



Durango Fish Hatchery Packed Columns-Water Treatment

Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Table of Contents

<i>Durango Fish Hatchery Packed Columns-Water Treatment</i>	<i>4</i>
1.0 Executive Summary	4
2.0 Scope of Work	5
3.0 Budget Spreadsheet	10
4.0 Public Communications Strategy	10
5.0 Relationship to Ranking Criteria	10
Appendices	14

May 29, 2025

Mark Rudolph
Bonita Peak Mining District NRD Project Manager
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division
4300 Cherry Creek Drive
South Denver, CO 80246-1530
Phone: 303-916-2179
Email: mark.rudolph@state.co.us

Re: Bonita Peak Mining District Natural Resource Damages Trust Fund Project Proposal

Dear Mr. Rudolph,

Please find attached Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Durango Fish Hatchery Packed Columns-Water Treatment project description for submission to the Bonita Peak Mining District Natural Resource Damages Trust Fund. We believe this project is well suited to meet the objectives for the Funds, including restoration, rehabilitation, protection, and enhancement of the area's natural resources and related services injured as a result of historical mining impacts.

This project focuses on providing benefits to the water quality, recreation, and conservation to help restore native fish to the Animas River Basin, improve recreational fishing in areas of degraded habitat through improved stocking, and will be a benefit to the public, anglers, guides, outfitters, and the economy. We have reviewed the proposed project to ensure it complies with the criteria provided, provides long-term benefits to both the environment and the community, and represents a community-supported, watershed-wide effort.

We are happy to provide any additional information or clarification you may need. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew P. Nicholl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Matthew" being the most prominent part.

Matt Nicholl
Assistant Director- Aquatic Wildlife Branch

Durango Fish Hatchery Packed Columns-Water Treatment

1.0 Executive Summary

Proposal Name: Durango Fish Hatchery Packed Columns-Water Treatment

• **Project Description:** Rebuild the water treatment system (packed columns) at the Durango State Fish Hatchery to include removing carbon dioxide and nitrogen and re-oxygenating the water prior to entering the hatchery. Nitrogen can cause gas bubble disease and also stresses fish if saturation levels stay above 100%. Carbon dioxide will also cause stress at 10 parts per million, at which point fish can become sick, requiring treatment. Replacing the packed columns will resolve these issues. The Durango Fish Hatchery has been in operation since 1903, and raises and stocks Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, Colorado River Cutthroat Trout (native fish of Colorado), and Kokanee Salmon. The packed Columns are used to treat all of the water that is collected from spring seeps around the hatchery and in the area of Junction Creek. The water is pumped into the packed columns where it goes through four columns that are filled with coke rings. The coke rings break up the water to help remove nitrogen and carbon dioxide and replace it with oxygen. The packed columns need to be replaced as the nitrogen and carbon dioxide concentrations are too high and cause adverse effects to the fish health at the hatchery. The Durango hatchery stocks numerous waters within the Animas River Basin and throughout the southwest corner of the state, including the Animas River Basin, San Juan River Basin, and Dolores River Basin. Along with stocking, the hatchery also provides Colorado River Cutthroat Trout and Kokanee Salmon eggs to other hatcheries in the state for rearing and stocking. The damage caused to the river basin by mining in the area over the decades has affected the recreation, water quality, and habitat of the system and the hatchery helps offset and mitigate damages.

• **Project Offeror:** Colorado Parks and Wildlife - Durango State Fish Hatchery

• **Point-of-Contact:** Toby Mourning, 151 E. 16Th Street, Durango CO 8130, 970-382-6661, toby.mourning@state.co.us and Secondary; Amy Brandenburg 600 Reservoir RD, Pueblo, CO 81005, amy.brandenburg@state.co.us

• **Total Project Cost** \$597,000

• **Amount of NRD Funding Requested** \$350,000

- Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) large cap project requested \$175,000 and \$72,000 other non-matching contributions to be allocated for design, project management, and construction management. \$175,000 of the funding is contingent on CPW budgeting.

- **Signature of the Authorized Offeror:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew P. Aschultz".

2.0 Scope of Work

a. Target Natural Resource(s): State the target natural resource(s) or services to be affected by or included in the proposal.

