

# WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Planning Grant Proposal



Establishment of a New Watershed Group to Foster Collaboration, Trust, Outreach,  
Planning, and Solutions in the South Fork of the Boise River Watershed in  
Southwest Idaho



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## 1. Executive Summary

The executive summary should include:

- The date, applicant name, city, county, and state.
- A one paragraph project summary that identifies the location of the watershed area in which the group will work, provide a brief description of the activities that will be carried out, any partners involved, watershed concerns in the watershed area, area and how the activities completed through this grant are expected to help alleviate impacts of those conditions. This information will be used to create a summary of your project for our website if the project is selected for funding.

Date: 29 March 2022

Applicant Name: Trout Unlimited

City, County, and State: Boise, Ada County, Idaho

Length of Time: Two years beginning January 1, 2023

Estimated Completion Date: December 31, 2025

Trout Unlimited (TU) and partners seek to establish a new watershed group focused on the lower section of the South Fork Boise River (SFBR), located in southwestern Idaho. The watershed is located just east of Boise, Idaho, one of the fastest growing communities in the nation. The SFBR Watershed includes a significant amount of Federal lands – primarily National Forest lands (Boise & Sawtooth National Forests) with some Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Reclamation lands.

The South Fork Boise River houses a trophy rainbow trout fishery; it also harbors important habitat for several other different fish species, including bull trout and mountain whitefish. This river corridor is a designated state protected river also qualifies as a candidate for Federal Wild & Scenic designation. This watershed is of significant cultural importance to the Shoshone-Bannock and Shoshone-Paiute Tribes.

TU will seek out and involve a diverse group of interests including landowners, local governments in Ada, Camas, and Elmore counties, recreation and conservation groups, water use interests, Federal land and water management agencies, state agencies, Tribal governments and other affected stakeholders. A long history of uses, including road building, recreation, and water management have resulted in riparian and aquatic habitat degradation among other issues. The watershed group will identify and prioritize major watershed concerns, including, but not limited to: degraded water quality; aquatic, riparian and wetland habitat degradation; loss of stream function; bank and channel instability; and impacts of climate change.

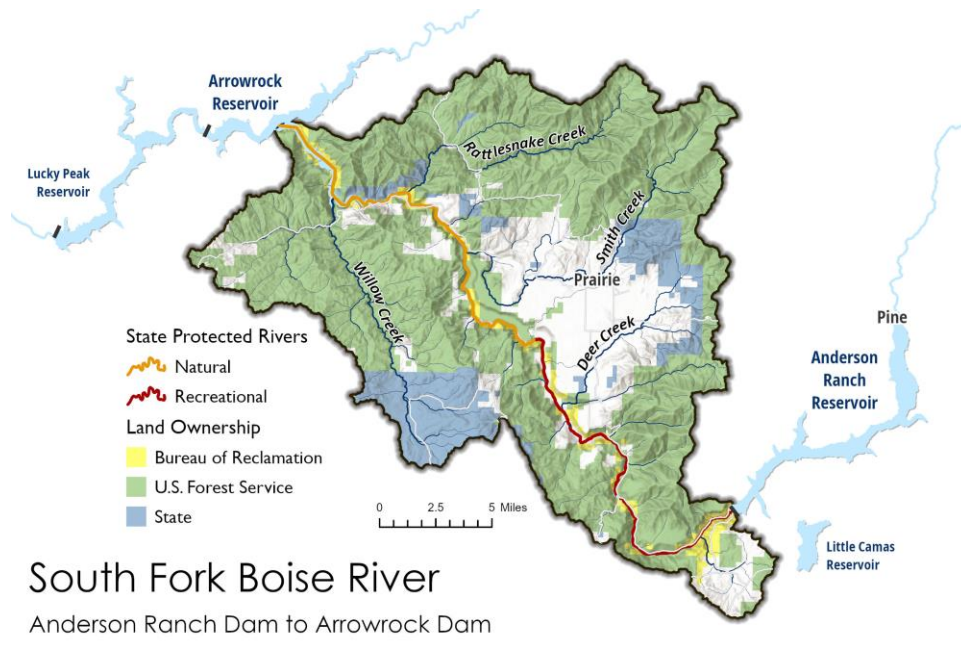
To create a thriving watershed group for the South Fork Boise River, grant funding will support organizational development, stakeholder and community outreach, background research such as a recreational user survey, and pre-planning for a future stakeholder-driven watershed restoration plan that can be used to help identify and prioritize future projects in the basin.

The proposed watershed group will be focused on the lower portion of the South Fork Boise River watershed, which begins downstream of Anderson Ranch Dam (including tributaries) to Arrowrock Dam.

## 2. Project Location

Provide specific information on the geographic location of the area in which the watershed group will work including a map showing the geographic location.

The South Fork Boise River (HUC 17050113) is located in Elmore & Camas counties in Idaho, approximately 48 miles east of Boise, the state’s capital city. The watershed encompasses approximately 1,300 square miles of land and drains to the northwest. For reasons outlined below, we propose that the watershed group focus on the lower South Fork Boise River, namely, the river and its tributaries below Anderson Ranch Dam to Arrowrock Reservoir. Anderson Ranch Dam is a major storage reservoir and flow management system operated by the Bureau of Reclamation.



## 3. Technical Project Description

### 3.1 Applicant Category

Please indicate whether you are seeking funding as a New or Existing Watershed Group and explain why you chose to apply under that Applicant Category. As part of this discussion, please

provide a brief history of the group, including discussion of: (1) when and how the group was initiated, and (2) ongoing projects or efforts (e.g., previous watershed planning activities).

Trout Unlimited (TU) is applying for grant funding to establish a New Watershed Group, the South Fork Boise River Watershed Group (SFBRWG), in southwest Idaho. TU is applying under this category because no established watershed group currently exists for any portion of the South Fork Boise River.

TU volunteers and staff have worked in the South Fork Boise River Watershed since 1992 including activities such as placing fence lines, scientific data collection such as a genetic study, and outreach. In 2007 and 2008, Boise National Forest officials and TU volunteers assessed spawning habitat in the area (please see <https://www.southforkboise.org/sfb-library>). In 2011, TU and the Boise National Forest completed the Pierce Creek Reconnection Project to improve fish passage and connectivity by replacing a non-functioning culvert with a bridge. Please click here to view a video about this project <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htMVUOmwa6Q>.

In 2011 and 2013, TU worked with partners Idaho Fish and Game and Bureau of Reclamation to complete further studies regarding flow release and sedimentation impacts of flushing flows, and to better understand how wildfires have played a role in changing the watershed. In 2013 and 2015, TU volunteers hosted riparian planting efforts within the watershed to restore areas along the river damaged by fires and heavy recreation use.

Many of the activities mentioned above included significant cooperation and coordination with numerous government agencies and other stakeholders. For example, the Pierce Creek reconnection project required TU to secure the support of the Mountain Home Highway District, obtain financial support from the Southwest Idaho Resource Advisory Committee, coordinate with area ranchers, and collaborate with officials from the Boise National Forest. Completing the genetic study involved working with Idaho Department of Fish and Game, TU staff scientists and the University of Nevada who performed the genetic analysis.

The relationships built through these activities have created a strong foundation on which to establish a new watershed group. With the assistance of the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP) Grant, and working closely with partners representing diverse interests, we will create a comprehensive watershed group for the SFBR watershed with the knowledge and expertise to improve and protect watershed health and resiliency now and into the future. Among other benefits, a watershed group will lead to increased communication and collaboration among stakeholders thereby better aligning multiple stakeholders' interests in a collective and organized environment.

### 3.2 Eligibility of Applicant

Please write a narrative summary indicating how the applicant meets the eligibility requirements, as described in *Section C.1. Eligible Applicants*. Please include an explanation of the applicant's role in the New or Existing Watershed Group.

TU is the nation's largest grassroots coldwater conservation organization with a mission to bring together diverse interests to care for and recover rivers and streams so our children can experience the joy of wild and native trout and salmon. TU works to achieve this mission on a

local, state, and national level through an extensive volunteer network and dedicated staff. Headquartered outside of Washington, D.C., TU is a 501c (3) nonprofit organization founded in 1959 that currently has approximately 258 staff working in 36 offices from Alaska to North Carolina. TU has extensive federal grant management experience, and currently manages over 300 different federal grants, including numerous grants in partnership with the Bureau of Reclamation.

TU has led or been involved in several watershed groups supported by CWMP grant funding, including the Wood River Water Collaborative in Idaho, the Boise River Enhancement Network on the lower Boise River, the Blue River Watershed Group in Colorado, the Bitter Root Water Forum in Montana, the Sun River Watershed Group in Montana, and the Willwood Working Group #3 in Wyoming, and is therefore well-positioned to be the lead applicant on the current proposal.

Additionally, TU works on the ground in communities throughout the West, finding collaborative solutions to the twenty-first-century challenges of drought, habitat loss, and aging infrastructure by convening diverse stakeholders in pursuit of shared goals. In the Yakima River Basin, for example, TU has partnered with the Kittitas Reclamation District to help create a national model for restoring streams by using existing infrastructure and modernizing water delivery system parts to maximize efficiency and increase flows to key salmon and steelhead tributaries. In the Henrys Fork River watershed of southwestern Wyoming and northeastern Utah, TU has built relationships with NRCS staff and local landowners to implement instream restoration and irrigation efficiency projects throughout the watershed.

TU is prepared to administer the CWMP grant and use a portion of the funding to help fund a new full-time TU staff person focused on the lower South Fork Boise River watershed. Additional TU capacity is essential for initial organization, solicitation, and development of a watershed group, as well as increased and sustained momentum for local partnerships and project identification. TU's standing in the watershed from previous project work, multi-agency working groups, and community connections provided by the TU Ted Trueblood Chapter ensures our capability of promoting the sustainable use of water resources.

