



# Colorado's Water Supply Future

## Interbasin Compact Committee Annual Report

October 31, 2013



To the House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture,  
Livestock, and Natural Resources and the Senate Committee  
on Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Energy



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### Websites, Emails, and Links

[www.cwcb.state.co.us](http://www.cwcb.state.co.us)

[www.coloradowaterplan.com](http://www.coloradowaterplan.com)

[cowaterplan@state.co.us](mailto:cowaterplan@state.co.us)

[www.cwcb.state.co.us/water-management/basin-roundtables](http://www.cwcb.state.co.us/water-management/basin-roundtables)

*(Basin Implementation Guidance & No Low Regrets Document)*

[SWSI Chapter 7 Link](#)

*(CWCB board page, July 2013 agenda item #22)*

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*Front Cover - Alan Hamel CWCB board Chair, James Eklund CWCB Director,  
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**Mike King** - DNR Executive Director  
**James Eklund** - CWCBC Director

## From John Stulp

*Special Policy Advisor to the Governor for Water  
Director of Compact Negotiations Interbasin Compact Committee*



**A**s we look back over the last twelve months, the mid September floods in the South Platte and Arkansas basins are foremost in our minds. Together the last three years have demonstrated the extreme variability that Colorado faces. The year 2011 was historically wet, 2012 historically dry, and 2013 both historically dry and historically wet. Despite the floods, 2012 and 2013 are two of the driest four years on record for much of the state. This variability, paired with the fact that in some places we may have experienced as much as a one in ten thousand year flood event, present immense challenges related to water supply planning in Colorado.

I am gratified that the Basin Roundtable process served as a way to quickly respond to the 2013 flood events. About a week after the floods, CWCBC was able to issue a \$1.8 million grant from the Water Supply Reserve Account for immediate support to help recover damaged water infrastructure. In addition to requesting this grant, meetings of the South Platte Basin Roundtable and IBCC served as forums for sharing

stories the damage caused by these catastrophic floods. They also served as a forum where collaborative flood recovery projects began to form.

The stories of lost reservoirs, of diversion head gates five or even ten feet above the river channel, of streams and rivers that have significantly changed their course and thousands of acres that may not be able to be irrigated next year if water infrastructure is not recovered in the near term tell me two things.

The first is that Coloradoans know how to face disaster. So many farmers were out in the water and mud trying to assess and even repair their systems as soon as the rain stopped. People have come together to support their neighbors and there have been thousands of heroes we will never know about who made a huge impact on the lives of their neighbors, strangers and community.

Second, the fact is that even when people come together to face catastrophe, having a plan and sufficient resources makes it easier, especially when the long effort of recovery replaces the immediate swell of disaster.

CWCBC's new director, James Eklund quotes Mike Tyson, who said "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the face." Drought and flood are punches that will continue to be thrown at us.

This variability highlights why Colorado must work together to help us prepare for our uncertain water future. Between the work of the IBCC, the Basin Implementation Plans, the Statewide Water Supply Initiative, and Colorado's Water Plan we can lay the groundwork to respond to an unpredictable future while supporting Colorado's growing communities, agriculture, beautiful environment, and plentiful recreational opportunities.



Photo provided by CWCBC Flood Section



*John Stulp letter continued from page 2*



The last twelve months have been monumental for the Interbasin Compact Committee and Basin Roundtable process. This is reflected by more between basin roundtables meetings, grants, cutting edge technical work, and consensus documents than ever before. This remarkable engagement is within the context of Colorado's Water Plan. I am thankful that the water plan has led to a renewed level of interest and participation, because it fundamentally relies on the grassroots efforts taking place across the state and with every interest group. The Governor's Executive Order put out a timeline which

will help bring the eight years of Basin Roundtable and IBCC dialogue and work to fruition.

One critical aspect of the body of work produced this year is the No and Low Regrets Action Plan. This document outlines several actions that are needed in the near term no matter what future Colorado may face. The IBCC reached one hundred percent consensus on moving the potential actions forward. The action plan has been reviewed by the CWCB board and will be further reviewed by the Basin Roundtables and other stakeholders. The action plan is a foundational document that will help with the Basin Implementation Plans, SWSI, and Colorado's Water Plan.