Mining significantly impacts aquatic life through pollution, habitat destruction, and alterations to water quality. Specifically, mining activities in the area lead to water pollution from mine drainage and tailings, habitat destruction due to erosion and sedimentation, and introduction of toxic substances such as heavy metals and chemicals. The damage caused to the Animas River basin by mining in the area over the decades has affected the recreation, water quality, and habitat of the system. Trout produced at the Durango State Fish Hatchery are used to offset and mitigate these mining impacts throughout the watershed. The hatchery stocks our native fish, the Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, in numerous high mountain lakes and streams in the Animas River basin to keep, maintain, and rebuild conservation populations. The hatchery stocks Rainbow Trout, Brown Trout, and Kokanee Salmon in La Plata County and Rainbow Trout and Cutthroat Trout in San Juan County, which helps bolster the economic value of these areas through angler expenditures. A healthy fishery has a significant impact on the recreational and tourism-based economy by employing guides and outfitters, and three fly shops in Durango that employ dozens of people. In the lower Animas River, with the help of the hatchery, a Gold Medal fishery has been developed over the years from Lightner Creek downstream to Rivera Bridge. Colorado River Cutthroat Trout have also been re-established in Cunningham Gulch near Silverton.

The Durango Hatchery sits on approximately 9 acres in the heart of Durango. It stocks fish throughout the Animas River watershed, from near the headwaters through the City of Durango.

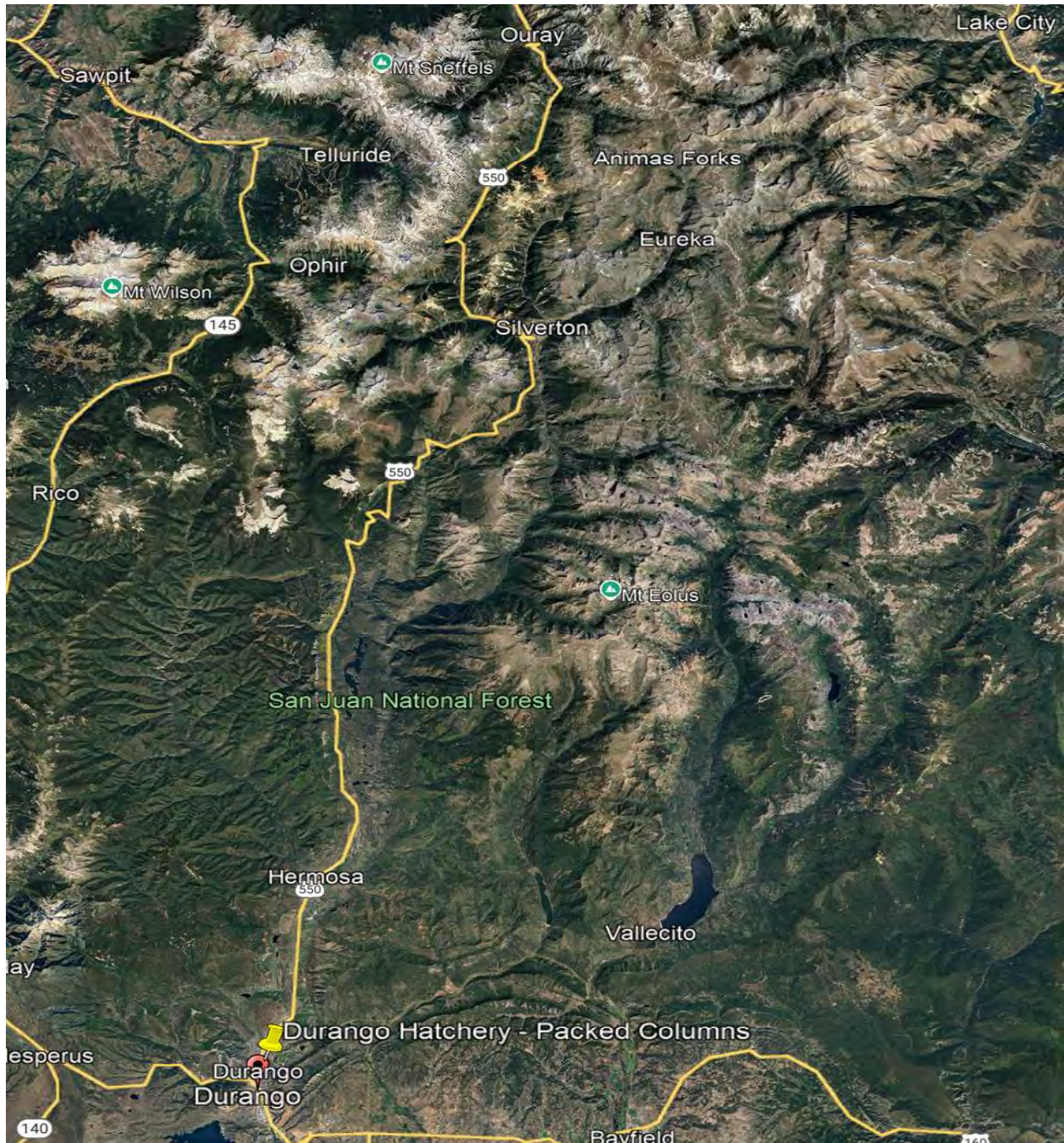


Figure 1: Map of Animas River basin.

b. Objectives: Provide clear, measurable, realistic, time-phased objective(s) for the work proposed.

