



October 29, 2021

Mr. Scott Griebing
St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District
1715 Iron Horse Dr. Suite 250
Longmont, CO 80501

Mr. Griebing,

Thank you for the opportunity to request funding from the St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District. The Boulder Valley & Longmont Conservation Districts appreciate the \$23,000 contributed by your District to support the staffing of two foresters in 2021 through our agreement with the American Forest Foundation ("AFF").

The 2021 agreement has allowed the Boulder Valley & Longmont Conservation Districts to employ two foresters from March through December 31, 2021. This new request will allow the Conservation Districts to retain the two foresters on staff throughout 2022.

Project Description: Forest Restoration in Action

To protect our communities and ecosystems across the Northern Front Range, we need to restore the health of our forests. After a century of fire suppression, our forests are overcrowded and stressed. And in our dry Colorado landscape, denser forests are prone to higher chances of severe wildfire, insect infestations and other negative impacts for wildlife. To return our forests to their natural condition, we need to reduce tree density through active forest management practices. By actively managing our forests, we can reduce fire risk, promote native wildflower and wildlife habitats, protect water quality, and build ecological resilience.

Project Purpose: The purpose of the Grant is to enable the Natural Resources Conservation Service ("NRCS"), AFF and the Conservation Districts to work cooperatively in obtaining forestry technical assistance for non-industrial private forest (NIPF) landowners and tribes in Colorado, and to develop forest management plans on these properties. This Grant will prepare the private landowners to work with NRCS to finalize their forest management plans and be able to apply for cost-share assistance to manage forestry activities and improve soil and water conservation issues on their land.

This project aligns with the District's mission and values in several ways:

- Protecting water quality and drinking water sources directly through forest health partnerships and supporting local forest management. This partnership will contribute to a healthy watershed to reduce the risk of high severity wildfire and the associated aftermath.

- Safeguarding and conserving drinking water through education and outreach opportunities both for forestry landowners and water users on the plains.
- Growing local food using the irrigation water which originates in the upper reaches of the watershed.
- Maintaining healthy rivers and creeks through reduced high severity wildfire risk.

Organizational Description: The Boulder Valley & Longmont Conservation Districts, as special districts, and political subdivisions of the state of Colorado are fully capable of completing the project deliverables. The Districts have been in existence since 1945 and 1946. With a combined annual budget of nearly \$400,000 and five full-time staff, the Conservation Districts have all the policies and processes in place to complete the project. Over the decades, the Conservation Districts have implemented many conservation and educational programs and events. A few notable projects include working with farmers to implement the use of strip-tillage to conserve water and inputs in their agricultural management systems, the long-running annual tree and shrub seedling sale, and the ten-year run of the From Our Lands to Your Hands educational event.

In addition, we are co-housed with the NRCS and the Farm Service Agency, both of which provide essential services to landowners who wish to receive financial assistance through the USDA-EQIP program.

In 2021, the AFF forestry staff will exceed their deliverables to the AFF by completing four Forest Management Plans which include nine landowners covering 549 acres. The current foresters, Ben Markle and Scott Heffernan, will remain on staff through 2022. In addition to the 2021 deliverables, Scott and Ben completed many trainings and gained essential experience to make them even more confident, effective, and efficient moving forward.

Funding request:

Funding for this project comes from multiple sources:

1. Congress appropriates Farm Bill funding to the NRCS
2. NRCS reaches partnership agreement with the AFF
3. AFF grants subawards to additional partners including the Conservation Districts
4. Conservation Districts expected to match 1/3 of AFF Award
5. Conservation Districts seek additional funding from SVLHWCD to fulfill the 1/3 match

Funds Requested and Match Amounts*:

1. AFF – \$116,160
2. Boulder Valley & Longmont Conservation Districts - \$10,000
3. **SVLHWCD - \$29,000-\$35,000**

*All funds are estimates to be finalized on approved contract with AFF. The range of funds requested from SVLHWCD accounts for range of possible total contract with AFF.

Stakeholder Involvement: The Boulder Valley & Longmont Conservation Districts have the privilege of working with landowners in both the forested foothills and the agricultural plains of Boulder County. As these two landscapes are intertwined by their collective watershed, the downstream water users rely on

healthy forested watersheds. As such, the Conservation District foresters are actively engaged in several stakeholder groups including:

- Northern Colorado Fireshed Collaborative
- Boulder County Fireshed
- St. Vrain Forest Health Partnership
- BoCo Forest Collaboration

The foresters and other Conservation District staff frequently attend outreach events, tours, and workshops. District staff also provide technical assistance to landowners.

District Recognition: SVLHWCD will be recognized in several ways.

1. Contribution highlighted in two quarterly Conservation District newsletter articles featuring the District logo, mailed to over 600 stakeholders.
2. Contribution highlighted on our website www.longmontcd.org, with the District logo displayed and a link to the District website.
3. Contribution highlighted in slide presentation at Boulder Valley & Longmont Conservation Districts annual dinner.
4. Any other reasonable, mutually agreed upon outreach and marketing materials.