

Colorado's Water Plan



The Challenge

Water is essential to Colorado's quality of life and economy, yet we face an uncertain future. This is due to 1) increasing gaps between water supplies and water demands; 2) the trend of permanent buying and drying of productive agricultural lands in order to meet growing municipal demands, and 3) greater uncertainty due to drought, climate change, and more. If we don't take responsible action now the consequences will be great. Hundreds of thousands of acres of Colorado's most productive farmland will dry up, our cities and towns will have insufficient water, wildfire response will become more difficult, and the environmental health of our watersheds will be increasingly threatened.

The Opportunity

Governor Hickenlooper issued an Executive Order in May 2013 directing the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) to develop Colorado's Water Plan. Creation of this plan is a grassroots effort drawing upon eight years of unprecedented work, dialogue, and consensus-building that water leaders from across the state have engaged in through the Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) and Basin Roundtable process. Colorado's Water Plan will be aligned with our state's water values: vibrant and sustainable cities, viable and productive agriculture, a robust skiing, recreation and tourism industry, and a thriving environment that includes healthy watersheds, rivers, streams, and wildlife.

Why now?

The gap between supply and demand is drawing ever closer. Without a thoughtful, educated, and measured response to this problem we run the risk of compromising Colorado's future of being one of the best places in the nation to live and work. The work of the IBCC and Basin Roundtables has made the development of Colorado's Water Plan possible.

- The 27 members of the IBCC, representing every water basin and water interest in Colorado, have agreed that unless action is taken, we will face an undesirable future for Colorado with unacceptable consequences. The IBCC has reached consensus on a number of actions that Colorado must take in the near term to secure our water future. These include conservation, alternative methods of utilizing agricultural water that doesn't result in the permanent dry-up of farmland, and support for water projects that meet certain factors.
- The Basin Roundtables have brought together leaders from each of Colorado's major river basins and the metro area to map out their own basin's needs and water future, facilitated discussions on water issues, and developed locally-driven, collaborative solutions.
- Since the 2002-2003 drought, the CWCB has been leading the most comprehensive analysis of Colorado water ever undertaken through the Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI 2010). As a result, we know more today than we have ever known about our future water demand: what supplies are available, how much water we need for consumptive and non-consumptive needs, and more.

How will it be developed?

Colorado's Water Plan is a grassroots effort. Each Basin Roundtable will develop its own plans for the future. The Basin Implementation Plans (BIPs) will identify the projects and methods that each basin will implement to meet its water needs, the specific challenges to a secure water future the basin faces, and the strategies it will pursue to address those challenges. These BIPs will then be incorporated into Colorado's Water Plan.

The IBCC will continue to facilitate dialogue across basins and continue its work of refining and adding to the list of action items around which there is consensus, including a thorough examination of options for new water supply.

The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) is tasked with drafting the plan. To do so, it will be reviewing and combining technical information and policy recommendations, incorporating the work of the IBCC and Basin Roundtables, and conducting any additional technical analysis needed.

How do I get involved?

Communicating with interested stakeholders and keeping them informed throughout the development of Colorado's Water Plan is our priority.

Join the Discussion!

The most effective way to be involved is to be engaged in your Basin Roundtable. To learn more about when your Roundtable meets and who represents your basin on the Roundtable, visit www.cwcb.state.co.us.

Find Colorado's Water Plan on [Facebook](#) and follow us on Twitter – [@COWaterPlan](#).

Questions?

Contact us at cowaterplan@state.co.us and visit us online at www.coloradowaterplan.com.

The Timeline