The overall objectives of the project are to improve the quality of the water entering the fish hatchery for fish production, improving the health of the fish reared, and enabling the hatchery to produce increased numbers and healthier fish. The first objective will be to complete the 100% construction design plan sets and bid documents during early 2027. Contractor selection will occur by the end of 2027, and the majority of construction will be completed by the fall of 2028.

c. Operational Plan: Submit an operational plan that describes the proposal.

The anticipated construction sequence is presented below; however, the construction sequence will be further evaluated as the final design deliverables are developed. The major construction component of the project will involve hatchery water control and timing of the project. All fish will have to be removed from the hatchery building during construction. Once the fish have been removed and water control has taken place construction will be able to begin with the removal of the existing packed columns, then raising the current building 24 inches, and finally installing new equipment and water lines for completion of the project. The construction phase of the project will likely be completed in a 30 to 60 day time period.

Task 1: The packed column design will be completed by the CPW Capital Development Section, which includes project coordination and management throughout the project duration and final engineering plans.

Task 2: Includes the actual construction management of the project, including oversight of the bid process by the Department of Natural Resources and CPW Procurement Departments.

Task 3: Construction of packed column building and water treatment equipment, with oversight from CPW Capital Development Section. Includes project closeout, as-built drawings, equipment training for users, and final inspections.

Task 4: Maintenance of the new packed columns will be provided by CPW - Durango State Fish Hatchery staff.

ii. Describe with whom the Offeror will collaborate to accomplish the scope of work. Provide letters of support from those entities and any other letters of support as an appendix to the proposal.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Capital Development Section is collaborating with InnovaSea Systems, Inc. to produce the design for the new packed column system.

iii. Describe the type and name(s) of donors and what they are contributing in the equivalent dollar amount of match if in-kind or actual dollar amount of cash.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife will provide \$175,000 in cash along with other non-matching contributions for project management, project design, and construction management of \$72,000 for a total of \$247,000.

iv. Provide construction designs and drawings, if applicable, maps of proposed restoration location(s), and a schedule and or timeline for the completion of major project components.

Project design drawings and maps are attached in appendix f at the end of this document. Pre-construction monitoring will begin in July 2027. The project assessment that will support the final design will begin in early 2027 with construction proposed as early as late 2027. All project components will be completed by late 2028.

v. Describe the operation, maintenance and monitoring (OMM) requirements and the entity(ies) accepting those responsibilities for the duration of the project and a minimum of 10 years thereafter, if applicable. Describe the plans or methods and schedule for how the project will be monitored to evaluate whether it successfully achieves the restoration objectives. Describe the 6 and 12-month warranty inspections which are required following substantial completion of the proposed project. Detail the funding source, cost, and entity responsible for conducting the long-term operation, maintenance and monitoring. This shall include an Annual Report documenting the OMM.

CPW will accept ultimate responsibility for overseeing the construction and long-term maintenance and monitoring associated with the proposed improvements. The Durango State Fish Hatchery will be responsible for daily operations, maintenance, and monitoring of the packed columns. The packed columns will be in operation at all times after completion, with hatchery employees trained to identify issues and repair and maintain the system at all times, including cleaning, operating, and all required daily, weekly, monthly and annual maintenance. To evaluate whether the project is a success, the hatchery will compare prior fish health, egg condition, and stocking compared to post project completion. Warranty inspections will be conducted on an ongoing basis, best described by equipment failure. The funding source for the OMM and utility costs will be the Durango Hatchery operations budget. Costs are unknown at this time, however should only be utilities and labor for maintenance.

vi. Permits/Approvals/Certifications: Describe all permits, licenses, approvals, professional engineer's stamps of engineering design, and as-built documents that will

be required to complete the project and describe the current status/progress towards obtaining these permits/approvals.

No permits are required for this project. CPW's Capital Development Section will design and complete all as-built documents.

vii. Project Schedule: Provide a timeline that identifies project phases, milestones, midpoint, and pre-final inspections.

