Grant Guidelines and Information

1. Background

The Yampa River Fund (YRF) is a community-based collaborative dedicated to identifying and funding activities that protect the water supply, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities provided by the Yampa River.

The YRF will invest in conservation and restoration activities that positively impact Yampa River flows and support natural-resource based livelihoods, including agriculture and recreation, throughout the basin. It will ensure that a healthy, flowing Yampa River remains the thriving center of our communities for generations to come.

The goal of the Yampa River Fund is to establish a sustainable, voluntary funding source for the Yampa River in order to:

• Enhance water security for communities, agriculture, the economy, and the natural environment in the Yampa Valley;
• Support a healthy, flowing river and enhance critical low flows through water leases from reservoirs, and;
• Maintain or improve river function through a holistic approach to restoration of riparian and/or in-channel habitat.

The Yampa River Fund “Collaboration and Administration Agreement” (CAA) identifies the origin of the criteria used to establish the Fund. The CAA states:

The Yampa White Green Roundtable adopted the Basin Implementation Plan (the “BIP”) in April 2015 with the purpose of ensuring that existing consumptive, environmental and recreational uses are met. The BIP sets forth the following goals (the “BIP Goals”) for the protection of the Yampa, White and Green River basins in the state of Colorado:

• protect the Yampa River Basin from compact curtailment of existing decreed water uses and some increment of future uses;
• improve agricultural water supplies to increase irrigated land and reduce shortages;
• identify and address municipal and industrial water shortages;
• quantify and protect non-consumptive (environmental & recreation) water uses;
• maintain and consider the existing natural range of water quality that is necessary for current and anticipated water uses;
• restore, maintain and modernize water storage and distribution infrastructure; and
• develop an integrated system of water use, storage, administration and delivery to reduce water shortages and meet environmental and recreational needs.

YRF PURPOSES AND POWERS
1.1 General Purpose. The general purpose of the YRF is to advance the goals of the BIP, the Yampa Integrated Water Management Plan, the Yampa River Health Assessment and Streamflow Management Plan (Steamboat Springs Stream Management Plan) and the Endangered Fishes Plan by establishing a sustainable fund to be used for grants that will be issued to support projects and programs that will enhance water security for communities, agriculture, the economy and the natural environment in the Yampa Valley, in compliance with applicable laws.

1.2 Primary Purposes. The primary purpose of the YRF is to enhance water security for communities, agriculture, industry, the economy and the natural environment in the Yampa River Basin (the “Intent”) by providing funding and supporting the efforts of other organizations and individuals to implement the following:

- (i) voluntary, market-based water leases and releases from reservoirs that will enhance river flows;
- (ii) restoration actions (on private and public land) that will improve riparian, in-channel, streambank and aquatic habitat;
- (iii) improvements or enhancements to water storage, distribution, management and infrastructure in the Yampa River Basin that will generate combined agricultural, industrial, environmental and recreational benefits.

and (iv) undertake fundraising activities with the objective of building, managing and administering a substantial fund (the “Fund”), the principal and earnings of which shall be dedicated to and expended by the YRF pursuant to this Agreement to support such efforts.

2. Yampa River Fund Eligibility

In the Yampa River Fund’s spirit of collaboration and desire for community benefit, landowners and groups that do not meet the eligibility criteria are encouraged to partner with qualified organizations on potential YRF projects. If you have questions about your eligibility or want to learn more about possible partnerships, contact the YRF Manager. (The following categories are derived from the Yampa White Green Basin Roundtable eligibility criteria.)

A. Entities Eligible to Apply for YRF funds

1) Public (Government): municipalities, enterprises, counties, and State of Colorado agencies. Federal agencies are eligible, but the agency needs to demonstrate why a local non-federal partner should not be the grant recipient. Federal agencies are encouraged to work with local entities.

2) Public (Districts): authorities, Title 32 special districts, conservancy, conservation, and irrigation districts, and water activity enterprises.

