical field experience, are the Colorado School of Mines (CSM) and Red Rocks Community College (RRCC). The Partnership has engaged Colorado School of Mines students through the Senior Design Challenge program to conduct preliminary field assessments, water

quality, and field data collection, and design stream channel restoration concepts on Missouri Creek, a tributary to North Clear Creek, and near the Town of Bakerville on the main stem of Clear Creek. Both locations are identified within the most at-risk drainages in the 2021 Upper Clear Creek Pre-Wildfire Planning Study. Working with the Colorado School of Mines Students has allowed the Partnership to increase public engagement and outreach to residents concerning watershed health, forest health, and fuels mitigation. It provides students with real-world experience to apply their knowledge.

CCWFHP would, with increased capacity, reach to Red Rocks Community College to engage their Water Quality Management Technology Department, which offers Water Quality Management AAS Degrees, Water Quality Management BAS Degrees, and various water management certifications. The RRCC campus has an Environmental Training Center which boasts numerous hands-on learning laboratories. CCWFHP is interested in collaborating with and supporting the emerging professional workshops and events sponsored by RRCC. This outreach would help the Partnership attract new professionals in the water field to the Clear Creek Watershed and assist our watershed communities with high unemployment rates.

A recent addition to the CCWFHP interested stakeholder's member list is the [Wildland Restoration Volunteers](#) (WRV) network. As the capacity of CCWFHP grows, we hope to engage with WRV in training and volunteerism, supporting their staff and volunteers in advancing conservation and reforestation initiatives in the Clear Creek Watershed. The collaboration CCWFHP has envisioned aims at increased resilience to storms and wildfires.

The Partnership seeks a funding stream for a Post-Fire Hazards Data Gap Analysis and Update project. The analysis would allow CCWFHP to obtain, format, document, and upload new data layers to the CCWFHP ArcGIS online map. Focus will be placed on a plan for data and project tracking. There is a need for a statement of procedures (SOP) planning for a) how ongoing project updates will be managed and b) how local/state/federal leaders will accomplish data sharing and communication in the case of a watershed event. An online form for forest landowners' interest and participation in CCWFHP watershed stewardship efforts will be critical to this data-sharing project.



DRINKING WATER COMPLIANCE DIVISION

PHONE: 720-898-7800

November 27, 2023

Ms. Robin Graber
Program Coordinator
Water Resources and Planning Office
Bureau of Reclamation
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, CO 80225

**RE: Letter of Support for Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership's
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grant Application**

Dear Ms. Graber,

The City of Arvada relies on drinking water supplies from the Clear Creek watershed, and we are keenly attuned to the risks in the watershed including water quality degradation from historic mining operations, potential catastrophic wildfires and post-fire impacts, and other water quality and quantity stressors from drought and climate change. Arvada supports any efforts to reduce those risks. Arvada believes a key element to protect our source water is through collaborative efforts, and specifically through the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership.

The City of Arvada supports the Clear Creek Partnership's initiative to staff a coordinator for the organization and for that position and consultants to work on key development initiatives for the collaborative. A Watershed Coordinator would work directly with our watershed communities and stakeholders to evaluate the Clear Creek Partnership's governance structure and potential status as a not-for-profit organization, develop an organizational financial management plan, and increase organizational capacity to implement a watershed and forest health restoration plan. Non-governmental watershed organizations have demonstrable value in aggregating resources, expertise, and perspectives to provide effective place-based resource management, and the Clear Creek Partnership is growing into that role for watershed. Hiring dedicated personnel for the Clear Creek Partnership will expand the organization's capacity and provide more effective stewardship of wildfire mitigation and watershed restoration efforts in the Clear Creek basin.

Sincerely,

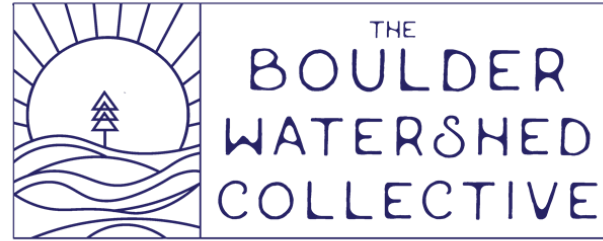
Evelyn Rhodes

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Evelyn Rhodes'.

