

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD



LONG RANGE PLAN 1994-1999

September 14, 1994
Revised July, 1995



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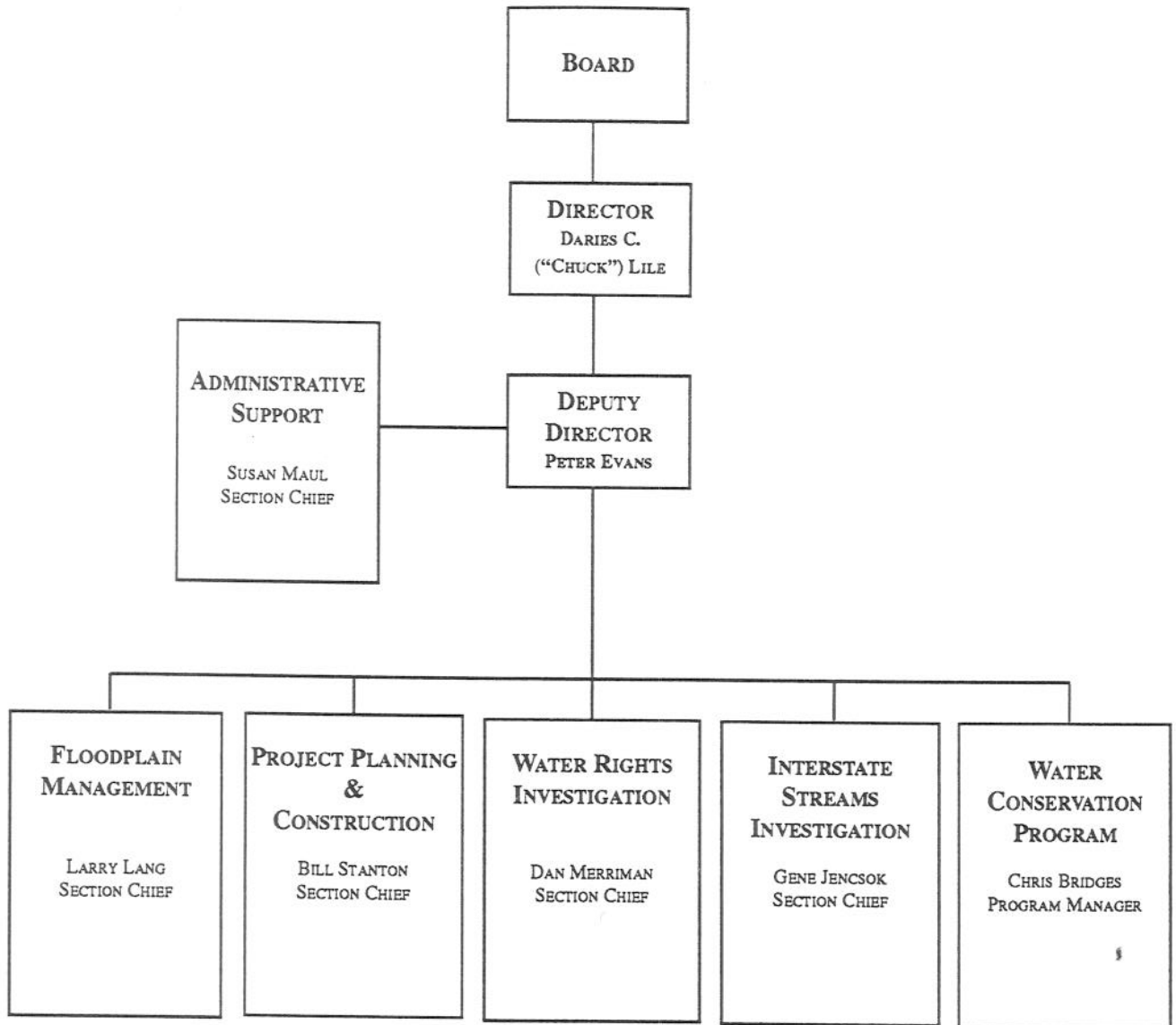
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COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD



9/95

**COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD
LONG RANGE PLAN**

Adopted July 20, 1994; Revised May 23, 1995

I. Mission Statement.

The mission of the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) is to promote the protection, conservation, and development of Colorado's water resources in order to secure the greatest utilization of those resources for the benefit of present and future generations, and to minimize the risk of flood damage and related economic losses.