Design will start early 2027, review mid 2027, pre-bid meetings with prospective contractors mid-2027, bids open and close mid-2027. Contractor selection and construction starts as early as September 2027, completed with final inspection by November 2028. Pre-final inspections will be conducted weekly throughout the project.

viii. Monthly Invoice and Status Report: Describe which activities in the operational plan will be tracked, how they will be counted, and how they will be reported in the monthly invoice.

Track all tasks weekly and provide monthly invoices of work completed during that time period.

ix. Project Documentation and Deliverables: Provide a list of documentation and deliverables that will be supplied for the proposed project and throughout the duration of the project, including the OMM phase.

During the design phase of the project, CPW anticipates the following documents and deliverables will be supplied: Drawings, technical specifications, any modeling analyses performed and associated files, design report, and final project cost estimates. A document outlining the recommended inspection activities, recommended maintenance activities and frequency of inspection and maintenance activities will be provided. Construction bidding results and evidence of project award can also be provided, if necessary. Annual status reports will be prepared documenting the operation with respect to the accomplishment and describing the deliverables, including design, construction, and operation of the packed columns. We will report on the monitoring of fish health, egg quality, and stocking.

3.0 Budget Spreadsheet

Tasks	NRD Fund Request	Non-Match Contributions Requested	Total Project Costs
Project Management	\$0	\$16,000	\$16,000
Site Assessment	\$0	\$0	\$0
Permitting	\$0	\$0	\$0
Design	\$0	\$40,000	\$40,000
Construction Management	\$0	\$16,000	\$16,000
Construction	\$350,000	\$175,000	\$525,000
Budget Totals	\$350,000	\$247,000	\$597,000

4.0 Public Communications Strategy

The Durango State Fish Hatchery has been in operation since 1903 and has a good following of visitors annually. With that, the hatchery receives approximately 50,000 visitors annually. The hatchery provides numerous educational tours annually for schools (K-12), organizations (e.g., Trout Unlimited, Boy and Girl Scouts, etc.), and local colleges (e.g., Fort Lewis). We plan to use and build on this already established network to communicate our interests in this project. We will also use CPW's social media network and news releases to communicate information regarding this project.

5.0 Relationship to Ranking Criteria

a. Likelihood of Success: The level of expected return of natural resources and natural resource services. Proposed project restoration goals should be clear and measurable. The proposal should describe the capability of individuals or organizations expected to implement the project, and their ability to correct any problems that arise during the course of the proposed project. The project must also be technically feasible and procedurally sound.

This project has a high likelihood of success. The new packed column system will be designed to handle a full range of expected water flows and conditions and will provide a stable, long-term solution to improved water quality for the hatchery. CPW's Capital Development Team will provide project management for construction. The project restoration goals will be monitored and measured as presented in previous sections.

b. Multiple Natural Resource Benefits: The extent to which a proposed project benefits more than one natural resource or natural resource service.

The proposed project will provide benefits to the water quality, recreation, and conservation to help restore native fish to the Animas River basin, improve recreational fishing in areas of degraded habitat through improved and additional stocking and will be a benefit to the public, anglers, guides, outfitters, and the economy.

d. Long-term Project Benefits: The expected sustainability and duration of benefits from the proposed project.

This project will improve water quality for many years to come. With proper maintenance and care this project will be sustainable for numerous years with improved water quality. For example, managing and monitoring for nitrogen and carbon dioxide will have a wider impact on the quality of water leaving the hatchery and as a result enhance ecosystem health. Conservation of Colorado's native Cutthroat trout and recreational opportunities will be improved through better water quality.

e. Project Alignment with Regional Planning: Proposals should be aligned with existing land and resource management plans such that they can be incorporated into a holistic land and natural resource management plan.

Resource management plans exist in the Animas River basin including the City of Durango, La Plata County, and San Juan County. These plans align with this project as they have goals to maintain, restore, and/or improve habitat, fish and wildlife populations, ecosystem health, ecological processes, biodiversity, and recreation.

f. Protection of Implemented Project: Considers the opportunities to protect the implemented project and the resulting benefits over time. Project proposals involving fee title acquisition of property for open space should identify the fee title owner and include a commitment to grant a conservation easement or other

mechanism allowing the Trustees to ensure that the acquisition provides continued natural resource benefits. If a conservation easement is proposed, the project proponent must identify the easement holder and provide a draft of the conservation easement prior to closing on the easement. Project proposals that afford long-term protection will be given preference.

