

Xcel Energy's Drought Preparedness Efforts, Richard Belt, Xcel Energy

Xcel Energy is an investor-owned utility which provides electric service to 3.3 million customers in 8 states and operates electric generation facilities utilizing a wide variety of fuels and technologies. In Colorado, Xcel Energy has prepared for drought in a variety of ways, including developing supply diversity, water supply integration, demand-side management, and increasing incorporation of low/no-water use generation technologies. Xcel Energy has a tremendous variety of water supplies including appropriated surface water, groundwater, and storage, changed agricultural rights, transbasin supplies, contract supplies from both agricultural and municipal entities, reclaimed wastewater (used directly and for replacement), seasonal temporary storage agreements, junior water rights, recharge rights and contracted recharge credits, and interruptible supplies which could be exercised in the event of significant shortage. Further, the company has worked diligently for many years to integrate these sources, using exchanges, multiple points of diversion, and agreements, for use at multiple generating stations. This robust, flexible approach allows the company to adapt readily to variable water supply conditions and continue to serve its plants. Finally, increasing usage of no/low-water use generation technologies, such as wind generation and combined cycle gas generation, have enabled the company to meet increasing power demands while minimizing water consumption.