In addition to learning more about the No and Low Regrets Action Plan, the annual report will cover the following:

- ◆ Colorado's Water Plan
- ◆ The work of the Basin Roundtables and their Basin Implementation Plans
- ◆ How the IBCC has worked with basin roundtables to develop five scenarios and the portfolios of water solutions that will help with adaptive management
- ◆ Cross basin meetings
- ◆ The emerging dialogue on how to preserve Colorado's ability to fully utilize its compact entitlements
- ◆ Existing and planned outreach efforts of the basin roundtables and how that fits within outreach happening at the statewide level
- ◆ The path forward

Together these efforts will help us prepare for our changeable water future.

John Stulp  
*Special Policy Advisor  
to the Governor on Water  
Director of Compact Negotiations  
Interbasin Compact Committee*



## THE NEED FOR COLORADO'S WATER PLAN

**W**ater in Colorado is in short supply. In the coming decades, research concludes that there could be a gap between water supply and demand of as much as half a million acre-feet or more per year. The entire state is put at risk by this scenario, but it is particularly threatening to Colorado's rural communities. Unless we do something to manage our water future differently than we do today, more and more agricultural water will be bought to supply our growing cities, thereby drying up hundreds of thousands of acres of productive farm land and jeopardizing the economy and livelihoods of rural Colorado. Northeastern Colorado alone is expected to lose approximately twenty percent of agricultural land currently under production from purchase agreements already in place, and if we continue at this pace as much as forty percent could be lost. This water supply future is unacceptable. We must have a plan that uses our best thinking and problem solving to provide an adequate and secure water future for all Coloradans.

To address Colorado's water supply challenges, the Governor issued an Executive Order in May, 2013 directing the CWCB to develop Colorado's Water Plan. Colorado's Water Plan will leverage and integrate nine years of work accomplished by Colorado's Basin Roundtables, the Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC), and 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. This is an unprecedented undertaking for Colorado, but fortunately much of the work that is needed to develop the plan is already done.

After the drought of 2002-03, the state commissioned the most comprehensive study ever done of Colorado's current and future water demands and supplies, the Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI). SWSI is continually being updated so it includes the



most current information available. For the last several years, the IBCC and nine Basin Roundtables around the state have been engaged in thoughtful dialogue while working hard to understand Colorado's water challenges and ways they could be addressed, using SWSI as a technical guide.

The CWCB, IBCC, and Basin Roundtables have reached consensus on a variety of actions that will lead to a better water future, including support for alternatives to permanent "buy-and-dry" of agriculture, conservation, projects that meet certain criteria, and more. Colorado's Water Plan will not be a top-down plan full of state mandates and requirements. Instead, it will be built on the foundation of the work of the CWCB, the IBCC and the Basin Roundtables. And that is a strong foundation.

The citizens in each basin are in the process of developing a water plan for their region. Because this effort is underway, we are beginning to understand the elements of what Colorado's Water Plan will include. Colorado's Water Plan will be balanced and will reflect