II. Summary of Strategic Direction.

Public attitudes toward natural resource development and environmental protection will continue to evolve and, although the projections for Colorado's population and economy predict continued growth, traditional sources of funding (i.e., tax dollars) for infrastructure development and rehabilitation will continue to be limited. As Colorado faces these challenges, the CWCB will provide a forum in which water policy options and opportunities receive open, factual analysis and evaluation. To meet these challenges, the CWCB will increase its attention to the effectiveness of its public meetings, the management of its personnel and fiscal resources, and the need to strengthen public confidence in government. The CWCB will review this Long Range Plan annually and will make minor adjustments to respond to changing circumstances. A major revision will be made beginning on July 1, 1998 which will include public participation.

Through the development and implementation of this Long Range Plan, the CWCB will become increasingly proactive in:

- Providing a forum and the necessary resources, when appropriate, to explore opportunities to assist in the resolution of critical water management conflicts, including the increasing demand for water-based solutions to environmental problems, while protecting vested water rights and future development opportunities;
- Enhancing the quality and accessibility of water resource information;
- Protecting Colorado's interstate allocations, supporting and financing the construction and rehabilitation of Colorado's water infrastructure (including facilities for the capture and conveyance of the state's waters), and promoting the consideration of more efficient and cost-effective water management technologies;

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The CWCB recognizes that the goals and objectives included in this long range plan may extend beyond current levels of funding and staffing. When appropriate, the CWCB will seek legislative authorization to obtain the necessary funding and staffing levels.

III. Situation Analysis.

The water taken from streams and aquifers is a vital ingredient in Colorado's agricultural, municipal, and industrial activities. Protecting these traditional uses of water is essential to the economic vitality and general well being of Colorado's citizens. However, Colorado is confronted with many difficult challenges in managing its water resources:

- Coloradans are spending vast sums of money in water fights that divide the state;
- Downstream states are seeking a greater share of water from Colorado's rivers;
- Federal financial support for water resource development is disappearing;
- National laws and policies which require protection of endangered species, recreational values, water quality, wetlands, and aquatic and riparian ecosystems are imposing new limitations on existing water facilities and traditional water supply development;
- Public demand continues to grow for recreational uses of water and for protection of the environmental values of this state;

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- Relatively slow population growth and adequate water supplies during the past decade have resulted in low public awareness of the need to prepare for future drought cycles and population growth;
- Public involvement in water resource management is increasing, including ballot proposals to amend the water rights framework in the state Constitution;
- Protection of water quality often conflicts with development of new water supplies;
- Economic and environmental considerations are prompting many agricultural, municipal, and industrial water users to adopt more efficient management practices; and
- Reluctance by states to accept federal programs that are viewed as imposing unfunded mandates, the "taking" of private property, and a questionable cost/benefit relation without the benefit of sound scientific evidence.

Although many people predict that the demand for significant new water supplies will remain relatively limited and localized in the near future, the CWCB expects that the growth of Colorado's population and economy will eventually require additional development of water resources. Preparation to meet those future needs must include consideration of dry year conditions and rigorous protection of Colorado's interstate allocations.

CWCB members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate in accordance with statutory provisions intended to assure both (a) balanced representation of Colorado's varied regions and interests and (b) appropriate expertise for water policy formulation. As a result, the CWCB is able to serve as one of the most effective agencies for anticipating and examining water policy issues in coordination with the Colorado General Assembly.

