

WaterSMART: Cooperative Watershed Management Program

Application for:

San Juan - Chama Watershed Partnership

Enhancing the capacity of the San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership: a group of diverse water users, land owners, and managers coming together to promote responsible land management.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chama Peak Land Alliance PO Box 5701 Pagosa Springs, CO 81147 Nov. 11, 2019

The Chama Peak Land Alliance respectfully requests \$100,000 over the two-year project timeline from the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program to further the capacity of the San Juan - Chama Watershed Partnership. The Partnership intends to do such through establishing a legal entity such as 501(c)3 status, expanding outreach activities by supporting and expanding our yearly Rio Chama Congreso event, enhancing our initiatives to reach out to landowners within priority project areas and from underrepresented groups, strategically expanding the membership of the Partnership to be more inclusive of currently unrepresented agencies, organizations and individuals, and to engage and coordinate activities with adjacent watershed partnerships, neighbor organizations and initiatives, the 2-3-2 Cohesive Strategy Partnership, and local youth and young adult education initiatives in the region. Founded in January 2014, the San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership is a community-based partnership of stakeholders in the Rio Chama watershed in Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico, and three smaller basins of the San Juan River headwaters in Southern Colorado where water is diverted and transported via an underground tunnel under the Continental Divide to the Rio Chama. The Partnership seeks to increase the resiliency and ecosystem health of the watersheds in its region and is working to protect New Mexico's source waters and the communities that rely on them.

Assuming grant funds are awarded April 1, 2020, the Partnership intends to complete this two-year project by April 1, 2022.

BACKGROUND DATA

Watershed Description

The San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership region contains the entirety of the Rio Chama Basin and the three sub-watershed tributaries to the San Juan River on which the Bureau of Reclamation's San Juan – Chama Project's diversions are located: the Navajo River, the Little Navajo River, and the Rio Blanco. The rivers that make up the Partnership's region are snowpack driven and receive bi-modal precipitation in the form of winter snows and summer monsoons. The region ranges in elevation from 6,000 to 13,000 feet. Figure 1 shows the San Juan – Chama Watershed's region.

The land ownership of the San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership region encompasses 2.13 million acres owned by various Federal and State entities including the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), United State Forest Service, NM State Game & Fish Department, NM State Parks, and private lands (Figure 1). Privately owned land and ranches are primarily located in and around the larger towns of Chama, Tierra Amarilla, and Abiquiu, as well as points east including El Rito, Ojo Caliente in Taos County, and land adjacent to Chromo, CO. The San Juan –

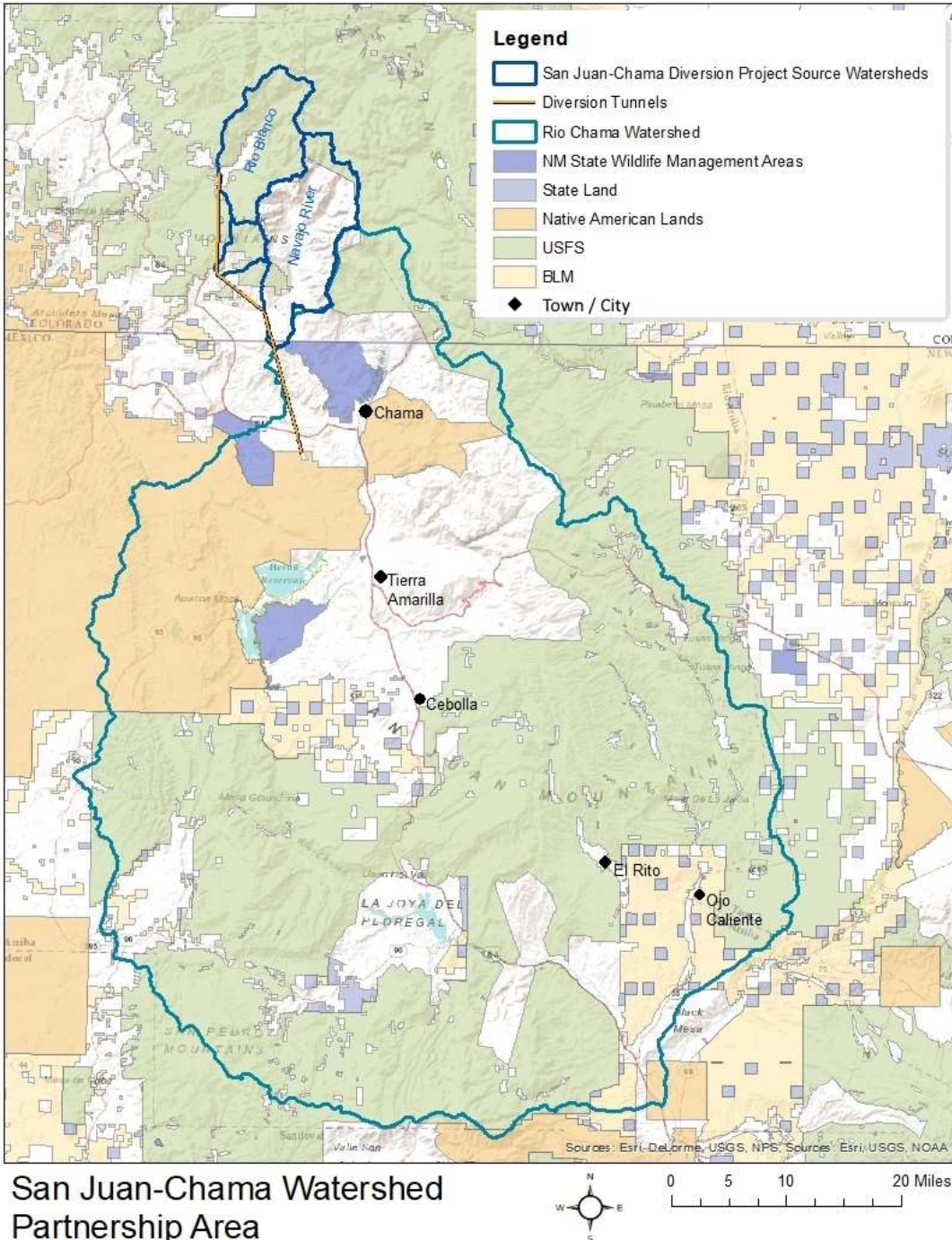


Figure 1. Map of San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership region.

Rio Chama Watershed is ecologically diverse, intact, and wild. The region is home to recently re-introduced lynx populations, big horn sheep, native Colorado River and Rio Grande Cutthroat trout, silvery minnow, southwestern willow flycatcher, boreal toads, globally rare plant species and vegetative communities, and large populations of black bear, lion, turkey, grouse, deer, and elk. There are diverse mixes of riparian vegetation, terrestrial species, and aquatic organisms because of the range of elevations present in the basin. Terrestrial habitats in the watershed include foothills, mountains, sub-alpine,

and alpine tundra; and vegetation includes aspen, spruce-fir, mixed conifer forest, ponderosa pine forests, pinyon-juniper woodlands, and tundra meadows.

Water Supply

The San Juan-Rio Chama Watershed is a unique watershed that includes areas from two separate HUC 8 watersheds due to the Bureau of Reclamation's San Juan-Chama Diversion Project. It is important that the San Juan and Rio Chama lands be managed cooperatively since these headwaters all flow downstream to large metro-area water users in Santa Fe and Albuquerque.

The Bureau of Reclamation's San Juan-Chama Diversion Project is a conduit system that includes two storage dams, two reservoirs, three diversion dams (Blanco, Little Oso, and Oso on the San Juan River tributaries: Rio Blanco, Little Navajo, and Navajo Rivers), six carriage facilities, five tunnels, and the Azotea Creek and Willow Creek Conveyance Channels. The diversion dams located on the tributaries divert water through the Continental Divide to Heron Dam and Reservoir through a series of carriage facilities made up of tunnels, siphons, and conveyance channels. Releases from Heron Reservoir pass through the Middle Rio Grande Project's El Vado Reservoir into the Rio Chama and eventually joins the Rio Grande north of Espanola, NMNM (Glaser 2010). The remaining waters are sourced from the Rio Chama Watershed. These tributaries and the mainstem Rio Chama encompass a drainage that is over 500,000 acres in size. Primary tributaries of the Rio Chama include Archuleta Creek, Rio Brazos, Little Willow Creek, Chavez Creek, Willow Creek, Horse Lake Creek, Rito de Tierra Amarilla, Rio Puerco, and Canjilon Creek.

The San Juan – Chama Diversion Project delivers approximately 50% of Santa Fe's City and County potable water, 90% of Bernalillo County's water, and 40% of Albuquerque's municipal water supply while also providing water for industrial uses, irrigation, and fish and wildlife benefits. These uses service approximately one third of New Mexico's population.

Water Rights

Within the watershed area there are federal, state, municipal, private, and acequia association water rights, some dating back to the 17th century through the Spanish Land Grant system. Much of the watershed region is in the Tierra Amarilla, San Joaquin del Rio de Chama, and Piedra Lumbre Land Grants. Acequia water users, such as Acequia Norteños, the Rio Chama Acequia Association, and the Echler Ditch Association hold water rights in the region, however, the watershed area is largely managed by the Bureau of Reclamation and its clients: The Albuquerque Water Utility Authority and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. The goal of the San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership is not to alter water rights ownership, but to encourage best practices and technologies that could lead to more efficient and effective water use by promoting collaboration across the watershed.

Current Water Uses

A majority of water use in the San Juan-Rio Chama Watershed is devoted to agriculture

(either irrigation or livestock grazing) and diversion/storage for municipal uses for downstream users. Other water uses include recreation, wastewater treatment, some commercial/industrial use, and residential use. Because such a large proportion of water is used for agriculture and municipal use, the Partnership's primary concerns lie with improving agricultural practices (grazing management and farming technologies) and ensuring activities and events that occur within headwater areas do not contaminate the water supply for downstream users (e.g. catastrophic fire, poor land management practices, etc.).

