

STATE OF COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

1313 Sherman Street, Room 721
Denver, Colorado 80203
Phone: (303) 866-3441
Fax: (303) 866-4474
www.cwcb.state.co.us



TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Rebecca Mitchell, Water Supply Planning Section

DATE: September 12, 2013

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item 21, September 24-25, 2013 Board Meeting - Colorado's Water Plan Update**

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 Colorado's Water Plan (CWP) by the end of 2015. CWCB board and staff 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 and Low Regrets Action Plan, 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 July 16-17, 2013 Board meeting, the Board continued to discuss 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. An initial framework for the CWP was developed, and the Board guided staff through several recommendations for how to further evolve the framework.

Discussion

Staff will give presentations on key CWP updates and will lead a discussion with the Board on the item outlined below:

CWP Framework & Annotated Framework

Building off of Board feedback received at the July 2013 Board meeting, staff updated the CWP framework and also created an annotated framework for review and discussion. The main objective of the discussion is to ensure that staff has sufficient direction to move forward with the development

of specific elements of the plan. The framework and annotated framework should be considered living documents.

Draft CWP Outreach and Communications Plan

Consistent and clear communications about the CWP will be critical to its success. After the July Board meeting, a draft CWP Outreach and Communications Plan was created to provide a cohesive strategy and structure for all CWP communications and outreach activities. Staff will give a presentation on elements of the CWP Outreach and Communications Plan, current and planned activities, and lead a brief discussion on what important elements may need to be incorporated in order to finalize the plan. Similar to the framework, the outreach plan should be considered a living document. Changes and updates will be made as necessary even after it is finalized.

Draft Framework Colorado's Water Plan

Colorado's Water Plan framework continues to evolve. Below is the updated framework based on CWCB Board feedback received during the July 2013 meeting. Items explicitly discussed by the board are in **[red brackets]**. These items have been incorporated into the initial draft of the annotated framework below. Items that have been added due to additional input are in **red** at the section and subsection level.

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Summary of Colorado water and summary of plan
- 1.2. Description of State and Federal entities that are involved in water administration, study, planning and project permitting
- 1.3. Description of Colorado Water Law & Administration

2. Overview of Each Basin

[Have distributed the write-up of each basin from SWSI to the BRTs for review/update]

3. Water Demand by Sector

4. Water Supply, Including Description of Historical and Projected Supply

5. Water Management

- 5.1. Scenario planning and adaptive management and no and low regrets
- 5.2. Meeting consumptive and nonconsumptive gaps
- 5.3. Watershed health/management
[This includes incorporating the request of some local staff at federal agencies to use stewardship opportunities and management tools.]
[Incorporating concept of downstream states contributing to watershed protection (e.g. salinity)]
- 5.4. Conservation **[asking each BRT to include conservation statements in their BIPs]**
 - 5.4.1. M&I Conservation (recognize demand hardening)
 - 5.4.2. Ag conservation (recognize headwaters state and return flows issues)
[reaching out to Ag-Water Alliance to get their updated ag conservation whitepaper]
 - 5.4.3. Self-Supplied Industrial (e.g. conservation of mining and energy water use)
 - 5.4.4. State agency conservation (e.g. Parks and Wildlife, Corrections, State Land Board, etc.)
[John Stulp is coordinating inventory of water use and conservation savings]
- 5.5. Alternative Ag-to-Urban Transfers (incl. ID of legal constraints)
[Will engage in HB 1248 to be able to incorporate lessons learned]
[Will engage Ag-Water Alliance and water bar]
- 5.6. Municipal, Industrial, and Agricultural Infrastructure Projects and Methods
 - 5.6.1. Water Supply Projects and Methods
[Incorporating CWCB strategic framework elements]
[Drafting incentive-based criteria to help move a project that may be lacking to a project that is worthy of state support]
[Drafting evaluation process and action that takes place when criteria are met]
 - 5.6.2. Existing Water Supply O&M
[Drafting criteria and a rubric for CWCB financing projects to ensure state funding aligns with values]

5.7. Environmental and Recreational Projects

5.8. Framework on streamlined water project permitting processes (formerly “Water Quality”)

[Incorporating lessons learned in the nutrients standard process and work of Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and the Colorado Water Quality Forum]