Key Communities and Interests

As a public agency, the Board's list of constituents or "customers" would include all citizens of Colorado and a number of agencies or organizations. For the purposes of this planning document, however, it is useful to identify the following constituent groups more specifically:

- Colorado General Assembly;
- Governor and DNR Executive Director;
- Water User Community:
 - Individuals (including agricultural, municipal, and industrial users);
 - Conservation and conservancy districts;

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- Tribes;
- Irrigation companies, canal and reservoir companies, etc.;
- Cities, towns, etc.;
- Associations;
- Environmental community;
- Recreational interests;
- Property owners;
- Local government officials, agencies, and organizations;
- Interstate compact commissions and other interstate councils, organizations, etc.;
- Federal Agencies (including the Bureau of Reclamation, Corps of Engineers, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Soil Conservation Service, and others);
- State agencies and their respective governing boards and commissions (including the Division of Water Resources, Division of Wildlife, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Water Quality Control Division, Department of Local Affairs, Department of Transportation, Department of Agriculture, Water Resources and Power Development Authority, and others);
- Schools and Universities;
- Bankers/Lenders, Realtors, Insurance Companies;
- Consulting Engineers, Attorneys, and Real Estate Developers; and
- CWCB members and staff.

Ballot Initiatives Affecting CWCB Activities

There will continue to be ballot initiatives which reflect a perception that government is not responsive to public concerns. Some of these initiatives may affect CWCB's operations, including limits on state spending, changes in the permissible uses of lottery funds, constraints on the diversion of water from one basin to another, and introduction of the "public trust" doctrine into Colorado water law.

We are aware that Colorado law and government are always in a state of change and accept that CWCB programs and management will need to remain flexible.

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IV. Goals and Objectives.

GOAL 1 PROTECTING COLORADO'S APPORTIONMENT OF INTERSTATE WATERS: To protect Colorado's apportionment of interstate waters against any proposed actions which may threaten Colorado's ability to utilize those waters, while pursuing alternatives which resolve or avoid the various water resource problems which may constrain or weaken Colorado's future opportunities.

- Objective Defend Compact Allocations: To vigorously oppose any efforts to reallocate Colorado's apportionment of interstate water supplies in all interstate streams, including the Colorado River, Platte River, Arkansas River, and the Rio Grande.
- Objective Defend Compact Interpretation: To anticipate challenges to existing compact provisions and adopt strategies to protect Colorado's apportionment and water development opportunities.
- Objective California Water Supply: To encourage California's efforts to find in-state solutions to its water supply needs within its 4.4 MAF Colorado River entitlement in a manner which protects the compacts and Colorado's ability to fully utilize its compact allocation.
- Objective Nevada Water Supply: To encourage Nevada's efforts to find a firm supply to meet its long-term water supply needs within the state of Nevada and/or within the waters apportioned to the Lower Basin States in a manner which protects the integrity of the "Law of the River" and Colorado's ability to fully utilize its compact allocation.
- Objective Arizona Water Supply: To encourage Arizona's and the Central Arizona Water Conservancy District's efforts to resolve their water allocation and repayment difficulties in a manner which protects the compacts and Colorado's ability to fully utilize its compact allocation.
- Objective Colorado River System Reservoir Operations: To assist the Colorado River Basin States and the Department of Interior in achieving optimum operation of reservoirs for water supply, power generation, environmental protection, and recreation opportunities in a manner that protects Colorado's compact apportionment and ability to develop.

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- Objective Arkansas River Litigation: To continue the vigorous defense against the Kansas claims over uses of Arkansas River water supplies, and take appropriate actions to implement the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Objective Platte River Litigation: To assure that Colorado's legal position is protected in the *Nebraska v. Wyoming* lawsuit over the uses of the Platte River water supplies.
- Objective Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program: To assist and cooperate with the Colorado River Basin States, federal agencies, and others in developing and implementing the Long Term Implementation Program according to the established schedule.
- Objective Endangered Fish Recovery: To protect Colorado's ability to continue development of its compact allocations through participation in the Upper Colorado River and San Juan River Recovery Programs in accordance with the commitments made by each of the participants, implementation of the Upper Colorado Recovery Implementation Program Recovery Action Plan (RIPRAP) according to the established schedule, implementation of the San Juan River Seven Year Research Plan, and by securing long-term federal funding for these programs by December 1998.
- Objective Endangered Species Recovery (S. Platte River): To protect Colorado's established usage of South Platte River compact apportionment as efforts to protect and recover the whooping crane, piping plover, least tern, and pallid sturgeon proceed.
- Objective Endangered Species Recovery (Rio Grande): To protect Colorado's established usage of Rio Grande compact apportionment as efforts to protect and recover the Rio Grande sucker and the silvery minnow proceed.
- Objective Future Endangered Species Listings: To assist the CDNR and CDOW in the development and implementation of a statewide plan by December 1998 to protect and enhance habitat and, where practicable, prevent the decline of additional species to conditions which might warrant federal regulatory protection.
- Objective Federal Reserved Water Rights: To oppose federal reserved water right claims which would affect Colorado water users and the ability to develop

