

# STATE OF COLORADO

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## Colorado Water Conservation Board

### Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

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John W. Hickenlooper  
Governor

Mike King  
DNR Executive Director

James Eklund  
CWCB Director

DATE: September 9, 2013

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item 7, September 24-25, 2013 Board Meeting**  
Interstate, Federal & Water Information/Stream & Lake Protection Sections –  
Wild and Scenic Rivers Alternatives Update

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### Background

The CWCB Staff continues to work with stakeholder groups to develop resource protection methods that could serve as alternatives to federal determinations by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management ("BLM") or U.S. Forest Service ("USFS") that certain river segments are "suitable" for designation under the Wild and Scenic River Act. There are currently three stakeholder groups that are continuing to work on Wild and Scenic protections: 1) the San Juan River basin group (separated into five different basins) ("River Protection Workgroup" or "RPW"); 2) the Upper Colorado River Wild and Scenic Stakeholder Group ("UCRW&S"); and 3) the Lower Dolores Plan Working Group ("LDPWG"). Updates on these processes are set forth below.

### Staff Recommendation

The item is informational only, with no Board action requested.

### Upper Colorado Stakeholder Group Update

The Upper Colorado River Wild and Scenic Stakeholder Group held its regular meeting on July 23, 2013 in Summit County and its next regular meeting is scheduled for September 17, 2013 at the same location. The Stakeholder Group is working on monitoring efforts including gathering data collected by others (i.e. Colorado Parks and Wildlife fish biomass surveys, Bureau of Reclamation's recreational permit data, etc.) as well as collecting its own data (i.e. creel surveys and recreation surveys). This year's recreation observations and intercept surveys began on April 25, 2013 at the Radium, State Bridge and Grizzly sites and will include 9 survey dates through the season. The group is also working on developing a web-based panel survey to follow

up with previous survey participants. The Stakeholder Group is working on drafting a long-term calendar, narrative definitions for a suite of flow regimes, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the provisional period and its 2012 Annual Report. The group also established a Cooperative Measures working group to develop methods for evaluating proposed cooperative measures.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Kremmling Field Office Final Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is now anticipated to be released in October with the Record of Decision (ROD) expected out in April 2014. The Colorado River Valley Field Office Final RMP/EIS is anticipated to be released in September with the ROD out in March 2014. The final Wild and Scenic Rivers Suitability Report (which will cover both field offices) will come out concurrently with the first RMP/EIS that is published.

For more information, see the following link: <http://www.upcowildandscenic.com/>.

#### River Protection Workgroup Update (various sub-basins of the San Juan River)

The River Protection Workgroup (RPW) Steering Committee held regular meetings on July 23 and August 26, 2013. The RPW Steering Committee's next meeting is scheduled for September 10, 2013 in Durango, CO. The CWCB director approved the Steering Committee's request for \$40,000 to begin the "Regional Discussion" [Phase II] for all five public workgroups (Hermosa Creek; San Juan River - East and West Forks; Upper Animas River; Vallecito Creek/Pine River; and the Piedra River). The Steering Committee is working on initiation of Phase II including discussing matching funds, process, logistics, etc. Final administrative items are being completed to wrap up Phase I of the project.

The proposed "Hermosa Watershed Protection Act", a product of the Hermosa Creek RPW, was originally introduced to Congress by Senator Bennet in 2012. Senator Bennet and Congressman Tipton reintroduced the act as companion bills on April 25, 2013. The bill reflects a balance between conservation, economic development and other uses.

The RPW for the Piedra River held its last meeting on July 22, 2013 in Pagosa Springs, CO to review the draft summary report for the group. The group endorsed the report with some edits and clarifications. Distribution of the final report will occur in early September. Any CWCB members that would like a copy of the report should contact Suzanne Sellers of the CWCB staff.

A new Forest Plan by Forest Service (FS) is due to be released in late September. A representative from the Forest Service indicated that an amendment to the new forest plan could be negotiated and drawn up to address recommendations of the groups that may not have been incorporated.

For more information, see the following link: <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/riverprotection>.

#### Lower Dolores Plan Working Group Update

The A Way Forward ("AWF") Implementation Team continues its work on re-drafting the AWF Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to address concerns raised by stakeholders in comments submitted earlier this year. This work includes sharing and discussing revised

chapters with various stakeholder groups. The Lower Dolores Plan Working Group Legislative Subcommittee and Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff have been coordinating closely with the Implementation Team on the revisions. The Legislative Subcommittee also continues to focus on three areas: (1) establishing the boundaries of the National Conservation Area that would be established by the proposed legislation the Subcommittee is drafting; (2) working to involve all affected counties in the discussion; and (3) fleshing out how the legislation would address protection of the native fish and flow-related ORVs. In July, the CWCB Director approved a request from the Lower Dolores Plan Working Group for funding from the Wild and Scenic Alternatives Fund to support the work of the Legislative Subcommittee. Additional information on the Lower Dolores Plan Working Group can be found at <http://ocs.fortlewis.edu/drd/meetings.asp>.

#### Dolores River Management Coordination Workshop

The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB), the Colorado River Water Conservation District (CRWCD) and the Southwestern Water Conservation District (SWCD) are convening a one-day workshop on Friday, October 18, 2013 in Naturita, Colorado. The workshop will bring together various stakeholders to discuss Dolores River management issues. The discussion will include: existing and proposed Wild and Scenic suitability for reaches of the Dolores River from McPhee Reservoir Dam to the Colorado state line; existing and proposed instream flow water rights on certain reaches of the Dolores River, and other alternative protections for portions of the Dolores River.