6. Alignment of State Resources and Policies

6.1. Funding/financing

[Incorporating WIFIA and the work of the Water and Power Authority]

6.1.1. Analysis of the cost to fully implement the CWP

6.1.2. Economic benefit of implementing the plan

6.1.3. Alignment of state funding resources and analysis of other funding opportunities

7. Legislative recommendations to assist in being able to fully implement the CWP

8. Process for Plan Update

INITIAL DRAFT – Colorado’s Water Plan Annotated Framework

Colorado’s Water Plan Purpose: Colorado’s Water Plan (CWP) will leverage and integrate nine years of work accomplished by Colorado’s Basin Roundtables, the Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC), and Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) to determine how to implement water supply planning solutions that meet Colorado’s future water needs while supporting healthy watersheds and environment, robust recreation and tourism economies, vibrant and sustainable cities, and viable and productive agriculture.

Schedule: A draft water plan will be submitted by CWCB to the Governor by Dec. 10, 2014.

Executive Summary

1. Introduction and Background

1.1. Summary of Colorado water and summary of plan

Objective: Introduce and outline the framework and structure of the CWP.

Potential Approach: Section 1.1 will discuss why the time is right for the CWP and what the CWP aims to accomplish. The section will also set forth Colorado’s water values, and the goals of the CWP. In order to do so, this section will:

- Provide historical context for the CWP and water planning efforts in the state, including the Basin Roundtable (BRT) and IBCC processes, and the Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI).
- Illustrate how the CWP was developed from grass roots efforts.
- Discuss challenges with the status quo trajectory vs. opportunities in the water plan. The CWP will seek to address the identified gaps while maintaining healthy watersheds and environment, robust skiing, recreation and tourism industries, vibrant and sustainable cities, and viable and productive agriculture.
- Information regarding other state water plans, and the need to integrate management of water quality and water quantity.
- Establish how the CWP will utilize SWI’s technical platform.
- Integrate water products.
- Identify what the CWP aims to achieve, which includes:
 - Align state funding and the state’s role in water supply and management with the plan’s water values;
 - Streamline the state role in the approval and regulatory process regarding water supply and management;
 - Provide a path to state support of those water supply and water management proposals that stress conservation, innovation, collaboration and other criteria such as promoting smart land use, healthy watersheds for Colorado’s rivers and streams, and smart water conservation practices that utilize demand-management. State support will also recognize that multipurpose projects will be preferred;
 - Be constructed from the bottom-up, incorporating the work of the grassroots IBCC and BRTs;
 - Protect Colorado’s ability to fully use its water within its interstate compacts and agreements and in light of increasing downstream water demands and changing federal requirements;
 - Establish a foundation for common-sense changes to the way we manage and transfer our water; and
 - Address our looming gap between supply and demand while minimizing the permanent buy-and-dry of irrigated agriculture.

Supporting Information: Executive Order, Presentation, talking points, etc.

Staff Support: CWCB Staff

1.2. Description of State and Federal entities that are involved in water administration, study, planning and project permitting

Objective: Demonstrate that the plan will make water supply project permitting more efficient and effective.

Potential Approach: Section 1.2 will be a brief section that will indicate the importance of aligning state resources. In addition, the section will specify that the CWP does not create an extra permitting hurdle for water providers; rather, it will establish a path to quicker (not more hurried) permitting for projects that meet the water values and criteria identified in the CWP.

Supporting Information: Information from State and Federal entities, 122.2, CWA Section 401, NEPA, ACTS, ESA

Staff Support: CWCB Staff and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Executive Director's Office (EDO) staff, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) staff

1.3. Description of Colorado Water Law & Administration

Objective: Demonstrate that the CWP works with Colorado water law and supports the doctrine of prior appropriation.

Potential Approach: Write a short section that describes how the plan works with Colorado water law to meet Colorado's future needs. This section will reaffirm the prior appropriation doctrine.

Supporting Information: Numerous sources, including C.R.S. 37-92-101 et. Seq., Colorado Constitution Article XVI, Sections 5 and 6, Interstate Compacts

Staff Support: CWCB Staff, Attorney General's Office, and Division of Water Resources (DWR)

2. Overview of Each Basin

Objective: Demonstrate the diversity of needs and interests throughout Colorado and to highlight each basin's importance in relation to Colorado's water values.