Property acquisition is not necessary to protect the improvements associated with this project. CPW owns the property where the project will take place. All of the work lies at the Durango Fish Hatchery and is intended to improve water quality for the rearing of fish that will be stocked into waters of the Animas River basin.

g. Project Benefit versus Expected Cost: Considers the time it takes for benefits to be provided to the target ecosystem or public, versus the expected costs of the project.

The benefits of this project will be realized within a few months after construction is complete. Once water is turned back on in the hatchery, fish eggs will be brought into the hatchery for hatching and rearing. Fish will be stocked into the lakes and streams starting in April of that year. The cost of this project is minimal considering the number of years the project will last.

h. Non-NRDs Match: A minimum of 50% match of the total amount of requested NRD funds is preferred. Match may consist of cash from non-NRD sources or in-kind services. Some degree of cash match is preferable. Points will be awarded based on the percentage of the cash match. For example, if a proponent asks for \$1,000,000.00 for a project, it preferably would provide a match of \$500,000.00. The match must be described in the proponent's proposal. At least half of the match should be for NRD-related work (e.g., construction type work that directly supports the project and is the same type of work that was funded by the Trustees) and the other half may be "non-NRD match" (e.g., work that complements the project, such as project planning or design).

CPW is committed to this project and is prepared to fund the 50% match from the Large Capital projects funds, but may be contingent on statewide priorities. Other non-matching contributions that will be funded is all of the project planning, design, and management of the project of approximately \$72,000.

i. Multiple Partners: Considers the number of partners contributing funds or services, as well as the degree to which these partners collaborate with the project proponents on planning and implementing the project.

This project does not require partners, however, CPW is working with InnovaSea Systems Inc. to help design the packed columns for the best possible results.

j. Monitoring: Considers the ability to monitor and evaluate the success of the project and to correct any problems that arise during the course of the project.

CPW will have a capital development engineer on site along with the hatchery manager to monitor and evaluate the success and the ability to make changes to correct problems that arise during the course of the project.

k. Disproportionately Impacted Community: Some communities in Colorado have an increased risk of exposure to human health and environmental harms. Many of these communities are home to people of color and low-income families. Points will be awarded to projects within these communities as identified on CDPHE's online Enviroscreen tool. See <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/enviroscreen>

The Enviroscreen tool score for the Durango Fish Hatchery is 33.52, however, communities around and within the City of Durango area have much higher scores up to 60. The Durango Fish Hatchery stocks fish only in public accessible waters in both San Juan and La Plata Counties. Durango Fish Hatchery improvements and fish stocking can benefit all communities by improving fish populations.

Appendices

a. Description of the Offeror's Organization:

The mission of Colorado Parks and Wildlife is to perpetuate the wildlife resources of the state, to provide a quality state park system, and to provide enjoyable and sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities that educate and inspire current and future generations to serve as active stewards of Colorado's resources.

CPW is a nationally recognized leader in conservation, outdoor recreation, and wildlife management. The agency manages 42 state parks, all of Colorado's wildlife, more than 350 state wildlife areas, 18 state fish hatcheries and numerous recreational programs. CPW issues hunting and fishing licenses, conducts research to improve wildlife management activities, protects high priority habitat through acquisitions and partnerships, provides technical assistance to private and public landowners concerning wildlife and habitat management and develops programs to understand, protect, and recover threatened and endangered species.

CPW administers the state's trails programs, registers boats, snowmobiles, off-highway vehicles, and river outfitters. Colorado Parks and Wildlife employees and their partners work together to provide ongoing and outstanding customer service through recreational programs, amenities, and services. Regulations are established by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission.

CPW is an enterprise agency, relying on license sales, state parks fees, and registration fees to support its operations, including: 42 state parks and more than 350 state wildlife areas covering approximately 900,000 acres, and 18 state fish hatcheries, management of fishing and hunting, wildlife watching, camping, motorized and non-motorized trails, boating, and outdoor education. CPW's work contributes approximately \$6 billion in total economic impact annually throughout Colorado.

b. Offeror agencies, organizations, and individuals must meet the following standards of responsibility:

i. Statement of Capability:

As a state agency CPW has adequate resources necessary to implement and manage a project of this scope including in-house engineering, water resources, biologists, and administrative staff. CPW will be required to comply with all state fiscal and procurement rules. However, that would not preclude the agency from receiving this grant.

ii. **Qualifications:**

CPW has designed, reviewed, and implemented numerous packed column and hatchery water treatment systems at all of the 18 fish hatcheries. Currently there is another similar project being designed for the Mount Ouray Hatchery near Salida.

