To: Casey Davenhill, Diane Kielty, Colorado Watershed Assembly, Healthy Rivers Fund

From: Dana Dallavalle, Colorado Water Trust

Subject: Final Report for Poudre Flows Project

1. NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

As you will see below in the “Unanticipated Developments and Challenges,” our Poudre Flows project was set back one year owing to the delay in passing the legislation necessary to support the legal structure of the innovative environmental water market we are aiming to put in place. Throughout the majority of 2019 and early 2020, we led a legislative effort that included stakeholder outreach, bill drafting, and testimony before the General Assembly. We continued to build relationships with our project partners, educated community members on the importance of the project through several events, presentations, and written materials, and continued to raise funds and build community support for the project. We completed a comprehensive Memorandum of Agreement for the Poudre Flows project that was signed by all project partners, and which outlines the entire scope and the intended future of the project. Everything we were able to advance without the legislation in place—such as communications, fundraising, education, and relationship building—was carried out extensively. In March, Governor Polis signed the bill into law, and in April we met with project partners to begin taking the next steps towards our original stated goals and objectives.

2. UNANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENTS and CHALLENGES:

Colorado Water Trust and our partners remain excited about the advancement of our Poudre Flows project. In 2019, we worked as proponents on legislation that would make possible the legal structure of our project. Unfortunately, legislators blocked the bill that we worked on in 2019. Our project was then delayed a year. Early this year, however, after educating lawmakers and spreading the word about the bill, the legislation passed with overwhelming bipartisan support and the Governor signed our bill into law in March.

Most bills become effective three months after the end of the annual legislative session. In a normal year, the legislative session ends in May and the legislation we worked on would become effective in August. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, however, the General Assembly has suspended the legislative session and we anticipate that the legislation we worked on will become effective in October or November. Once that happens, we will be able to present our plan to the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) for approval. Their administrative approval process takes two board meetings over the course of 120 days.
We are helping the CWCB and the cities of Fort Collins, Greeley, and Thornton to enter three contracts for “seed” water. The seed water is the initial water that will be banked into this project and be protected as environmental flow. Upon filing an application for approval of the plan for augmentation with water court, we anticipate gaining temporary approval to pilot the project using the seed water. This could take place as soon as spring of 2021.

Colorado Water Trust is accustomed to interruptions, delays, and complications associated with our projects, whether due to the complicated legal approvals needed or because we are managing projects that include partners with diverse interests. Our Poudre Flows project is a decade in the making and once it is implemented, it will be groundbreaking. But in order to get there, it will take time. We are committed to the long-term nature of our projects; it’s what we’re known for – never giving up. And we appreciate our funders who understand the important long-term role we play in bringing Coloradans together to restore Colorado’s rivers.

An updated and detailed timeline is included with this report.

Thank you for being patient with our project’s implementation and for allowing the extension in last December of 2019.

3. OUTREACH:

DOCUMENTARY FEATURE:
As part of our outreach and communications work for the Poudre Flows project, we are working on a feature in a local documentary about “critical issues facing the historic river that settled Northern Colorado and influenced the American West, where water is called liquid gold.” The documentary is titled Watering the West: A Water Western starring the Cache La Poudre River. You can find more information and trailers here: https://wateringthewest.com/
Colorado Water Trust and the Poudre Flows project will be discussed as one of the many diverse collaborations aiming to restore the Poudre River. Additionally, Colorado Watershed Assembly/Healthy Rivers Fund’s logo, along with Colorado Water Trust’s logo, will be featured in the credits thanks to the approval of the $5,000 donation from your generous outreach, branding, and communications grant.

MEETINGS:
Colorado Water Trust held several meetings throughout the Fort Collins area and beyond to share more about the Poudre Flows projects with people from Xcel Energy Foundation, Yampa Valley Community Foundation, Patagonia, Telluray Foundation, Morning Fresh Dairy/Noosa Yogurt, New Belgium Family Foundation, American Whitewater, Poudre Heritage Alliance, individual donors, various other private foundations, and project partners.

EVENTS:
Colorado Water Trust hosted several events and also teamed up with other local entities to partner on events in the community to talk about our Poudre Flows project. Below is a list of some examples of those events:
4/24/2019: We held a house party at a local donor’s home with their friends in Fort Collins. We were able to gain four new monthly donors! Below is a picture of our Senior Staff Attorney, Kate Ryan, explaining the Poudre Flows project to guests with our Executive Director, Andy Schultheiss.

6/25/2019: We hosted the Party on the Poudre at Craig Harrison’s ranch in Timnath. We raised over $1000 at this party from guests. Below are pictures from the event with Andy Schultheiss giving a warm welcome to guests and sharing about the Poudre Flows project.
9/23/2019: Senior Staff Attorney, Kate Ryan and Development Director, Dana Dallavalle, participated in Poudre Heritage Alliance’s Peddle the Poudre where we got to talk with attendees about the Poudre Flows project.

10/14/2019: We partnered with Poudre Heritage Alliance for their Poudre Pub Talk event at Odell Brewing and Kate gave a presentation on the Poudre Flows project to attendees.