Potential Approach: Section 2 will include a brief summary of each basin, pulling content from SWSI where appropriate. In addition, this section will include information about how CWCB has supported each basin, such as with instream flows, flood assistance, drought assistance, compacts that are important to the basin, and major funding efforts that have occurred within the basin.

Supporting Information: SWSI 1 and 2, Basin Fact sheets

Staff Support: CWCB Staff

3. Water Demand by Sector

Objective: Illustrate Colorado's significant municipal, industrial, agricultural, environmental, and recreational water needs

Potential Approach: Section 3 will be a brief section summarizing Colorado's consumptive and nonconsumptive needs.

Supporting Information: SWSI 2010, HB 1051, BRT work

Staff Support: CWCB Staff

Potential Stakeholder feedback: N/A

Additional Questions or needs: HB 1051.

4. Water Supply, Including Description of Historical and Projected Supply

Objective: Describe Colorado's variable water supplies and highlight where there are critical limitations and opportunities.

Potential Approach: Section 4 will be a brief section that includes content regarding Colorado's water supply and how it relates to other states. The section will refer to the SWSI update and be consistent with the IBCC scenarios.

Supporting Information: Executive Order, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Colorado River Basin Supply and Demand Study, SWSI 2010, BRTs, Drought Plan and Task Force work, Colorado River Water Availability Study (CRWAS), Front Range Vulnerability Study, SWSI update Ch. 7 on Scenario Planning and Adaptive Management, IBCC and BRT work on scenarios, Drought Task Force, Climate Change Technical Advisory Group.

Staff Support: CWCB Staff

5. Water Management

5.1. Scenario planning and adaptive management and no and low regrets

Objective: Ensure that the CWP prepares Colorado for a broad range of potential futures and to show how the CWP builds upon the work of the BRTs and IBCC.

Potential Approach: Section 5.1 will include a brief and simplified narrative that indicates that the CWP is aimed at being successful regardless of what future Colorado faces. Summarize the no and low regrets. This section will frame how the other subsequent components fit into the CWP. This section will indicate where this information came from.

Supporting Information: BRT and IBCC Portfolio and scenario work, SWSI Update Ch. 7., IBCC No/Low Regrets Action Plan

Staff Support: CWCB Staff

5.2. Meeting the consumptive and nonconsumptive Gaps

Objective: Demonstrate how the CWP rests upon the foundation of BRT work and indicate that the CWP incorporates the BIPs, which should meet most of Colorado's future water needs while maintaining the state's water values.

Potential Approach: Synthesize and summarize the BIPs showing how they will measurably meet Colorado's future water needs. While a few projects may be highlighted, the section will primarily refer to the BIPs.

Supporting Information: BIPs, especially section 6.

Staff Support: CWCB Staff

5.3. Watershed health/management

Objective: Show how Colorado can pull together the state's consumptive and nonconsumptive interests in order to protect critical watersheds from fire and other natural hazards, such as floods, beetle kill, and drought.

Potential Approach: Section 5.3 will synthesize the BIP watershed health sections, and indicate any existing support garnered from downstream states and/or federal agencies.

Supporting Information: BIP watershed health section. Information on fire impact to downstream states, existing plans, U.S. Forest Service information. This includes incorporating the request of some local staff at federal agencies to use stewardship opportunities and management tools.

Staff Support: CWCB Staff

5.4. Conservation

5.4.1. Municipal & Industrial (M&I) conservation

5.4.2. Agricultural conservation

5.4.3. Self-Supplied Industrial (e.g., conservation of mining and energy water use)

5.4.4. State agency conservation

Objective: Indicate the amount of conservation that can be utilized to meet Colorado's future water needs.

Potential Approach: Section 5.4 will pull from various resources and will highlight recent BRT or legislative progress on the topic. Section 2.4.1 M&I Conservation will synthesize BIP action on conservation and any legislative movements forward and summarize the pros and cons of M&I conservation. It will recognize demand hardening as a concern and will describe land use efforts related to the No and Low Regrets Action Plan. Section 2.4.2 Agricultural conservation will summarize the work of Colorado Agricultural Water Alliance. It will also recognize Colorado's unique issues with agricultural conservation related to the fact that 1) Colorado is a headwaters state and must consider interstate concerns, and 2) there are limitations due to the protection of return flows for downstream users. For section 2.4.3 Self-Supplied Industrial, summarize efforts to partner with industry, including the water savings associated with utilization of natural gas and renewable energy sources compared to coal. This section could be focused on the energy/water nexus more generally and showcase efforts an energy/water nexus ad hoc group. For Section 5.4.4., State agency conservation, the section should indicate how state agencies are leading conservation efforts.

