



Colorado River District

75 Years

Protecting Western Colorado Water



MEMORANDUM

JANUARY 5, 2012

TO: ERIC KUHN, GENERAL MANAGER

CC: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: DAVE KANZER, P.E.

SUBJECT: SELENIUM TASK FORCE FUNDING PROPOSED FOR 2012 (CA12003)

This memo outlines the projected River District support of the Selenium Task Force (STF) for the 2012 calendar/ budget year. It is recommended that the board authorize the General Manager to enter into a new contract with SC Environmental for services related to STF facilitation and related Selenium Management Program (SMP) activities for up to \$40,000.

Background

After two years of cooperative efforts, the Selenium Management Program was finalized in December 2011 when the US Bureau of Reclamation transmitted the Program Formulation Document (PFD) to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) on behalf of Gunnison Basin water user interests, satisfying an important requirement of the Gunnison Basin Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO) signed by the Service in December of 2009. River District staff was integral to drafting this guidance document and all related SMP development activities with significant support from Sonja Chavez de Baca of SC Environmental (SCE). Ms. Baca has been the primary contractor for the STF, under River District management, since approximately 2006.

Although, the River District shoulders the majority of the financial burden (recently up to \$30,000 per year) and significant technical services load, there are many significant partners. In addition to important state and federal partners (DNR/CWCB, Reclamation, Service, NRCS, and BLM), local and regional interests participate and contribute financially (the Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District (UGRWCD) has recognized that the SMP and PBO benefits the whole basin and has contributed up to \$10,000 per year to the River District since 2010. Reclamation has provided nominal amounts of financial assistance on a sporadic basis directly to SCE.

Although it is anticipated that the intensity of STF/SMP activities may decrease slightly in 2012, up to \$40,000 may be needed to support a diverse array of research, monitoring and mitigation implementation activities. Because this amount exceeds the contracting authority of the General Manager, it is hereby requested that the Board of Directors authorize staff to:

201 Centennial Street / PO Box 1120 • Glenwood Springs, CO 81602

(970) 945-8522 • (970) 945-8799 Fax

www.ColoradoRiverDistrict.org

Enter in a new contract with SCE (CA12003; please see attached letter of appreciation from the STF) to provide STF facilitation services and related SMP development work in an amount not to exceed \$40,000 dollars in 2012.



Lower Gunnison Basin

Gunnison Basin & Grand Valley Selenium Task Force

114 Sandpiper Trail, Gunnison, CO 81230
Phone/Fax: 970-641-8927
Email: info@seleniumtaskforce.org
Web: www.seleniumtaskforce.org



Grand Valley: Mt. Garfield

January 5, 2012

Thomas Sharp, President
Colorado River Water Conservation District
201 Centennial Street, Suite #204
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601

Dear Mr. Sharp,

On behalf of the Gunnison Basin and Grand Valley Selenium Task Forces (STF), I wish to sincerely thank the Colorado River Water Conservation District for your continued support of our efforts to reduce selenium in the lower Gunnison and Colorado River Basins.

The River District has been an essential political, technical, and financial contributor to our activities and greatly helped us as we pursue our mission of selenium control and preservation of the regional agricultural-based economy and heritage. The voluntary members of the STF are especially thankful for your continued critical funding of the part-time coordinator / facilitator staff position and your willingness to serve as a grant sponsor on several important STF grants. Funding for the coordinator is vitally important as we make progress toward meeting Colorado's water quality standards for selenium. The coordinator position supports many STF activities, including watershed planning and research, grant writing and project administration, stakeholder communication and meeting facilitation, as well as public outreach and education.

In fact, your support of the STF has directly contributed to the completion of the following (but not limited to) significant projects in 2011:

- Completion of the Final Selenium Management Program and related Formulation Document
- Establishment of the lower Gunnison Basin Wise Water Use Council
- Completion of a Draft Selenium Watershed Management Plan for the Colorado Water Quality Control Division / EPA
- Robust water-quality monitoring programs in both the lower Gunnison and Colorado Rivers; importantly, these data helped remove Colorado River Segments 2b and 3b (a.k.a. 15- and 18- Mile Reaches) from the State of Colorado's List of impaired Waters (303d list)
- Widespread education and outreach efforts (Selenium Public Forums, meetings with county commissions) that resulted in prominent media coverage and editorial comment (articles in Montrose Daily Press, Irrigation Leader Magazine and GJ Sentinel)
- Completion of Phase I of the EC Lateral Lining Demonstration Project
- Acquisition of UVWUA System Optimization Study Phase I funding through the Colorado NPS Program

- Acquisition of a BOR Science and Technology Grant for a Selenium Fate and Transport study
- Support of the Soil Health Initiative
- Initiation of a new national NRCS interpretive ranking initiative for seleniferous soils

In conclusion, the STF would like to reiterate its great appreciation for the River District's unflagging support. We recognize that your assistance has been instrumental in making our efforts successful. We look forward to our continued partnership in addressing selenium (and related salinity and water conservation) issues that are critical to the long-term environmental and economic sustainability of our regions of concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonja R. Chavez de Baca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sonja R. Chavez de Baca, Coordinator