Water Quantity, Climate Change & Drought

With ongoing drought and climate change, water quantity is a perpetual concern for all who reside within the San Juan- Chama Watershed. Research by climatologist Dr. Dave Gutzler of the University of New Mexico indicates that the impact of climate change on the Southwestern United States, and New Mexico in particular, will be severe. According to Dr. Gutzler, "warmer temperatures will lead to higher rates of water consumption, reduced snowpack, less and earlier spring runoff, more evaporation from open water, and drier soil conditions. Each of these changes acts to diminish streamflow and exacerbate drought." Dr. Gutzler suggests that a continued downward trend in precipitation coupled with rising average temperatures may result in a "permanent megadrought" throughout the Southwestern United States (Gutzler)¹. These challenges will require difficult decisions and proactive management under constant drought conditions.

Additional water quantity issues include efficiency and conservation, ecological resiliency, water flow and water yield.

Water Quality

The Rio Chama Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS) developed in 2005 listed multiple water quality issues that exist within the Rio Chama watershed including:

- Channelization of streams and subsequent erosion.
- Low dissolved oxygen levels.
- Dumpsites that may affect water quality through leaching into streams.
- Erosion impacts from off-highway vehicle use (OHV) and dispersed recreational impacts from campers and day users.
- Higher than acceptable fecal coliform levels.
- Fire danger due to buildup of fuels on forest lands.
- Invasive species and encroachment by brush with subsequent reduction in soil stability leading to potential erosion issues.
- Livestock management contributing to erosion and fecal contamination.
- Loss of riparian vegetation and habitat that leads to bank destabilization and increased stream temperatures.
- Noticeable levels of chronic aluminum.
- Potential impacts from upland development and septic tank seepage.
- Increased stream temperature and turbidity.
- Wastewater treatment facilities not being up to code. In 2014-15, CPLA worked

1 <http://www.gilaconservation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Gutzler.pdf>

with many partners to help retain \$8 million in funding to upgrade the Village of Chama's wastewater treatment plant. These upgrades completed in fall 2017 and have helped to significantly improve water quality downstream of the facility.

Additionally, the Water Quality Survey Summary for the Chama River and Select Tributaries (2011) found the following water quality issues within the Rio Chama Watershed:

- *Aluminum*: Available data exceeds the applicable criterion in the Rio Chama, Chamita, and Puerco de Chama.
- *E. coli*: Available data exceeds the applicable criterion in the Rio Capulin, Chama, Chamita, Puerco de Chama.
- *Nutrients*: Assessment of available data indicates nutrient enrichment in Rio Chama, Chamita, and Tusas.
- *Specific Conductance*: Available data exceeds the applicable criterion in Canjilon Creek.
- *Temperature*: Available water quality data exceeds the temperature criterion in Canjilon Creek, Rio Chama, Chamita, and Puerco de Chama.
- *Turbidity*: Available water quality data exceeds the historic segment-specific criterion of 25 NTU in Canjilon Creek, Rio Chama, and Rio Chamita. Benthic macro-invertebrate data were not available to confirm impairment on Canjilon Creek and Rio Chama (Rio Brazos to Little Willow Creek).

The study also identified six (6) impaired waterbodies within the San Juan-Rio Chama Watershed (see Figure 2):

- Rio Chamita (entire reach)
- Rio Chama (from NM/CO state line to El Vado Reservoir)
- Chavez Creek (entire reach)
- Rito de Tierra Amarilla (a majority of its lower reaches)
- Heron Reservoir (all)
- El Vado Reservoir (all)

In 2016 the Office of the State Engineer published the Rio Chama Water Plan and outlined additional water quality challenges in the region. See Figure 2 for more information.

Grazing Management

There are multiple large, privately-owned ranches, Native American lands, and Forest Service grazing allotments within the San Juan-Rio Chama Watershed where livestock is grazed on forested as well as open grasslands near waterbodies. Education and outreach to the agricultural community concerning grazing best management practices is a priority for the watershed.

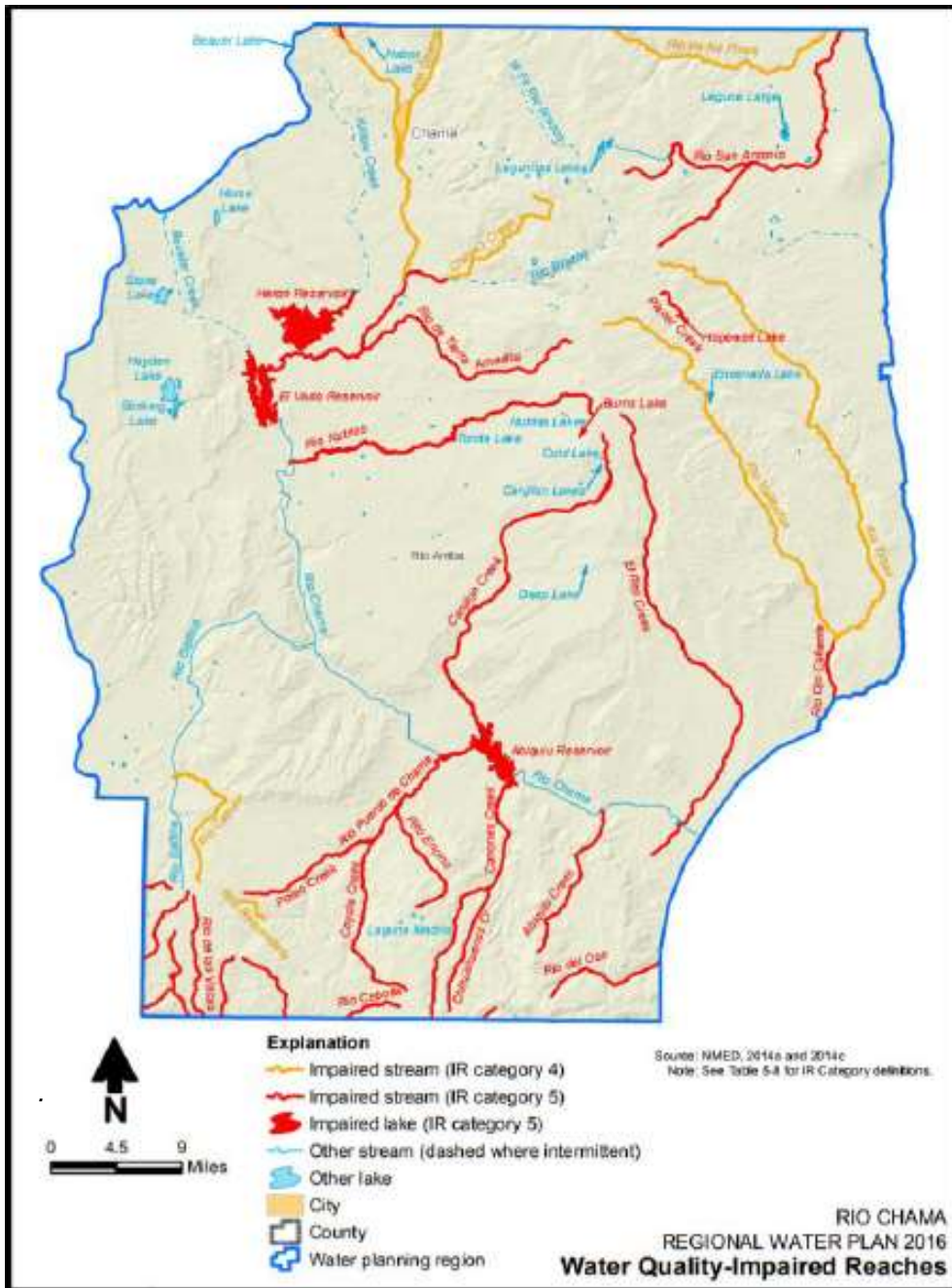


Figure 2. Water Quality-Impaired Reaching in the Rio Chama Watershed. From Rio Chama Regional Water Plan, NM Interstate Stream Commission

Fire Suppression and Uncharacteristic Wildfire Severity

With the goal of protecting timber resources and rural communities, U.S. federal fire policy focused on suppressing all fires on national forests for most of the 20th century. Unfortunately, this policy overlooked the ecological need for fire in North American

forests. Fire returns nutrients to soils, encourages growth of older fire-resistant trees, and promotes establishment of seedlings (Berry, 2007)².

The results of fire suppression within the region are evident. Basal areas are far above what is considered a “healthy” forest within the natural range of variation. These dense forests contain ladder fuels of shrubs and small diameter timber that can carry fire into the canopy, resulting in stand mortality over a large area, a condition that is uncharacteristic in severity and/or spatial extent.

In the new millennium, New Mexico has seen two of the largest wildfires in state history. The Las Conchas fire in 2011 near Los Alamos burned over 150,000 acres and at the time was the largest wildfire in state history. The following year (2012) the Whitewater Baldy Complex Fire in Catron County/Gila National Forest burned more than 297,845 acres, displacing the Las Conchas fire as the largest wildfire in New Mexico state history.

Denuded slopes following wildfire can produce debris flows that significantly impair water quality impacting fish and other aquatic organisms, drinking water supplies, and wastewater treatment systems. These impacts are further exacerbated by activities resulting from pollutants mobilized by combustion during a wildfire, chemicals used to fight the fire, and the post-fire response of the landscape. Responses include both immediate and short-term responses as well as longer-term impacts over a decade or more. In addition, state and federal agencies spend hundreds of millions of dollars a year suppressing these fires and conducting post-fire rehabilitation, to say nothing of costs borne by local communities and residents. For example, the University of New Mexico estimates the full cost of the Las Conchas wildfire at between \$136 million and \$336 million.

Oil & Gas Development

Landowners in San Juan-Rio Chama Watershed understand that oil and gas development is important economically and to supply the nation’s energy needs. Some landowners welcome the financial benefits of development. Other landowners are deeply concerned about the risks development poses to water quality and other natural resources and quality of life in their community. Everyone agrees, however, that energy development should be handled thoughtfully to minimize risks and maximize benefits.

The San Juan-Chama Watershed Partnership focuses on issues related to surface and ground water pollution resulting in any oil and/or gas development that may occur in the watershed area. For example, roads and well pads associated with oil and gas development are sources of erosion and sediment deposition, which can severely impair the habitats of aquatic organisms (Matherne 2006)³. However, oil and gas development, when done properly, can mitigate many of these associated risks through best management practices and community engagement.