Water Quality Administrator
City of Arvada
erhodes@arvada.org
720-898-7802

November 16, 2023

Ms. Robin Graber
Program Coordinator
Water Resources and Planning Office
Bureau of Reclamation
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, CO 80225



RE: Letter of Support for Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership's WaterSMART
Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grant Application

Dear Ms. Graber,

The Boulder Watershed Collective has been engaging in pre-fire mitigation and post-disturbance watershed recovery for the last ten years. We have accomplished this through collaborative efforts, and we believe the best way to protect our source water is through collaborative efforts. Because wildfire does not obey boundaries, we believe in supporting the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership.

BWC strongly supports the Clear Creek Partnership's initiative to staff a coordinator for the organization and for that position and consultants to work on key development initiatives for the collaborative. A Watershed Coordinator would work directly with our watershed communities and stakeholders to evaluate the Clear Creek Partnership's governance structure and potential status as a not-for-profit organization, develop an organizational financial management plan, and increase organizational capacity to implement a watershed and forest health restoration plan. Non-governmental watershed organizations have demonstrable value in aggregating resources, expertise, and perspectives to provide effective place-based resource management, and the Clear Creek Partnership is growing into that role for watershed. Hiring dedicated personnel for the Clear Creek Partnership will expand the organization's capacity and provide more effective stewardship of wildfire mitigation and watershed restoration efforts in the Clear Creek basin.

Sincerely,

Scott Heffernan

Scott Heffernan
Forest Program Manager
Boulder Watershed Collective



File Code: 3510
Date: November 30, 2023

Ms. Robin Graber
Program Coordinator
Water Resources and Planning Office
Bureau of Reclamation
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, CO 80225

RE: Letter of Support for Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grant Application

Dear Ms. Graber:

The Clear Creek Ranger District (CCRD) is pleased to provide our support for the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership's application for the WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I funding opportunity.

The Clear Creek watershed provides critical drinking water supplies, recreational opportunities, and cultural and economic values to Colorado residents – but the watershed is vulnerable to the impacts of wildfire and other stressors. Watershed restoration and risk mitigation projects are critical to ensure its future resilience. Portions of the Clear Creek watershed are included in the Colorado Front Range Landscape under the Forest Service's Wildfire Crisis Strategy, and momentum is building to support landscape-scale efforts to support watershed and forest health.

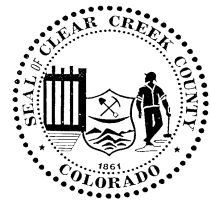
The CCRD believes this work cannot be accomplished without collaboration. The Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership has led the way on building community support for wildfire risk mitigation and watershed resilience work; identifying, planning, and prioritizing projects; and coordinating between key stakeholders in the watershed. While still relatively new, the Partnership and its member organizations have been valuable collaborators for the CCRD. Additional dedicated support and staffing for the Partnership will be critical to moving our shared priorities forward.

The CCRD therefore supports the Clear Creek Watershed and Forest Health Partnership's efforts to staff a coordinator for the organization and to work on key development initiatives for the collaborative. A Watershed Coordinator would increase organizational capacity to implement watershed and forest health restoration projects, support outreach and communication efforts, facilitate collaborative meetings, develop an organizational financial management plan, and evaluate the Partnership's governance structure and procedures. This support will expand the organization's capacity and allow it to support the health and resilience of the Clear Creek watershed more effectively.

Sincerely,

NICOLE MALANDRI
District Ranger





November 29, 2023

Ms. Robin Graber
Program Coordinator
Water Resources and Planning Office
Bureau of Reclamation
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, CO 80225

Re: Letter of Support for Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership's WaterSMART
Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grant Application

Dear Ms. Graber,

Clear Creek County headwaters are surrounded by historic mining operations. We are aware of the risks in the watershed including water quality degradation from historic mining operations, potential catastrophic wildfires and post-fire impacts, as well as other water quality and quantity stressors from drought and climate change. The Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership (CCWFHP) is an important partner for Clear Creek County, as we work towards collaborative stream restoration and fire mitigation projects with CCWFHP.

