

## **Gunnison Basin Roundtable Grant Application & Review Procedure**

1. Submit application (available on CWCB website-WSRA grant app) by the first of month prior to meeting month at which request will be heard. eg 1st of July for August meeting. Application goes to Project Screening Committee (Tom Alvey is chair) or to Michelle Pierce, chairperson of Gunnison Basin Roundtable.
2. Applicants should contact the Screening committee for help or advice with application and should understand the CWCB has final approval authority. CWCB meetings are every other month. Requests for state funds are only heard twice a year, in March and September.
3. PSC will schedule a meeting to discuss application with applicant. The PSC ensures that the app is complete and makes a recommendation to the Roundtable.
4. The PSC evaluation is based on the Gunnison Basin needs assessment (see below). The Roundtable is working on other criteria, including amount of matching funds, beneficiaries, applicability to other projects and meeting multiple needs (including non-consumptive).

### Gunnison Basin Roundtable Needs Assessment<sup>1</sup>

The Gunnison Basin stretches over 8,000 square miles of western Colorado, extending from the Continental Divide to the confluence of the Gunnison and Colorado Rivers near Grand Junction. The largest cities in the basin are Montrose, Delta and Gunnison. The Gunnison Basin faces several challenges into the future including:

- Growth in the headwaters will require additional water management strategies.
- Addressing agricultural water shortages in the basin is an important goal of the community.
- The area between Ouray and Montrose is rapidly growing. Agriculture is important but will continue to feel pressures from the growth in the Uncompahgre Valley.

The Gunnison Basin has identified the following priorities:

- Preserve open space;
- Continue dialogue/ negotiations between the Gunnison and other basin roundtables;
- Address aging infrastructure with the basin;
- Develop and implement a selenium management plan;
- Maintain agricultural viability;
- Provide for in-basin augmentation;
- Address compact delivery impacts to existing and future in-basin water rights;
- Ensure Endangered Species Act compliance through Aspinall re-operations; and

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<sup>1</sup> This is the Introduction to the Needs Assessment developed by the Basin Roundtable with assistance from CDM.

- Ensure adequate water for future needs (Municipal and Industrial [M&I], Agricultural, Environmental, and Recreational uses.

The Gunnison Basin Roundtable has completed their basinwide water needs assessments for their consumptive and nonconsumptive water supply needs and analyzed the basin's water supply availability. The basin roundtable conducted a separate study to examine their consumptive needs. This study, completed and adopted by the basin roundtable in August 2009, examined four specific areas – demands and supplies for smaller municipalities, rural domestic demands and supply, identified water supply vulnerabilities, and snowmaking demands. The basin has completed their nonconsumptive needs assessment (NCNA) mapping and is currently underway on the statewide effort with Phase 2 of the NCNA, which will identify specific projects addressing nonconsumptive needs within the basin.

Based on these needs assessments, the overall needs of the Gunnison Basin fall into six overlapping categories with specific projects related to each:

1. **Agricultural Water Shortages:** Agriculture is the sustaining life of the basin; it is central economically, culturally and for the creation of the background for all other activities. It therefore has the highest priority for water needs. The roundtable has long known that there are shortages of agricultural water, which limit production, land use, and crop type throughout the basin. The Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI) 2010 Report acknowledges this and quantifies the shortage as 128,000 acre-feet per year on average. While the roundtable feels this number is less than the actual shortfall, and will continue to analyze the agricultural water shortage, even this amount requires projects and methods to fill this gap.
2. **Rehabilitation and Maintenance of Existing Infrastructure:** Many of the existing sources of supply are aging and in need of more than routine maintenance. Dams, ditches, diversion structures, and other infrastructure are in many cases past their design life and need to be upgraded. The cheapest water supply is that which we already have and we cannot afford to lose any of our existing supply. Although there is a great deal of overlap between this need and others (efficiency, agricultural shortages, and selenium reduction) it should be emphasized as a distinct category.
3. **Efficiency:** There is a need to upgrade and improve water delivery and use. We must also address the question of what happens to saved water. Unless water saved can be used for our benefit, there is little incentive to become more efficient. Both agricultural and municipal water conservation needs to be addressed. This topic needs more discussion and input.
4. **Compliance with Federal Requirements:** The Gunnison Watershed is controlled by federal demands. The Black Canyon water right, Endangered Species Act, power generation, and Aspinall reoperations Programmatic Biological Opinion are all needs that must be met by the water supplies of the basin. These needs dictate flow regimes on the Gunnison and will require further projects to minimize selenium loading of the river.
5. **Municipal Shortages:** There are shortages for municipalities identified in the SWSI 2010 Report. The Task Order report details some known municipal shortfalls but there are other projects needed to

keep up with growth in the area. Since the Gunnison system is over appropriated, there are augmentation needs in the sub basins as well.

6. **Compact Compliance:** All the water uses in the Gunnison Basin are impacted by the threat of a Colorado River Compact Call. We have, therefore, a need to understand the risks associated with further development of water within this basin. To that end, we need a better knowledge of the amount of water physically and legally available in the Gunnison. In addition, we need to plan for the effects of a Compact Call. The roundtable supports the efforts of the River District and others to create a water bank, which might allow more certainty to future water development. Specifically, the roundtable is a participant in studying the potential use of Blue Mesa storage capacity as part of a water banking mechanism.

A final and overriding need for the basin is the achievement of funding for the projects considered in our needs assessment. It is obvious that none of our needs can be satisfied if funding sources cannot be found. There will have to be creative partnerships formed among all project beneficiaries to provide the revenue needed. Among other sources, hydropower on existing or new projects is a promising avenue.