Forest Health: Wood Utilization

A high priority issue identified by the community is the overgrowth of headwater forests resulting from over a century of fire exclusion, leading to an increased threat of

catastrophic wildfire and resulting damage to watershed health and alteration of the hydrological cycle. Loss of vegetative cover results in higher evaporation, more runoff, and less water storage. Neither private landowners nor agencies in the region cannot afford to remove this unnatural accumulation of biomass on a large enough scale without an economic market for the material and are currently exploring woody biomass utilization opportunities to treat forests, increase watershed health, and create jobs. This challenge is shared across multiple watersheds in the southwest; consequently the San Juan-Chama Watershed Partnership seeks to work collaboratively with other watershed groups and partners through the 2- 3-2 Cohesive Strategy Partnership, a group which brings together watershed groups, agencies, and other partners across a wide region, to identify market solutions on an economically and logistically feasible scale.

Working Relationship with Reclamation

Employees of the Bureau of Reclamation have been involved in the San Juan-Chama Watershed Partnership (SJCWP) since its inception in January of 2014, and currently two BOR representatives are active on the Partnership's Advisory Committee. The Chama Peak Land Alliance ("CPLA") is the fiscal sponsor organization for the Watershed Partnership, and is a non-profit, 501c(3) whose membership consists of conservation minded landowners who represent the vast array of private lands in the region. CPLA currently partners with BOR to host a VISTA Volunteer who works directly on projects under the Partnership's guidance. Each week, elected officers of the Partnership, BOR employees, CPLA employees, and the VISTA volunteer participate in a conference call to coordinate the week's activities. This frequent communication over the last four years has resulted in several collaborative projects including planning and conducting the annual Rio Chama Congreso, conducting various monitoring activities, supporting outreach, hosting meetings, presenting at conferences, updating social media and web pages, and jointly keeping active committees and working groups engaged in Partnership initiatives. The San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership's area encompasses and stretches beyond the Chama Peak Land Alliance's geographic and jurisdictional scope. Although the CPLA fully supports the goals of the Watershed Partnership, all parties recognize the benefits of creating a separate non-profit entity for the Partnership allowing CPLA to remain focused on private lands in a specific geographic region, and SJCWP to focus on all lands and landscape scale activities

PROJECT LOCATION

The San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership's geographical scope is located within Archuleta County, CO and Rio Arriba County, NM. The Partnership works throughout the entire Rio Chama Watershed and three San Juan River headwater tributaries that contribute to the Bureau of Reclamation San Juan-Chama Diversion Project. The primary communities in the region are , Chromo, CO, Chama, NM, Tierra Amarilla, NM, Abiquiu, NM and El Rito, NM.. This includes all Hydrologic Unit Code ("HUC") 12 watersheds within the larger Rio Chama HUC8 identifier, 13020102. The Rio Chama Watershed is approximately 2,021,065 total acres in size.

The Partnership's region also consists of portions of HUC8 identifier 14080101 (San Juan portion that is diverted to Rio Chama 13020102 through the Bureau of Reclamation's Diversion Project). The San Juan headwaters diversion area is comprised of 9 HUC 12 watersheds (or portions thereof) and is approximately 115,000 acres. For simplicity we have organized these watersheds into three basins:

- **Navajo Basin**

- o HUC 140801010603 – Peterson Creek-Navajo River
- o HUC 140801010601 – East Fork Navajo River
- o HUC 140801010602 – West Fork Navajo River
- o Portion of HUC 140801010606 – Weisel Flat – Navajo River

- **Little Navajo Basin**

- o Portion of HUC 140801010604 – Little Navajo River

- **Blanco Basin**

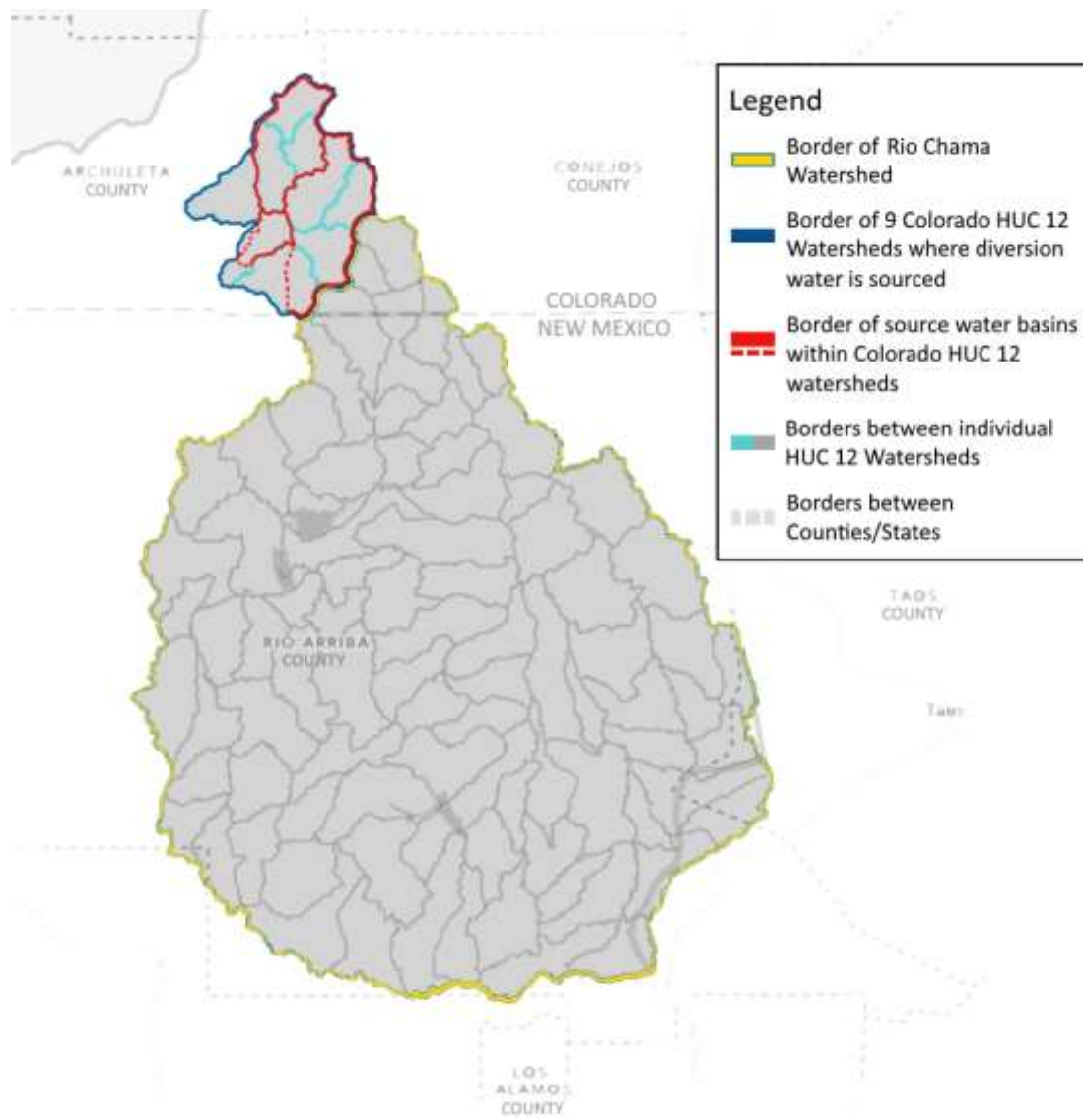
- o HUC 140801010303 – Upper Rio Blanco
- o Portion of HUC 140801010304 – Middle Rio Blanco
- o HUC 140801010302 – Headwaters Rio Blanco
- o HUC 140801010301 – Fish Creek

Please see Figure 3 for a map of the Project Location and the above referenced Hydrologic Units.

TECHNICAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Applicant Category

The San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership is seeking funding as an **Existing Watershed Group** via its fiscal sponsor, the Chama Peak Land Alliance. The Partnership itself has been operating without pursuing legal identity up to this point. The Watershed Partnership has existed since 2014 and has participated in hosting conferences, establishing mentoring opportunities, helping partners apply and occasionally receive large landscape scale grants for implementation, concentrated watershed restoration planning, and coordination among partners. In addition, there has been a solid focus on engaging initial partners, crafting organizational guidance documents, gathering stakeholder input regarding structure and mission, and seeking funding for organizational capacity.



San Juan (portion) and Rio Chama Watersheds Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) Map

Figure 3. Map of San Juan and Rio Chama Watersheds with Hydrologic Unit Code borders.

The San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership is a community-based partnership of stakeholders in the Rio Chama, and the three contributing San Juan River headwater basins in Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico. The Partnership seeks to increase the resiliency and ecosystem health of the watersheds in its region and is working to protect New Mexico’s source waters and the communities that rely on them. From the launch of the San Juan -- Chama Watershed Partnership in 2014 until 2017, Chama Peak Land Alliance served as the de facto executive director while searching for funding for a paid Coordinator position. In spring 2017, CPLA underwent a significant staff transition that provided an opportunity to change the leadership structure of the

SJCWP to focus on broader watershed partners and create a leadership structure that could function operationally. CPLA remains the fiscal agent for the Partnership. There is now a rotating chair of the Advisory Group that fills the leadership role until the organization evolves to support a coordinator/director. The chair position rotates every two years between members of the advisory board, which is to be composed of representatives from founding and other key partners. Members of the Partnership hold voting power to elect additional advisory board members as needed. Advisory Group members retain voting power on key decisions for the Partnership. This will provide a more sustainable and equitable structure that is less reliant on a single organization. Mary Stuever with New Mexico State Forestry is currently the chair for the Partnership. Angie Krall, with the U.S. Forest Service, will assume this position in July, 2020.