### 3.3 Goals

Discuss the preliminary goals and objectives of the New or Existing Watershed Group.

The preliminary goals and objectives of the SFBR Watershed Group will be to:

1. Establish a new watershed group in the South Fork Boise River Watershed in southwest Idaho, including federal and state agencies; county and municipalities; nonprofits; water users; agricultural producers; Tribal Nations; and interested community members.
2. Initiate meetings and launch discussions among the new group concerning issues and opportunities of land and water use in the South Fork Boise River Watershed.
3. Research watershed needs and issues, including a recreational user survey, in preparation for the development of a future watershed restoration plan.

4. Increase TU capacity in the South Fork Boise River watershed to solicit participation SFBR watershed group and identify partnerships and priorities for restoration project implementation.

### 3.4 Approach

Provide a more comprehensive description of your planned approach for completing watershed group development, restoration planning, and watershed management project design activities. Please identify which of the Task Areas described in *Section C.4. Eligible Projects* you will address as part of this project, including a detailed discussion of what activities you will undertake within each Task Area.

TU is applying for this CWMP Phase I funding opportunity as a New Watershed Group and will be undertaking activities under **Task A - Watershed Group Development**. These proposed activities align with the goals outlined above and will help TU and partners build a South Fork Boise River Watershed Group that is representative of the diverse stakeholders in the South Fork Boise River (SFBR) watershed and that will be responsive to the watershed concerns identified through this process.

TU has identified four main activities for the development of the SFBR Watershed Group:

#### *Activity 1: Organizational development*

- Hire a full-time watershed coordinator. TU proposes that a portion of the grant funds be used to help fund a new TU position - the South Fork Boise Watershed Coordinator. We will raise the remaining funds needed for the position from other funding sources.
- Research successful watershed groups' organizational structures.
- Develop a mission statement, vision statement, and goals.

#### *Activity 2: Stakeholder and community outreach*

- Create a communications and outreach plan which will include but is not limited to:
  - Creating marketing and outreach materials including business cards, brochures, stickers, signage, and updating <https://www.southforkboise.org/>.
  - Developing an ArcGIS Story Map that will provide public information about the South Fork Boise watershed, the watershed group, watershed concerns, and, eventually, potential projects identified through watershed planning and stakeholder involvement.
- Establish a community presence which will include but is not limited to:
  - Attending community events to promote the SFBR Watershed Group.
  - Plan events within the designated area to raise awareness about the Watershed Group.
- Conduct stakeholder outreach which will include but is not limited to:
  - Meeting with interested stakeholders to provide information about the SFBR Watershed Group and ensure membership is diverse and representative of watershed demographics.
  - Hosting tours of past partnership projects in the watershed for interested stakeholders and community members.

- Coordinate regular SFBR Watershed Group meetings which will include but are not limited to:
  - Scheduling and organizing quarterly meetings.
  - Facilitating meetings.
  - Disseminating agendas, notes, and information for meetings.

*Activity 3: Background research and stakeholder interviews*

- Background research actions will include but are not limited to:
  - Research relevant federal, state, and local planning efforts and plans.
  - Research examples of other watershed restoration plans.
  - Identify other planning efforts that may complement a future Bureau of Reclamation-supported, stakeholder-driven watershed restoration plan.
  - Compiling information gathered through research efforts, including a recreational user survey, and making these findings accessible to stakeholders on <https://www.southforkboise.org/>.
- Stakeholder interview actions will include but are not limited to:
  - Conducting stakeholder interviews to better understand watershed concerns, needs, and issues.
  - Organizing and attending on-site visits with stakeholders to observe, understand, and document watershed concerns, needs, and issues.

*Activity 4: Pre-planning for a future stakeholder-driven watershed restoration plan*

- Once the SFBR Watershed Group is established, identify desired elements of a future watershed restoration plan based on background research, stakeholder interviews, and community outreach.
- Compile information about watershed concerns, needs, and issues, including photos and GIS coordinates to populate Story Map.
- Identify additional research needed and contractor requirements for a future watershed restoration plan and begin to develop an action plan and budget.

## 4. Evaluation Criteria

### 4.1 Evaluation Criterion A—Watershed Group Diversity & Geographic Scope (30 points)

#### 4.1.1 Sub-criterion No. A1. Watershed Group Diversity

Points shall be awarded to proposals based on the extent to which they encourage collaboration with a diverse array of stakeholders across the watershed. Please describe the efforts that you will undertake to ensure that the watershed group will include a diverse array of stakeholders, including outreach to stakeholders or collaborating with other groups or partners. If the watershed itself does not include a diverse set of interests and sectors, please provide an explanation of this also.

### **Affected Stakeholders & Support for the South Fork Boise River Watershed Group**



TU will prioritize working to ensure that the Watershed Group represents a diverse collaboration of stakeholders for the South Fork Boise River (SFBR) watershed.

TU has identified the following list of potential SFBR Watershed Group members that will ensure full representation of the geographic scope of the area. TU will work with this group to establish a process to identify and invite additional stakeholders.

The SFBR Watershed Group will engage with the Tribes and incorporate their needs, ideas, and goals into the Group’s work. Tribal connection to the area is evidenced by the Danskin Rock Shelter, containing an extraordinary depth of cultural deposits and rock art within its walls.

Local Guides and Outfitters have not been included as these activities are prohibited within the South Fork of the Boise River.

*Bolded organizations have expressed an interest in being involved in SFBR Watershed Group. Italicized groups have submitted letters of support; these letters are included in Appendix A.*

<b>ENTITY</b>	<b>SECTOR</b>
<b>Trout Unlimited—project applicant and watershed group coordinator</b>	Environmental Conservation
Landowners/Residents	Community Members
<i>Danskin Cattle LLC</i>	Agriculture, Private Landowner
<i>Boise Valley Fly Fishers</i>	Recreation
Magic Valley Fly Fishers	Recreation
<i>Idaho Conservation League</i>	Environmental Conservation
<i>The Nature Conservancy</i>	Environmental Conservation
<i>Idaho Wildlife Federation</i>	Environmental Conservation/Recreation
<i>Ted Trueblood Chapter -Trout Unlimited</i>	Environmental Conservation/Recreation
<i>Hemingway Chapter -Trout Unlimited</i>	Environmental Conservation/Recreation
Land Trust of the Treasure Valley	NGO
<i>Idaho Department of Environmental Quality</i>	State Agency
<i>Idaho Department of Fish and Game</i>	State Agency
<i>Idaho Department of Water Resources</i>	State Agency
Idaho Water Users Association	Irrigation and Water Interests
Pioneer Irrigation District	Irrigation and Water Interests
Treasure Valley Water Users Association	Irrigation and Water Interests
Water District 63	Irrigation and Water Interests
<b>City of Boise</b>	Local Government
City of Prairie	Local Government
Town of Featherville	Township
Town of Pine	Township
Ada County	Local Government
Camas County	Local Government
Elmore County	Local Government
Mountain Home Highway District	Local Government
Cat Creek Energy	Proposed Hydropower Utility
<i>Boise National Forest</i>	Federal Agency
Sawtooth National Forest	Federal Agency

<b><i>Bureau of Reclamation</i></b>	Federal Agency
United States Geological Survey	Federal Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Federal Agency
Shoshone-Bannock	Tribal
Shoshone-Paiute	Tribal
Boise State University	University/Education

### **Targeted Outreach**

TU and the SFBR Watershed Group will target outreach to the listed groups who have not already been contacted and will seek input from additional stakeholders who are interested in and affected by watershed concerns and the Watershed Group activities. Several of the listed entities that have already expressed an interest in joining the Watershed Group have offices and a presence in the Treasure Valley (Boise area) to assist the group in targeting additional members through outreach.

In addition to reaching out to additional stakeholders, the SFBR Watershed Group will also develop a communications and outreach plan to promote involvement from the community, recruit additional stakeholders, and provide information. This plan will involve updating the [www.southforkboise.org](http://www.southforkboise.org) website and creating outreach materials such as brochures, business cards, stickers, and signage. There is also potential in developing a platform on the website for an ArcGIS Story Map that will provide information about the South Fork Boise River watershed in a compelling and interactive format.

In addition, TU and the SFBR Watershed Group will conduct further stakeholder engagement by establishing a community presence through attending local events, hosting river events, and advertising in local publications. TU will follow up with interested contacts after events, and will reach out to potential members, through personal emails and phone calls. Quarterly SFBR Watershed Group meetings will be open to any interested stakeholder and sign-in/contact sheets will be used to take attendance and follow up with those who attended the meeting. The group will also conduct stakeholder interviews and on-site visits to observe, understand, and document watershed concerns, needs, and issues.

