



St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District Funding Request Guidance

July 7, 2021

Background

The St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District (“District”) exists to provide holistic, sensible, and apolitical leadership to ensure a secure water future for District constituents and the environment by developing and managing water projects, facilitating water conservation, protecting water quality, and educating the public. As a local government, the District serves its constituents within and outside of Longmont and in the areas proximate to St. Vrain and Left Hand watershed basins.

On November 3, 2020, the registered electorate of the District approved Ballot Question 7A (“7A”). 7A, in its entirety reads:

Shall St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District taxes be increased up to \$3,337,003 and by such amounts as are generated annually thereafter, by an additional tax levy of 1.25 Mills (which increase amounts to approximately \$9 in 2021 for every \$100,000 in residential home value), for a period of ten years, in order to implement the District’s water plan which includes:

- ***Protect water quality in drinking water sources;***
- ***Maintain healthy rivers and creeks;***
- ***Safeguard and conserve drinking water supplies for local communities and local food production;***
- ***Protect forests that are critical to water supply and reduce the risk of wildfires;***

With oversight by the appointed board of local residents and subject to annual independent audits published on the District website; and shall the revenues from such increase be collected, retained, or spent as voter approved revenue changes and as an exemption to the limits which would otherwise apply?

The District’s Board of Directors adopted a Business Plan. This plan was summarized into a publicly digestible **Five Point Plan** to describe the District’s mission and values as reflected in 7A. The five points are:

- ***Protect water quality and drinking water sources*** though
 - Drought planning & preparedness
 - Improving and expanding the District’s augmentation program
 - Increasing stream gages, measurement devices, and telemetry for water administration and the support of the basin’s ecological attributes
 - Developing forest health partnerships and supporting local forest management
 - Protecting local water rights by building collaborative partnerships between in-basin water leaders to ensure diverse long-term thinking to protect water quality and quantity for future generations

- **Safeguard and conserve drinking Water** through
 - Conserving water including indoor water uses and urban outdoor irrigation
 - Educating the District constituents on how water management occurs in Colorado and in the District
 - Connecting the public to their water through tours of key water features and facilities
 - Leading the water community to reach a broader audience through all forms of media
- **Grow Local Food** through
 - Repairing aging irrigation infrastructure to improve efficiency and benefiting ecosystems
 - Educating and training the next generation of farmers
 - Encouraging mutually beneficial water sharing between cities and farms
- **Store water for dry years** through
 - In-stream flows for environment and recreation
 - Develop multipurpose “Creek Improvement Facilities” to serve as an alternative to traditional water storage
 - Mitigate climate uncertainty and optimize water management
- **Maintain healthy rivers and creeks** through
 - Restoring ecosystems including stabilizing creek channels and reconnecting floodplains
 - Improving diversion structure passage for debris, ecosystem, fish, and recreation benefits

Part of the District’s approach to implementing its Five Point Plan involves leveraging 7A funds through strategic partnerships with entities seeking to implement projects, programs, or services that align with the District’s mission and values. This document outlines the process and criteria the District uses to evaluate funding requests from partner entities.

Approval Process

The District follows the following process for reviewing and approving funding requests:

1. **Initial Conversation:** Potential partners are expected to initiate a discussion with District staff where the project and partnership opportunity is discussed as an initial screen. The District will provide guidance to potential partner entities to ensure a funding request has merit.
2. **Funding request letter:** Potential partner entities provide the District with a funding request letter that includes, at a minimum, the following:
 - a. A Project Description, including details of how the proposed project meets the District’s funding criteria
 - b. A description of the organization and its ability to complete the project
 - c. Funds being requested and the potential partner’s proposed match amount
 - d. Stakeholder involvement
 - e. Specific elements of how the District will be recognized for its financial contributions to the potential partner’s project
3. **District review:** District staff will review the funding request letter. District staff will work with the potential partner to refine the scope or budget of the funding request to better align it with the District’s mission, values, and available funds. District staff and the potential partner will present the funding request to the District’s board, as appropriate.
4. **Agreement:** If the District’s Board approves the funding request, the District will enter into a formal agreement with the partner, with such agreements ranging from an Intergovernmental Agreement (“IGA”), as appropriate, to a simple invoice, that will outline the amount and timing of the fund distribution and the partner’s obligations tied to the funding grant.
5. **Reporting:** The Agreement will require the partner to provide regular formal and informal updates to District staff and the District board on the progress of the project, the financial status of the

project, project outreach and District recognition, and any other relevant information the District deems appropriate.

6. *Timeline:* Funding request letters must be received by the District before **September 1** to receive funds for the following calendar year. Presentations to the District Board related to funding requests will occur during the District's November Board meeting, which falls on the second Monday in November. The District's Board will officially approve the budget for funding requests during the December Board meeting.

Funding Criteria

District staff will evaluate all funding requests based, at a minimum, on the criteria listed below. Requests for projects, programs, or services that do not satisfy the criteria will not be considered for funding.

- *Align with the District's mission & values:* Any funding request must align the District's mission and values as expressed by the District's Five Point Plan, as the same may be amended or modified from time to time. Funding requests must align with at least one of the Five Points described above.
- *Occurs in District Boundaries:* All funding requests must go to projects, programs, or services that occur or will have a net benefit within the boundaries of the St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District. All projects, programs, or services must benefit the District's constituents. For a map of the District's Boundaries, please refer to the District's website: <https://svlhwcd.org/resources-maps/>.
- *Eligible Partners:* The District will field funding requests from a variety of potential partners including but not limited to established non-profit organizations, watershed coalitions, State of Colorado departments and agencies, local governments, and conservation districts.
- *Capability to Accomplish the proposed work:* Potential partners requesting funds must show they are able to complete the proposed work. The District will review a potential partner's ability to accomplish the proposed work based on the following:
 - Annual budget
 - Level of staffing to be directed toward the implementation of the proposed work
 - Demonstrate realistic budget and schedule
 - Partner length of existence
 - History of accomplishments in the basin
 - On a case by case basis, and when necessary - insurance and/or indemnification
- *Cost-Sharing:* It is the expectation of the District that the potential partner contribute matching funds for any project. Matching funds can consist of a cash match or a combination of a cash and in-kind match, such as services and labor of the potential partner.
- *Branding and Signage:* The District must be included in the marketing and outreach involved in any project that it funds, including recognizing the District's funding contribution using logos and signage approved by the District.

Preferred Project Attributes

In addition to the criteria listed above, the District may give preference to projects, programs, or services that incorporate the following elements:

- *Multiple Stakeholders:* The District prefers projects, programs, or services that involve more than one organization or entity and build robust stakeholder engagement. Funding requests can highlight this by clearly describing which stakeholders are involved and their level of participation in the project. Letters of support from local stakeholders are encouraged to accompany funding requests.
- *Mult-Objective Projects, programs, or services:* Projects, programs, or services that meet multiple objectives and multiple points of the District's Five Point Plan will be more likely to be funded by the District.

- *District-wide impact:* The District may consider funding requests that have a District-wide impact over projects, programs, or services that are limited to one geographical part of the District.

Emergency Funding Requests

The District has a proven history of serving the St. Vrain and Left Hand community during natural disasters and emergencies. The District will evaluate funding requests from partner organizations in the event of emergencies such as floods, wildfires, and droughts on a case-by-case basis and may not adhere to these guidelines and criteria in its decision to approve emergency funding requests.

Modification of District Guidance

The District reserves the right to add, modify, or otherwise revise this Guidance document at any time without advanced notice.