C. Full Budget Table

		Durango Fish Hatchery Packed Columns-Water Treatment					
				Budget Spreadsheet			
						Eligible for NRD	
Item No.	Qty	Contractor Furnished Goods and Services			Item Cost	Grant Use	
1	1	Mobilization, Bonds, Insurance, Etc.			\$52,500.00	Yes	
2	1	Dewatering			\$15,000.00	Yes	
3	1	Materials			\$215,625.00	Yes	
4	1	Construction			\$215,625.00	Yes	
5	1	Contingency			\$26,250.00	Yes	
6	1	CPW - Design, Project and Construction Management			\$72,000.00	No	
		Total Eligible for NRD Use			\$525,000.00		
		Total Other Non-Matching Funds			\$72,000.00		
		Total NRD Grant Request			\$350,000.00		
		Total Matching Funds - CPW			\$175,000.00		
		Total Project Funds			\$597,000.00		

d. Application/Assurances: If applicable, provide proof of organizational status. If the offeror claims non-profit tax-exempt status under section 501 (c)(3) of the IRS code, then the offeror shall submit proof of status.

State of Colorado

DR 0160 (02/18/11)
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
DENVER CO 80261-0012

CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION FOR STATE SALES/USE TAX ONLY

**THIS LICENSE IS
NOT TRANSFERABLE**

USE ACCOUNT NUMBER for all references	LIABILITY INFORMATION	ISSUE DATE
09802565	G 010180	Feb 10 2023



STATE OF COLORADO/ OFFICE OF STATE
CONTROLLER
1800 N GRANT ST STE 200
DENVER CO 80203-1125

Executive Director
Department of Revenue

e. Letters of Support:



Board of County Commissioners,
Marsha Porter-Norton, Chair
Matt Salka, Vice Chair
Clyde Church, Commissioner

1101 East 2nd Ave
Durango, CO 81301
(970)382-6219

May 27, 2025

Mark Rudolph
Bonita Peak Mining District NRD Project Manager
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division
4300 Cherry Creek Drive South
Denver, CO 80246-1530

Re: Support for Bonita Peak Mining District Natural Resource Damages Trust Fund Local Workgroup Project Proposal

Dear Mr. Rudolph:

On August 5, 2015, approximately three million gallons of acid mine drainage (also referred to as the Gold King Mine spill) was accidentally released into Cement Creek in San Juan County, Colorado, contaminating the Animas, San Juan and Colorado Rivers as it traveled through Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and the Southern Ute, Ute Mountain Ute and Navajo reservations.

The ensuing environmental, economic and cultural impacts on downstream communities, businesses and state, tribal and local governments were significant. The establishment of the Bonita Peak Mining District Natural Resource Damages Trust Fund (NRD Trust Fund) is an important element of the wide-ranging response to the incident and the historic mining activity that has contaminated soil, groundwater and surface water with heavy metals.

The local workgroup that convened to identify and propose projects for NRD Trust Fund dollars has established a list of endeavors that focus on habitat restoration, ecosystem preservation, and community access for recreational use. The work group has reviewed the proposed projects to ensure they comply with the criteria provided, provide long-term benefits to both the environment and the community, and represent a community-supported, watershed-wide effort.

We offer strong support for funding the five projects the workgroup proposes for NRD Trust Fund dollars, as follows:

- Upper Animas Stream and Wetland Restoration for Mill, Mineral, Placer and South Mineral creeks
- The Animas River Corridor Project, restoring damaged resources affected by legacy mining and expanding recreational access
- Durango Fish Hatchery Packed Columns Water Treatment Project to rebuild the water treatment system at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife state fish hatchery

- Animas River Bank Stabilization Project to restore up to 3.7 miles of bank restoration and stabilization on the north end of the City of Durango.
- San Juan County & Town of Silverton Animas River Preservation and Access Project to preserve riparian areas and provide access to the river corridors for recreational opportunities.

Taken together, these projects address habitat restoration, ecosystem preservation and community recreational in the Upper Animas River watershed, spanning two counties from the headwaters to the southernmost reaches of Southwest Colorado. The collective impact of these projects will serve to improve and restore critical resources affected by historic mining activities, culminating in the Gold King Mine Spill in 2015. We offer our full support for these projects and encourage an award of NRD Trust Fund resources for their completion.