Supporting Information: SWSI 2010, Best Practices manual, Ag conservation paper, state agency water/energy conservation paper, Colorado & Yampa/White BRT energy study, nonprofit reports and memos on water/energy nexus, Letter to the Governors, information from the water/energy ad hoc group, SWSI Update (especially on industrial needs), BIPs, Colorado River Basin Supply and Demand Study and associated Next Steps Processes

Staff Support: CWCB Staff, relevant staff from other state agencies

5.5. Alternative agricultural to urban transfers

Objective: Showcase recent and ongoing efforts allowing for water sharing between agricultural and municipal water users.

Potential Approach: Section 5.5 will discuss recent legislative efforts to allow for alternative transfer method pilots, and will further the technical information, which indicates that approximately 50,000 acre-feet of agricultural water will be needed in the Front Range. Relevant aspects of the East Slope Basin Implementation Plans and the No and Low Regrets Action Plan will be incorporated. Examples, such as conservation easements which tie water to agricultural lands while allowing for temporary leasing on fallowed lands, will be highlighted. The section will also include an identification of some of the legal constraints.

Supporting Information: H.B. 1248 and associated Guidance and lessons learned from any pilots, Colorado Agricultural Water Alliance, Ag Policy Dialogue, Alternative Transfer Method grants and report, existing law concerning water banks, interruptible supply agreements, etc., information from discussions with the Colorado Water Bar

Staff Support: CWCB Staff, DWR Staff

5.6. Municipal, Industrial, and Agricultural Infrastructure Projects and Methods

5.6.1. Water supply projects and methods

5.6.2. Existing water supply operation and maintenance

Objective: Summarize the type and amount of infrastructure projects and methods needed to meet our current and future water supply needs, to indicate how much this infrastructure will cost, and to highlight multi-purpose and regional projects and methods from the BIPs. In addition this section will draft incentive-based criteria to help new projects that may be lacking to a project that is worthy of state support. It will also include an evaluation process and actions that take place when criteria are met. Similarly, for existing water supply operation and maintenance, criteria and a rubric for CWCB financing will be included. These efforts will be utilized in the permitting and funding section of the plan.

Potential Approach: Informed by the BIPs, Section 5.6 will summarize the amount of additional infrastructure Colorado will need to meet our future consumptive needs while striving to uphold Colorado's water values. In addition, the section will estimate how much the infrastructure will cost.

Supporting Information: Cost estimates from SWSI 2010, BIPs, SWSI Update (e.g., section 8), CWCB Strategic Framework

Staff Support: CWCB Staff

5.7. Environmental and Recreational Projects and Methods

Objective: Summarize the needed environmental and recreational projects and methods needed for protecting Colorado's environmental legacy and recreational opportunities, and to highlight important regional projects and methods

Potential Approach: Informed by the BIPs, Section 5.6 will summarize the amount of additional projects and methods that will be needed to maintain and, in some cases, enhance Colorado's environmental and recreational attributes, while maintaining Colorado's water values. In addition, the section will estimate how much the projects and methods will cost. The section will indicate the total number of projects, amount of protected or restored habitat, amount of protected or restored stream miles, and the expected benefit to nonconsumptive attributes.

Supporting Information: SWSI 2010, SWSI Update, BIPs, nonconsumptive database and Identified Projects and Processes (IPPs), Nonconsumptive toolbox

Staff Support: CWCB Staff

5.8. Framework on streamlined water project permitting processes

Objective: Show how the CWP will help make the water supply project permitting processes more effective and efficient, especially for those projects that meet Colorado's water values and fit within the CWP framework.

