

Project Details (2005)

Coalition for the Upper South Platte Project (CUSP)

Grant Amount: \$5,000

Objectives:

- Mitigate soil erosion from burned lands
- Improve wildlife habitat and stream-bank restoration
- Facilitate community fire planning/defensible space implementation
- Assist with implementation of weed control
- Undertake educational initiatives

Background: CUSP is the lead organization for facilitating multi-agency cooperation and volunteer efforts on other projects in the watershed. Our work includes efforts to mitigate soil erosion from burned lands (raking, seeding, constructing straw-bale dams, contour log felling...); improve wildlife habitat and stream-bank restoration through planting willows, trees, and other vegetation; facilitate community fire planning/defensible space implementation (these should help reduce the catastrophic nature of future fire events within the watershed); assist with implementation of weed control; and undertaking educational initiatives designed to improve public understanding of fire, forest health, watershed concepts, non-point pollution, etc.

North Fork River Improvement Association

Grant Amount: \$5,000

Objectives:

- Rehabilitate section of Gunnison River decimated by in-stream gravel mining
- Establish the Paonia River Park
- Enhance ecology of river through restoration
- Community revitalization and education
- Meet recreational needs

Restoration: The park and river restoration process will incorporate riffles, pools, and native riparian vegetation to shade and produce detritus, thus providing habitat for insects, fish and other wildlife. The river will be protected from gravel mining and urban development by transferring several parcels into conservation easements, preventing commercial and industrial development in perpetuity. Agricultural lands and private property will be protected by creating a slow, meandering river channel and stabilizing banks to prevent erosion of banks downstream.

Education: Educational activities will include special community events such as river clean-ups and "Weed Free" days. The area will also be used as a natural classroom for water quality monitoring, aquatic ecology and the like. This process will foster stewardship for the North Fork

River and of water resources throughout the region

Recreation: Establish a 2-mile riverfront trail that would connect the Paonia River Park with Volunteer Park downstream. Accessibility of this section of river will be rewarded with uses such kayaking, improved fish habitat for anglers, hikers, birders, picnickers, and photographers. For the first time in decades, townspeople will be able to appreciate their local river.

San Juan Resource Conservation & Development Council (Mine Reclamation)

Grant Amount: \$12,000

Objectives:

- Remediation implementation designed to reduce metal loads of high priority mining sites
- Use Best Management Practices to meet Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) standard
- Obtain landowner cooperation and participation
- Ensure proper permitting
- Develop covenant agreement with landowners
- Develop approved Sample and Analysis Plan (SAP)
- Monitor receiving stream above and below site for minimum two years
- Photo-document every stage of remediation

Background: Massive quantities of metals from years of mining have leached into San Juan County's Upper Animas watershed. Now experts from the Animas River Stakeholders Group (ARSG) have the goal of remediation implementation designed to reduce metal loads to acceptable standards, thereby removing the streams from their current 303(d) listing of polluted rivers.

The goal of this project is to have the Animas River Stakeholders Group (ARSG) remediate high priority mining sites by reducing metals and acidity arising from leaching of mine wastes through construction of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and monitor the results. This particular project is focused on the Kansas City group of mines.

Tasks include: Obtaining landowner's cooperation and participation; develop engineering and bid specifications for project construction; ensure proper permitting (environmental assessment, historical review, Section 404 permit, etc.); develop covenant agreement with owners to protect the work to be implemented; develop an approved Sample and Analysis Plan (SAP) for sites selected for remediation; competitively bid construction and award the project to the lowest qualified bidder; project construction and management; involve the public, holding monthly meetings and providing progress reports; monitor the receiving stream above and below the site for a minimum of two years, and, photo-document site before construction, during construction progress, and after completion while evaluating ground cover effectiveness.

Willow Creek Reclamation Committee

Grant Amount: \$18,000

Location: The Windy Gulch Improvement Project addresses the confluence of Windy Gulch and Willow Creek at the north end of Creede.

