

STATE OF COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Joe Busto, Staff
Watershed and Flood Protection Section

DATE: September 3, 2013

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item 16, September 24-25, 2013 Board Meeting**
Weather Modification and Dust on Snow Updates

John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

Mike King
DNR Executive Director

James Eklund
CWCB Director

Staff Recommendation

This is an informational item and staff is not requesting board action.

Background

A Department of Natural Resources permitting program for weather modification or “cloud seeding” was developed in 1972 by the Colorado General Assembly. This program has been continually delegated to the CWCB since 1987. Program interest increased following the severe 2002 drought year, and the CWCB developed grants in 2004 to complement locally permitted operations. Shortly thereafter, agreements were formalized between Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona, and California to provide donations through the CWCB to wintertime cloud seeding to augment mountain snowpack for the benefit of system water in the Colorado River basin. In 2008, the CWCB adopted a Strategic Plan to apportion grants for operations, updated equipment, monitoring, and evaluations. In 2012, the Colorado Weather Modification Rules and Regulations were updated, requiring and suggesting new evaluation methods of permit holders.

There are currently seven winter time seeding programs: the Central Mountains, Vail/Beaver Creek, Grand Mesa, Gunnison Basin, Telluride/Dolores, Western San Juan Mountains, and Eastern San Juan Mountains. Staff will present expenditures, planned activities, the new target control evaluations now required by rule.

Additionally, Chris Landry (Center for Snow and Avalanche Studies) will provide an update on a separate program known as Colorado Dust-on-Snow (CODOS). Results from winter 2012-13 will be presented. The CWCB provides financial assistance to CODOS along with several major water districts, Denver, Grand Junction, and the Bureau of Reclamation. Dust-on-Snow is continuously monitored throughout the winter at the Senator Beck Basin Study Area at Red Mountain Pass and during a series of winter and springtime field sessions at 10 additional sites in Colorado. CODOS issues frequent updates and alerts describing dust-on-snow conditions statewide and how snowmelt runoff could be or is being affected.