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Colorado's compact apportioned waters, and to insist upon the use of Colorado's water rights system to satisfy federal water needs.

GOAL 2 DEVELOPMENT OF COLORADO'S WATER RESOURCES: To promote necessary and appropriate development of Colorado's water resources.

- Objective Enhance Water Supplies and Develop Colorado's Compact Allocations: To promote the construction of water resource projects through technical and financial assistance for new or enlarged storage or diversion facilities which anticipate and prepare for periods of drought and develop Colorado's compact allocations.
- Objective Specific Projects: To secure the development and completion of the following specific projects by December 2003: the Animas-La Plata Project, the enlargement of Elkhead Reservoir, and a reformulated San Miguel Project.
- Objective Federal Project Water: To promote contract terms and conditions conducive To reliable availability of water at reasonable cost from federal facilities in Colorado for municipal, agricultural, industrial, and other beneficial uses.
- Objective Secure Future Development Opportunities: To assist water users in the development of new water supplies in Colorado by exploring the utility of "development allowance" agreements with the appropriate local, state, and federal agencies and affected interests in each major river basin.
- Objective Rehabilitation of Restricted Storage Capacity: To reduce by 40 percent the amount of existing water storage capacity which has been restricted as a result of dam safety concerns by December 1998 by using Construction Fund monies for rehabilitation, where appropriate (approximately 144 KAF restricted in 1993).
- Objective Rehabilitate Existing Infrastructure: To assist in the rehabilitation and improvement of diversion structures, canals, ditches, pipelines, and other raw water collection and delivery facilities through loans from the Construction Fund.
- Objective Reduce Dam Spillway Requirements: To coordinate with the State Engineer and provide financial assistance for a review of the "probable

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maximum flood" spillway design requirements for dams above 7500 feet M.S.L. in Colorado, and seek other opportunities to reduce the cost to reservoir owners at other elevations which are affected by similar spillway design requirements, while protecting the safety of public.

- Objective Front Range Water Supplies: To promote cooperative development and management of Front Range water supplies by completing the Metropolitan Water Supply Integration Studies by December 1995 and supporting the ongoing process for proceeding with implementation of the resulting recommendations.
- Objective Integrity of the Construction Fund: To add \$20-30 million to the Construction Fund and the Mitigation Account and complete the development of the long-term financial projection for the Construction Fund by July 1994, restore General Fund support for at least 50 percent of the CWCB's administrative expenses, and report annually to the General Assembly to ensure the financial integrity and full utilization of the Construction Fund.
- Objective Loan Contract Processing: To complete the development of a plan by December 1995 for streamlining the contracting process, so that loans recommended by the CWCB and approved by the Legislature are closed within three months following legislative approval.
- Objective Water Quality/Water Supply Management: To promote the development and utilization of non-point source water quality management practices which permit the continued use of existing water supplies through voluntary programs which provide pilot and demonstration projects coordinated with the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission.
- Objective Water Use Efficiency: To promote improvements in water use efficiency in agricultural irrigation and municipal supply systems through demonstration grants and loans from the Construction Fund.
- Objective Office of Water Conservation: To complete the applicable technical assistance, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting requirements for state building water efficiency standards and plans, municipal water efficiency plans, and The public information clearinghouse authorized by HB 91-1154 by July 1999.

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GOAL 3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION: To avoid future environmental conflicts associated with the development and use of Colorado's water resources by preserving the water-dependent natural environment to a reasonable degree in a non-regulatory setting in which water rights and opportunities for future human uses are also protected.

