

STATE OF COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Rebecca Mitchell, Water Supply Planning Section

DATE: July 3, 2013

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item 21, July 16-17, 2013 Board Meeting**
Colorado Water Plan

John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

Mike King
DNR Executive Director

James Eklund
CWCB Director

Staff Recommendation: *This is an informational item only. No Board action is required.*

Background:

In May, 2013 the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) was charged, through Executive Order D 2013-005, with leading the great effort of creating a Colorado Water Plan (CWP) by the end of 2015. CWCB staff members are aligning existing efforts in order to successfully deliver the grassroots-based CWP. This agenda item will continue to be a recurring item in future agendas.

In preparation for this effort, the CWCB has identified a variety of resources from which the agency may draw. The CWP will build upon the work of the Basin Roundtables and Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) as well as the findings of Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI). The work of the Roundtables includes their Basin Implementation Plans and the work of the IBCC includes scenario planning, the no regrets/ low regrets document, as well as emerging discussions, which include new supply development. Several Roundtables have also expressed an interest in having the new supply development conversation. In addition, there are numerous Water Supply Reserve Account studies, the Colorado River Water Supply and Demand Study, and expertise and analysis from across the CWCB and other sister agencies that will need to be incorporated.

At the May 14-15, 2013 Board Meeting, the Board discussed in greater detail the development and structure of the agency's CWP efforts and how they fit with other ongoing efforts such as the Colorado River Water Availability Study Continuation, and the work of the IBCC. Emphasis was placed on coordinating these various efforts, necessary timelines for development, and associated roles and responsibilities.

Discussion:

An organized framework for the CWP will be helpful in guiding the agency as it focuses its efforts. Staff will lead a discussion with the board on how to build a CWP framework incorporating the following bullets, which come directly from the executive order and Board discussions to date. These include items directly from Executive Order:

- Reflect Colorado's values
 - Productive economy that supports vibrant and sustainable cities, viable and productive agriculture, and a robust skiing, recreation, and tourism industry

- Efficient and effective water infrastructure promoting smart land use
- A strong environment that includes healthy watershed, rivers and streams, and wildlife
- Align projects, studies, funding
- Determine opportunities for water rights held by state agencies and evaluate opportunities for those rights
- Align State's role in project permitting and emphasize expediting permitting processes for projects that stress conservation, innovation, collaboration, and other criteria
- Recognize link between water quality and quantity
- Work with other state and federal agencies
- Address the looming gap between water supply and demand while minimizing the buy-and-dry of irrigated agriculture
- Protect Colorado's compact entitlements
- Recommend legislative changes where necessary for implementation
- Affirm the doctrine of prior appropriation

Additional items discussed by the Board:

- Protect existing yield of M&I water supplies
- Develop regulatory incentives
- Maximize loan dollars to meet the needs of the CWP and examine other CWCB policies and funding mechanisms
- Integrate water products
- Explore the state water right concept proposed by the Metro Roundtable and some IBCC members

Staff will seek direction from the board regarding stakeholder involvement in the development of the framework, specific CWP sections, and the development of ad-hoc panels.