

Contract Opportunity

Colorado Water Congress Colorado River Project Coordinator

The Colorado River Project Coordinator (Coordinator) represents Colorado River water users in Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah in the implementation of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program (Recovery Program) (<https://coloradoriverrecovery.org/uc/>). A broad coalition of twenty-three water users in Colorado and Utah provide funding for a Coordinator through the Colorado Water Congress Colorado River Project (Project). Each contributing water user is a member of the Project's Executive Committee and provides guidance and direction to the Project Coordinator and is kept informed of Recovery Program activities through regular meetings with and correspondence from the Coordinator.

The successful candidate will collaborate with the current Coordinator for sufficient time to gain a complete understanding of the Program and the responsibilities of the position. The water users have benefitted from having the current Coordinator since the inception of the Recovery Program with one point of contact and consistent, successful representation in all of the Recovery Program facets. The water users realize how unique the arrangement has been with the longevity and the water users will have an ongoing need for a Coordinator as long as the Recovery Program exists. The Recovery Program or its successor is expected to be permanent. A candidate that has a vision to provide a way for historic knowledge learning, retention and application, along with the ability to look toward the future, for a time period of 10-years or more is desired.

Coordinator will be an independent contractor and not an employee of the Colorado Water Congress (CWC). Coordinator could be an individual or a company. If a company wishes to apply, please identify and provide qualifications of the primary person responsible for the scope of work and any additional supporting staff. The company must provide a commitment that one person will serve as Coordinator and that any change in staff must be approved by the Executive Committee. This does not preclude that person from other duties. The estimated time requirement averages 20 hours per week. The applicant must disclose any potential conflicts of interest.

Compensation range: \$120 - \$200 per hour, depending on knowledge, skills, and experience.

Minimum Qualifications: Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university in Planning, Natural Resource Management, Environmental Science, Watershed Science, Engineering, or related field. Minimum 6 years of related work experience. Any equivalent combination of certifications, education, or experience that provides the required skills, knowledge, and abilities for the position.

Preferred Qualifications: A candidate with skills/experience in working with Congress on appropriations/authorizing legislation, a track record of successfully working with members of diverse groups to achieve consensus on difficult issues, ESA experience, and knowledge of the Recovery Program is preferred.

A detailed Scope of Services is attached as *EXHIBIT A*.

Applicant Submittal Information

Please submit your letter of interest and resume or documents to Colorado Water Congress by email to chane@cowatercongress.org with the email subject line “Project Coordinator – [your name]”.

The position will be open until filled. Initial interviews are anticipated to be conducted the week of January 29th coordinated with the Colorado Water Congress Annual Convention, January 31 to February 2, 2024, in Aurora, Colorado.

This is an equal employment opportunity.

Background

In mid-1983, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released a draft proposal to restrict future water development in the Upper Colorado River Basin in order to protect native fish species listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act. The Colorado Water Congress (CWC) Colorado River Project was established on December 1, 1983 by a coalition of Colorado and Utah water users. The objective of the Project was to develop an acceptable administrative solution to resolve conflicts between protection of federally listed endangered fish species and development and management of water in the Upper Colorado River Basin. Negotiations among federal agencies, the states of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming, water interests, and environmental organizations between 1984 and 1987 resulted in establishment of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Implementation Program (Recovery Program) on January 22, 1988 by agreement of the Secretary of the Interior, the Administrator Western Area Power Administration, and the governors of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. The Recovery Program has the objective of recovering endangered fish while water development and management activities proceed in compliance with the ESA, Reclamation project authorizations, and state water and wildlife law. This objective is being achieved.

Current participants in the Recovery Program include four federal agencies (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, and Western Area Power Administration), the states of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, Upper Basin water users, Colorado River Storage Project power customers (Colorado River Energy Distributors Association), and environmental organizations (The Nature Conservancy, Western Resource Advocates).

Recovery Program actions taken to recover the species include construction of fish passages, fish screens, habitat improvements, non-native fish control, enhancing instream flows in accordance with state water law and interstate compacts, stocking, monitoring, and research. These actions provide the ESA compliance for water depletions and water management in the Upper Colorado River Basin for federal, non-federal, and tribal water projects. In entering the agreement to establish the Recovery Program, the United States agreed that any water needed for endangered fish would be acquired in accordance with state law and interstate compacts, and that there would be no taking of water or condemnation of water rights. The states, water users and the Bureau of Reclamation committed to finding ways to provide water for endangered fish in accordance with state law, interstate compacts and Reclamation project authorizations.

As of December 31, 2022, the Recovery Program has provided ESA compliance for 2,203 water projects depleting approximately 2.8 million acre-feet/year in Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah. This includes 1,262 projects in Colorado depleting 2.1 million acre-feet per year, 266 projects in Utah depleting 619,439 acre-feet per year, and 434 projects in Wyoming depleting 124,463 acre-feet per year. No lawsuits have been filed on ESA compliance provided by the Recovery Program.