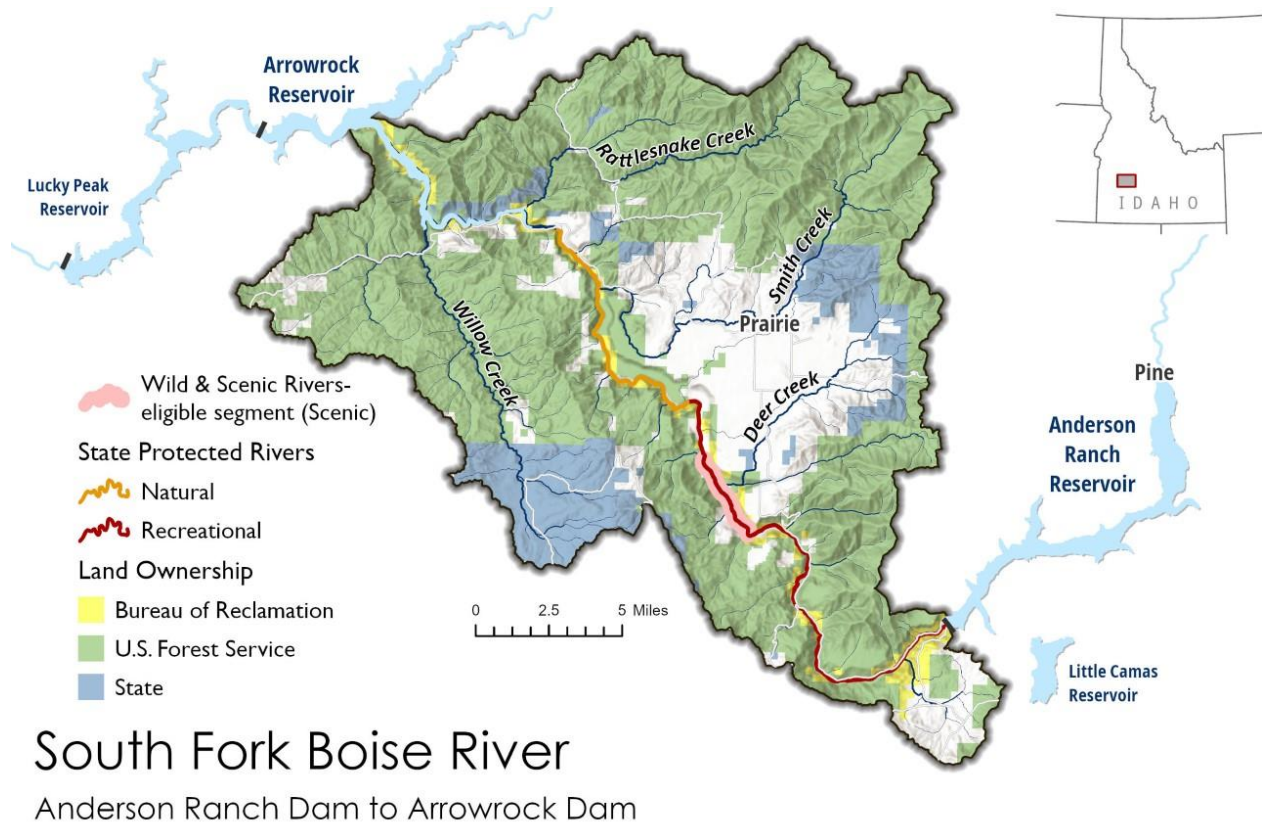
#### **4.1.2. Sub-criterion No. A2. Geographic Scope**

Please provide the following information in response to this sub-criterion:

- Provide a map illustrating the geographic boundaries of the area in which the watershed group will work.
- The map should also identify the location or boundaries of the stakeholder groups within the area and indicate which stakeholders are currently involved in the group and which will be targeted through outreach. If a map of stakeholder location cannot be provided, please describe the geographic scope of the area to the best of your knowledge, including where specific stakeholders are located within the watershed
- Describe the extent to which the planned membership of the watershed group will represent the full geographic scope of the area in which the group intends to work. If

applicable, describe the extent to which the watershed group already represents the geographic scope of the area.

- Describe the efforts that you will undertake to ensure that the watershed group will target stakeholders that represent the full geographic scope of the area in which the watershed group will work.
- Describe why you have chosen to work within the watershed area you described. For example, if the watershed group is only working along the river corridor, describe why they are not working within the larger watershed area.



The South Fork Boise River (SFBR) watershed is located in southwestern Idaho. It covers approximately 1,300 square miles (835,645 acres), across portions of two counties (Elmore and Camas) and is an hour's drive east of Idaho's capital city, Boise, the state's largest metropolitan area and capital.

TU proposes to focus solely on the areas below Anderson Ranch Dam, referred to as the Lower South Fork Boise, within the given watershed (HUC 17050113) due to the nature of use, resources present, conditions, and user demographics. Main uses of this area include livestock grazing, recreational fishing, hiking, kayaking, and wildlife watching. Access to many areas within the Lower South Fork is limited due to roadless area designations as described in further detail below. Accessible roads in the area cater to reservoir users and management by the Forest Service.

The Lower South Fork Boise, starting at Anderson Ranch Dam, is in Elmore County and extends to Arrowrock Reservoir. The South Fork Boise watershed totals an estimated 291,100 acres, of which the Forest Service manages 59 percent, 31 percent of the lands are privately owned, and 10 percent are managed by the State of Idaho. The SFBR watershed is bordered by the Boise National Forest to the north, the Sawtooth National Forest to the east, and a mix of private and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in the central and southern zones. To date, the primary uses or activities in this management area have been dispersed and developed recreation, livestock grazing, and timber management.

The SFBR below Anderson Ranch Dam, the area we are proposing to focus on, has three segments. Nearly 29 miles of the river is designated a state-protected river in the state water plan. Under Federal Wild and Scenic River eligibility studies the southernmost segment, beginning just below Anderson Ranch Reservoir, has a Recreational classification; it is 13.1 miles long, with an estimated river corridor of 4,200 acres. The middle segment has a Scenic classification, and is 3.1 miles long, with a river corridor of 1,000 acres (Danskin Bridge to Trail Creek).

The northernmost segment is classified as Wild, and is 12.3 miles long, with a river corridor of 9,130 acres. The river is considered eligible for Wild and Scenic River status because of its outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, and hydrologic values.<sup>1</sup> The Forest Service has classified approximately 30 percent of this area as inventoried roadless, including all the Danskin, House Mountain, and Cathedral Rocks Roadless Areas, and portions of the Cow Creek, Rainbow, and Lime Creek Roadless Areas.

Use of the river above Anderson Ranch Dam is focused primarily on reservoir recreation as well as irrigation and caters to different user categories than below the dam. In 2021, after unsuccessfully applying for a CWMP grant to create this watershed group, Reclamation officials recommended we focus our efforts below the dam and we agree. We strongly believe that in order to move forward with cooperative management solutions, there is a much higher level of achievability in dividing the watershed into these two zones.

Additional factors we considered when deciding to focus on the Lower South Fork Boise River include:

- The Bull Trout Recovery Plan adopted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in 2015 segments the “Arrowrock Core Area” to include the South Fork Boise River downstream of Anderson Ranch Dam with the Middle Fork and North Fork of the Boise River as tributaries to Arrowrock Reservoir where bull trout can migrate without barriers. A separate Anderson Ranch Core Area includes the SFBR upstream of Anderson Ranch Dam.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/viewer.html?pdfurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fs.usda.gov%2FInternet%2FFSE\_DOCUMENTS%2Fstelprdb5394209.pdf%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR3NdPvgaEqnCulDCnMqM6XmDGjZoD8SJ10R7nQjXlmsuuEedxf5AD3BcHA&clen=770845&chunk=true

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.fws.gov/pacific/bulltrout/RP/Chapter\\_18%20Southwest%20Idaho.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/pacific/bulltrout/RP/Chapter_18%20Southwest%20Idaho.pdf)

- The Land and Resource Management Plan for the Boise National Forest includes a management area<sup>3</sup> focused on the SFBR downstream of Anderson Ranch Dam as well as lands surrounding Anderson Ranch Reservoir, but it excludes the SFBR watershed upstream of the reservoir. It is worth noting these lands in our proposed focus area are where vegetation is predominantly rangeland with some limited forest vegetation. Upstream of the reservoir the lands are dominated by conifer forest vegetation types.
- The Idaho Department of Fish & Game (IDFG) uses Anderson Ranch Dam as a boundary for management regions, with Anderson Ranch Reservoir and tributaries as part of the Magic Valley Region, and the area from Anderson Ranch Dam downstream as part of the Southwest Region.

Taken together these natural resource plans validate an approach to focus on a defined area that is smaller than the entire 4<sup>th</sup> Field hydrologic unit for the SFBR.

The planned membership of the SFBR Watershed Group will represent the full geographic scope of the SFBR watershed, as described above, by engaging with all affected stakeholders from federal agencies to private landowners even though our focus remains on the Lower South Fork below Anderson Ranch Dam. The efforts TU and the watershed group will undertake to ensure that stakeholders representing the full geographic scope of the South Fork watershed are described in Section 3.4, Approach, on p. 5 and Section 4.1.1, Subcriterion No. A1 – Watershed Group Diversity, on p. 7. Potential future phases could expand to the entire watershed geographic.

## 4.2 Evaluation Criterion B—Addressing Critical Watershed Needs (35 points)

### 4.2.1 Sub-criterion No. B1. Critical Watershed Needs or Issues

Please describe in detail the critical issues or needs occurring within the watershed including, for example: declining ecological resiliency, water shortages, flooding, structural impairments, water supply, water quality issues. Provide quantitative and qualitative support to describe the severity of the critical issues or needs. If the concerns are not yet severe, describe why it is important to address the concerns preemptively and explain the potential impacts of not addressing the concerns.

A primary goal of this proposal to establish a new watershed group is to identify major issues in the watershed (also discussed in more detail in Evaluation Criterion B – Addressing Critical Watershed Needs) with the help of engaged stakeholders. Initial conversations with partners involved to date have identified the following issues:

#### a. Development

The Treasure Valley is one of the fastest growing communities in the nation and within Idaho. Recreational use of the watershed is increasing as population growth in southern Idaho continues, and this affects the lands along the river and reservoir and surrounding area.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.southforkboise.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/BoiseNFLowerSFBoiseMgmtArea.pdf>

Wildlife and fish habitat are affected by soil compaction and erosion near the river and riparian areas. The riparian corridor will continue to see this development pressure which has proven to result in riparian vegetation loss and bank stabilization degradation.

Due to our population boom, public agencies are only beginning to encourage safe and responsible recreation for all within the watershed. For example, in 2021, the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission produced a video about the SFBR (<https://youtu.be/17isH6Vem9g> or you can also find it at [www.southforkboise.org](http://www.southforkboise.org)). The video urges responsible recreation behavior as the area continues to see increased use.