Potential Approach: This section will summarize the work of state and federal permitting entities to accomplish the recommendations in the no and low regrets action plan. The draft indicates two main actions:

- **Streamline state permitting processes for IPPs that meet values of the CWP:** The Executive Order directs the CWP to help expedite permitting at the state level. The state should develop an approach to permitting IPPs that efficiently moves projects through the process and toward an outcome, whether positive or not, while ensuring sufficient protection of nonconsumptive and other values. Public engagement and community outreach regarding water supply needs may need to increase in affected communities to facilitate an efficient permitting process.
- **Continue state coordination with the federal permitting entities:** The state should continue to meet with federal agencies and look for opportunities, including entering into MOUs, to make NEPA and permitting processes more efficient, especially for projects that meet the values of the CWP and are needed across multiple scenarios. Efficiency would not dictate whether the outcome is positive or not.

If there are pertinent aspects of the BIP's, those will be included as well. In addition, the CWP will consider any recommendations from the Quality and Quantity Workgroup recommendations on how quality and quantity policies should be linked, and seek to build off other successes, such as those in the endangered species recovery programs.

Supporting Information: CWCB Strategic Framework, No/Low Regrets Action Plan, any results from coordination meetings between state and federal permitting entities, ES white paper, Letter to the Governors, Mark Pifher Letter, nutrient rules, applicable law, Quality and Quantity Workgroup, information from state and federal permitting entities, information from project proponents, local governments, nonprofits, and other stakeholders on the permitting process, and information from the nutrients standards process, the work of CDPHE, and the Colorado Water Quality Forum

Staff Support: CWCB Staff, EDO Staff

5.9. Cross-basin Framework Agreements

Objective: Showcase water management agreements achieved across basins and provide support to these agreements by virtue of incorporating them into the CWP.

Potential Approach: Section 5.8 will summarize existing agreements and discuss the importance of additional agreements. It will also detail any new agreements developed as part of the process and discuss any agreements that are underway. As part of this work, the section will explore criteria for a good new supply project or package of projects.

Supporting Information: Basin Roundtable Project Exploration Committee, No/Low Regrets Action Plan, Letter to the Governors, new supply subcommittee chairs letter, West Slope Caucus, East Slope white paper, existing agreements (e.g., Colorado River Cooperative Agreement, Windy Gap Firing Agreement), Basin Roundtable and IBCC discussions.

Staff Support: CWCB Staff

6. Alignment of State Resources and Policies

6.1. Funding/financing

6.1.1. Analysis of the cost to fully implement the CWP

6.1.2. Economic benefit of implementing the plan

6.1.3. Alignment of state funding resources and analysis of other funding opportunities

Objective: Indicate how the CWP can be implemented from a funding perspective and demonstrate that doing so would be beneficial for the vibrancy of the state. If additional funds beyond current resources are needed, it will demonstrate how such funds could be acquired.

Potential Approach: Drawing from SWSI and other resources, this section will briefly discuss the costs and economic benefits of implementing the plan and then discuss in greater detail how the CWP could be funded. If additional funds are needed, it will recommend a funding approach. Section 6.1.3 will indicate how state funding can be aligned with meeting the priorities set forth in the CWP.

Supporting Information: No/Low Regrets Action Plan Appendix B, SWSI 2010. SWSI Update, information from various funders (e.g., Water and Power Authority, Bureau of Reclamation, private funding entities), information from the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Authority (WIFIA) and the Water Infrastructure Network (WIN), CWCB Strategic Framework

Staff Support: CWCB Staff

6.2. State water rights and alignment

Objective: Indicate how the State of Colorado is utilizing its water rights to the best benefit of the state, in accordance with the CWP water values and goals.

Potential Approach: Section 6.2 will summarize how Colorado's state agencies are aligning their water rights to meet the water values and goals of Colorado's Water Plan. This section will include recommendations on how to move forward any critical water projects and methods that have not been achieved by the time the water plan is published. Specifically, water rights should be aligned to have multiple benefits, for instance to agriculture and the environment. Water sharing agreements could also be explored. Water rights and potential water projects should be reviewed so that they can best meet the nonconsumptive and consumptive measurable objectives in the BIPs.

Supporting Information: Instream flows, Colorado Parks and Wildlife water rights database, State Land Board water rights documents and recommendations, feedback from various state agencies that have water rights.

Staff Support: CWCB Staff, EDO Staff

6.3. Alignment of other State Policies

Objective: To ensure that state water policies and procedures across agencies are aligned.

