

Proposal

S. Platte Roundtable Groundwater Committee role in implementation of HB1278 (South Platte River Alluvial Aquifer Study)

HB-1278 calls for the Colorado Water Institute (CWI) to review, analyze, evaluate, and draw conclusions regarding groundwater levels and management in the South Platte using existing data. The need for good science and transparency cannot be understated, must remain fundamental goals throughout the study, and should be applied to the following:

- clear identification of data sources
- understanding of data quality and completeness (or incompleteness)
- data analysis processes
- presentation of results

CWI proposes the need for three distinct bodies to deliberate on the compiled data and findings:

1. The CWI Research Team – Made up of researchers from universities, private sector, USGS and other contractors as appropriate to develop data layers and provide interpretation of data.

2. An Independent Scientific Panel – Made up of approximately 5 respected scientists/engineers with knowledge of groundwater, modeling and the S. Platte Basin to function as an NRC-like panel to provide peer review of data and develop hypotheses, conclusions and recommendations in a written report.

3. The South Platte Roundtable Groundwater Committee – Authorized by the Roundtable to:

- a. provide input to the CWI Director and CWI Research Team on study scope, research process, data suitability, maps, and specific questions from the CWI Research Team.
- b. provide a forum for public input and discussion at the regular meetings of the Groundwater Committee.
- c. advise the S. Platte Roundtable on progress and concerns related to the HB1278 study. Make recommendations to the Roundtable as to when presentations from the CWI Research Team to the Roundtable are appropriate.
- d. hear presentation of the interim and final CWI reports to the legislature and provide input on the reports.
- e. help CWI develop an educational strategy for the public, elected officials and the media regarding factual information on groundwater in the Basin.