The Partnership's efforts have been further enhanced by Rio Grande Restoration through their previous Phase I WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program grant in the New Mexico portion of the region. Rather than create a new watershed organization for the Lower Rio Chama, the San Juan-Chama Watershed Partnership expanded to include the lower Chama River, which was the focus area of Rio Grande Restoration's effort. The Partnership seeks to continue this relationship by engaging in the Chama Flows Project Advisory Committee as significant stakeholders in the larger Watershed Partnership. The previous Phase I funding via Rio Grande Restoration allowed the development of Congreso, which has become a forum at which the expanded Partnership convenes diverse stakeholders and discusses topical issues annually. This current San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership CWMP proposal project will build upon the successes of the previous Rio Grande Restoration Phase I funding by increasing the capacity of the Partnership and bringing a broader array of stakeholders and expanded geographic scope, beyond just the Lower Rio Chama Basin.

In 2016 the Chama Peak Land Alliance, in partnership with the Bureau of Reclamation, received funding to hire three consecutive one year term San Juan – Watershed Partnership AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteers. While the Department of the Interior has many VISTA volunteers, the BOR/CPLA VISTA position is the only one within the Bureau of Reclamation. This volunteer position has been a large success for the region, as the VISTA has acted as a coordinating force between various organizations, communities, and partners. Now in the first year of a second three year VISTA funding agreement, the newest AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer has continued to follow in the footsteps of those that came before, while serving under a renewed mission to coordinate outreach and further develop links between the various stakeholders in the Partnership region, as well as focusing on bringing wildfire mitigation awareness to the public of the San Juan - Chama Watershed. While the Partnership continues to seek out fundraising opportunities, it is grateful for the help the VISTA provides towards creating a stronger, more effective organization.

More recently, the Chama Peak Land Alliance was the recipient of a Catalyst Fund Grant from the Network for Landscape Conservation, on behalf of the SJCWP. This grant of \$25,000 over two years serves to help in identifying priority issues and areas within our region, to identify landowners within priority landscapes and project areas,

and to establish contact with these landowners and provide technical support if they are interested in participating in landscape scale activities.

Multiple organizations in the Partnership region are being awarded funds for implementation projects, including \$3.5 million to the East Rio Arriba Soil and Water Conservation District for a Rural Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) project through NRCS, and the Navajo and Blanco Basins receiving an investment from Albuquerque Bernalillo Water Utility Authority in the sum of \$1 million for fuels reduction treatments, thanks to the Nature Conservancy's Rio Grande Water Fund. With significant dollars flowing into the region, it is critical that these projects be leveraged together and implemented in ways that bring about the greatest good for the region. The San Juan - Chama Watershed Partnership is poised to encourage collaboration between these various entities to line up projects and utilize each other to achieve the best application of these funds on the landscape.

Eligibility of Applicant

The CPLA is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization of conservation-minded landowners working collaboratively to practice and promote ecologically and economically sound land management in the southern San Juan Mountains of Colorado and northern New Mexico. CPLA is seeking to bolster the capacity of the San Juan-Chama Watershed Partnership so it may take on more of a coordinating and managing role in on-ground projects in the Partnership area.

The CPLA and the San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership represent individual organizations that both affect and are affected by the quality and quantity of water in the region. As an organization of landowners, the CPLA membership base is made up of people and businesses that rely on clean and plentiful water for their livelihoods. Conversely, because of the location and size of their land ownership, many of the partner members of the CPLA and the San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership positively impact the water quality and quantity that continues downstream, both in the Colorado and the Rio Grande Basins. The CPLA actively promotes the sustainable use of water resources through water conservation, good land stewardship that protects and enhances ecological resiliency, and the reduction of water conflicts.

The San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership is comprised of representatives of the affected stakeholders and engage a variety of partners to achieve our goals, such as, but not limited to:

- Private landowners, timber producers and cattle ranchers
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Environmental and conservation non-profits
- State wildlife and forestry agencies
- Federal land management agencies, including the Bureau of Reclamation
- Recreation and tourism industry, e.g. fly fishing and hunting outfitters
- Agricultural producers who rely on irrigation
- Tribal agencies and sovereign nations (Jicarilla Apache, Southern Ute)
- Local citizens and business owners

Goals

The overarching mission of the San Juan - Chama Watershed Partnership is to protect and enhance the watershed health and water supply conditions of the Rio Chama from headwaters to the confluence of the Rio Grande, and the tributaries (Navajo River, Little Navajo River, and Rio Blanco) that contribute to the New Mexico Bureau of Reclamation's San Juan – Chama Diversion Project. In pursuing this mission, the Partnership seeks to facilitate effective local cooperative and collaborative decision – making, implementation, and process around resource management issues, concerns and activities in our region. The Partnership strives to prepare for, raise awareness of, plan for, and take actions that, on a landscape level, promote sustainability of resources that honors and sustains economic, ecological and social systems. Finally, the Partnership endeavors to enhance regional economic viability and use of forest products.

Approach

As the fiscal agent, CPLA is seeking funds for the San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership for:

Task A: Watershed Group Development, specifically towards establishing a legal entity such as 501c(3) status for the San Juan Chama Watershed Partnership. Furthermore, funding would be used to hire a facilitator (contractor) for outreach activities and enhance the Partnership's current initiative in reaching landowners within project priority areas and underrepresented groups, in particular land grant, tribal heritage, and absentee landowners. Efforts will be made to expand membership to be more inclusive of currently unrepresented agencies, organizations, and individuals. Finally, the grant will provide resources to ensure effective Partnership collaboration, including expanding the annual Rio Chama Congreso event to cover additional topics and include time for action planning and prioritizing.

Task B: We will be relying on various plans of our partners who have already identified priority projects, but we will be interviewing watershed group members and stakeholders to gain ideas of projects that improve the watershed and working with watershed group members, landowners and land managers, and government agencies to determine where watershed improvement projects are being planned and implemented and how we can support those operations.

We have outlined our approach via our three main objectives for the grant:

Establishing a Legal Entity for the Partnership

When the Partnership was first established in 2014, the goal was to encourage better communication and cooperation among partners and support the work that partners were engaging in through increased opportunities to work together. In the past five years, many projects and successes have elevated the Partnership to a deeper collaborative level where partners are now ready for the Partnership to engage in project management which allows for various partners to work together on the same

activity. The need has emerged to position the Partnership to be able to enter into contracts, manage money, apply for grants, and so forth. Therefore, a primary task of this grant is to establish a legal entity for the Partnership. The Partnership's Advisory Committee and the contractor engaged to help implement this grant will research the best option, develop supporting documents (articles of incorporation, bylaws, etc.), and establish a legal entity. This step will allow for the Partnership to apply for grants for project implementation, including Phase II WaterSMART grants.

Expanding Outreach to Special Audiences to Increase Diversity and Effectiveness of Projects and the Partnership

We have identified several target groups whom we would like to reach out to engage in watershed activities. Here is a brief description of those audiences and our proposed methods.

Private Landowners in and near priority projects. We have found that when we target a specific geographic area, we have positive outcomes and better projects. For example, we identified a need for fuel treatments along Highway 64 between Tierra Amarilla and the Forest Service boundary to the east to protect the community of Brazos Canyon to the north of the highway. We sent letters to the 98 landowners identified in that region notifying them of a funding opportunity and over a dozen applied, resulting in a concentration of projects in a specific area which increases the effectiveness of the treatments compared to a scattered approach. Building on this experience, we are currently approaching our partners to identify where private land is adjacent or within their project areas, and then reaching out to those landowners to inspire similar land management activities. This grant would allow us to expand this type of outreach throughout the watershed. We would develop the list of projects via interviews with our partners, research the landowners, and then reach out and provide technical assistance, that may possibly lead to funding mechanisms to help with implementation.

Under-served Landowners, specifically Native Americans, Land Grant heritage, and Absentee Landowners. When we rely on public notices regarding grant opportunities, primarily the landowners who respond are in comfortable income brackets, are well-educated, and have typically done similar management activities. In order to diversify our client base, we need to work harder to help other landowners engage in our programs and opportunities. Our approach will be to make individual contacts, build relationships while transferring technical information, and identify pathways for reaching under-served landowner groups. Although we see this as an on-going project for decades to come, we will develop plans, techniques, and opportunities with this grant that will lay a strong foundation for continued outreach and leveling of access to opportunities. We will address each of these three audiences separately, recognizing that what works in one community may be inappropriate in another.

Ensuring Effective Collaboration within the Partnership

With funds from the Bureau of Reclamation, the Chama Peak Land Alliance will secure a contractor to:

- Conduct outreach, sustain interest, and engage existing and new partners to

sustain Watershed Partnership growth and development

- Coordinate the Partnership's Advisory Committee and cultivate new Advisory Committee members
- Engage and coordinate activities with adjacent watershed Partnerships, neighbor organizations and initiatives, and the 2-3-2 Cohesive Strategy Partnership
- With Advisory Committee, coordinate and expand the annual Rio Chama Congreso to promote stakeholder engagement and outreach—particularly community members
- Engage with local education initiatives and region specialists to engage youth directly and young adults

These responsibilities are further expanded upon in Evaluation Criteria B.