Sincerely,

LA PLATA COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Marsha Porter-Norton
Chair


Matt Salka
Vice Chair


Clyde Church
Commissioner



Chris Chambers – Southwest Colorado Project Manager
205 Weston Drive Durango, CO 81301
chris.chambers@tu.org – (828) 361-7814

April 16, 2025

Mark Rudolph
BPMD NRD Project Manager
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Hazardous
Materials and Waste Management Division
4300 Cherry Creek Drive South
Denver, CO 80246-1530

Dear Mr. Rudolph,

I am writing to express Trout Unlimited's (TU) support for the Bonita Peak Mining District Natural Resource Damages Trust Fund stakeholder group's project proposals. The stakeholder's group has met monthly since the Solicitation for Project Proposals was received in March 2024. The meetings have resulted in a community-supported, watershed-wide list of projects intended to address recent and historic hazardous substance releases from the Bonita Peak Mining District. The proposed projects will restore the natural resources injured from the legacy of mining-related impacts in the upper Animas watershed.

As one of the leading cold-water conservation organizations, TU strives to protect, restore, reconnect, and sustain our nation's waterways. Since TU was founded in 1959, on-the-ground restoration of streams, watersheds, and fisheries has been our hallmark. TU has completed over 30 reclamation and restoration projects across Colorado since 2012 that focus on water quality improvement, non-point source contamination reduction, stream restoration, and revegetation of degraded landscapes.

TU respectfully requests the approval of this proposal to amplify this community effort and restore the natural and cultural heritage of Southwest Colorado's Animas River Basin. In addition, it is worth noting that the stakeholder's group has support from national and local non-profits that will help ensure a collaborative approach to projects. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Best Regards,

Chris Chambers

Trout Unlimited: America's Leading Coldwater Fisheries Conservation Organization
www.tu.org



THE SOUTHWESTERN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Developing and Conserving the Waters in the
SAN JUAN AND DOLORES RIVERS AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES
West Building – 841 East Second Avenue
DURANGO, COLORADO 81301
(970) 247-1302

05-08-2025

Mark Rudolph
Bonita Peak Mining District NRD Project Manager
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division
4300 Cherry Creek Drive South
mark.rudolph@state.co.us

Re: Bonitia Peak Mining District NRD Solicitation for Project Proposals – Letter of Support

Dear Mark Rudolph,

I am expressing my strong support for the projects submitted by the local workgroup for funding to support mining reclamation projects in the Animas River Basin in Colorado through the Bonita Peak Mining District Natural Resources Damage Funds (NRD).

At the Southwestern Water Conservation District, I have been participating in their meetings and following their collaborative efforts throughout the region. I am deeply impressed by the NRD workgroup participants' commitment to environmental stewardship and their dedication to support these mining mitigation and reclamation projects.

Established by legislative action in 1941, the Southwestern Water Conservation District (SWCD) was created to protect, conserve, and manage the waters of the San Juan and Dolores River Basins. The collaborative and far-reaching nature of these projects reflects SWCD's ongoing mission to support regional water users and safeguard the water resources of the San Juan River Basin.

We are excited by the opportunities these settlement funds are providing southwestern Colorado, they will provide significant opportunity for the Animas Watershed. Thank you for considering this worthy proposal.

Sincerely,

Monika Rock

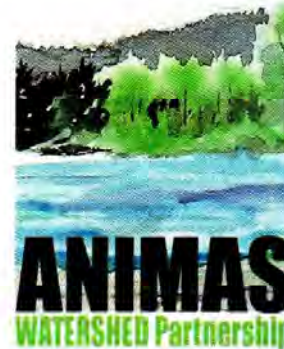
Monika Rock

Programs Coordinator

May 14, 2025

Mark Rudolph
Bonita Peak Mining District NRD Project Manager
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division
4300 Cherry Creek Drive South
mark.rudolph@state.co.us

Re: Bonita Peak Mining District NRD Solicitation for Project Proposals
Letter of Support



Dear Mark Rudolph,

On behalf of the Animas Watershed Partnership (AWP), I am expressing my strong support for the projects submitted by the local workgroup for funding to support mining reclamation projects in the Animas River Basin in Colorado through the Bonita Peak Mining District Natural Resources Damage Funds (NRD).

AWP's mission is to *protect and improve the quality of water resources to benefit the Animas River, now and into the future*. As a participation of the NRD workgroup, AWP is deeply impressed by the NRD workgroup participants' commitment to environmental stewardship and their dedication to support these mining mitigation and reclamation projects.