Public land recreation, such as off highway vehicle use and occasional angler wandering, also impacts private lands via trespass and other indirect effects.

IDFG recognizes the SFBR as an important quality fishing resource and recreation hub for the Treasure & Magic Valley communities. The Boise National Forest manages a number of public access sites for fishing and boating along the SFBR. The Forest and local highway district manage the road next to the river where culvert crossings inhibit fish passage to tributary spawning areas. Agencies will play an important role in a watershed group considering improved accessibility and ways to promote proper recreational use.

#### **b. Water Supply & Structural Proposals**

Water storage and flow management at Anderson Ranch Dam affects downstream reaches of the SFBR. Flows are regulated according to an adopted Bureau of Reclamation operations manual and in accordance with state-granted water rights delivering water to water users through the downstream reservoirs and diversions. We regard the current operations as a model of compatibility for meeting downstream water rights along with providing benefits of a wild trout fishery in a tailwater system, operations that have been in place for nearly 40 years.

The regulated flows benefit fish populations in the SFBR in important ways, such as the long-established winter flow releases of 300 cfs. However, some emerging challenges seem to be appearing for fish populations and aquatic and riparian habitat. These challenges include the loss of natural high flows that would periodically inundate the floodplain and route sediment, water and debris to foster channel migration, renewal of riparian vegetation, and habitat diversity. Supply of river gravel is interrupted by the dam, which reduces spawning and rearing habitat for fish and alters macroinvertebrate community composition. Seasonal down-ramping of flows from Anderson Ranch Dam occur at a rate much faster than the natural river regime and stranding of aquatic insects and fish has been documented (see photo below)<sup>4</sup>.

Currently, there is no forum or process in place to foster dialogue and mutual learning regarding timing of water releases and flow management levels. The Henry's Fork Drought Management Planning Process that operates in eastern Idaho represents an excellent example of the type of forum and process that could be beneficial here. Once created, the SFBR watershed group could

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.southforkboise.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/2012SFBoise\\_StrandingSummary.pdf](https://www.southforkboise.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/2012SFBoise_StrandingSummary.pdf)  
[https://www.southforkboise.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Macroinvertebrate\\_Report\\_SFBoise.pdf](https://www.southforkboise.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Macroinvertebrate_Report_SFBoise.pdf)

serve as a similar forum to create cooperative planning efforts with Reclamation to identify flow release regimes to potentially address fishery enhancement opportunities while also ensuring recognition and protection of existing water rights.

Water supply issues and pending proposals affecting the area include the proposed raise of Anderson Ranch Dam, pump storage and diversions or withdrawals from Anderson Ranch Reservoir by Elmore County, as well as by Cat Creek Energy. Each proposal separately or in combination can affect flow management in the SFBR downstream of Anderson Ranch Dam and will also affect the Reservoir elevations. A forum and process similar to the one for the Henry's Fork mentioned above could also improve opportunities for dialogue about the potential downstream implications of these pending proposals – with knowledge that the decisions about such proposals will unfold from other processes already underway.



*Collecting Data for Stranding Study (2012)*

**c. Aquatic, Riparian, and Wetland Habitat Degradation and Loss of Endangered Species Habitat**

IDFG considers the SFBR to be a trophy rainbow trout stream fishery in the 28-mile stretch downstream from Anderson Ranch Dam (watershed encompasses 101.6 miles of stream total). Bull trout are listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and are present both in Anderson Ranch Reservoir and the SFBR downstream of the dam. The bull trout in the South Fork are considered a separate core population with the Middle Fork and North Fork of the Boise River. The bull trout population in Anderson Ranch Reservoir and tributaries is a

separate core population and the reservoir is also an important kokanee fishery. These populations are directly impacted by water resource management.

The loss of spawning gravels in the SFBR downstream from Anderson Ranch Dam places a premium on the need for spawning habitat in the main river and in tributaries. Yet aside from Pierce Creek, where a bridge was built in 2011 to replace a culvert by TU and partners, barriers remain to aquatic organism passage between the river and important tributaries where additional spawning habitat could be available.

Riparian vegetation is not functioning properly in some areas due to impacts from roads, recreation, livestock grazing, wildfires, and water releases from Anderson Ranch Dam. Composition has changed in many riparian areas because of disturbance, lowered water tables, and introduced plant species. Non-native plants have increased, and other wetlands species have decreased. Native cottonwoods and broadleaf shrubs have also decreased and are not regenerating in many areas.<sup>5</sup>

The watershed has also been subject to wildfire, most recently in 2013, with two large wildfires that affected vegetation conditions. Some habitat rehabilitation has occurred along the river shortly after the 2013 fire, but no major restoration work happened in later years. A watershed management group could help identify key areas in need of aquatic, riparian, and habitat restoration.



*Aftermath of Elk Complex Fire (2013)*

#### **d. Water Quality**

Water Quality impairments are a concern in the watershed resulting from historic anthropogenic and natural impacts to the area. As a result of these impacts, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) assessments have found that multiple streams in the subbasin are not supporting beneficial uses for Salmonid Spawning and Cold Water Aquatic Life. In 2009, the US Environmental Protection Agency approved temperature TMDLs for multiple tributaries

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<sup>5</sup> Benjankar, R, A.W. Tranmer, D. Videgar and D. Tonina. 2020. Riparian vegetation model to predict seedling recruitment and restoration alternative. *Journal of Environmental Management*. YJEMA 111339 *excepted for publication Sept 1, 2020.*



to the South Fork Boise River, creating opportunities for water quality improvement project implementation plans. Three waterbodies in the area need such implementation plans according to DEQ's most recent Integrated Report.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the waterbodies needing implementation plans as mentioned above, DEQ notes in its support letter that there are several other waterbodies in the South Fork Boise River watershed which would benefit from a cooperative watershed management program.

Recreation users and landowners have voiced concern over presence of didymo (algae) on the stream bed, seemingly more prevalent in warmer years. Also, it appears there is an absence of freshwater mussels, which used to be more abundant. The SFBR Watershed Group can serve as the forum to discuss these water quality concerns and raise awareness of them.

Aquatic habitat is degraded in some areas due to elevated water temperatures, habitat fragmentation, and accelerated sediment. Decline of the riparian canopy also adversely affects stream temperature where loss of shade occurs after wildfire or decline and loss of overmature trees. Recruitment of new trees is hampered by flow regulation and, to date, limited revegetated efforts.

#### 4.2.2 Sub-criterion No. B2. Developing Strategies to Address Critical Watershed Needs or Issues

Please describe in detail how the group plans to positively contribute to the management of the issues and needs of the watershed through the proposed activities. Only address those Task Areas that you propose to complete with this grant funding. Please address the following when responding to this sub-criterion:

- Describe the Task A Watershed Group Development activities that will be completed as part of this grant project and explain why these activities are an important step for addressing the critical watershed needs and issues in the watershed discussed in sub-criterion No. B1. Explain why the establishment of a New Watershed Group or further development of an Existing Watershed Group is important for addressing the critical watershed needs and issues in the watershed area.

#### **Task A -Watershed Group Development**

Central to TU's mission is a belief that bringing all parties to the table results in finding proactive solutions that meet the challenges facing cold water fisheries. Throughout the West, TU prioritizes protecting important habitat, reconnecting degraded waterways, and restoring salmon and trout populations—work that would not be possible without true partnerships between landowners, agencies, non-profits, municipalities, Tribes, and other stakeholders.

For example, using this relationship-based approach in Idaho's Upper Salmon Basin, since 2009 and working closely with our partners TU has reconnected more than 26 miles of river habitat and restored over 100 acres of floodplain and riparian zones.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/monitoring-and-assessment/>

TU will use this deep experience in partnership building to further the relationships already developed in the Lower South Fork Boise River watershed and conduct outreach to and convene affected stakeholders in the watershed to address the issues and needs of the watershed.

Past restoration efforts by TU and others capitalized on opportunities but lacked an overall strategic approach. In 2011, the Boise National Forest, Mountain Home Highway District, Danskin Cattle Ranch, and TU worked together on the Pierce Creek reconnection project. Idaho Fish and Game and several fishing groups cooperated on a genetic study of the fishery in 2011 & 2013. And finally, a stranding study of the effects of down-ramping flows involved the Bureau of Reclamation, TU, and other groups. In 2013 & 2015, local volunteers participated in tree planting to revegetate the area after wildfires destroyed the corridor. Through these efforts, TU has cultivated relationships with many stakeholders in the watershed that provides a solid foundation to foster a collaborative start to the watershed management group.

If awarded funding through this grant opportunity, TU will expand on these partnership-building efforts through the outreach activities detailed in Section 3.4, Approach (p. 5), and Section 4.1.1, Sub-Criterion No. A1 – Watershed Group Diversity (p. 7). These activities include hiring a watershed coordinator, updating our website and marketing materials, attending and hosting local events, advertising in local publications, following up with interested event attendees, convening quarterly SFBRWG meetings, and conducting stakeholder interviews and on-site visits to observe, understand, and document watershed concerns, needs, and issues.

TU will also solicit input and participation from other NGOs to provide additional partnerships for SFBRWG and potential funding for project implementation. TU maintains relationships with Land Trust groups, sportsmen/women groups, and conservation entities with which we partner on coldwater projects throughout the state. TU will promote the involvement of these partners to increase capacity and partnership opportunities.

The South Fork watershed boasts great fishing opportunities and is utilized by locals, including our local chapter, for recreation. Although guiding and outfitting is banned in the South Fork of the Boise River, TU maintains a long history with multiple entities that have partnered in the past on restoration projects and outreach. TU will solicit input and participation from these groups to include recreation stakeholders in the effort. Maintaining a relationship with the recreation groups in the area will provide additional outreach to the community about the objectives of the Working Group.