3) Private Incorporated: mutual ditch companies, homeowners associations, and non-profit corporations.

4) Non-governmental organizations: typically, non-profit but they may also include for-profit corporations. 1

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1 Note that non-governmental organizations are almost always organized as non-profit entities in the United States. The category of “for-profit, non-governmental organizations” is meant for organizations with a public purpose and is likely to apply only in rare circumstances. Check with the YRF Manager for more clarification.
B. Eligible YRF Project Types

1) Proposed projects must satisfy these YRF Priorities:
   - Support science-based projects classified in one of the project pools listed below.
   - Provide project budget, timeline, evaluation and monitoring plan, and letter(s) of support from affected project area landowners and/or water users.

2) Project Funding Pools (Determine which Pool best represents the Project)
   - Pool A - Flow Enhancement Reservoir Releases: Voluntary, market-based water leases and releases from reservoirs that will enhance river flows based on best available science. Examples include:
     a. Any voluntary water lease from a reservoir (consistent with Colorado water law and in compliance with interstate compacts and the Federal Endangered Species Act) that increases flow during a period when river flows would not otherwise attain flow goals identified in the Yampa River Fund’s Conservation Objectives (see Appendix __).
     b. Priority is placed on leases that will benefit stream reaches with known valuable aquatic resources and/or riparian resources, recreational activities or that have known water quality standard exceedances.
   - Pool B - Identified Restoration Actions: Restoration actions (on private and public land) that will improve riparian, in-channel, streambank, and aquatic habitat, including those that address critical water quality issues. Project proponent’s approach to long term sustainability must be described in the evaluation and monitoring plan approach in section 2B5. Examples include:
     b. Projects that restore stream function, provide aquatic habitat to benefit aquatic and/or terrestrial species, re-vegetate riparian areas with native species, reduce erosion, improve channel/floodplain connectivity, and other restoration projects that address ecological needs identified in the Yampa River Fund Conservation Objectives.
   - Pool C - Infrastructure Improvements: Infrastructure improvements that will generate combined consumptive use and environmental/recreational benefits. Project proponent’s approach to long term sustainability must be described in the evaluation and monitoring plan. Examples include:
     a. Infrastructure projects that improve fish passage and recreational opportunities.
     b. Infrastructure projects that eliminate the need for annual construction of gravel push-up diversion dams (and thereby allow fish passage and improve aquatic habitat).
     c. Water efficiency improvement projects that result in measurably less water diverted from the river.

C. Description of Ranking Criteria (See the “Yampa River Fund -Proposal Evaluation Matrix” below for scoring explanation.)

1) Yampa Fund Project Priorities
   - Aligns with Yampa River Fund Goals.
• Contributes matching funds or in-kind services.
• Incorporates educational elements or public participation in execution.
• Integrates with or complements existing or planned projects, programs, and planning efforts.
• Includes monitoring plan to demonstrate progress toward YRF goals identified in the YRF Conservation Objectives. Proposals should include narrative describing approach to stewardship and outreach/education.

2a. Pool A - Flow Enhancement Reservoir Releases: Water releases during low flows that will benefit a critical river reach as defined by YRF Conservation Objectives, to address aquatic habitat need, recreational activities, or ameliorate water quality standard exceedances.

• Pool A projects that address ecological flow targets score higher than those that address recreational flow targets. Projects that address both score highest. (see explanation of ranking and multiplier approach below)
• Pool A projects that restore flow during dry years will score higher.
• Pool A projects that provide water for multiple beneficial uses will score higher.

2b. Pool B - Identified Restoration Actions: Restoration actions (on private and public land) that will improve riparian, in-channel, streambank, and aquatic habitat, including those that address known water quality issues.

• Pool B projects that will benefit habitat for species listed as endangered, threatened, or State species of concern, and/or remove or mitigate invasive species will score higher.

2c. Pool C - Infrastructure Improvements: Efficiency or infrastructure projects that will provide benefits for the environment and recreation as well as other uses.