While we are supportive of all proposed projects, the Animas Valley River Bank Stabilization project is of critical importance to AWP and furthering our mission. This project will reduce the loss of conservation easement-protected agricultural land and wildlife habitat to erosion, improve the ecological health of the Animas River and its water quality, and make this stretch of river more resilient to flood events. These impacts will benefit the general public, not just the landowners whose properties are selected for stabilization work under this proposal. By establishing gentler bank slopes, installing wetland bench buffer zones, installing log and rock structures to direct forces towards the channel center, and restoring impacted areas with native plantings, the proposed project presents a comprehensive solution to the high sediment loads and increased rates of erosion resulting from upstream mining activities.

San Juan Resource Conservation and Development Council is the fiscal agent for AWP and is applying on behalf of AWP for this project. The project's improvements to an injured resource, as outlined in their grant application, demonstrate a thorough understanding of the challenges involved and a commitment to implementing effective and sustainable solutions.

These settlement funds provide a significant opportunity for our watershed, as they will support restoration projects for water resources impacted by mining activities. We are excited by the opportunities these settlement funds are providing southwestern Colorado. Thank you for considering this worthy proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carrie Padgett'.

Carrie Padgett
Animas Watershed Partnership Chair



Town of Silverton
1360 Greene Street
P.O. Box 250
Silverton, CO 81433
Phone: 970-387-5522
Email: townadministrator@silverton.co.us

May 12, 2025

To the Trustees of the Natural Resources Damages Fund:

On behalf of the Town of Silverton, I write to express our full support for the suite of regional projects proposed by the **Natural Resources Damages (NRD) Regional Work Group** in response to the legacy mining impacts associated with the Bonita Peak Mining District Superfund Site.

These projects are the product of a broad and sustained collaboration between counties, municipalities, non-profits, landowners, and conservation groups across the region. They reflect years of coordinated planning, relationship-building, and community engagement, with a shared goal of addressing the long-term damages to our watershed and enhancing the Animas River Corridor for ecological, recreational, and public benefit.

As a community at the epicenter of historical mining activity, the Town of Silverton has seen firsthand the impacts to our natural resources and our quality of life. The regional projects advanced by the NRD Work Group not only address critical restoration needs, but also support enhanced access, conservation, and recreation for both residents and visitors. These projects embody the spirit of environmental stewardship, partnership, and local commitment, and we believe they represent highly appropriate and effective uses of NRD funding.

The Town of Silverton supports the regional partnerships behind these efforts and strongly encourages the Trustees to fund the proposed projects. We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in this process and look forward to continued collaboration in restoring and revitalizing our shared watershed.

Sincerely,
Dayna Kranker
Mayor
Town of Silverton, Colorado

P.O. Box 250 • 1360 Greene Street • Silverton, CO 81433
970-387-5522
colorado.gov/townofsilverton



Mike Wight, Southwest Program Officer
mwight@goco.org, (720)-576-4062

May 13th, 2025

Mark Rudolph
BPMD NRD Project Manager
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Hazardous
Materials and Waste Management Division
4300 Cherry Creek Drive South
Denver, CO 80246-1530

Dear Mr. Rudolph,

I am writing to express Great Outdoors Colorado's (GOCO) support for the Bonita Peak Mining District Natural Resource Damages Trust Fund stakeholder group's project proposals. Ongoing stakeholder meetings have resulted in a community-supported, watershed-wide list of projects intended to address recent and historic hazardous substance releases from the Bonita Peak Mining District. The proposed projects will restore the natural resources injured from the legacy of mining-related impacts in the upper Animas watershed.

GOCO was created by a voter approved constitutional amendment in 1992 to distribute a portion of state lottery proceeds to preserve and enhance the state's parks, trails, wildlife, rivers, and open spaces. Since our inception, GOCO has distributed over \$1.4 billion in support of 5,800 projects across all of Colorado's 64 counties.

The five projects identified by the NRD stakeholder group in this proposal represent a collaboratively developed suite of timely efforts which together will positively impact public access and recreation, improve wildlife habitat, restore degraded stream banks, and improve water quality throughout the Animas River basin in Colorado. The selected projects showcase clear alignment with GOCO's values of Resource Conservation, Outdoor Stewardship, Community Vitality, and Equitable Access. The benefits to residents, visitors, wildlife, and natural resources include improved river function, increased public access for outdoor recreation, positive contributions to the tourism economy and improved resiliency of wildlife and habitat in Southwest Colorado.

The NRD stakeholder group is a diverse, community-led collaborative displaying leadership in project planning and implementation with a strong track record of success in watershed management and recreation development. GOCO applauds this effort and respectfully requests approval of this NRD proposal. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely, *Mike Wight*

1900 Grant St. | Ste. 725 | Denver, CO 80203 | 303-226-4500 | GOCO.org

f. Construction Drawings