Objectives:

- Restore functionality, aesthetics, and flood control in the Willow Creek watershed.
- Conduct characterization projects and coordinate Best Management Practice implementation on mine-scarred land.
- Revitalize stream corridors in the communities of Creede and Mineral County.
- Strengthen the partnerships and skills that WCRC will need for future stream restoration projects.

The WCRC, along with conducting characterization projects and coordinating BMP implementation on mine-scarred land, has sought to revitalize stream corridors that have been degraded by a century of contamination, sediment deposition, and manipulation. Stream restoration is a high priority for the associated communities of Creede and Mineral County, and the WCRC has worked on the design and funding for large scale projects above and below town. The Windy Gulch Improvement Project addresses the confluence of Windy Gulch and Willow Creek at the north end of Creede. This project is one component in our objective to restore functionality, aesthetics, and flood control in the Willow Creek Watershed.

The goals of the Windy Gulch project will be to: 1) provide flood control and stream stabilization for Windy Gulch; 2) improve flood control and stream stability in Willow Creek; and 3) provide project and grant management. The Windy Gulch Improvement Project is an essential step towards watershed health, and its success will strengthen the partnerships and skills that the Committee will need in future stream restoration projects.

Colorado Acequia Association

Grant Amount: \$14,000

Objectives:

The Culebra Watershed Restoration Plan was conceived by the Colorado Acequia Association (CAA) to:

- Identify the major environmental issues and causes in the watershed.
- Develop and implement a monitoring plan to establish baseline conditions and track changes.
- Identify and implement restoration activities that will restore and protect the water resources in the watershed.

Water is diverted from streams in a watershed into a network of acequias (a type of irrigation

ditch) that transports and distributes the water to irrigate agricultural lands. The return flows from this irrigation then reenter the natural streams in the watershed making the acequias an integral part of the watershed. The Culebra Watershed Restoration Plan was conceived by the Colorado Acequia Association (CAA) to identify the major environmental issues and causes in the watershed; develop and implement a monitoring plan to establish baseline conditions and track changes; and identify and implement restoration activities that will restore and protect the water resources in the watershed.

To accomplish these goals, the Culebra Watershed Restoration Plan is made up of three phases:

Phase I — Cumulative Watershed Effects Analysis. This identifies impacts on the water users and links these impacts to management activities.

Phase II — Implement the Monitoring Plan developed in Phase I by periodically sampling approximately five sites in the watershed; assessing riparian conditions for reaches determined in the Monitoring Plan; photo-inventory the sites; data management system through use of GIS; revising the list of restoration activities to update the priority of each activity.

Phase III — Restoration Activities. CAA anticipates that the first restoration activities will likely address the erosion and sedimentation issues, and the subsequent loss of function to the acequias and streams in the watershed.

San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Objectives:

The Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project (RGHRP) will develop a Strategic Plan (SP) to implement the restoration recommendations made from a study conducted on 91 miles of the Rio Grande. The SP will:

- Include data collection and assessment of ongoing restoration projects.
- Prioritize projects and alternatives " identify possible funding sources for specific projects in the future.
- Educate and maintain involvement and support from the community.
- Link existing and future restoration projects affecting:
 - Water quality
 - Floodplain issues
 - Stream bank stabilization
 - Irrigation diversions
 - Riparian and river habitat health
 - Interstate Compact requirements

The Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project (RGHRP) will develop a Rio Grande Watershed Restoration Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan) to implement the restoration recommendations made from a study conducted on 91 miles of the Rio Grande. A Strategic Plan will provide focus for

the implementation of future structural and non-structural restoration projects. It will include data collection and assessment of ongoing restoration projects, prioritization of projects and alternatives, identification of possible funding sources for specific projects in the future, and outreach efforts to educate and maintain involvement and support from the community.

The Task Force, made up of representative farmers, ranchers, environmentalists, irrigation companies, staffs of both state and federal agencies, elected officials, and staff of local government and towns, have also identified the need for a third party Consultant to guide the Strategic Planning process. Although the Upper Rio Grande in CO has not been designated impaired, it is in need of this strategic and comprehensive watershed plan that links existing and future restoration projects that affect the water quality, stream bank stabilization, riparian and river habitat health, floodplain issues, irrigation diversions, and interstate Compact requirements of the Rio Grande.