Role of the CWC Colorado River Project in the Upper Basin Recovery Program

The CWC Colorado River Project (Project) plays a key role in Recovery Program implementation. The Project supports participation by the water users' representative in the Recovery Program's governing and technical committees. Participation ensures that the Recovery Program is implemented in accordance with existing agreements. The Coordinator confers with and seeks input from the Executive Committee on key Recovery Program issues and provides assistance to water users throughout the Upper Colorado River Basin when needed to assure that ESA Section 7 consultations on water projects are carried out in accordance with Recovery Program agreements.

Because the Project is not part of a federal or state agency, it has considerable latitude in dealing directly with the United States Congress and presidential administrations with respect to Recovery Program matters. Since its inception, the Project has been involved in successful efforts to secure federal funding for the Recovery Program. In 2000, the Project garnered Congressional support for and coordinated passage of federal legislation (P.L. 106-392) that authorized federal cost sharing for the Recovery Program and use of Colorado River Storage Project hydropower revenues for Recovery Program activities, and recognizes non-federal cost sharing. This legislation also authorized funding for the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program (<https://coloradoriverrecovery.org/sj/>). The Project has played a leading role in passage of subsequent amendments to expand federal cost-sharing as needed. Each year the Project works with other non-federal participants in both recovery programs to secure annual appropriations by Congress for the Recovery Program and the San Juan Recovery Program in accordance with the authorizing legislation. The annual appropriations are divided between the two programs pursuant to the authorizing legislation. As of September 30, 2023, Congress has appropriated \$173,552,000 in support of the Recovery Program and authorized \$115,774,000 in Colorado River Storage Project Colorado River Project hydropower revenues to support the Recovery Program. Total Recovery Program costs from FY 1989 through FY 2023 were \$478,919,000, including non-federal contributions and credits to participants for various activities.

EXHIBIT A
SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Consultant shall be responsible for providing the following Services in fulfillment of the Consulting Services Agreement:

1. The Consultant shall serve as Project Coordinator (Coordinator) for the Colorado Water Congress Colorado River Project. The Colorado River Project is a special project established by the Board of Directors, Colorado Water Congress (CWC). In this capacity, the Consultant shall:

- a. Periodically meet with the Colorado River Project Executive Committee at times and locations designated by the Committee. Generally, these meetings will take place monthly. At least two meetings per year should be in-person or hybrid.
- b. May be asked to attend and coordinate trips to Washington, D.C. for Congressional briefings.
- c. At each Executive Committee meeting, provide the Executive Committee with a report on the status of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program (Recovery Program), report on pending issues, provide recommendations, and seek advice from the Executive Committee on how issues should be resolved and the position of the Executive Committee on issues.
- d. Prior to each Executive Committee meeting, provide an invoice for services and a report on the financial status of the Colorado River Project with respect to annual expenditures to date vs. budget, and remaining funds on a monthly basis.
- e. Provide Zoom or Teams invite to the meetings and a written summary of Executive Committee meetings and notices of the date, time, and location of the next meeting to members of the Executive Committee and CWC.
- f. Coordinator will periodically provide written reports under this agreement to the CWC Board of Directors describing the status of the Colorado River Project and pending issues and will provide information to the CWC Board of Directors as requested.
- g. By October 1 each year, the Coordinator will prepare a proposed annual budget for the following year for the Colorado River Project, and submit the proposed budget to the Executive Committee and CWC for review and approval.
- h. CWC will prepare invoices requesting voluntary contributions to the Colorado River Project Executive Committee members each by the end of each year based on the approved budget. The invoices will state that all contributions be sent to the CWC and can be paid prior to the end of the current year or in the next calendar year.

2. Coordinator will represent Colorado Water Congress, Utah Water Users Association, and Wyoming Water Association, as the "water users representative" on the Recovery Program. In this capacity the duties of the Consultant will include:

a. Attendance at all meetings of the following Recovery Program committees: Recovery Implementation Committee, Management, Biology, Water Acquisition, Information & Education. In addition, Coordinator will participate in subcommittee activities as needed to provide water user input, guidance, and direction to the Recovery Program.

b. Coordinator will represent the views of the Executive Committee to the Recovery Program through active participation in committee and subcommittee meetings, and through correspondence and discussion with Recovery Program participants serving on the various committees.

c. Coordinator will participate in efforts with other Recovery Program participants to secure federal and state funding for the Recovery Program.

d. Coordinator will periodically report to the Colorado Water Congress, Utah Water Users Association, and Wyoming Water Association on the status of the Recovery Program through reports at association meetings and correspondence.

e. Coordinator will provide information and assistance on ESA compliance per agreements on procedures agreed upon as part of the Recovery Program as needed to individual waters in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming regardless of whether or not such water users are members of the Executive Committee.

3. Coordinator will be available for discussions and meetings concerning the Colorado River Project with individual members of the Executive Committee and Colorado Water Congress staff as needed.

4. Coordinator will perform other duties related to the goals and objectives of the Colorado River Project as directed by the Executive Committee, including Congressional activities.