Developing Final Report

Final reporting will be a collaborative effort between the San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership Chair/Grant Representative and Contractor and the Chama Peak Land Alliance Executive Director and Business Administrator. Funding for such will come from funding allocated to the CPLA's Executive Director's salary and to the contractor, with Partnership officers providing their time as leverage from their prospective agencies.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluation Criteria A: Watershed Group Diversity and Geographic Scope

Subcriterion No. A1-Watershed Group Diversity

The San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership consists of a diverse group of stakeholders, including State and Federal agencies, tribal sovereign nations, and non-governmental agencies, due to the various land uses throughout the watershed and the cultural backgrounds of its community members. Additionally, partners active with the Watershed Partnership have a vast network of contacts in the region that are accessible to the Contractor. Existing stakeholders and supporters include:

- Private landowners, individually and via CPLA
- Acequia associations within the watershed
- Rio Grande, San Juan, Santa Fe, and Carson National Forests
- New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
- New Mexico State Forestry
- NRCS – CO and NM
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts – E. Rio Arriba and Upper Chama
- The Nature Conservancy – New Mexico
- Trout Unlimited
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Village of Chama
- Rio Chama Flow Project
- Rio Arriba and Archuleta Counties

- Tierra Amarilla Land Grant
- Jicarilla Apache Nation
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe
- Businesses - forestry consultants, outfitters, and outdoor recreation companies
- New Mexico Land Conservancy
- Partners for Fish and Wildlife
- Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory
- Western Landowners Alliance
- 2-3-2 Cohesive Strategy Group
- Beneficiaries of the San Juan – Chama Diversion Project*

** Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Los Lunas, Espanola, Taos, Belen, Bernalillo, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, Pojoaque Valley Irrigation District, Heron Lake State Park, El Vado Reservoir, Abiquiu Reservoir, and Cochiti Reservoir.*

The history of the SJCWP region is unique due to its roots in Native American culture and Spanish Land Grants. A sense of distrust for the Federal Government permeates the area's local communities, as many families and individuals feel that their land was "taken" from them. The Land Grant communities have long lineages of land use dating back to the 1600's and during the late 18th and 19th centuries, much of their land was transferred to government ownership via the United States Court of Land Claims and was acquired by lawyers and out of area interests in various ways. Our philosophy is to honor, understand, and respect the past, yet to find common ground to move toward unified solutions for the future. It is not the goal of the SJCWP to establish commentary on ownership but rather to encourage an interface between parties, traditional landowners, contemporary owners, and the Federal Government, specifically the Bureau of Reclamation and the Forest Service. It is the experience of the Partnership and its founding partner members that often individuals and communities in the region are seeking opportunities to feel listened to and heard on a broader stage. Congreso and Advisory Group meetings provide the platform for this engagement.

The Partnership has received a small grant (Catalyst Funding) to kick off an initiative to increase our outreach to private landowners. We would like to expand this concept utilizing this grant to amplify this work, and to include residents who utilize and depend on natural resources in participating in Partnership activities. Here is a target list of potential members we are hoping to bring to the table: more people from land grant families, engaged in acequias for farming, Native Americans, absentee landowners, and landowners situated within and adjacent to project areas identified by federal, state, and local governments or non-governmental organizations engaged in project implementation.

Our methods vary with each target group. For example, we have collaborated on hosting listening sessions for issues important to historic land grant families, such as Elk Management or why people are discussing wilderness designations on lands they have used for generations. We find that when we use time responsibly to address concerns

important to each group, we engage more representatives from our target audience. Meanwhile, our approach for priority project landowners starts with identifying where projects are being planned and determining if treating adjacent private land will amplify the project's success – such as creating fuel breaks around communities. If so we reach out to those landowners, help identify supporting funding, provide technical assistance, and hopefully inspire action to create resilient landscapes.

Receiving funds to support these activities sends a clear message to communities in the area that the Department of Interior is investing in not just the watershed, but the people within it as well. In turn, this helps promote positive associations with the agency. Please see the Eligibility of Applicant section above for further discussion on membership of the Partnership and a description of how stakeholders are affected and affect the water supply and water quality within the watershed.

Subcriterion No. A2-Geographic Scope

Members and partners in the San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership are diverse and represent the full geographic scope of the San Juan and Chama watersheds. This is evidenced by the 100 participants that joined us for the launch of this Partnership in Dulce, NM in January 2014, many of whom have continued to be engaged through the annual Rio Chama Congreso. For example, Figure 4, shows a graphic representation of this diversity. In the map pictured, participants at our last Congreso in January 2019 were asked to pin their home locations on the map.

Figure 1 under the “Background Data” heading displays the boundaries of the geographic area where the Partnership works and intends to target outreach to specific audiences. As mentioned under the “Approach” heading in the “Technical Project Description” section, private landowners in and near priority projects are one group of stakeholders that have been identified in increasing diversity and effectiveness of projects and the Partnership. These landowners are at higher risk of property/infrastructure damage and injury due to their proximity to landscape in need of forest thinning treatment. When notified as a group through mailings or information campaigns, the “critical mass” of responsive landowners promotes a greater likelihood of effective ground treatment due to work being performed on larger areas of landscape at a time. News of this effective treatment over wide-sweeping areas promotes interest in other communities of stakeholders, hence displaying the effectiveness of the outreach. As there are other priority projects within the bounds of the Partnership's scope, such targeted outreach merits repeating.

While Figure 4 shows a large spread of interested parties, the Partnership also intends to target under-served landowners, specifically Native American, Land Grant heritage, and absentee landowners. The history of the area the Partnership covers includes



Figure 4. This map shows interests from residents of the region, downstream water users, and neighboring collaborative partners. The southern-most concentration of pins is the Albuquerque area. The area above that to the right is Santa Fe. North of that shows attendees from Abiquiu, Tierra Amarilla, Chama, Dulce, various points East and within the Carson National Forest, and North into Colorado.

incidents that have spawned distrust of other groups, the government, and a sense of isolation, both by choice on the landowner's part, and at times by design. Reaching out to these specific audiences, as well as part-time occupants whose primary residence may be out of state, will require separate methods in order to provide them access to the opportunities the Partnership can provide. These landowners, both concentrated in small communities and spread far and wide, will take effort to reach, but the Partnership seeks to develop pathways to reach them all the same.

Evaluation. Criteria B: Addressing Critical Watershed Needs

Subcriterion No. B1-Critical Watershed Needs or Issues

The effects of prolonged drought and climate change are anticipated and already noticeable within the San Juan-Rio Chama Watershed. Warmer and drier conditions have occurred in recent years and the 2017-18 winter is thus far a record low snowpack season in the region. While 2019's snowpack may have appeared as a reversal of the trend, it's important that stakeholders not find themselves complacent or dismissive of the residual threat presented by climate change.

Mitigating wildfire risks and resulting debris flows through forest management is a top priority for the San Juan - Chama Watershed Partnership. The Las Conchas Fire of

2011 illustrates this problem. Post-fire thunderstorms brought rain to the burned areas and created massive ash and debris flows in surrounding canyons. The Rio Grande turned black with sediment and water managers halted withdrawals in Albuquerque and Santa Fe, determining the ash-laden water was not worth treating. Meanwhile, tons of debris was deposited in Cochiti Lake, closing the area to recreation and dumping excessive sediment in the reservoir.

Debris also serves to threaten waterways when wildfires aren't a factor. The region covered by the Partnership is supplied water through the diversions of the San Juan – Chama Project, and Bureau of Reclamation staff make daily trips to the Oso Diversion dam in Chromo, CO for the purpose of checking the state of debris buildup. This daily trip is required whether there is fire near the Navajo River or not, as natural erosion, wind, and precipitation processes will dislodge trees, foliage, rock and soil. Removing debris from the protective grate is a necessary process in this case as it protects water infrastructure.

Wildfire risks are a result of over a century of fire exclusion leading to the overgrowth of headwater forests, degrading watersheds and altering the hydrological cycle. This results in higher evaporation, less runoff, and less water storage. Woody biomass treatments are a costly operation with limited or no market value for wood biomass generated. Because of this situation, limited acres are treated annually, therefore providing negligible effect on wildfire risk and watershed protection. Utilization of woody biomass at cost with value added benefits can act as an economic driver for proactive landscape-scale forest treatments that benefit the public's forest and water supply.

Sustainable grazing management within the watershed using best management practices is an important opportunity and priority for the San Juan-Chama Watershed Partnership. Our goal is to inform and assist ranchers, directly and through our partners who focus on private land management, with improving their grazing practices to help improve water quality in headwater streams.

Water quality is of great concern in the watershed as identified by the Rio Chama Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS) in 2005 and the Rio Chama Water Plan by the NM Office of the State Engineer in 2016. Please see the Water Quality section above for a full list of water quality impairment issues. Additionally, flow regimes and water yield issues will be addressed for the watershed. Water yield will be paired, in part, to forest health treatments at the landscape scale, as thinning treatments allow for more snowpack on the ground and improvement of water quality. Additional water quantity issues include water efficiency, specifically for acequia users. Improvements to canals and headgates are needed throughout the region to more effectively deliver water to users.

The water supply of the region may soon face a new threat from marijuana growers. The legalization of hemp growing as an agricultural crop has yielded a number of individuals seeking licenses from the New Mexico Department of Agriculture. Unfortunately, the water requirements of maintaining a lucrative crop has put stress on

the water supply of rural communities, exceeding water rights of the landowner prior to any other utilization. Upcoming legislation around recreational marijuana use could further stress water supplies and considering January 2020's legislative session may include such a measure, New Mexico may become the second state to legalize recreational marijuana without voter approval. While 60 million dollars of new tax revenue in the first year⁴, as has been mentioned in a report written by a Governor appointed workgroup, may attract passage of said measure, the threat to water supplies as well as a new point sources of water pollution via runoff has only very recently begun being investigated.

Facilitated Outreach Activities

In order to combat these challenges and needs, the San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership is working with our partner agencies and organizations to help identify and conduct outreach to private landowners in or adjacent to current and planned projects and to reach out to landowners who have historically not been engaged in land management projects. The responsibilities fall under Task A of this project's Funding Opportunity Announcement and are as follows:

- Item 1- Conduct outreach, sustain interest, and engage existing and new partners: The contractor will assist in coordinating the annual Partnership summit meeting, Congreso, for Partnership members, the Advisory Committee, and additional interested parties. Additionally, the contractor will be responsible for general outreach to these parties which will consist of email marketing, maintaining and updated and relevant website and social media presence, traditional media marketing as needed, and interpersonal contact. The contractor will also attend community meetings throughout region to gather information on issues and needs related to water quality and quantity of the communities within the watershed (e.g. Upper Chama and East Rio Arriba Soil and Water Conservation District Board Meetings, Rio Arriba and Archuleta County Commission Meetings, Chama Village Council Meetings, Public Acequia Association Meetings etc.) This request will fund time and travel for the contractor to make necessary outreach and organize meetings and secure venues. The contractor will initiate and maintain a relationship with the Piedra Lumbre Land Grant Corporation and consider their needs and further engage their input in the Partnership.
- Item 2 - Coordinate the Partnership's Advisory Committee and cultivate new Advisory Committee members: The contractor will actively familiarize themselves with existing members of the Partnership's Advisory Committee and host quarterly Advisory Committee meetings. The contractor will also be responsible for cultivating and recruiting potential new members to join the Advisory Committee. This request will cover staff time for the contractor for these tasks.
- Item 3 - Seek additional funding to ensure financial stability for project work and planning: The contractor will also actively research grant opportunities to fund watershed restoration treatments and other priority watershed projects. With full recognition of the CWMP program's timeline, the contractor will be responsible for

⁴ Davis et al, 2019, Gov. Grisham's Marijuana Legalization Workgroup, Marijuanaworkgroup.com

seeking additional funding to sustain their position beyond the CWMP grant term.