Routt County Conservation District

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Objectives:

The Yampa Basin Watershed Plan (208 Plan) addresses water quality, water resources, and facility needs within the entire Yampa River Basin, including Routt and Moffat Counties. It includes summaries of:

- Watershed characteristics
- Population and land use
- Stream classifications and standards
- General basin water quality characteristics
- Point and non-point source discharges
- Watershed management policies and recommendations

Six general water policies were developed:

1. **Water Quality:** The surface water and groundwater of the region will be protected to maintain the present uses of those waters. The physical, chemical, and biological conditions will be maintained for the benefit of the environment and present and future generations of residents and visitors to the region.
2. **Water use and Development:** The use and development of the waters of the region will maintain the quality necessary to protect present uses.
3. **Land Use and Disturbance:** The surface water and groundwater of the region will be protected from land uses and management practices which could cause significant degradation of water quality or impairment of the natural protection and/or treatment processes provided by wetlands, floodplains, shorelines, and riparian areas.
4. **Domestic, Municipal, and Industrial Waste Treatment:** Decisions to locate water

supplies and wastewater treatment systems, and to extend utilities will be made in a manner that protects water quality. Decisions regarding facility location will consider environmental conditions.

5. **Chemical Management:** The surface water and groundwater of the region will be protected from the use of pesticides, fertilizers, algaecides, road deicing and friction materials, and other chemicals which would temporarily or permanently cause a significant degradation of water quality conditions or impair present uses.
6. **Management System:** The surface water and groundwater of the region will be protected by a management agency structure.

The Yampa Basin Watershed Plan (208 Plan) addresses water quality, water resources, and facility needs within the entire Yampa River Basin, including Routt and Moffat Counties. Land uses in the watershed include agriculture, timber harvesting, coal production, residential, and recreational uses.

Primary basin issues include: population growth, land development, increased tourism and recreation, pressure on infrastructure and community resources; diverse use of/ interest in the watershed, and potential subsequent impacts on watershed resources, water quality, and river system health. The Yampa 208 Plan includes summaries of: Watershed characteristics, Population and land use, stream classifications and standards, general basin water quality characteristics, point and non-point source discharges, and watershed management policies and recommendations.

San Juan Resource Conservation & Development Council (Pine River)

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Objectives:

- Development and implementation of watershed plan to bring together diverse interests that share the resources of the Pine River Watershed.
- Bring together residents and agencies to discuss the important issues in the watershed
- Develop a hydrologic unit plan with input from the public through the Pine River Watershed Group (PRWG)
- Residents and represented interests will direct the needs of the plan
- Outreach will be a priority to ensure education, involvement, and support of the community
- Work with other agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service, La Plata County, and the Southern Ute Tribe with their GIS information and the hydrologic unit plan

The Pine River Watershed is experiencing many stresses to its land and water resources. Development and implementation of a watershed plan is needed to bring together the diverse interests that share the resources of the Pine River Watershed. This planning project will bring together the upper, middle, and lower reaches of the watershed. Proposals to conduct restoration

activities will improve the health of the watershed and it will bring together residents and agencies to discuss the important issues in the watershed.

A hydrologic unit plan will be developed with input from the public through the Pine River Watershed Group (PRWG). The residents and interests represented in the watershed will direct the needs of the plan. Available data will be compiled and new data collected when needed. Outreach will be a priority to ensure the education, involvement and support of the community. Data will be shared and the work will be done in a collaborative fashion. Restoration projects will be proposed and implemented to protect the land and water resources.

Multi-objective aspects of the project are inherent in the data compilation and GIS enhancements, working with the public to receive input, working with other agencies and the Southern Ute Tribe, and working towards the implementation of restoration projects. The BLM has GIS coverages for the gas development parts of the Pine River Watershed, and this project will work with the BLM to include their data. This project will incorporate efforts from the U.S. Forest Service and La Plata County GIS coverages into the hydrologic unit plan and develop new coverages.