

Garrett Varra, South Platte Basin Roundtable Chair

11/30/2022

Chris Sturm

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Colorado Water Conservation Board

1313 Sherman Street, Room 721

Denver, CO 80203

RE: Letter of support for the Lower South Platte Children's Water Festival – Colorado Water Plan Engagement and Innovation Grant Application by Lower South Platte Water Conservancy District

Dear Mr. Sturm:

On behalf of the South Platte Basin Roundtable I am pleased to write in support of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, Water Plan grant application submitted by Lower South Platte WCD for the Lower South Platte Children's Water Festival project. LSP WCD presented an executive summary and budget to the South Platte Basin Roundtable on October 26, 2022, and then we voted in support of the Water Plan grant request. Specifically, the Lower South Platte Children's Water Festival will: 1) every year connect over 400 young stewards to the South Platte River's watershed science and issues, and 2) provide an equitable educational experience to rural and underserved youth in our basin. This outreach will educate future decision-makers on water use efficiency and watershed resiliency. The South Platte Basin Roundtable voted unanimously at its November meeting to allow the needs assessment committee to decide upon support for this project. On November 29th the SPBRT WSRF Committee unanimously voted to support this project.

Based on successful fundraising, partner letters of support, and teacher survey answers, Lower South Platte WCD have done a very good job coordinating local and statewide **stakeholders** in building support for their festival. To date, these stakeholders and LSP WCD identified priority needs for youth to understand the issues of our Headwaters State, and have repeatedly garnered support from local businesses, educational organizations, water providers, and schools. The LSP WCD proposal will result in moving forward with engagement and outreach goals recommended in Colorado's Water Plan and our Basin Implementation Plan and endorsed by stakeholders.

We are particularly pleased that the proposal to continue to hold the festival for the next three years will **address important stakeholder needs**. Specifically, the festival reaches students, and thus their families, at the crucial age where science curriculum weaves in water. Presenters representing conservationists, municipalities, agricultural, and governmental entities will share the breadth of water uses, potential conflicts, and conservation methods. This important learning opportunity offers current, accurate, and consistent water lessons to our basin's residents. We endorse continuing the legacy of the Lower South Platte Children's Water Festival, to ensure momentum into 2023 and beyond.

Importantly, for our Roundtable, the proposed LSP Children's Water Festival **addresses multiple objectives from our Basin Implementation Plan**. Besides this project being wholly rooted in community outreach and education, implementing this educational festival furthers our BIP strategies. Because presenters teach water conservation from a variety of perspectives, our basin's future stewards will absorb multiple tactics to 1) meet the municipal supply gap, 2) protect irrigated agriculture, and 3) protect and enhance watersheds. We declare the overlap of these BIP strategies to be crucial pillars in future decision-making in our basin.

We encourage CWCB to support the Lower South Platte Children's Water Festival for the next three years. Judging from sources of funding and letters of support to date, there a high probability of sustained activity and support for the next few years to fully implement their goals, as they carry on the Children's Water Festival along the Lower South Platte corridor. We support and look forward to the continued festivals for rural elementary school students, to build a community understanding of water issues for a resilient South Platte River.

Sincerely,



Garrett Varra, SPBRT WSRF Committee Chair