- Item 4 – Create and distribute informational brochure regarding Partnership’s scope and programming: The contractor will coordinate creation of an informational brochure to be distributed to watershed stakeholders. This request covers the printing of an estimated 1,000 copies.
- Item 5 – Engage with adjacent watershed Partnerships, neighbor organizations and initiatives, and the 2-3-2 Cohesive Strategy Partnership: The contractor will actively engage with geographically adjacent watershed groups, organizations, and partnerships to further mutual goals, share knowledge and resources, and coordinate cross-watershed boundary projects. This will include active participation with the 2-3-2 Cohesive Strategy Partnership, particularly the Biomass Sub-committee, and the Chama Flows Project.
- Item 6 – With the Advisory Group, coordinate the annual Rio Chama Congreso: Coordinate logistics, speakers and agenda, registration, and other duties as necessary to host the annual Rio Chama Congreso. Congreso is an annual event historically coordinated by Rio Grande Restoration, a partner and member of the Advisory Committee. This gathering of diverse watershed stakeholders is an avenue for outreach, education, input from stakeholders—particularly community members--and an opportunity to identify and coordinate priority watershed needs. Helping to organize and host the annual workshop has been a key action of the San Juan-Chama Watershed Partnership and under BOR funding, the contractor will become the formal lead on planning and executing this event which will provide a forum for water users in the Partnership’s region to come together to discuss topical issues in the Rio Chama and diverted headwaters.
- Item 7 – Engage with local education initiatives in region: Collaborate with education programs and specialist organizations in the region, such as River Source, to further youth engagement and knowledge of natural resource management, air and water quality, and ecology of the region. In addition to River Source, the contractor will work directly with local schools and educators to further Partnership programming (e.g. Archuleta County #50 School District, Chama Valley Independent School District, and Abiquiu Elementary School).

Subcriterion No. B2- Developing Strategies to Address Critical Watershed Needs or Issues

The various sub-committees that report to individual Advisory Committee members are comprised of individuals who represent a number of the watershed group’s partners. These individuals continue to work toward building Partnerships in the purview of their own committee focuses. For example, the Biomass committee, originally established as a means to exploring the feasibility of a wood biomass electric generation and biochar production initiative in the timber regions of North New Mexico and Southern Colorado, has continued in its efforts of working toward bringing education in trades and furniture craft to the El Rito campus of North New Mexico College. Promoting an economical

usage for timber coincides with the watershed group's pre-existing partnership with New Mexico State Forestry, supporting the agency's projects to thin overgrown forests for the sake of mitigating wildfires and protecting watersheds. The Water Committee has been in Partnership with professional educators and science students in supporting the Chama Flow project, to develop a comprehensive report as to the ecological, economical, topographical and legal ramifications attached to the Bureau of Reclamation's altering the flow rate of the Rio Chama. This report contains a wealth of information that can aid stakeholders of various industry backgrounds in how to navigate their relationship with the Rio Chama watershed. This collaboration produces results and continues to happen at our quarterly advisory committee meetings and the annual Congreso forum. The Partnership will utilize grant funds to facilitate discussions about land use planning processes, potential restoration projects, and further relationship building throughout the region. The contractor's regional presence will also allow for the development of meaningful relationships with stakeholders and they will serve as a point person for coordinating projects among entities within the watershed.

While many partners within the SJCWP are conservation organizations, the explicit purpose of the Partnership is not to advocate for increased access to the Department of the Interior lands for hunting, fishing, and other recreation. Rather, the Partnership will serve as an entity through which conversations between conservation organizations and the Department of Interior can discuss these types of issues.

Through prior committee projects demonstrating usage of data collection in preparing reports, the Partnership seeks to build upon these methods to improve forest and land health, water quality, and water quantity. The expertise and resources of the stakeholders in the region, coupled with a hired contractor to work hands-on at the local level conducting outreach and coordination among partners, will allow the Partnership to better serve the needs of the inhabitants of the Rio Chama watershed. The Partnership's increased outreach initiatives will allow us to identify stakeholders who can provide work toward watershed restoration projects, as well as with the help from stakeholders, identify new areas in need of watershed restoration.

Evaluation Criteria C: Implementation & Results

Subcriterion No. C1-Understanding of and Ability to Meet Program Requirements

A contractor to facilitate outreach with landowners will be hired by the CPLA within three months of receiving funding. The successful hiring of this contractor will be the first milestone in the overall funding timeline. They will be supervised by the Chama Peak Land Alliance Executive Director and will be held accountable for conduct and deliverables. As such, the budget line item "CPLA Executive Director" under the heading "Salaries and Wages" reflects this.

- Item 1 - Coordinate the Partnership's Advisory Committee and cultivate new Advisory Committee members: The contractor will spend their first two to three months familiarizing themselves with existing members of the Advisory Committee. A quarterly Advisory Committee meeting will be facilitated by the contractor no later than three months after their hiring date, serving as the first milestone for Task A: Watershed

Group Development. At all Advisory Committee meetings, the contractor is expected to update the committee as to their progress in regards to adding unrepresented populations, agencies, or stakeholders as new Advisory Committee members. Incurred costs are listed in the budget under line item “TBD by RFP” line item for contractor under the “Contractual” heading, the “Travel” heading, as well as the “Supplies and Materials” heading in line item “Outreach and supplies for Quarterly Advisory Meeting” at \$45 per meeting.

- Item 2- Conduct outreach, sustain interest, and engage existing and new partners: Further performing activities under Task A, the contractor will spend their first three months familiarizing themselves with existing partners and begin outreach to new partners. In developing an informational brochure regarding the Partnership’s scope and programming, the contractor will be performing research under Task B, as material will be created or contracted based on current watershed issues and the stakeholders they are affecting. This brochure is expected to be completed and ready to present at the quarterly Advisory Committee meeting mentioned above, and then distributed shortly after to our agency partners, town chambers of commerce, libraries, and other forums of public information in the Partnership region. Incurred costs are listed in the budget at budget line item “Brochure Production” under the “Contractual” heading at \$1000 at \$4 per brochure, yielding 250 total, the “TBD by RFP” line item for contractor, and the “Travel” heading.

- Item 3 - Engage with adjacent watershed Partnerships, neighbor organizations and initiatives, and the 2-3-2 Cohesive Strategy Partnership: The contractor shall attend regular meetings, as possible, for adjacent partnerships, neighbor organizations, and initiatives in the region. These fellow organizations will be kept aware as to the happenings of the Partnership, and items of stakeholder interest will be shared via social media and/or a weekly email recap. As this item includes both outreach and research gathering from fellow agency partners and watershed organizations, it falls under both Task A and B. Incurred costs are listed under budget line items “TBD by RFP” under “Contractual” heading, and under the “Travel” heading.

- Item 4 - Establishment of the San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership as a legal entity: The contractor, with input from the Advisory Committee, will research the best option, develop bylaws, an improved and current mission statement, and articles of incorporation. This process is to begin no later than 6 months after the hiring of the contractor, to provide ample time for the breeding of familiarity and a beneficial working relationship with all members of the Advisory Committee, partners, and local stakeholders, current and new. This item falls squarely under Task A. Incurred costs fall under line item “TBD by RFP” under the “Contractual” heading. Assuming grant award funding is received in April of 2020, establishment of legal entity for the Partnership would ideally be announced in February of 2021 at the yearly Congreso event, or announced as actively being engaged.

- Item 5 - Engage with local education initiatives in region: The Contractor will work with various education institutions throughout the region and with River Source, a nonprofit

organization that coordinates natural resource management programming with schools in Northern New Mexico. As engaging with local education initiatives will include work with students and professionals in the field, this item combines facets of both Task A and Task B. Measured success for this item will involve coordination with the Skills and Pathways Sub-Committee of the Partnership, as well as the creation of educational opportunities outside of schools. Coordinating events with the AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer will serve to develop educational links throughout the Partnership region and demonstrate growth in the relationships between students and the watershed. Incurred costs would fall under the budget line items "TBD by RFP" and "River Source", under the "Contractual", as well as the "Travel" heading, and "Equipment" headings for educational materials for River Source at a flat rate of \$1000 over the course of the funding period for the grant. Cost would vary based on hours.

- Item 6 - With the Advisory Group, coordinate the annual Rio Chama Congreso: In conjunction with Advisory Group, the Contractor shall plan and execute Congreso annually. The Contractor will utilize partnerships with Rio Grande Restoration, River Source, and others for help planning the event and will be responsible for obtaining speakers and coordinating with Ghost Ranch or other appropriate venue. The only milestone for this item would be the successful coordination of the event. Incurred costs fall under budget line item "Supplies, facility, and outreach materials for Congreso" at \$3500 dollars per event with two annual events planned, under the heading "Supplies and Materials". Also budget line item "TBD by RFP" under the "Contractual" heading, and the "Rio Grande Restoration Staff" line item under "Salaries and Wages" as they are a partner in the production of the Congreso.

- Item 7 - Seek additional funding to ensure financial stability for project work and planning: The contractor will apply for additional funding for project work and planning every quarter. Milestones for this task will vary depending on funding cycles. The contractor is encouraged to seek funding to further their position and extend it beyond the two years funded by this CWMP grant.

Subcriterion No. C2-Building on Relevant Federal, State, or Regional Planning Efforts

The contractor will rely on the Rio Chama Regional Watershed Plan by the NM Office of the State Engineer (2016) for guidance on recommend watershed activities and programs. Furthermore, the Partnership keeps on hand the New Mexico Acequia Association's Acequia Governance Handbook as there are a number of Acequia communities in the region. Each National Forest also has a watershed portion of their forest management plan which projects adhere to when performed within their boundaries. Soil and Water Conservation Districts have watershed management plans as well. Finally, prescribed fire treatments on Federal land undergo scrutiny through the NEPA process.