Potential Approach: This section will summarize how state agencies have aligned their policies to meet the water values and goals of the CWP based off interagency meetings and information.

Supporting Information: Relevant policies from state agencies, Feedback from state agencies with water related policies.

Staff Support: CWCB Staff, EDO Staff, Attorney General's office, DWR, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado Department of Health and Environment, etc.

7. Legislative Recommendations to Assist in Being Able to Fully Implement the CWP

Objective: To showcase recent legislative accomplishments and show grassroots support for any additional legislative action that is needed.

Potential Approach: This section should pull from the No/Low Regrets Action Plan's legislative recommendations and summary. It will discuss recent legislation in support of CWP water values and goals. In addition, it will highlight the level of support for new legislative concepts and from where the concepts emerged. Every recommendation should come from BRT, IBCC, and stakeholder involvement.

Supporting Information: No/Low Regrets Document, Basin Implementation Plans, BRT agriculture policy document, information from the Interim Water Committee, Colorado Water Congress, and the Colorado Water Bar

Staff Support: CWCB Staff, EDO Staff

8. Process for Plan Update

Objective: Indicate that the CWP is a living document that will need periodic updates.

Potential Approach: Write a brief section describing the process for future updates.

Supporting Information: Executive Order, CWP presentations



Colorado Water Conservation Board

Colorado's Water Plan

DRAFT 9/12/2013 - Outreach and Communications Plan Overview

INTRODUCTION

The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) has been charged with a historic task over the next 16 months – to incorporate and build upon nine years of work and unprecedented dialogue and consensus among water leaders throughout the state to develop a comprehensive plan for addressing Colorado's water challenges.

Public engagement coupled with consistent and clear communications about Colorado's Water Plan (CWP) will be critical to its success. The Outreach and Communications Plan is designed to provide a cohesive strategy and structure for all CWP communications and outreach activities. While strategic communications around the plan will undoubtedly become a multi-year effort, this plan is intended to act as a guide from September 2013 until the submission of the draft CWP to the Governor's office in late 2014. The plan should be considered a living document, with changes and updates being made as necessary. Communications beyond late 2014 will necessarily shift and strategies will need to be adjusted accordingly.

GOALS

Outreach and communications will be rooted in four clear goals aimed at ensuring the CWP's success:

- To engage the public and to create general public awareness and dialogue about the CWP and its role in ensuring a secure water future for Colorado;
- To build support within the water community for the CWP and increase the level of understanding of the plan and its components;
- To proactively identify and address issues that may create barriers to success for the CWP and mitigate/manage negativity; and
- To share the responsibility of implementing and executing communications about the CWP across CWCB leadership and key stakeholders to achieve the impact of a collective voice.

TARGET AUDIENCES

Public input is essential to the success of the CWP. While the communications effort will seek to inform and foster dialogue among a broad group of stakeholders, targeted efforts will be made to engage a core group of audiences through a variety of tactics designed to specifically connect with each group's values. Target audiences include:

- General public
- IBCC and Basin Roundtables members
- Broader water community
- Constituent groups
- Policy makers
- Key community groups and opinion leaders
- News Media

STRATEGY

The multi-pronged, proactive approach outlined below embraces the local nature of water and leverages existing efforts and forums to the largest extent possible to build support for the CWP from the ground up.

Across all audiences, the strategy involves an initial push focused first on education and gradually turns up the volume over time towards deeper engagement and understanding.

Elements of the strategy include:

Basin Roundtable Engagement

The Basin Roundtables are a ripe opportunity for grassroots engagement and members have the potential to act as ambassadors of the CWP in the communities they represent. In addition to regular CWCB attendance and participation at BRT meetings, we will work together with the BRTs to develop communications collateral and messaging that they can disseminate and use in their conversations about the CWP in their communities. Part of this work will happen through the existing Public Education, Participation, and Outreach (PEPO) Workgroup. Basin Roundtable education liaisons are also creating opportunities to share information regarding the Basin Implementation Plan development process and how it relates to the CWP.

Grassroots Stakeholder Group Outreach

We will build a database of key community, civic, and water organizations (e.g., Chambers of commerce, Colorado Municipal League, Water Congress, regional advocacy groups, others) with established communications networks (websites, newsletters, email updates, etc.) that we can partner with to distribute CWP materials. We will engage with these groups on the development of the plan and to help get information into the hands of their constituents. These groups also present important speaking opportunities that will be incorporated into a speaking opportunity schedule.