In addition, and as detailed in Section 3.4, Approach (p. 5), a portion of this grant, if awarded, would be used for pre-planning activities for a future stakeholder-driven watershed restoration plan. Once the SFBR Watershed Group is established, these activities will include identifying desired elements of a future watershed restoration plan based on stakeholder interviews, material from quarterly meetings, project site visits, and other sources. This research will be used to build and populate an ArcGIS Story Map that presents the information gathered in a public-facing format and that will be updated as the restoration plan process advances. Pre-planning activities will also include identifying research and contractor needs for a future watershed restoration plan and beginning to develop an action plan and budget for this future phase of work.

#### 4.3 Evaluation Criterion C—Implementation & Results (25 points)

### 4.3.1 Sub-criterion No. C1—Project Implementation

Applicants should describe their plan for implementing the proposed scope of work. Please include an estimated schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work. Please include an estimated schedule that shows the stages and duration of the proposed work. The schedule should include:

- Major tasks (e.g., stakeholder outreach; development of bylaws, a mission statement, and articles of incorporation; or development of a watershed restoration plan and project design)
- Milestones for each task
- Start and end dates for each task and milestone
- Costs for each task

Activity	Milestone	Start Date	End Date	Direct Cost
<b>Activity 1: Organizational Development</b>				<b>\$177,340.00</b>
Hire full-time watershed coordinator	Coordinator hired	August 1, 2023	October 1, 2023	
Develop a mission statement, vision statement, and goals	SFBRWG adopts mission, vision, goals	September 1, 2023	February 28, 2024	
<b>Activity 2: Stakeholder &amp; Community Outreach</b>				<b>\$16,000</b>
Establish a communications and outreach plan	Website created Marketing materials created GIS Story Map developed	August 1, 2023	January 31, 2024	
Establish a community presence	Attended relevant local events Hold river clean-up event with Ted Trueblood TU Booked advertising for SFBRWG meetings	August 1, 2022	July 31, 2024	
Conduct stakeholder outreach	Meet with interested stakeholders	August 1, 2022	July 31, 2024	

	Hosted tours of recent partnership projects			
Establish regular SFBRWG meetings	Hold quarterly meetings	October 1, 2022	July 31, 2024	
<b><i>Activity 3: Stakeholder Interviews &amp; Background Research</i></b>				<b>\$40,000</b>
Undertake background research actions to determine previous planning efforts and models for watershed restoration plans	Relevant in-progress and previous planning efforts identified Example watershed restoration plans identified Information made available to SFBRWG members Recreation Use Survey	September 1, 2023	February 28, 2024	
Conduct stakeholder interviews and on-site visits to better understand watershed concerns, needs, and issues	Interviews with affected stakeholders conducted 4 on-site visits organized and attended Findings from interviews and visits made available to SFBRWG members	September 1, 2022	February 28, 2023	
<b><i>Activity 4: Pre-Planning for Future Watershed Restoration Plan</i></b>				<b>\$10,000</b>
Identify desired elements of a future watershed restoration plan	Preliminary desired elements identified and outlined	September 1, 2022	July 31, 2024	

Identify research and contractor needs for a future watershed restoration plan and begin to develop action plan and budget	Research and contractor needs identified Action plan, budget, and potential application for a second CWMP grant to complete activities under Task B and Task C developed	September 1, 2022	July 31, 2024	
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**4.3.2 Sub-criterion No. C2—Building on Relevant Federal, State, or Regional Planning Efforts**

Please describe how the proposed activities that are part of this grant project will complement, build upon, or meet the goals of relevant Federal, state, or regional planning efforts.

An important objective of establishing the new South Fork Boise River Watershed Group will be to research and build upon relevant federal, state, and regional planning efforts to help inform and guide the Group’s efforts and help identify where additional future planning is needed. The Watershed Coordinator will work with the Group to better understand how proposed activities may complement the following plans and, particularly, how a future watershed restoration plan developed by the group can build upon these plans.

***Idaho State Water Plan (2012):***

This plan provides a framework for the adoption and implementation of policies, programs, and projects that develop, use, conserve, and protect the state’s water supplies. There are three statewide goals which complement the creation of a watershed group for the Lower South Fork Boise River:

- 1) Water management to encourage integrated, coordinated, and adaptable water resource management and the prudent stewardship of water resources.
- 2) Environmental Quality to maintain and, where possible, enhance water quality and water-related habitats. Specifically, with respect to this goal, the State Water Plan states that efforts should be made to study and examine the quality of rivers, streams, lakes, and ground water (Idaho Code § 42-1734(15)) and ensure that due consideration is given to the needs of fish, wildlife, and recreation in managing the water resources of the state.
- 3) Economic Development to encourage and support economic development through the optimum use of water resources. Promote the protection of designated waterways for all beneficial purposes (Idaho Code § 42-1734A(1)(b)).

This section of the State Water Plan focuses on federally listed aquatic species preservation, protection, perpetuation, and management. This includes species that are low in numbers, limited

in distribution, and/or have suffered significant habitat losses, such as native rainbow and bull trout present in the South Fork Boise River Watershed. Congress has directed federal agencies to “cooperate with state and local agencies to resolve water resource issues in concert with conservation of endangered species.” 16 U.S.C. § 1531(c)(2). Cooperative community-based conservation programs can be more effective in providing on-the-ground habitat benefits than enforcement actions. With site-specific information about water and land use practices and habitat requirements, targeted and effective conservation strategies can be developed and implemented.

Finally, this section of the Idaho State Water Plan explicitly states that “The integration of water resource and land use planning activities that affect riparian zones and wetlands requires coordination among various local, regional, and state authorities. . .The Board supports voluntary watershed-based conservation strategies for the protection of riparian and wetland areas . . . developed and implemented through collaboration with water users, land managers, local governments, and state and federal agencies” (p 38).

***Idaho Water Resources Board Comprehensive State Water Plan: South Fork Boise River Sub-Basin (1990):***

The Idaho Water Resources Board Comprehensive State Water Plan is a sub-document to the Idaho State Water Plan designed specifically to constitute management plans within designated areas of Idaho. This management plan serves as a guide to specific rules and regulations permitted or prohibited within each tributary and waterway within the watershed. SFBR Watershed Group members will be expected to reference and comply with this plan.

This plan also includes a description of various existing and planned uses of resources, as well as a discussion of goals, objectives, and recommendations for improving, developing, or conserving the waterways within the basin. This document references *Trout* magazine, which is owned and operated by Trout Unlimited. The plan outlines twelve areas of goals within the watershed that align with the proposed goals for the SFBR Watershed Group. The watershed group will build upon the foundation that this document provides and update the goals and objectives as outlined in activities 3 and 4 section 3.4 on p. 7. Creation of a watershed group was referenced in this document; however, we are unable to verify the year of the group's disbandment.

***Boise National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) - Management Area 1 (written 2003 & revised 2010):***

National Forests are governed by management plans that set goals and guidelines for resource management, protection, and use. As the National Forests represent most of the land ownership in the watershed and representatives plan to be a part of the new watershed group, it is expected that the proposed activities of SFBR Watershed Group are likely to both complement and meet the watershed, fisheries, and aquatic related goals of these Forests' respective management plans.

***Idaho Fish and Game Fisheries Management Plan (2019-2024) & Annual Strategic Plan (2018-2021):***

IDFG representatives plan to be a part of the new watershed group. Within their most recent goal updates, ensuring the long-term survival of native fish, wildlife and plants remains at the top of the list, along with increased capacity of habitat to support fish and wildlife within our state.

IDFG recognizes and operates the South Fork of the Boise River as a trophy wild rainbow trout fishery. Alongside protection of our great state's resources, IDFG recognizes within their management plans that working with others ensures comprehensive plans have higher rates of success. IDFG recognizes and acknowledges that climate change and changing conditions increase the likeliness of wildfires within our region, leaving an impact on fisheries, wildlife, and recreation alike. Working with IDFG and their partners will be an integral part of the SFBR Watershed Group's success.

***Idaho Nonpoint Source Management plan 2020-2025 (2020):***

Water quality protection and improvement is governed by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the nonpoint source management plan. The plan describes the coordination of multiple agencies and DEQ programs to identify and mitigate pollutant sources.

***Recovery Plan for the Coterminous United States Population of Bull Trout (2015):***

The Endangered Species Act requires the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to conserve and recover plant and animal species that are at risk of extinction. Bull trout were listed as a threatened species in 1998, for its entire region of Idaho, Montana, Washington, and Oregon.

In 2015, the FWS finalized its Bull Trout Recovery Plan, which outlines the conservation actions needed to recover bull trout. At the core of the plan's strategy are six geographically specific implementation plans, which identify specific conservation actions needed to address threats such as loss of habitat connectivity and passage barriers.

In the South Fork Boise River, where bull trout are present, part of a core population exists that ranges downstream of Anderson Ranch Dam to Arrowrock Reservoir and the Middle and North forks of the Boise River. Conservation of bull trout will necessitate involvement of the FWS in discussions of projects and plans to improve the resources of the South Fork Boise.

#### **4.4 Evaluation Criterion D— Presidential and Department of the Interior Priorities (10 points)**

##### **4.4.1 Climate Change:**

- Please provide specific details and examples on how the project will address the impacts of climate change and help combat the climate crisis.
- Does this proposed project strengthen water supply sustainability to increase resilience to climate change? Does the proposed project contribute to climate change resiliency in other ways not described above?

Climate change is already impacting our cold-water resources. Adaptation measures like habitat improvements, at the core of TU's mission, moderate the negative impacts of a changing climate. Over decades, we have determined that collaborative conservation is by far the best approach to

addressing the impacts of climate change. Building partnerships and coalitions is something TU does well, and we are always looking for opportunities to partner with other like-minded groups.

