



Agricultural Engagement In Watershed Planning 2019 Funding Opportunity

Background

With financial support from the Colorado Water Conservation Board and Gates Family Foundation, River Network is working to enlarge the pipeline of local coalitions that are interested, ready and capable of planning and initiating watershed management plans. Since 2017, our work has resulted in almost \$3million in new funding for watershed planning efforts across Colorado to help implement the goals of Colorado's Water Plan.

Since 2017, River Network has provided capacity support and financial assistance to multi-stakeholder coalitions intending to pursue [CWCB Watershed Restoration Program](#) grant funding. We have helped launch watershed plans in the Eagle, Middle Colorado, Yampa, St. Vrain, Big Thompson, and North Fork of the Gunnison basins that are led by water conservancy districts, basin roundtables and non-profit watershed groups. This assistance is intended to help coalitions:

- Identify and engage stakeholders whose initial support for a CWCB Watershed Restoration grant application are critical
- Identify and prioritize the desired goals of a watershed plan
- Develop a scope of work that includes the appropriate methodologies and budget to meet the identified goals
- Establish pathways and opportunities to raise the required matching funds
- Assist in developing a CWCB Watershed Restoration grant application, as well as applications for matching funds from other sources

Visit coloradosmp.org to read about SMP basics and determine if it is a useful tool for your community.

2019 Focus on Engagement of Agricultural Stakeholders

In addition to historic work supporting multi-stakeholder coalitions, in 2019 River Network is focusing on helping engage water rights owners (particularly riparian landowners and irrigators) earlier in watershed planning projects. Watershed plans would benefit from early engagement by these stakeholders, and should, from the get-go, include objectives that meet their interests and needs.

River Network and the Colorado Cattleman's Association's Ag Water NetWORK have a shared interest in reaching rural and agricultural audiences with information on the basics of watershed planning and how multi-benefit, multi-stakeholder projects can benefit landowners and irrigators. To supplement River Network's funding, [CCA will also provide training to interested producers](#) on how to initiate and implement watershed planning projects.

Funding Available for Ag-Lead Stakeholder Groups

River Network has allocated up to \$65,000 to assist 2-3 agriculture-led coalitions interested in developing the capacity to participate in a watershed planning project that results in a grant application to CWCB's Watershed Restoration program (grant type: Stream Management Plan) in November 2019 or 2020. These will be a supplement to CCA's trainings that will be available.

The coalition will take a leadership role in organizing, scoping and raising matching funds for the project. River Network will support the coalition with coaching, an agreed upon amount of hands-on work, and funding to hire needed expertise or capacity. River Network's support is meant to supplement the coalition's leadership and capacity, not replace it.

The expectations of participating coalitions are laid out in this [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document.

Application Process

River Network is currently meeting with groups across Colorado to gauge interest and ability to undertake a stream management plan in 2019 or 2020. **In 2019, River Network will field inquiries from any interested coalition through April 30 2019** and meet with them to understand their interest and capacity. Interested coalitions must complete a short application (due May 15) that will assess their interest in requesting funding for stream management planning, their current level of engagement with relevant stakeholders, their capacity to receive the needed support and assistance, and their commitment to actively participating.

An advisory committee made up of River Network and the CWCB will make the final selection.

Visit smppcolorado.org for a full guide to the basics of SMPs, and where they are currently happening. Visit rivernetwork.org/resource/stream-management-planning-in-colorado for additional details and application materials.

For more information about River Network's support, contact:

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