Clear Creek County OEM therefore fully supports the CCWFHP proposal to hire a coordinator to help grow the organization. Having dedicated staff will allow the organization to build capacity, develop strategic plans, and become more financially sustainable. The organization can make a bigger impact to the watershed and in Clear Creek County with a committed coordinator.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Melissa Lewis

Melissa Lewis
Coordinator, Office of Emergency Management
Clear Creek County



**Gilpin County
Colorado**

Commissioners
Marie Mornis,
District 1

Susan Berumen,
District 2

Sandy Hollingsworth,
District 3

County Manager
Ray Rears

County Attorney
Bradford Benning

Address
P.O. Box 366
203 Eureka Street
Central City, Colorado 80427

*Located in the Historic
Gilpin County Courthouse*

Phone
Main: 303.582.5214
Fax: 303.582.5440

Website
[www.gilpincounty.
colorado.gov](http://www.gilpincounty.colorado.gov)

Facebook
Gilpin County Colorado

November 17, 2023

Ms. Robin Graber
Program Coordinator
Water Resources and Planning Office
Bureau of Reclamation
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, CO 80225

**RE: Letter of Support for Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership's
WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grant
Application**

Dear Ms. Graber,

The headwaters of Clear Creek begin in Gilpin County. We are aware of the risks in the watershed including water quality degradation from historic mining operations, potential catastrophic wildfires and post-fire impacts, and other water quality and quantity stressors from drought and climate change. The Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership (CCWFHP) is an important partner for Gilpin County, as we work towards collaborative stream restoration and fire mitigation projects with CCWFHP.

Gilpin County therefore supports the CCWFHP proposal to hire a coordinator to help grow the organization. Having dedicated staff will allow the organization to build capacity, develop strategic plans, and become more financially sustainable. The organization can make a bigger impact in the watershed and in Gilpin County, with a committed coordinator.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marie Mornis

Susan Berumen

Sandy Hollingsworth



November 30, 2023

Ms. Robin Graber
Program Coordinator
Water Resources and Planning Office
Bureau of Reclamation
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, CO 80225

**RE: Letter of Support for the 2023 Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health
Partnership WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I
Grant Application**

Dear Ms. Graber,

As a representative of the Colorado State Forest Service, I am writing to express our strong support for the proposed Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grant Application. Recognizing the critical importance of safeguarding our natural resources, we believe that this analysis is a crucial step in understanding and mitigating the risks associated with wildfires in this region.

The Clear Creek Watershed holds significant ecological and economic value for the state of Colorado. Its diverse ecosystems, wildlife habitats, and the well-being of surrounding communities depend on the health and resilience of this area. Unfortunately, the increasing frequency and severity of wildfires pose a significant threat to the delicate balance of this watershed.

Our state has witnessed the devastating impact of wildfires in recent years, and the Clear Creek Watershed is not immune to these challenges. We recognize the importance of involving local communities, landowners, and other agencies in this process. Building a collaborative and informed approach will not only enhance the accuracy of the analysis but also foster a sense of shared responsibility among all stakeholders.

We appreciate the dedication and effort that the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership and the City of Golden are investing in this critical initiative. Staffing a Watershed Coordinator for the partnership is an important step in creating a local support structure that will undoubtedly guide future management strategies, policies, and community outreach efforts to create a more resilient Clear Creek Watershed.

If there is any additional information or support required from the Colorado State Forest Service, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to a successful collaboration that will contribute to the sustainable management and protection of Colorado's natural resources

Thank you for your commitment to this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

John White

Supervisory Forester - Golden Field Office

Colorado State Forest Service



UPPER CLEAR CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 3058
Idaho Springs, CO 80452

November 16, 2023

Ms. Robin Graber
Program Coordinator
Water Resources and Planning Office
Bureau of Reclamation
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, CO 80225

RE: Letter of Support for Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grant Application

Dear Ms. Graber,

The Upper Clear Creek Watershed Association (UCCWA) is designated under Section 208 of the Clean Water Act as the management agency responsible for reviewing proposed actions that may impact water quality in the watershed. Our membership includes municipalities, counties, dischargers, and related entities located in the upper Clear Creek watershed, primarily in Clear Creek and Gilpin counties.

