

# Stream and Lake Protection Section 2005 Strategic Plan

April 26, 2005

## **Section Mission**

Preserve, improve, and protect Colorado's natural environment to a reasonable degree through the use of instream flow (ISF) and natural lake level (NLL) water rights.

## **Section Fundamental Objectives**

The fundamental objectives of the Stream and Lake Protection (SLP) Section relate to three key areas of practice – **current authorities, program applications, and program advocacy.**

### **1. Objectives related to Current Authorities:**

The CWCB has the exclusive authority to appropriate waters of natural streams and lakes to preserve the natural environment to a reasonable degree, and to acquire such water, water rights or interests in water to preserve or improve the natural environment to a reasonable degree. As a result of this authority, the CWCB must provide the SLP Section with the legal, technical and policy staff, and associated resources necessary to:

#### ***Base Programs Related to Current Authorities:***

Legal protection	Engineering and Water Quality
Physical protection	ISF Methodology and Biology
New Appropriations	Water Acquisitions

- i) Administer the program, in accordance with the statutes, *and*
- ii) Maintain the base programs required to perform the duties specified in statute.

### **2. Objectives related to Program Applications:**

The SLP Section is tasked with using the CWCB's authorities and resources, embodied by the Section's stated mission and base programs, to support the mission of the CWCB which includes the protection, conservation, management and development of the waters of the State.

To achieve this fundamental objective, the SLP Section will apply the base programs to support the needs of the State's water community and citizenry, with respect to the preservation and, where possible, improvement of the natural environment in alignment with two key areas of practice:

#### ***Direct and Indirect Benefits of the SLP Programs include:***

- Preserving, and improving, the natural environment to a reasonable degree while protecting:
  - Existing uses; and
  - Compact requirements
- Protecting native species
- Providing regulatory stability
  - NEPA mitigation and permitting
  - USACE permitting
  - By-pass flow resolution and management
- Supporting
  - River and stream restoration
  - Water supply protection
  - Water quality stabilization
  - Recreation
  - Aesthetics

- i) Supporting and implementing the "conserve, protect and restore (or CPR)" framework identified in the Statewide Water Supply Initiative.
- ii) Maintaining regulatory stability by using program tools to assist with permitting and mitigation needs, as only can be accomplished by a state agency.



### 3. **Objectives Related to Program Advocacy:**

The SLP Section must continually work with the Board, key program stakeholders, and the public to engage, educate, inform, and create mechanisms to obtain feedback and understand stakeholder needs regarding the CWCB authorities, and the Section's base programs and program applications.

#### ***Key Program Stakeholders:***

Water Users and Providers, Environmental Groups, Non-Profits, State and Federal Agencies, and Water Conservation and Conservancy Districts

## **Short- and Mid-Term Objectives and Goals for the SLP Section**

These objectives and goals relate to the month-to-month activities that the SLP Section will focus resources to achieve over the next 3 to 5 years, and beyond. The objectives and goals are presented together for each objective listed.

### **1. Maintain existing base programs**

#### **Goals**

- Implementing the Board's statutory authorities
- Support and maintain regulatory stability with the Section's base programs and program applications
- Protect Board's existing water rights assets
- Support State's water needs

### **2. Increase connectivity with Board, key program stakeholders, and the public**

#### **Goals**

- Increase levels of understanding and communication
- Track new and emerging issues
- Expand use of external resources
- Identify needs of the SWSI 80% solution (relative to the ISF Program)
- Enhance current relationships (e.g., Federal government)
- Support and maintain regulatory stability
- Pursue and obtain funding

### **3. Increase staff and program efficiency**

#### **Goals**

- Explore external funding opportunities to:
  - Leverage Board funds with match from other sources
  - Support funding needs for other programs relevant to the ISF Program (e.g., USGS gaging)
  - Support funding efforts of State's water users, environmental and recreational interests, etc.
- Evaluate the feasibility of outsourcing basic technical support services (including the use of consultants and key program stakeholders)
  - Reduce current demands on Section resources
  - Allow Section staff to pursue and achieve other identified objectives
  - Support and maintain regulatory stability



## **Prioritized Tasks for the SLP Section**

Based on the short- and mid-term objectives that the Board and Section have identified as important to the ISF Program, the following priority tasks have been identified differentiated into three categories: policy, program and administrative.

### **Policy Tasks**

The policy tasks relate to those tasks that require significant and perhaps substantial input from the Board, working with the Section and CWCB Leadership, to provide guidance and direction to the ISF Program – and how it is used and applied to achieve the mission of the CWCB and the SLP Section.

- 1. Provide processes and mechanisms for continue policy discussions related to the ISF Program.*
- 2. Coordinate ISF Program needs with the Board Strategic Plan.*

### **Program Tasks**

The program tasks relate to the day-to-day and month-to-month activities that the Section and other CWCB staff perform to support the water needs of the State through implementation of the Board's statutory responsibilities.

- 1. Maintain base programs (see Attachment A).*
- 2. Increase connectivity through expanded education and outreach efforts, and increased levels of communication and engagement.*
- 3. Develop and maintain a database of potential funding sources that can be utilized by CWCB and/or other State agencies or water interests.*
- 4. Develop and implement a CWCB (and Section) funding strategy which leverages private public partnerships, federal and other grant and loan programs, supports funding efforts by others, etc.*

#### **Federal Government Nexus with the ISF Program:**

The SLP Section and the CWCB Board and Management Team will place priority on enhancing the CWCB's relationship with selected Federal agencies (e.g., U. S. Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, and Bureau of Land Management) that have a significant need for the ISF "Toolbox". The purpose of the enhancement effort will be to increase the effect use of the ISF Program to:

- Reduce the need for federal by-pass flows
- Support local needs for special use permitting
- Coordinate resources for
  - Identifying candidate streams
  - Making water availability determinations
  - Identifying natural environments appropriate for preservation and/or improvement
  - Assisting in setting priorities for potential new appropriations and acquisitions
  - Developing new methodologies as the science and needs evolve

### **Administrative Tasks**

The administrative tasks relate to those tasks that Section and CWCB Leadership perform on a regular basis to administer and direct the ISP Program and manage Section resources.

- 1. Continue administration of the base programs and the ISF Program*
- 2. Evaluate feasibility of outsourcing basic technical support services*

