AGENDA ITEM or FINAL CONTRACT REVIEW SUBMITTAL FORM

Agenda Item: Letter of Support; WSCU Masters in Environmental M

Action Requested:

Parties to the Agreement:

Term Begins: **Term Ends:** **Grant Contract #:**

Summary:

Please see attached letter for WSCU student Chris Nutgrass

Fiscal Impact:

Submitted by: Josh Ost **Submitter's Email Address:** jost@gunnisoncounty.org

Finance Review: ○ Required ◉ Not Required

Comments:

Reviewed by: Discharge Date:

County Attorney Review: ○ Required ◉ Not Required

Comments:

Reveiwed by: Discharge Date: Certificate of Insurance Required

Yes ○ No ○

County Manager Review:

Comments:

Reveiwed by: GUNCOUNTY1\mbirnie Discharge Date: 9/30/2016

◉ Consent Agenda ○ Regular Agenda ○ Worksession Time Allotted: 0

Agenda Date: 10/4/2016

Revised April 2015

GUNNISON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
Phone: (970) 641-0248, Fax: (970) 641-3061
Email: bocc@gunnisoncounty.org
Website: www.GunnisonCounty.org

October 4, 2016

Coal mines in the North Fork Valley have provided revenue to Gunnison County and high paying jobs to residents of this and surrounding counties for decades. As you clearly know, with the recent downturn in the coal market, those companies have been forced to reduce the number of employees at our local mines. Although many coal industry employees live in Delta County, Gunnison County also feels many of the impacts from decreased production, notably decreased revenue.

Coal will remain a vital part of our energy mix but is projected to decrease in the years to come. Gunnison County has seen this coming, but needs to keep preparing for those changes. The past decade has seen a reduction in the amount of coal and an ever-increasing amount of natural gas, of which methane is the primary component, used to generate electricity. In addition to electrical generation methane can be used as a chemical feedstock and vehicle fuel source.

Gunnison County fully supports the efforts of Chris Nutgrass, through the Master's in Environmental Management program at Western State Colorado University in understanding further the potential for methane capture from coal mines. The Board of County Commissioners views this project as an important element as we seek to adapt to the changing environment surrounding our energy production. Methane from coal mining is a resource that we cannot afford to ignore as an energy option.

This resource has potential benefits for the economy, environment, and the citizens of Gunnison and surrounding counties.

- Methane has a global warming potential twenty-eight times that of carbon dioxide, and keeping it out of the atmosphere would contribute to Colorado's efforts as a leader in greenhouse gas reduction;

- Captured methane is a potential energy source, which should be put to a beneficial use;

- If new business can be created based on the availability of this energy source, this could support badly needed new livelihoods.

Through this project, Chris will begin to answer some of the questions regarding this resource. Please help him to access the information he needs to assist us in this process. Your cooperation in helping Gunnison County to lead in exploring the potential of this resource Colorado is greatly appreciated!

Paula Swenson, Chairperson Phil Chamberland, Commissioner Jonathan Houck, Commissioner