- Objective Instream Flow Rules: To complete the promulgation of rules for the Instream Flow Program by February 1, 1994.
- Objective Instream Flow Quantification: To complete an evaluation of the need for new standards and methods for quantification of instream flows and natural lake levels by June 1996.
- Objective Protection of Water Rights: To adopt and initiate implementation of a plan by May 1996 for routine protection of its instream flow and natural lake level water rights.
- Objective Federal Reliance upon Colorado Law: To seek legislative support by May 1996 for the development of cooperative agreements with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and other federal agencies under which the federal government would rely upon Colorado's Instream Flow and Natural Lake Level Program as the principal means of protecting the water resources needed for recovery of endangered species and for the reasonable preservation of the water-dependent natural environment on federal lands.
- Objective Program Evaluation: To establish an Instream Flow Advisory Committee by July 1995 with appropriate representatives from water development, environmental, and wildlife interests, and with local, state and federal agencies for the purpose of identifying significant public concerns and to provide strategies for resolving any identified concerns to the CWCB by January 1997.

GOAL 4 QUALITY MANAGEMENT: To enhance the leadership, efficiency, and morale within the CWCB staff by 25 percent as measured in annual surveys monitoring productivity and employee satisfaction.

- Objective Long Range Plan Implementation: Develop an implementation process for achieving each of the goals of this Long Range Plan, and making minor adjustments to this plan on an annual basis for the next four-year period.

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A major review of this plan will be completed by July 1, 1998 which will allow for a carefully developed public involvement process.

- Objective Survey of Key Communities and Interests: To develop a survey, with substantial input from CWCB members, and begin an annual assessment of the agency's priorities, responsiveness, and efficiency by December 1995.
- Objective Assessment of CWCB/Staff Coordination: To begin an annual assessment by December 1995 of the working relationship between the CWCB and its staff in order to optimize their communication and coordination.
- Objective Employee Survey: To develop an employee survey, with substantial input from the staff, and begin an annual assessment of employee satisfaction, the productivity of office organization and facilities, and the effectiveness of team leadership and personnel supervision by September 1995.
- Objective Office Management: To review the allocation of office management responsibilities, and make any necessary adjustments in that allocation by July 1994 to improve the efficiency and "friendliness" of CWCB office working conditions.
- Objective Performance Planning and Evaluation: To complete all employee performance evaluations each July for the preceding year, together with performance plans (including clearly defined objectives which recognize the need to allocate significant time to customer service functions for the following year).
- Objective Filling Positions: To fill all authorized FTEs within budget limitations, and reduce the time required to refill vacant positions to two months (or less) by July 1994. Whenever possible, new employees will be hired before current employees leave in order to provide on-the-job training and continuity.
- Objective Diversity: To recruit qualified minority and female candidates into the application pool when hiring new personnel.
- Objective Education and Training: To allocate at least 5 percent of the CWCB's general operating budget for the education and training of staff beginning in FY 94.

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- Objective Education and Training: To assure each CWCB employee has the opportunity to attend at least one training or educational workshop selected in consultation with the supervisor for that employee to reflect the interests and job skill requirements related to that employee's opportunities and responsibilities beginning in FY 94.
- Objective Employee Cross-training: To implement a cross-training plan which reflects the needs of the entire CWCB staff by FY 94.
- Objective Office Space Effectiveness: To assure that the reallocation and renovation of CWCB office space are complete by September 1995, with appropriate input from CWCB staff, to accommodate a full staff, an efficient, centralized filing system, and a medium-sized conference room.
- Objective Accessibility of Records: To complete the renovation of the CWCB's central filing system by December 1995, including an improved index/cross reference system to provide more efficient and reliable access for the CWCB and its staff to stored documents and information (including maps and hydrology data).
- Objective Information Technology: To maintain an effective program for the improvement and maintenance of the CWCB computer hardware and software systems in order to assure the CWCB staff has the equipment needed to accomplish the CWCB mission efficiently within budget limitations.
- Objective Quality Management Coordinator: To designate a quality management coordinator by July 1994 to represent the CWCB on DNR's Quality Management Council and to develop and implement appropriate initiatives within the CWCB staff beginning in FY 94.
- Objective Employee Recognition: To develop and implement a system of recognition awards by March 1994 designed to motivate peak performance and develop optimum working conditions.