Public Comment

Opportunities for public input will be emphasized in all communications materials related to the CWP. A public comment form will be built into the website, and comments will be tracked and shared with the Basin Roundtables and other key groups as appropriate to consider in their decision making. Members of the public will also be encouraged to engage directly with their Basin Roundtables.

Media Relations

CWCB has an immediate opportunity to work with the press to clearly articulate what the CWP is and isn't before the plan is defined by others. It will be critical to establish an initial foundation of knowledge and awareness in the media with an immediate push through op-eds, news releases and other means, and to follow that with a steady drum beat of information. Subsequent proactive pushes tied to key milestones will follow. Official spokespeople will be designated to ensure our message remains clear and consistent.

DNR/CWCB/IBCC Leadership Roadshow

Meetings with DNR/CWCB/IBCC leadership will go a long way in increasing understanding of and hopefully building support for the CWP in the water community. We will identify a number of key organizations and individuals (e.g. local governments, environmental groups, policy makers, etc.) throughout the state for one-on-one meetings or group briefings. Some of these meetings could potentially be accomplished through members of the Speakers Bureau (see below) if appropriate.

Speakers Bureau

In coordination with the IBCC and the BRTs, we will identify a small group of geographically diverse spokespeople who can speak about the CWP in various forums across the state. This should include engaging our key partners (e.g. agricultural and municipal water providers) wherever possible. We will prepare a master calendar of events in order to capitalize on existing opportunities to reach key stakeholders. Efforts will be made to line-up speaking assignments and prepare appropriate materials and trainings for spokespeople.

Branding

We will develop an overarching brand (logo, templates, and consistent look and feel) that reflects the CWP's purpose and values. This will be an early-action item that will be carried through all collateral materials produced for the CWP.

Digital Engagement

We will develop a robust online presence for the CWP where stakeholders can go to get information, sign up for updates and get involved with the process. This strategy includes a CWP-specific website, active social media channels and targeted email campaigns tied to key milestones.

Social Media

Facebook and Twitter accounts have been created and will be integrated into the CWP website. These social media tools provide an informal and interactive space for CWP dialogue and exchange of ideas. The accounts will be monitored and administered by CWCB staff who will proactively post relevant information and participate in the conversation. The accounts will be launched and promoted through a variety of channels including the website and email campaigns.

Key Meeting Outreach and Follow-Up

As appropriate, targeted pre-event outreach and follow-up will be made to drive stakeholder attendance to important events and create opportunities for additional interaction and dialogue.

Communications Plan Management

This communications plan requires a strong and coordinated team effort to be effective. Regular strategy sessions with the CWCB team will be critical to keeping our strategy on track while remaining flexible to respond to inevitable changes in the communications landscape.

PRODUCTS

Print Materials

We will develop a suite of printed collateral materials (Fact Sheets, FAQs, Brochures, White Papers, etc.) based on communications needs that will be targeted and updated as necessary. The materials will be made available for download on the CWP website and distributed as appropriate through other channels.

Digital Materials

As another early-action item, we will develop a comprehensive CWP website that showcases the current work of the CWP and provides important plan information, materials and background. The website will be updated as necessary to ensure timeliness. A mailing list sign-up option will be included, and branded templates will be developed for email campaigns at key milestones.

Media Materials

A basic CWP press kit will be developed containing many of the print materials outlined above. We will also develop milestone-specific press releases, op-eds and other necessary press materials to support communications goals.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Since the CWP will be built from the ground up, our success depends on our ability to effectively engage with each basin through a variety of outreach tools. The following targets and metrics will be used to measure the success of our communications effort over the next six months. These targets will be updated as the development of the CWP and our strategy progresses.

- At least one op-ed, editorial board meeting and CWP presentation to a broad-based community group occurs in each basin
- All appropriate CWP materials supplied to the Basin Roundtables and other identified groups are being distributed through their respective networks (e.g., PEPO network, local Chambers of Commerce and other community organizations)
- The website and Basin Roundtable meetings are being utilized as public comment mechanisms. Comments are being received from each basin and shared with the IBCC and Basin Roundtables around the state.