TU is uniquely qualified to influence the formulation and implementation of an environmentally sound and responsible climate policy at the national, state, and local levels. TU's more than 300,000 members and supporters, most of whom are sportsmen, sportswomen, and anglers, have detailed knowledge of local and regional conditions, and a long and successful history in planning and carrying out conservation projects. TU also has a highly qualified and capable professional conservation staff. And TU has a proven track record of science-based analysis using respected tools such as the Conservation Success Index (CSI) for evaluating and mitigating impacts on coldwater fisheries and their watersheds throughout North America.

TU will bring this history of success to the South Fork Boise River Watershed Group to convene diverse stakeholders, assess watershed needs, and collaboratively work toward solutions that benefit South Fork watershed residents, those who enjoy recreating in the area, state and federal agencies, Tribes, ranchers, and the environment. As the formation of SFBR Watershed Group is being led by a conservation organization, climate change is at the forefront of the proposed project. Through identifying watershed concerns, convening affected stakeholders in the watershed, implementing a communications strategy that provides watershed information and opportunities to engage to the local community, and working with science-based approaches, the SFBR Watershed Group will help ensure a united front to address climate change impacts.

#### 4.4.2 Disadvantaged or Underserved Communities:

- Will the proposed project serve or benefit a disadvantaged or historically underserved community? Benefits can include, but are not limited to, public health and safety by addressing water quality, new water supplies, or economic growth opportunities.

The proposed project does not serve or benefit any disadvantaged or historically underserved communities. Our watershed lies within very remote areas of Idaho with very minimal populations or public services, though it is in relatively close proximity (1.25-hour drive) to the Treasure Valley (Boise) area and receives visitation from this population center.

#### 4.4.3 Tribal Benefits:

- Does the proposed project directly serve and/or benefit a Tribe? Will the project improve water management for an Indian Tribe?
- Does the proposed project support Tribal resilience to climate change and drought impacts or provide other Tribal benefits such as improved public health and safety by addressing water quality, new water supplies, or economic growth opportunities?

While the South Fork of the Boise River is historically a prized fishery of the Shoshone-Paiute and Shoshone- Bannock Tribes, with historical sites such as Danskin Rock Shelter and Danskin Lookout providing evidence of summer camping grounds of the Tribe used for fishing and fish preservation, it is unclear how much Tribal activity exists today in the South Fork Boise.



Trout Unlimited’s new Watershed Coordinator will do everything within their power to steward the relationship between the Shoshone-Paiute Nation and Shoshone-Bannock Nation and the proposed watershed group. We hope to foster open communication and cooperation to which the Tribe will feel welcomed and comfortable coming forward with their input on the management of the watershed. TU will bring our mission and experience to the South Fork Boise River Watershed Group to convene diverse stakeholders, assess watershed needs, and collaboratively work toward solutions that benefit South Fork Boise watershed Tribal partners, residents, state and federal agencies, ranchers, and the environment.

TU has a proven track record of finding and empowering long-term stewards from affected communities. This deep experience will be put to use with the SFBR Watershed Group by attending public events, hosting a river clean up, advertising in local papers, and holding meetings that are open to all interested parties. These activities are designed to ensure that those who participate feel heard, that lines of communication between participants are opened, and that participants feel their input is valued. Convening all affected stakeholders in such a fashion helps create and restore trust among all participants, including Tribal Nations.

## 5. Project Budget

### 5.1 Budget Proposal

#### Total Project Cost Table

Source	Amount
Costs to be reimbursed with the requested Federal funding	<b>\$199,038.</b>
Costs to be paid by the applicant	<b>\$109,715.</b>
Value of third-party contributions	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST</b>	<b>\$308,753.</b>

#### Budget Proposal

Budget Item Description	\$/Unit	Quantity	Unit	Total Cost
<b>Salaries and Wages</b>				
TU Program Director - In-Kind - 2 years	\$42.78	640	Hours	\$27,380.
TU GIS Support - In-Kind - 2 years	\$33.50	40	Hours	\$1,340.
TU Watershed Coordinator - 2 years	\$29.00	4160	Hours	\$120,640.
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>				
TU Program Director - In-Kind (47%)	47.00%	\$27,380.	Percentage	\$12,869.

TU GIS Support - In-Kind	47.00%	\$670.00	Percentage	\$314.90
TU Watershed Coordinator (47%) - In-Kind	47.00%	\$120,640.	Percentage	\$56,700.
<b>Travel</b>				
Local travel (meetings, outreach, site visits) - 2 years	\$0.56	10,268	Miles	\$5,750.00
<b>Supplies and Materials</b>				
Printer and office supplies	\$50.00	24	Months	\$1,200.00
Meeting and event supplies	\$500.	8	Meetings	\$4,000.00
Marketing materials	\$2,000.	1	Lump Sum	\$2,000.00
<b>Contractual / Construction</b>				
Advertising in Idaho Statesman	\$570.	16	Ads	\$9,120.00
<b>Other</b>				
Website domain, hosting, template	\$500.	1	Lump sum	\$500.00
Office space & desk at TU Boise - in-kind	\$463.	24	Months	\$11,112.
Recreation Use Survey	\$32,000.	1	Lump Sum	\$32,000.00
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>				\$175,210.
<b>Indirect Costs</b>				
Predetermined-NICRA	13.60%			23,828.
<b>Total Estimated Project Costs</b>				\$117,175.
<b>Total Estimated Project Costs - TU In-Kind</b>				\$109,715.
<b>Total Estimated Project Costs - BOR CWMP</b>				\$199,038.

## 5.2 Budget Narrative

### Salaries and Wages

Funds from this grant will be used to contribute cost-share funds for TU to hire a Watershed Coordinator to lead efforts for the development of the South Fork Boise River Watershed Group. We plan to raise funds from other sources to secure the remaining funds needed to hire a full-time Coordinator. The workplan for this position will include restoration project development, funding and implementation as well as the responsibilities listed below for the development of the SFBR Watershed Group.

The Watershed Coordinator responsibilities will include (but not be limited to):

- Establishing the SFBR Watershed Group including the development of a mission, vision, membership and rules for the group
- Facilitating group meetings
- Interviewing members and other potential SFBR Watershed Group members for input and participation
- Produce and maintain outreach and web based content including the Story Map and other marketing materials.
- Attend local events to provide additional outreach including:
  - January: Fly Fisherman's Expo
  - February: Idaho Water User's Association Annual Conference
  - March: Outdoorsman Expo
  - May: Experience Idaho Expo
  - April: Rugged Idaho Expo
  - August: Western Idaho State Fair

Salaries and wages also include costs associated with the participation of TU's Program Director and GIS Support staff in the development of SFBR Watershed Group. Contemplated costs include management of the CWMP grant and responsibilities for overseeing outreach, communications, project development and management and supervision of the Watershed Coordinator. TU will provide GIS support including the development of a Story Map for the South Fork Watershed, similar to what is used for TU's Upper Snake River Home River Initiative (see: <https://arcg.is/DPvyy>) and the Willwood Working Group (see: <https://arcg.is/OPmPvS>). As noted in the budget, this time there will be an in-kind commitment from TU towards the cost of the project.

### **Fringe Benefits**

TU's current fringe benefit is 47% and is included in the budget. Fringe Benefits for the new TU Watershed Coordinator, TU's Program Director and GIS Support will be an in-kind contribution towards the cost of the project.

## **Travel**

Travel costs are associated with the Watershed Coordinator position. The majority of the travel will occur throughout the South Fork Boise Watershed to visit potential stakeholders and SFBR Watershed Group members. Travel will also include project site visits and multi-agency meetings.

## **Supplies and Materials**

Funds from the grant will be used for general office and marketing supplies including brochures, business cards, rack cards, stickers, and a banner.

Office space for the watershed coordinator will be provided by Trout Unlimited Boise office as an in-kind contribution.

## **Contractual/Construction**

Funds will also be used for advertising costs which could include advertisements in the Idaho Statesman and other local resources.

## **Other**

Grant funds will be used for costs associated with the domain, hosting and template for the SFBR Watershed Group website.

Grant funds will also contribute towards a recreation user survey to provide essential information to contribute to the eventual watershed plan. As discussed in more detail above in the section regarding critical watershed issues (4.2 Evaluation Criterion B – Addressing Critical Needs or Issues), recreational use of the watershed is increasing rapidly as population growth increases in nearby urban areas. Based on discussions with agency officials and other stakeholders, it is clear the need is great for accurate and up-to-date information about people's interactions with the lands and waters in this area. A recreational user survey will provide critical information for the eventual watershed plan.

## 6. Environmental & Cultural Resources Compliance

As this project is designed to develop a new watershed group and undertake planning activities, no environmental compliance will be necessary for project implementation.

## 7. Required Permits or Approvals

No known permits or approvals are necessary to implement the watershed group development and planning activities proposed in this application. If permits or approvals are needed for meetings and/or events, TU will secure the required permits/approvals.

## 8. Letters of Support

Please see Appendix A for letters of support from the following partners:

Anglers Fly Shop  
Boise National Forest  
Boise Valley Fly Fishers  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Danskin Cattle LLC  
Idaho Conservation League  
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality  
Idaho Department of Water Resources  
Idaho Fish & Game  
Idaho Wildlife Federation  
The Nature Conservancy  
Trout Unlimited – Hemingway Chapter  
Trout Unlimited - Ted Trueblood Chapter

## 9. Official Resolution

The official resolution will be submitted immediately following Trout Unlimited's next board meeting and no later than 30 days after March 31, 2022.

## Appendix A: Letters of Support

March 8, 2022

United States Bureau of Reclamation  
Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region 9  
1150 North Curtis Road, Suite 100  
Boise, Idaho 83706

Re: Trout Unlimited Idaho Water Group's Application to the WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program for a South Fork Boise River Watershed Group.

