

## **SOUTHWEST BASINS ROUNDTABLE**

**Michael Preston, Chair**  
**c/o Dolores Water Conservancy District**  
**P.O. Box 1150**  
**Cortez, Colorado 81321**  
**970-565-7562**

October 29, 2018

Chris Sturm, Watershed Restoration Program  
Colorado Water Conservation Board  
1313 Sherman St., Room 718  
Denver, CO 80203

RE: La Plata County Post-416 Watershed Restoration Project

Dear Chris,

This letter is in support of the La Plata County Post-416 Watershed Restoration Project. The 416 Fire has been discussed in detail by the Roundtable.

At our July 11 Roundtable Meeting we hosted Jonathan Bruno from Cooperatives and Collaboratives to advise the Roundtable on the challenges of post-fire response. The following day Jonathan met with La Plata County officials and representatives of the Animas River Community Forum to advise on coordination between the Forest Service, NRCS, local units of government and property owners affected by the 416 Fire.

Every concern that emerged from the July 11 and 12 meetings has come to pass with flooding and sediment loading into irrigation canals, county roads, Highway 550 and the Silverton Train. Excellent post-response information has been posted on the La Plata County website and collaboration has been built with the NRCS.

The proposed Watershed Restoration Project brings these resources together into a comprehensive package which in addition to the \$500,000 requested from the Watershed Restoration Grant will leverage a total \$6,106,500 from the NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP), with La Plata County providing \$150,000 in cash match.

The proposed project addresses and contributes to the Goals and Measurable Outcomes identified in the Southwest Basin Implementation Plan including:

- **A2 IPPs to maintain the quality of life in this region and address multiple purposes:** Industrial, municipal, recreational, environmental, agricultural.
- **A5 Maintain watershed health** by protecting and/or restoring watersheds that could affect critical infrastructure and/or environmental and recreational areas.
- **B2 Implement agricultural efficiency measures** to maximize beneficial use and production
- **C2 Provide safe drinking water**
- **D1 Maintain, protect and enhance recreational values and economic values** to local and statewide economies derived from recreational water uses, such as fishing, boating, hunting, wildlife watching, camping, and hiking.

- **E1 Encourage and support restoration, recovery, and sustainability** of endangered, threatened, and imperiled aquatic and riparian dependent species and plant communities.
- **E2 Protect, maintain, monitor and improve the condition and natural function** of streams, lakes, wetlands, and riparian areas to promote self-sustaining fisheries, and to support native species and functional habitat in the long term, and adapt to changing condition.
- **F1 Monitor, Protect and Improve Water Quality**

The Southwest Basin Roundtable supports this vital project in assisting the residents, service providers and natural environment in La Plata County to achieve recovery from the 416 Fire. Please give this application your favorable consideration. You can contact me at 970-565-7562, [mpreston@frontier.net](mailto:mpreston@frontier.net), if you have questions or wish to discuss this application in more detail.

Sincerely,



Michael Preston, Chair  
Southwest Basin Roundtable