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GOAL 5 WATER POLICY FORMULATION: To strengthen the CWCB's effectiveness as a leader in the identification and analysis of water controversies affecting Colorado, in the evaluation of alternative solutions in cooperation with the affected communities of interest, in the development of consensus support for a preferred resolution to those controversies, and in formalizing official state policy in coordination with the Governor and General Assembly.

Objective Policy Analysis: To review and analyze every legislative bill considered in the Colorado General Assembly which has a substantial bearing upon Colorado's water supply or flood protection interests by December 1995, and provide CWCB assessment when appropriate.

Objective Analysis of Federal and Interstate Policy Issues: To implement a plan which assures the identification and analysis of every major legislative or rulemaking proposal by the federal government or other western states which has a substantial bearing upon Colorado's water supply or flood protection interests by December 1998.

Objective Policy Development Participation: To strengthen the effectiveness of the Colorado River Policy Advisory Council and the Front Range Water Policy Forum, and to establish other appropriate councils for the evaluation of water policy and legislative opportunities with the interested parties.

Objective Full Participation: To participate in any legislative or administrative action or policy resolution at the local, state, interstate, or national levels which may significantly affect Colorado's water resource or flood protection interests by December 1998.

GOAL 6 WATER INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS: To develop and implement a statewide water information management system by 2003.

Objective Information System Design: To design a statewide water information management system by December 1995 to ensure efficient and cost-effective development of reliable present and future water supply and demand information in coordination with the State Engineer, Water Quality Control Division and other interested parties as a principal component of the Water Resource Information Center developed by the CWCB pursuant to SB 93-1273, and taking into consideration the previous work by the DNR Geographic Information System (GIS) task force, the

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Colorado River Decision Support System (CRDSS) Technical Advisory Committee, and the South Platte Water Rights Management System Steering Committee.

- Objective Water Resource Information Center: To complete the initial establishment of the Water Resources Information Center authorized in SB 93-1273, including the improvement of systems for managing and providing efficient public access to important water resource information, completing the transfer of appropriate materials from CWCB and the Division of Water Resources, and being prepared to receive, care for, and provide public access to the materials donated by others by December 1996. To incorporate an "electronic bulletin board" by December 1996 to make it easier for the public to remain informed on current water issues and encourage broader public involvement in the decision making process.
- Objective Publication Account: To establish a public information publication account with legislative authorization by December 1995 to recycle the fees collected pursuant to the Open Records Act (24-72-205, C.R.S.) and to enhance the quality and availability of water resource information publications.
- Objective Colorado River DSS: To complete the development of the Colorado River Decision Support System by January 1998.
- Objective Coordination of Data: To coordinate the collection of data with other state, federal and local agencies and develop a common database by 1998 which will be suitable for as many users as possible and eliminate unnecessary duplication of effort.
- Objective South Platte River DSS: To seek authority and funding to begin designing a decision support system for the South Platte River Basin, and to begin the acquisition of appropriate data to support that system by the 1996 legislative session.
- Objective South Platte River DSS: To seek authority and funding for the development of a decision support system for the South Platte River Basin by the 1998 legislative session.
- Objective Rio Grande DSS: To seek authority and funding to begin designing a decision support system for the Rio Grande Basin, and to begin the

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acquisition of appropriate data needed to support that system, by the 1997 legislative session.

- Objective Rio Grande DSS: To seek authority and funding for the development and implementation of a decision support system for the Rio Grande Basin by the 1998 legislative session.
- Objective Arkansas River DSS: To seek authority and funding to begin designing a decision support system for the Arkansas River Basin, and to begin the acquisition of appropriate data needed to support that system, by the 1997 legislative session.
- Objective Arkansas River DSS: To seek authority and funding for the development and implementation of a decision support system for the Arkansas River Basin by the 1999 legislative session.
- Objective North Platte and Laramie River DSS: To seek authority and funding to begin designing an expansion of the South Platte River Basin decision support system to include the North Platte, Laramie and mainstem Platte River Basins into Central Nebraska by the 1998 legislative session.
- Objective South Platte, North Platte and Laramie River Decision Support System: To seek authority and funding for the expansion of the South Platte River Basin decision support system to include the North Platte and Laramie River Basins by the 2000 legislative session.