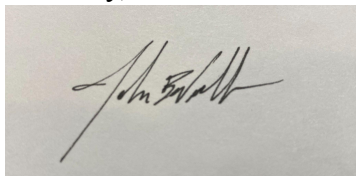
To Whom It May Concern:

Anglers Fly Shop writes to support Trout Unlimited Idaho Water Project's grant proposal to establish a South Fork of the Boise River (SFBR) Watershed Group.

Anglers Fly Shop has been serving Boise anglers for over 20 years. As a gateway for a generation of local anglers, we recognize stewardship as a responsibility and see comprehensive, connective community representation as an essential part of both healthy communities and fisheries.

The SFBR is valued by many of our customers (and staff) for its world class fishing and recreational opportunities within close proximity to the Treasure Valley. The SFBR, however, is not without its challenges in the future- the long-term health and viability of the SFBR will hinge on multiple stakeholders coming together to identify issues and opportunities related to land and water used in the watershed. Trout Unlimited's proposal aims to bring these stakeholders together by forming a diverse watershed group for the SFBR watershed. This watershed group will develop a plan for restoration and conservation of fish and wildlife habitat that is widely supported. Anglers Fly Shop believes that Trout Unlimited's proposal to bring landowners, local governments, recreation and conservation groups, water use interests, Federal public land and water management agencies, state agencies, and tribal governments to the table is smart planning for the future of the South Fork Boise River Watershed.

Sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read "John Wolter".

John Wolter  
Owner  
Anglers Fly Shop

**Date:** March 9, 2022

Kira Finkler, Director  
Trout Unlimited Idaho Water Project  
910 W. Main St., Suite 342  
Boise, ID 83702

Re: Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase 1 grant proposal for a South Fork Boise River watershed group

Dear Kira,

The Boise National Forest would like to express support for the Trout Unlimited Idaho Water Project's grant proposal to the Bureau of Reclamation for the formation of a South Fork Boise River (SFBR) watershed group.

This proposal will build on the efforts of TU and the Boise NF to improve aquatic habitat on the South Fork Boise River where we worked together years ago on the Pierce Creek reconnection project, trout spawning area monitoring, and riparian planting efforts, to name a few examples.

The South Fork Boise River downstream of Anderson Ranch Dam is southwest Idaho's premiere wild trout fishery and also attractive for whitewater rafting in the canyon section upstream of Arrowrock Reservoir. Recreation use of the river has increased in recent years and there is a need to address issues arising from this increased use of the area. A working group with a diversity of interests and viewpoints will be a positive development that can help allow stakeholders, landowners and others to develop plans for the area. The grant proposal highlights some of the key critical watershed needs that a watershed group can bring some focus and prioritization for project work.

The Forest Service looks forward to being involved in the work group and will cooperate with Reclamation on agency activities in the area.

Sincerely,

TAWNYA  
BRUMMETT

Digitally signed by  
TAWNYA BRUMMETT  
Date: 2022.03.09  
11:03:52 -07'00'

TAWNYA BRUMMETT  
Forest Supervisor







# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Snake River Area Office  
230 Collins Road  
Boise, ID 83702-4520



IN REPLY REFER TO:

MSF-1100  
2.2.4.21

March 9, 2022

Ms. Kira Finkler  
Trout Unlimited  
910 W. Main Street, Ste 342  
Boise, ID 83702

Subject: WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Grant Opportunity

Dear Ms. Finkler,

The Bureau of Reclamation, Snake River Area Office appreciates Trout Unlimited (TU) taking time on March 4, 2022, to discuss your interest in applying for a WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program (CWMP) grant. Through the CWMP, Reclamation provides funding to watershed groups to encourage stakeholders to form local solutions to address water management needs.

Using CWMP funding, TU proposes establishing a South Fork Boise River (SFBR) Watershed Group. The project would bring together local landowners, state, local, and federal agencies, recreation and conservation interests, water users, and others to develop a strategic habitat restoration plan for the SFBR. Given Reclamation's water management responsibilities in the Boise River basin and the diverse community of interests in the SFBR, we see considerable value from TU's proposal. We appreciate your reaching out to us.

If you have questions, you can contact me at (208) 383-2251 or [bhorsburgh@usbr.gov](mailto:bhorsburgh@usbr.gov).

Sincerely,

BRYAN HORSBURGH  Digitally signed by BRYAN  
HORSBURGH  
Date: 2022.03.09 10:26:58 -07'00'

Bryan Horsburgh  
Middle Snake River Field Office Manager

United States Bureau of Reclamation  
Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region 9  
1150 North Curtis Road, Suite 100  
Boise, Idaho 83706

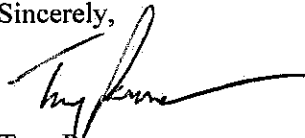
Re: Ted Trueblood Trout Unlimited Cooperative Watershed Management Program grant for a South Fork of the Boise River Watershed Group

The Boise Valley Fly Fishers group (BVFF) supports Trout Unlimited Idaho Water Project's grant proposal to aid the formation of a South Fork Boise River (SFBR) watershed group. The proposal's objectives include the following:

- Exploring the opportunity to form a diverse watershed group for the SFBR watershed and recruit representatives from a diversity of interests.
- Initiating organizational meetings and launching discussions about issues and opportunities related to land and water use in the watershed.
- Developing a plan for restoration and conservation of fish and wildlife habitat.

BVFF has a long-standing commitment to the South Fork of the Boise River and has invested in access and habitat improvement projects. It is a popular fishery with fishermen in the Treasure Valley and it is important to have a watershed group to look out for the river and guide the different stakeholders to maintain and improve the fishery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Troy Pearce", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Troy Pearce  
Conservation Director  
Boise Valley Fly Fishers

March 4, 2022

Kira Finkler, Director  
Idaho Water Project  
Trout Unlimited  
910 W. Main St., Suite 342  
Boise, Idaho 83702

Re: Trout Unlimited Idaho Water Group's application for a Cooperative Watershed Management Program grant for a South Fork Boise River watershed group.

As a local landowner along the South Fork Boise River, Danskin Cattle, LLC supports Trout Unlimited's efforts to establish a working group to coordinate and foster management of the resources and the public and private uses in the area. The unprecedented population growth in the area and the desire for outdoor recreation, is contributing to the area receiving increasing pressure from the public for recreation uses. Thoughtful and pro-active management coordination among federal, state and local agencies, private landowners and the general public is needed and Trout Unlimited's desire to spearhead the effort is appropriate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Baker". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,". A thin black line is drawn across the signature, starting from the left and extending to the right, crossing over the signature.

Bob Baker, manager  
Danskin Cattle, LLC  
5789 W. Willowtree Ct.  
Nampa, Idaho 83687



STATE OF IDAHO  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

1445 N. Orchard Street, Boise ID 83706  
(208) 373-0550

Brad Little, Governor  
Jess Byrne, Director

March 11, 2022

Andy Brunelle – Trout Unlimited  
910 W. Main St., Suite 342  
Boise, Idaho 83702  
(208) 345-9800

Subject: Trout Unlimited Idaho's application for a Cooperative Watershed Management Program grant for a South Fork Boise River Watershed Group

Dear Mr. Brunelle,

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) understands Trout Unlimited's ongoing interest and concerns with riparian and aquatic habitat degradation and water quality impairments in the South Fork Boise River watershed, resulting from historic anthropogenic and natural impacts to the area. As a result of these impacts, DEQ assessments have found multiple streams in the subbasin are not supporting beneficial uses for Salmonid Spawning and Cold Water Aquatic Life. In 2009 the US Environmental Protection Agency approved temperature TMDLs for multiple tributaries to the South Fork Boise River, creating opportunities for water quality improvement project implementation plans. The following waterbodies need such implementation plans according to DEQ's most recent Federal Integrated Report:

- Lime Creek - 5th order (Temperature TMDL Complete)
- Smith Creek and tributaries - 1st and 2nd order (Temperature TMDL Complete)
- Smith Creek - 3rd order (Mule Gulch to SF Boise River) (Temperature TMDL Complete)

In addition to these waterbodies, there are several other waterbodies in the South Fork Boise River watershed which would benefit from a cooperative watershed management program.

DEQ is supportive of the objectives proposed by Trout Unlimited's watershed group and is of the opinion that such a group would benefit the overall water quality improvement and beneficial use support of the South Fork Boise River watershed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "L. Holloway".

Lance Holloway  
Water Quality Manager

2022AKD3

C: Aaron Scheff, Chase Cusack



IDAHO  
CONSERVATION  
LEAGUE

February 25, 2022

Kira Finkler  
Trout Unlimited  
910 W. Main St Ste 342  
Boise, ID 83702

Re: Support for Trout Unlimited's USBOR Cooperative Watershed Management Grant application

Dear Kira:

Founded in 1973, the Idaho Conservation League strives to be Idaho's leading voice for conservation. With thousands of members and supporters from across Idaho and beyond, we advocate on behalf of Idaho's clean water, clean air, wildlife, and open access to wild places.

I am writing to share ICL's support for Trout Unlimited's effort to secure a USBOR Cooperative Watershed Management Grant for the South Fork Boise River watershed. As you know, the S Fk Boise is a special place not just for ICL and TU members, but so many more Idahoans. It's beautiful and a candidate for a federal Wild & Scenic designation; its fishery is one of the best in the state; and thousands of people fish, raft and camp along the river every year.

As you also know, it is also in need of better and more coordinated management. As the nearby Treasure Valley grows at a rate rivaling any community in the nation, more and more people will seek to enjoy all the S Fk Boise River has to offer. Additionally, three large scale water projects are proposed in its upper reaches. If these projects are approved and built, it will take a focused and coordinated effort to maintain a healthy fishery.