Our membership is acutely aware of the risks in the watershed including water quality degradation from historic mining operations, sediment and chemicals from major roadway operations, potential catastrophic wildfires and post-fire impacts, and other water quality and quantity stressors from drought and climate change. UCCWA supports any efforts to reduce those risks. We believe the best way to protect our source water is through collaborative efforts, and specifically through the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership, which we view as an implementation arm for water quality improvement and protection projects in our watershed.

UCCWA supports the Clear Creek Partnership's initiative to staff a coordinator for the organization and for that position and consultants to work on key development initiatives for the collaborative. A Watershed Coordinator would work directly with our watershed communities and stakeholders to evaluate the Clear Creek Partnership's governance structure and potential status as a not-for-profit organization, develop an organizational financial management plan, and increase organizational capacity to implement a watershed and forest health restoration plan.

Non-governmental watershed organizations have demonstrable value in aggregating resources, expertise, and perspectives to provide effective place-based resource management, and the Clear Creek Partnership is growing into that role for watershed. Hiring dedicated personnel for the Clear Creek Partnership will expand the organization's capacity and provide more effective stewardship of wildfire mitigation and watershed restoration efforts in the Clear Creek basin.

Sincerely,

Bradford R. Benning
Bradford Benning, Esq.
UCCWA, Chair



December 4, 2023

Metro Basin Roundtable and Colorado Water Conservation Board

RE: Letter of Support for the 2023 Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership WSRF Grant Application

To Whom it May Concern,

The Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership (CCWFHP) is a collaborative effort among watershed stakeholders to identify and map wildfire risk, mitigate it, and mitigate potential adverse impacts to Clear Creek water quality and water delivery to Denver area water users. In this vein, the CCWFHP seeks to update the state of its existing pre-wildfire risk planning information by incorporating new alluvial fan and debris flow mapping data for Gilpin and Clear Creek counties. Catastrophic wildfire and other natural disasters that might occur in the upper Clear Creek watershed would have serious consequences lower in the watershed including Jefferson County.

Jefferson County Open Space supports the CCWFHP as it transitions towards active project implementation by investing in improved spatial risk-evaluation data and improved project tracking capabilities. The partner project map on the clearcreekpartnership.org website helps coordinate partner activities, is a critical education and engagement tool in community outreach and is the primary project tracking database for Clear Creek watershed partners and stakeholders.

Thank you for considering this grant proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Hobby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom Hobby, CPRE
Director



City of
Golden

911 10TH ST. GOLDEN, CO 80401
TEL: 303-384-8000
FAX: 303-384-8001
WWW.CITYOFGOLDEN.NET

November 20, 2023

Ms. Robin Graber
Program Coordinator
Water Resources and Planning Office
Bureau of Reclamation
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, CO 80225

RE: Letter of Support for Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I Grant Application

Dear Ms. Graber,

The City of Golden gets the entirety of our drinking water supplies from the Clear Creek watershed. Golden's three storage reservoirs are in the upper watershed and all our water resources are conveyed through the Clear Creek watershed into Golden, so we are keenly attuned to the risks in the watershed including water quality degradation from historic mining operations, potential catastrophic wildfires and post-fire impacts, and other water quality and quantity stressors from drought and climate change. Golden supports any efforts to reduce those risks. Golden believes the best way to protect our source water is through collaborative efforts, and specifically through the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership.

The City of Golden therefore supports the Clear Creek Partnership's initiative to staff a coordinator for the organization and for that position to work on key development initiatives for the collaborative. A Watershed Coordinator would work directly with our watershed communities, stakeholders, and consultants to evaluate the Clear Creek Partnership's governance structure and potential status as a non-profit organization, develop a financial management plan, and increase organizational capacity to implement a watershed and forest health restoration plan. Non-governmental watershed organizations have demonstrable value in aggregating resources, expertise, and perspectives to provide effective place-based resource management, and the Clear Creek Partnership is growing into that role for watershed. Hiring dedicated personnel for the Clear Creek Partnership will expand the organization's capacity and provide more effective stewardship of wildfire mitigation and watershed restoration efforts in the Clear Creek basin.

Sincerely,

Anne Beierle
Public Works Director
City of Golden

Scott Vargo
City Manager
City of Golden