Grant funds would aid the Partnership in assisting coordination of projects as outlined by the plans. Educational events will be developed regarding such plans so partners and stakeholders are aware as to how to navigate policy around prospective projects.

Evaluation Criteria D: Department of the Interior Priorities

As the San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership is requesting funds primarily for pursuing legal identity, an expanded capability for outreach targeted towards specifically identified populations, and expanded capacity in effectively collaborating with partners old and new in supporting their watershed restoration initiatives, the Department of the Interior Priorities titled “Restoring trust with local communities”, and some portions of “Creating a conservation stewardship legacy second only to Teddy Roosevelt” are shown support by the project through this proposal.

Both lines “a” and “b” of “Restoring trust with local communities” is supported through the Partnership’s outreach toward specific communities. Attempts to contact underrepresented communities in the Rio Chama Watershed is based upon bringing the resources and expertise of our partners to those who may be unaware of the opportunities our partners can provide regarding watershed restoration and resource management. The Partnership is looking to hire a contractor to facilitate outreach on the ground and lay the groundwork for contact between “us and them”, to change that paradigm to a more neighborly “us”. The expanded capacity in effectively collaborating with partners, those partners being different agencies and stakeholders, serves to expand the lines of communication between those partners. In placing responsibility on a contractor to cultivate new Advisory Committee members, the Partnership strives to give agencies, governments, water authorities, tribes, and communities, a voice during our quarterly meetings. A voice that is heard and responded to by each and every other voice at the table. Pursuing a legal entity serves to open up new sources of funding and allow the Partnership management of multiple partners on the same project, bolstering our abilities to include stakeholders and partners in more places than our quarterly meetings and Congreso.

Lines “a” and “d” of “Creating a conservation stewardship legacy second only to Teddy Roosevelt” is supported in the Partnership’s desire to reach out to underrepresented communities and stakeholders to bring them the resources and expertise of our partners, but also to bring their expertise and resources to the rest of the Partnership. Expanded capacity in collaborating further supports this notion by improving our data collection. More input from various experts creates more thorough reports. The hiring of a contractor to interface with stakeholders in the watershed promotes a constant review of DOI water storage, transportation, and distribution systems, by virtue of those stakeholders’ water supplies and river-based livelihoods and recreational activities being directly affected by Reclamation’s control of Rio Chama flow rate. Expanded outreach and collaboration furthers the Partnership’s ability to converse with stakeholders of varying backgrounds, identifying challenges and exploring expanded capacity opportunities along the way. Finally, the pursuing a legal entity helps not only in increased funding opportunity for the science and collaboration of experts in identifying best resource management and adaptations to climate change, but it expands analysis of DOI’s water storage, transport, and distribution as well.

*****END OF TECHNICAL PROPOSAL (total length 25 pages)*****

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES COMPLIANCE

This project scope does not incorporate activities involving measurement, monitoring, or fieldwork.

REQUIRED PERMITS OR APPROVALS

No permits or approvals are anticipated under the scope of this project.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Budget Proposal

BUDGET ITEM DESCRIPTION	\$/UNIT	QUANTITY	QUANTITY TYPE	Non-Federal and Federal Receipt Funding	Reclamation Funding	Total Cost
SALARIES AND WAGES						
CPLA Executive Director	\$ 35	400	salary & assoc. costs (hours)		\$ 14,000	\$ 14,000
Rio Grande Restoration staff			salary & assoc. costs (hours)	\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000
CPLA-BOR VISTA			Yearly volunteer stipend	\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000
NM State Forestry - District Forester	\$ 50	\$ 80	Salary for 80 hrs.	\$ 4,000		\$ 4,000
FRINGE BENEFITS						
CPLA Executive Director	\$ 2,520	18%	Percentage of salary cost		\$ 2,520	\$ 2,520
TRAVEL						
Mileage for Travel to stakeholder and partner meetings throughout region (Contractor and Ex. Director)	\$ 0.545	9850	Per Mile		\$ 5,368	\$ 5,368
Conference/meeting registration	\$ 150	2	Registration costs		\$ 300	\$ 300
Lodging	\$ 75	9	per night		\$ 675	\$ 675
Meals	\$ 30	16	per day		\$ 480	\$ 480
EQUIPMENT (>\$5K)						
Educational equipment (River Source)			Flat rate	\$ 1,000		\$ 1,000
SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS						
Misc. office & other supplies (pens, markers, signs etc)					\$ 406	\$ 406
Supplies, facility, and outreach materials for annual Congreso	\$ 3,500	2	For 2 events		\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000
Outreach & Supplies Materials for quarterly Advisory Group Meetings	\$ 45	8	# meetings in two years		\$ 360	\$ 360
CONTRACTUAL						
TBD by RFP	\$ 50	1000	Hourly		\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
RiverSource	\$ 50	80	Hourly		\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Nick Dolocek - Forester	\$ 60	80	Hourly		\$ 4,800	\$ 4,800
Brochure Production	\$ 4	250	per brochure		\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
OTHER						
Total Direct Costs					\$ 90,909	\$ 90,909
Indirect Costs - 10%					\$ 9,091	\$ 9,091
Year 1 Total Costs				\$ 10,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 60,000
Year 2 Total Costs				\$ 10,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 60,000
Total Costs - 2 year grant period				\$ 20,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 120,000

Budget Narrative

Salaries and Wages

Project Oversight – Caleb Stotts, CPLA, Executive Director - \$14,000 . Although this position is salaried the budget reflects an estimated \$35/hour rate that includes wage, payroll tax and workers compensation coverage for the listed number of hours to be spent on this project. CPLA anticipates the Executive Director will work approximately 400 hours during the two-year term of this grant/project. The Executive Director will provide supervision to contractual work, and complete all required financial and technical reports.

Fringe Benefits

The fringe benefit rate requested is calculated as 18% of budgeted salary cost in this proposal. The 18% rate has been calculated based on the percentage of total yearly salary divided by yearly fringe benefit costs. This rate is an internal CPLA budgeting rate used for application purposes.

Travel

Travel expenses total \$6,823. This covers 9,850 miles at the federal reimbursement rate of \$0.545 per miles, \$300 for conference registration fees, \$675 for lodging costs, and \$480 for meals all over the two-year project period. Contractors, and occasionally the CPLA Executive Director, will frequently travel in and around the Partnership's region and will occasionally be required to travel outside of the region for conferences and meetings. Travel funds will primarily be used by the contractor(s) however, the Executive Director may utilize these funds if their travel is required for the explicit purpose of furthering the goals of this project.

This numbers were estimated based on past project experience, the federal mileage rate for 2019, and average lodging rates in Rio Arriba County, NM.

Equipment

CPLA does not anticipate purchasing any equipment with a value of over \$5,000 using project funding.

Materials and Supplies

Our anticipated supplies and materials costs are primarily associated with business operations and outreach efforts and are as follows:

- Miscellaneous office and other supplies (pens, markers, signs etc.): \$406 (\$203/year)
 - These costs are estimated on past experience for a typical one person office
- Supplies, facilities, and outreach materials for annual Congreso: \$7,000 (\$3,500/year)
 - Estimated cost breakdown is as follows based on experience hosting past Congreso events, but specific costs within and between categories may vary between years
- Outreach and Supplies materials for quarterly Advisory Group Meetings: \$360 (\$180/year)
 - Estimated cost breakdown is as follows based on experience hosting past Congreso events, but specific costs within and between categories may vary between years

Contractual

Multiple sub-contractors will be utilized to assist with the further development of the watershed group and priority project identification:

- TBD by RFP - \$50,000
 - CPLA anticipates this position will work approximately 1000 hours at \$50/hour during the two-year term of this grant/project.
- Nick Dolacek – Forester – Denver, CO: \$4,800
 - 80 hours at \$60/hour for a total of \$4,800
 - Forestry consulting and private lands project identification.

- River Source - Santa Fe, NM: \$4,000
 - Educational outreach to regional secondary school(s) to promote water quality education and programming for students.
- Brochure production: \$1,000
 - 250 brochures at \$4/brochure for outreach purposes at partner agency offices, libraries, chambers of commerce/travel centers, post office bulletin boards, public sources of information.

Environmental and Regulatory Compliance Costs

This proposal does not include monitory, measurement, or other fieldwork, thus no environmental compliance costs are required.

Other Expenses

CPLA does not anticipate any other costs outside of what has been presented.

Indirect Costs

The CPLA does not have a previously negotiated indirect rate and so requests the de minimus rate of 10% for this project.

Total Costs

While not required by Reclamation, the following additional funding sources are committed to this project over the two-year grant term.

Non-federal sources include:

- Rio Grande Restoration - \$5,000
 - Technical expertise and participation in Advisory Group
- River Source - \$1,000
 - Educational equipment for classrooms

Federal sources include:

- CPLA-BOR VISTA Volunteer - \$10,000
 - Cost of third year VISTA term, sponsored by BOR
- Mary Stuever – NM State Forestry - \$4,000
 - \$50/hour for 80 hours over two years

Total Cost of Project from Reclamation (two years): \$100,000 Total Cost of Project from Reclamation and donations from partners (two years): \$120,000



RESPONSIBLE LAND STEWARDSHIP

Bureau of Reclamation
Attn: Alicia James
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, Colorado 80225

Dear Ms. James:

The Executive Committee of the Board of the Chama Peak Land Alliance hereby resolves that the Chama Peak Land Alliance shall apply to the Bureau of Reclamation for the WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program to further develop the San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership by supporting organizational legal structure and associated outreach and development activities.

It is also further resolved that:

- Caleb Stotts, the Executive Director of the Chama Peak Land Alliance, shall have full authority to sign and submit all required documents, including but not limited to the grant application and the grant agreement, and that such signature is binding on the Chama Peak Land Alliance.
- The Executive Committee of the Chama Peak Land Alliance has reviewed and supports the application submitted and has the authority to do so.
- The Chama Peak Land Alliance is capable of providing the amount of funding and/or in-kind contributions, if any, specified in the funding plan.
- The Chama Peak Land Alliance will work with Reclamation to meet established deadlines for entering into a financial assistance agreement.