ICL is extremely supportive of TU's efforts to secure this grant and we hope to be a

productive participant in a coordinated effort to maintain a healthy S. Fk Boise River.

Sincerely,

/s/ Marie Callaway Kellner

ICL Conservation Program Director  
mkellner@idahoconservation.org



**IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME**

SOUTHWEST REGION  
15950 North Gate Boulevard  
Nampa, Idaho 83687

Brad Little / Governor  
Ed Schriever / Director

March 4, 2022

United States Bureau of Reclamation  
Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region 9  
1150 North Curtis Road, Suite 100  
Boise, Idaho 83706

Re: Trout Unlimited Idaho Water Group's application for a Cooperative Watershed Management Program grant for a South Fork Boise River watershed group

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) supports Trout Unlimited Idaho Water Project's grant proposal to aid the formation of a South Fork Boise River (SFBR) watershed group. The proposal's objectives include the following:

- Exploring the opportunity to form a diverse watershed group for the SFBR watershed and recruit representatives to from diversity of interests.
- Initiating organizational meetings and launching discussions about issues and opportunities related to land and water use in the watershed.
- Developing a plan for restoration and conservation of fish and wildlife habitat.

IDFG manages multiple fisheries in the SFBR, watershed including a trophy trout fishery between Anderson Ranch Dam and Neal Bridge, a popular kokanee fishery within Anderson Ranch Reservoir, as well numerous general and put-and-take fisheries in the mainstem and tributaries upstream of Anderson Ranch Dam. Many other entities also play key roles shaping management of the SFBR watershed including land and water management agencies, counties, private landowners, NGO's, and user groups. A watershed group has the potential to focus these diverse groups toward collaboratively guiding basin-specific management opportunities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Josh Royse", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Josh Royse  
Regional Supervisor

*Keeping Idaho's Wildlife Heritage*



State of Idaho

**DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**

322 E Front Street, Suite 648 • PO Box 83720 • Boise ID 83720-0098

Phone: (208) 287-4800 • Fax: (208) 287-6700

Website: [idwr.idaho.gov](http://idwr.idaho.gov) • Email: [idwrinfo@idwr.idaho.gov](mailto:idwrinfo@idwr.idaho.gov)

BRAD LITTLE  
Governor

GARY SPACKMAN  
Director

March 17, 2022

RE: Trout Unlimited Idaho Water Group's application for a Cooperative Watershed Management Program grant for a South Fork Boise River watershed group

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter of support from the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) for the project proposal to assist in the formation of a South Fork Boise River watershed group. The proposal's objectives include the following:

- Exploring the opportunity to form a diverse watershed group for the SFBR watershed and recruit representatives from a diversity of interests.
- Initiating organizational meetings and launching discussions about issues and opportunities related to land and water use in the watershed.
- Developing a plan for restoration and conservation of fish and wildlife habitat.

IDWR is in charge of administering water rights in the Treasure Valley/Boise Watershed. IDWR works actively with local stakeholders and interested parties to resolve water issues throughout the state. A watershed group in this area has the potential to focus these diverse groups toward collaboratively guiding basin-specific management opportunities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Neeley Miller', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Neeley Miller  
*Water Resource Planner, Senior*  
Idaho Department of Water Resources





March 8, 2022

United States Bureau of Reclamation  
Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region 9  
1150 North Curtis Road, Suite 100  
Boise, Idaho 83706

Re: Trout Unlimited Idaho Water Group's Application to the WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program for a South Fork Boise River Watershed Group.

To Whom It May Concern:

Idaho Wildlife Federation (IWF) writes to support Trout Unlimited Idaho Water Project's grant proposal to establish a South Fork of the Boise River (SFBR) Watershed Group.

IWF is Idaho's oldest statewide conservation organization, founded by sportsmen and women in 1936. Today, we represent a nonpartisan voice of 28 affiliate organizations with 45,000 affiliate members and individual supporters who desire to sustain and enhance Idaho's fish and wildlife, conserve their habitat, and maximize sporting opportunity for current and future generations. Trout Unlimited is a valued partner to IWF and we appreciate their efforts to develop the proposal.

The SFBR is valued by many of our supporters for its world class fishing and recreational opportunities within close proximity to the Treasure Valley. The SFBR, however, is not without its' challenges in the future- the long-term health and viability of the SFBR will hinge on multiple stakeholders coming together to identify issues and opportunities related to land and water used in the watershed. Trout Unlimited's proposal aims to bring these stakeholders together by forming a diverse watershed group for the SFBR watershed. This watershed group will develop a plan for restoration and conservation of fish and wildlife habitat that is widely supported. Trout Unlimited's proposal to bring landowners, local governments, recreation and conservation groups, water use interests, Federal public land and water management agencies, state agencies, and tribal governments to the table is smart planning for the future of the South Fork Boise River Watershed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Garret Visser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent than the last.

Garret Visser  
Conservation Program Coordinator  
Idaho Wildlife Federation



Idaho Chapter Office  
950 W. Bannock St.  
Suite 210  
Boise, ID 83702

Tel (208) 343-8826  
Fax (208) 343-8892

nature.org

March 4, 2022

RE: Cooperative Watershed Management Program Grant Proposal Letter of Support

Dear CWMP Program Administrators,

It is my pleasure to write this letter in support of the proposal being submitted to the Bureau of Reclamation by Trout Unlimited.

At The Nature Conservancy (TNC) our mission is to conserve land and water upon which all life depends. A core value of this mission is conservation through collaboration, which is especially important in water conservation, where the demands of water resources are multiple and dynamic.

The proposed project submitted by Trout Unlimited is to help fund the creation of a watershed group focused on the South Fork of the Boise River, located in Southwestern Idaho. The South Fork of the Boise is a trophy rainbow trout fishery; it also harbors important habitat for several other different fish species, including bull trout and mountain whitefish. The watershed is located just east of Boise, Idaho, one of the fastest growing communities in the nation. Due to this exponential growth the South Fork is facing increased pressure from water supply demands, as well as watershed degradations from recreational and land use pressure. Given the diversity of landownership, including significant federal (National Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Reclamation) ownership and regional stakeholder interests, a collaborative approach will be critical to addressing these watershed degradation issues.

In closing, the Nature Conservancy strongly supports the grant application submitted by Trout Unlimited and appreciates their efforts towards collaborative conservation. A watershed working group will be vital to successfully manage and restore such an important fishery.

I thank you for the opportunity to be involved in this process and to support such an impactful project.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Neil Crescenti".

Neil Crescenti  
Agriculture Program Manager  
The Idaho Chapter of The Nature Conservancy

Hemingway Chapter  
Trout Unlimited

1340 Northridge Drive  
Hailey, ID 83333  
202-256-0163  
Nickmiller2011@gmail.com  
www.hemingwaytu.org



MARCH 11, 2022

Ashlynn Goody,  
Policy & Outreach Associate  
Trout Unlimited  
Suite 324  
910 W Main Street  
Boise, ID 83702

Dear Ms. Goody,

Trout Unlimited Hemingway Chapter is pleased to write in support of Trout Unlimited's grant application to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for a WaterSMART Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase I grant. The grant will help fund the creation of a watershed group focused on the South Fork of the Boise River.

The South Fork is a prized fishery. Our 600 chapter members fish these waters year-round and we embrace this area as part of our home-waters.

A watershed group is needed. The South Fork region is experiencing growth and increased recreational demand. It is vital that all the stakeholders in the region work collectively to protect this beautiful area of Idaho and the ecosystem that sustains the fishery. Proper management will ensure its protection and longevity so our children can experience the joy of Idaho public lands and native fish. This project proposal will serve the purpose of the WaterSMART Program.

Trout Unlimited Hemingway Chapter recognizes the importance of creating a diverse group of stakeholders to establish a mission statement, vision statement, and goals for the South Fork Boise to protect the fishery now and in the future. If the grant is awarded, our Chapter promises to support the watershed group and to participate as appropriate.

We strongly support your grant application and the creation of a watershed group to improve the health of the river and associated habitat.

Sincerely,

  
Nicholas Miller, President, Trout Unlimited Hemingway Chapter



# Ted Trueblood Chapter

**TROUT UNLIMITED**

*P.O. Box 1971, Boise, Idaho 83701*

[www.tedtruebloodtu.org](http://www.tedtruebloodtu.org)

March 22, 2022

Kira Finkler, Director  
Trout Unlimited Idaho Water Project  
910 W. Main St., Suite 342  
Boise, ID 83702

Re: South Fork Boise River Cooperative Watershed Management Program Phase 1 grant proposal

Dear Kira,

The Board of Directors of the Ted Trueblood Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Inc. recently voted in favor of Trout Unlimited Idaho Water Project submitting a proposal to the Bureau of Reclamation for a Phase One Cooperative Watershed Management Program grant. The proposal is to form a watershed group for the South Fork of the Boise River.

The South Fork Boise River has long been a priority for the Ted Trueblood Chapter as it is southwest Idaho's premiere wild trout fishery. We have worked in the South Fork area for many years on projects, cooperating with other groups like the Boise Valley Fly Fishers, and with government agencies like Idaho Fish and Game, Bureau of Reclamation and Boise National Forest.

Our body of work is on display at the [www.southforkboise.org](http://www.southforkboise.org) website and includes the Pierce Creek reconnection project to reestablish access for fish to the spawn in this tributary to the South Fork Boise River. We also cooperated on stranding studies of river operations and numerous riparian protection and enhancement work such as planting and fencing projects.

This proposal will take the efforts to the next level by establishing a work group to cooperate on future projects and we support the proposal and plan to participate in efforts to form the watershed group.

Sincerely,

Darryl Kuhrt, President

*To conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.*

Ted Trueblood Chapter of Trout Unlimited

*To conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.*