• Pool C projects that address ecological needs identified in the YRF Conservation Objectives will score higher.

To evaluate proposals, the YRF may score proposals based on the criteria presented in the attached scoring matrix and as described above. The total project score includes the score for Yampa River Fund Project Priorities (item 1) plus the score for an individual project pool (item 2a, 2b, or 2c, depending on project type). The maximum score for Pool A projects is 100, and for Pool B or C projects, the maximum score is 90. All projects are ranked out of 100 points to account for the Yampa River Fund's priority to fund flow enhancement projects in drier years.

Note that multi-year or multi-phase projects are allowed not to exceed three years. The applicant is asked to explain the Project timeline in the Project description and the Budget worksheet.
### Yampa River Fund - Proposal Evaluation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Multiplier</th>
<th>Max Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alignment with YRF Goals</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides matching funds or in-kind services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Includes educational component</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrates with existing or planned projects and/or planning efforts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring approach</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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**Subtotal**: 50

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Multiplier</th>
<th>Max Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits a river reach with known valuable aquatic or riparian resources, recreational activities, or known water quality exceedances</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides meaningful flow improvement toward ecological flow goals identified in the YRF Conservation Objectives</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrological Year Type (Dry = 3-5, Avg = 1-2, Wet = 0)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides water for multiple beneficial uses (industrial, ag, enviro/rec)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Subtotal**: 50

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Multiplier</th>
<th>Max Score</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improves riparian, in-channel, streambank, and aquatic habitat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addresses known water quality issue, benefits endangered or sensitive species habitat, removes or mitigates invasive species</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Subtotal**: 40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Multiplier</th>
<th>Max Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides multiple benefits (eg. Ag + Rec, Ag + Env)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addresses ecological need(s) identified in the YRF Conservation Objectives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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**Subtotal**: 40

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### 3. Reporting and Payment Information

**Note**: max scopes for items 2b and 2c are 10 points lower than item 2a to account for YRF’s priority on funding flow projects in dry years
### Granting Information

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) serves as the Management Entity for the Yampa River Fund and, as such, will be the granting entity for YRF grants, as specified in the CAA. Successful applicants will sign a grant agreement with TNC. As part of the granting process, TNC may request copies of documents to ensure that Grantee meets the required eligibility criteria and that the Grantee meets appropriate standards of capacity, competence, and financial accountability. These documents include but are not limited to the following: a certificate of good standing, a list of the names of all of its board members and principal officers, copies of Grantee’s bylaws and articles of incorporation. The agreement may contain the elements listed below regarding reporting requirements and payment. Contact Andy Baur, Yampa River Fund Manager with any questions or to request a template copy of the grant agreement: andrew.baur@tnc.org.

### Reporting Requirements

**Progress Reports:** The applicant shall provide the YRF a programmatic and financial progress report every 6 months, beginning from the date of the execution of a grant agreement. The progress report shall describe the status of the tasks identified in the section 2D Application, including a description of any major issues that have occurred and any corrective action taken to address these issues.

**Final Report:** At completion of the project, the applicant shall provide TNC and YRF a Final Report on the applicant's letterhead that:
- Summarizes the project and how the project was completed.
- Describes any obstacles encountered, and how these obstacles were overcome.
- A financial report detailing the income and expenditure and confirms that all matching commitments have been fulfilled.
- Includes photographs, summaries of meetings and engineering reports/designs.

### Payment

TNC will pay the Grantee for reimbursement of project expenses. An initial disbursement may be made and subsequent disbursements will be made based upon submission and acceptance of the programmatic and financial report in accordance with the schedule above. TNC will make its final payment when the Final Report is completed to the satisfaction of TNC and YRF staff. Once the Final Report has been accepted, and final payment has been issued, grant will be closed with no further payment.

Costs incurred prior to the effective date of this contract are not reimbursable. All products, data and information developed as a result of this contract must be provided to YRF in an electronic format as part of Project documentation.