I, Aaron Jones, Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of the Chama Peak Land Alliance, hereby declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States, that the Board has agreed to the above resolutions and that I am authorized to sign this resolution on the behalf of the full Board of Directors.



Aaron Jones, Vice-Chair

Dated this 13 of November, 2019

PO Box 1544 | Santa Fe, NM 87504
chamapeak@chamapeak.org | www.chamapeak.org | 1-888-445-7708

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

Sarah Cottrell Propst
Cabinet Secretary

Todd E. Leahy, JD, PhD
Deputy Cabinet Secretary

Laura McCarthy, State Forester
Forestry Division



Bureau of Reclamation Financial Assistance Operations Section
Attn: Alisha James
P.O. Box 25007 | Denver, Colorado 80225

Dear Ms. James:

Please accept this letter of support and commitment for the Chama Peak Land Alliance's proposal to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program on behalf of the San Juan - Chama Watershed Partnership in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado.

The San Juan - Chama Watershed Partnership's region includes the San Juan - Chama Bureau of Reclamation Diversion Project that redirects water from the San Juan Basin into the Rio Grande Basin, as well as the entirety of the Rio Chama Watershed. These headwaters provide drinking water to a third of New Mexicans making watershed resiliency in this region critical to human welfare. Threats to water quality and quantity such as wildfire, drought, insects, energy development, and climate change affect the health of both local and downstream communities.

Watershed restoration and resiliency projects must be managed on public and private lands with strong cooperation among stakeholders, as these watersheds jointly affect thousands of people. The work the Partnership is doing and proposes to do to help our collaborative efforts is critical to achieve this cooperative management and ensure that the significant funds currently directed to watershed health projects are fully leveraged and coordinated among Watershed Partners.

The Chama District of New Mexico State Forestry has been a key partner since the inception of the Partnership. Although our time and resources are already matched with federal grants, we strongly support the Partnership and our efforts can be considered as leverage. We see the Partnership as an excellent body to guide coordination between local, state, tribal and federal efforts.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding our support for this project. Thank you for your consideration of this important proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary Stuever".

Mary Stuever
Chama District Forester

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HC 75 Box 100 • Chama, New Mexico 87520
Phone (575) 588-7837 • Fax (575) 588-3337
<http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SFD>



conserving
natural resources
for our future

SUPERVISORS

Kenneth V. Salazar
Ross Garcia, Jr.
Ted Salazar
Leroy J. Salazar
J. Lucas Cordova

EAST RIO ARRIBA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

19283 Highway 84/285, Suite 112

Española, New Mexico 87537

Telephone (505) 753-0477

Bureau of Reclamation Financial Assistance Operations Section

Attn: Mr. Darren Olson

P.O. Box 25007 | Denver, Colorado 80225

Dear Mr. Olson:

Please accept this letter of support and commitment for the Chama Peak Land Alliance's proposal to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program on behalf of the San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado.

The San Juan – Chama Watershed Partnership's region includes the San Juan – Chama Bureau of Reclamation Diversion Project that redirects water from the San Juan Basin into the Rio Grande Basin, as well as the entirety of the Rio Chama Watershed. Together these headwaters of the San Juan and Rio Grande provide drinking water to a third of New Mexicans making watershed health and resiliency in this region critical to human welfare. Threats to water quality and quantity in the headwaters such as wildfire, drought, insects, energy development, and climate change affect the health of both local and downstream communities.

When planning watershed restoration and resiliency projects at the watershed scale, it is critical that public and private lands be managed with strong cooperation among stakeholders, as these watersheds jointly affect thousands of people. A Watershed Coordinator is critical to achieve this cooperative management and ensure that the significant funds currently directed to watershed health projects are fully leveraged and coordinated among Watershed Partners. The hiring of this Coordinator position is a top priority for us as a member of the Partnership. Our region has a critical need for collaboration and engagement in order to achieve the greatest good possible as various projects are simultaneously planned and implemented.

The East Rio Arriba Soil and Water Conservation District (ERASWCD) that includes 21 partners are actively pursuing watershed restoration activities in the San Juan/Rio Chama watershed. ERASWCD has been granted several funding opportunities in pursuit of the restoration activities and supports any and all efforts to achieve its goals through coordination, collaboration, cooperation and communication.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding our support for this project.

Thank you for your consideration of this important proposal.

Sincerely,

Marcos Valdez
ERASWCD District Manager

Norman Vigil
San Juan/Rio Chama Program Manager



The Nature Conservancy
in New Mexico
1316 Paseo de Perilla
Suite 200
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Tel: (505) 988.3867
Fax: (505) 988.4905
nature.org

November 11, 2019

Bureau of Reclamation Financial Assistance Support Section
Attn: Alisha James
Mail Code: 84 -27814 P.O. Box 25007 Denver, Colorado 80225

Dear Ms. James:

Please accept this letter of support and commitment for the Chama Peak Land Alliance's proposal to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program on behalf of the San Juan - Chama Watershed Partnership in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado.

The San Juan - Chama Watershed Partnership's region includes the BOR's San Juan -Chama Diversion Project that redirects water from the San Juan Basin into the Rio Grande Basin, as well as the entirety of the Rio Chama Watershed. Together these headwaters of the San Juan and Rio Grande provide drinking water to many New Mexicans making watershed health and resiliency in this region critical to community welfare. Threats to water quality and quantity in the headwaters such as wildfire, drought, forest insect infestation, energy development, and climate change affect the sustainability of water for both local and downstream communities.

Through the collaborative Rio Grande Water Fund, The Nature Conservancy strongly supports watershed restoration and resiliency planning. Assisting the San Juan -Chama partners to complete the process of becoming a 501 (c) (3) organization, and expanding outreach to other collaborative efforts such as the Rio Chama Congress, and to more private lands and tribal nations within the region would strengthen the already impressive multijurisdictional efforts in the Basin.

For the Rio Grande Water Fund, the San Juan-Chama region is a priority for ensuring water security for New Mexicans. Fund partners have already committed more than a million dollars to reduce fire risk and improve private lands capacity to engage in collaborative efforts. We encourage you to build on the good work partners have been doing by funding this WaterSMART proposal to strengthen the Chama Watershed Partnership. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding our support for this project. Thank you for your consideration on this important proposal.

Sincerely,

Anne Bradley
Forest Program Director



November 8, 2019

Bureau of Reclamation Financial Assistance Support Section
Attn: Ms. Alisha James
Mail Code: 84-27814 P.O. Box 25007 Denver, Colorado 80225

Dear Ms. James,

I am writing to express my commitment and support for the Chama Peak Land Alliance's proposal to the WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program on behalf of the San Juan Chama Watershed Partnership.

For the past 4 years I helped to organize the Rio Chama Congreso as a member of the San Juan Chama Watershed Partnership. The Congreso has established an annual gathering that has successfully brought people together to set goals collaboratively, leverage existing resources and make commitments to create positive outcomes on the ground. The Partnership is now poised at a critical juncture to make a greater impact by expanding outreach work and formalizing its legal structure. Specifically, the Partnership will:

- Engage landowners that are often under-represented in watershed stewardship trainings.
- Expand the Rio Chama Congreso to an additional day of workshops and trainings.
- Grow the membership of the Partnership to include agencies, organizations and landowners who are not represented.

I have also been involved as a citizen science coordinator and educator of middle and high school students in three different schools in the Chama watershed over the past 5 years. The San Juan Chama Watershed Partnership provides a venue for the students to share their watershed science results and have their voices heard. Getting youth engaged in water management and watershed science careers is a key goal for the Partnership. Funding from WaterSMART makes it possible to expand youth engagement and career development.

Creating a 501c(3) represents a crucial milestone as the work of the Partnership has become more established in the watershed. Having non-profit legal status will expand fundraising options and enable a watershed-based board to be established that best represents the region.

I ask you to please support this proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RSchrader", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Richard Schrader, Director
APA, MRCP



Steve Harris
HCR 69 Box 3-C
Embudo, NM 87531
phone/fax: 575-751-1269
e-mail: steve.harris39@gmail.com
FEIN #: 85-041-5030

November 6, 2019

Bureau of Reclamation
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, Colorado 80225

Dear CWMP Reviewers:

Please accept this Rio Grande Restoration (RGR) letter of support for, and commitment to, the San Juan Chama Watershed Partnership's proposal to the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program to improve the effectiveness of the Partnership in implementing projects identified in our Watershed Implementation Strategy.

RGR's primary work on this landscape is as convener of the Rio Chama Flow Project (CFP), which consists of a stakeholder Advisory Council (including many agencies, environmental NGOs and local interests), a voluntary science team and a collaborative consultation process with Reclamation, the Corps and other water management and provider agencies. Over the past five years, the CFP has had some gratifying success in enabling environmental flow operations from El Vado Reservoir, as well as realizing substantial investment in outreach and education in the basins.

Rio Grande Restoration is particularly proud to have contributed to the formation of the San Juan Chama Watershed Partnership, which we hope will become an exemplary watershed group drawing active participation from the whole universe of public and private stakeholders who depend upon the combined Chama, Navajo and Blanco watershed for their many essential water needs. This especially includes local agriculturalists and water providers in the middle Rio Grande.

The present proposal will enable the Partnership to more effectively organize the local communities as an effective force for improving watershed and water supply conditions on a landscape scale

RGR is committed to the work of the Partnership and stand ready to contribute our resources toward its success. We will continue to serve on the Partnership Advisory Board and sub-committees; assist with extending CFP concepts to the Navajo and Blanco Basins; and provide technical assistance to river and riparian restoration projects. We estimate that the expected in-kind value of RGR contributions under the current proposal to be at least \$5000.

Thank you for considering this San Juan-Chama Watershed Partnership proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding our support for this project.

Sincerely,

Steve Harris
Executive Director, Rio Grande Restoration