GOAL 7 FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT: To minimize Colorado's flood loss vulnerability and related economic impacts.

- Objective Floodplain Designation: To formally approve and designate all identified floodplains by December 1997.
- Objective Comprehensively Expand Uses of Designated Floodplains: To develop a comprehensive, multi-objective program to explore opportunities for recognizing and securing mitigation credit for the natural and beneficial uses of floodplains by integrating wetland mitigation, wildlife enhancement, recreation and habitat preservation within the CWCB's designated floodplains while protecting floodplains as well as utilizing all avenues and sources of funding. Maximize the economic benefit of improved channel conveyance to deliver Colorado's compact

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apportionments.

- Objective Preparation and Emergency Response: To implement flood preparedness mitigation measures and post-recovery operations during all major flood events, and to document the effectiveness of those measures within six months in conjunction with the State's Emergency Response Plan.
- Objective Hazard Mitigation Plan: To support the timely revision of the flood-related portions of Colorado's Hazard Mitigation Plan and the implementation of objectives set forth in the plan.
- Objective Flood Insurance Participation: To assist Colorado communities in obtaining accurate flood insurance and flood hazard maps and increase the percentage of structures in Colorado floodplains covered by flood insurance to 25 percent by 1998, and 50 percent by December 2003 (approximately 16 percent covered by 1993).
- Objective Floodplain Information Support System: To develop and implement a floodplain information support system by December 1995 which is a compatible part of the DNR Geographic Information System (GIS).
- Objective Flood Emergency Preparedness: To develop and implement an annual planning process, including a snowmelt-runoff model, for flood forecasting and advance avoidance actions by December 1996.
- Objective Local Assistance: To develop guidelines by December 1995 to guide local government and water conservancy districts through the process of developing flood protection plans and projects for flood threatened areas, taking full advantage of state and federal funding programs.
- Objective Service Capability: To restore funding and authorization for one additional FTE by December 1995 and in matching funds for federal assistance programs by December 1998 in order to (a) delineate floodplains, including areas below dams, (b) implement flood mitigation measures, (c) develop an annual program for the education of floodplain users, (d) assist local governments in the development and implementation of their own flood risk management programs and (e) develop and implement a program to integrate wetlands concerns with floodplain management priorities and emergency response activities.

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GOAL 8 PUBLIC INFORMATION: To assure that Colorado citizens, including key communities and interests, have ready access to the high quality information which will be needed for the protection, conservation, and development of Colorado's water resources.

- Objective Public Information Officer: To appoint a Public Information Officer by May 1994 to coordinate, in consultation with the DNR, the training of CWCB staff, the response to requests for information (ongoing), and the development of a strategic plan which identifies key communities and interests and assures that the CWCB will effectively meet their needs for water resource information in a timely manner.
- Objective Colorado Water Almanac: To prepare a water almanac by September 1996 describing Colorado's water resources, their current uses, the infrastructure and institutions developed to manage those resources, and the issues which need to be resolved in order to assure the protection, conservation, and development of those water resources for Colorado's future.
- Objective Environmental Education: To provide the leadership and support necessary to assure that the water-related components of DNR's environmental education programs are factual, objective, and highly effective in reaching the key communities and interests.
- Objective CWCB Brochure: To prepare a brochure by December 1995 describing the CWCB, its responsibilities, and this long range plan for distribution to the public and to the various agencies and organizations interested in Colorado's water resources.

V. DIVERSITY

As a publicly funded agency with the responsibility to represent the best interests of the citizens of Colorado, the CWCB recognizes the appropriateness of increasing the participation on the Board and in staff positions by women and minorities. Toward this end, we will recruit qualified female and minority candidates into the application pool for state employment whenever we hire new employees at the CWCB. Since the CWCB staff is not involved in the recruitment or selection of CWCB members, the responsibility for increasing female and minority participation on the CWCB will rest with CWCB members, including the DNR Executive Director, and with the Governor.