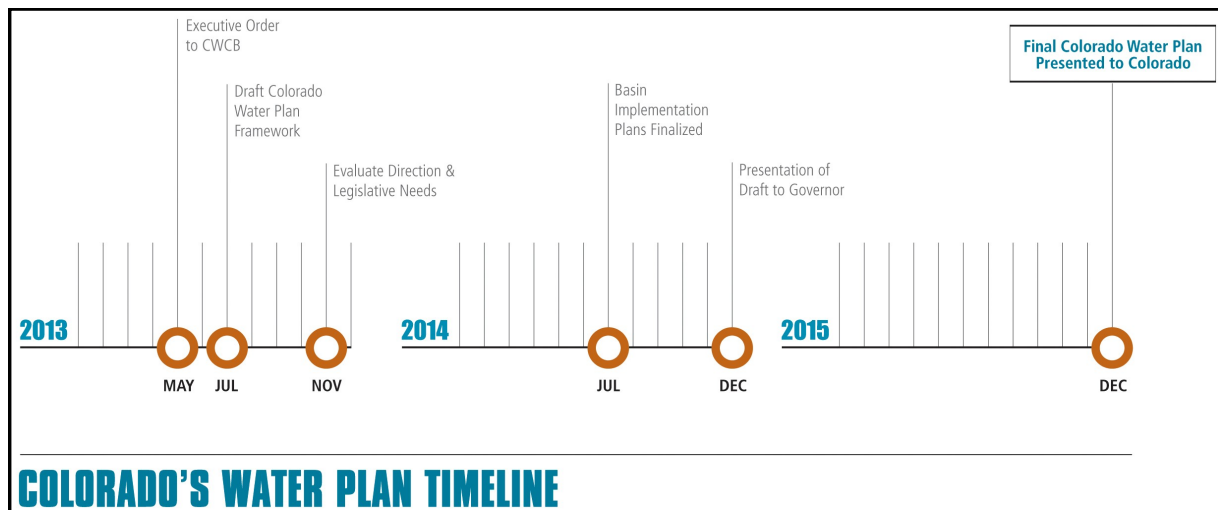


*Colorado's Water Plan continued from page 4*

Colorado's best values presented in the Executive Order. The plan must further efficient and effective water infrastructure promoting smart land use and a strong environment that includes healthy watersheds, rivers and streams, and wildlife. And, Colorado's Water Plan will reaffirm the Colorado Constitution's recognition of prior appropriation while offering recommendations to the Governor for legislation that will improve coordination, streamline processes and align state interests.

With the help of many stakeholders and interested persons the CWCB will deliver a draft of Colorado's Water Plan to the Governor's Office by December 10, 2014. The CWCB will then work with the Governor's

Office to finalize Colorado's Water Plan no later than December 2015. To provide your insights and perspectives, please participate in the next meeting of your Basin Roundtable. To learn who the members of your Roundtable are and when they meet, visit [www.cwcb.state.co.us](http://www.cwcb.state.co.us) and go to the IBCC and Basin Roundtable link. At each bi-monthly CWCB Board meeting updated documents including the Colorado's Water Plan Annotated Framework are presented and available for public review and input. You can submit your comments on such documents to the CWCB by emailing [cwaterplan@state.co.us](mailto:cwaterplan@state.co.us). For more information on how to get involved, visit Colorado's Water Plan online at [www.coloradowaterplan.com](http://www.coloradowaterplan.com).



## GENERATING INVOLVEMET IN COLORADO'S WATER PLAN

*By Kate McIntire*

**P**roviding a clearly defined process for managing broad stakeholder involvement across the state during development of Colorado's Water Plan (CWP) will be critical to its success. The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) manages an Outreach and Communications Plan designed to provide a cohesive strategy and structure for all CWP communications and outreach activities. That outreach plan emphasizes the important role the Basin Roundtables will play in stimulating grassroots engagement at the local level in

Colorado's Water Plan.

Through the IBCC's Public Education, Participation and Outreach Workgroup (PEPO), each Basin Roundtable has appointed an Education Liaison who coordinates their basin's education and outreach efforts. The CWCB is working closely with the Basin Roundtables and PEPO members to inform, involve, and educate the public on the activities of each Roundtable including developments related to the Basin Implementation Plan process, the work of the

### *Generating involvement in CWP continued from page 5*

IBCC, and updates regarding how to get involved in the creation of Colorado's Water Plan. The PEPO Workgroup will also help provide a mechanism for tracking public input and feedback on Colorado's Water Plan. This includes communicating the guidelines for how various stakeholder groups can provide input through a combination of working directly with their respective Basin Roundtable so that it may be incorporated into that basin's Basin Implementation Plan or, if appropriate, by submitting their input directly to the Colorado Water Conservation Board.

Stay up to date regarding events and speaking engagements related to Colorado's Water Plan around the state, download general information, and learn more about how to provide input for Colorado's Water Plan, including related deadlines, online at [www.coloradowaterplan.com](http://www.coloradowaterplan.com). Any questions related to Colorado's Water Plan should be directed to [cowaterplan@state.co.us](mailto:cowaterplan@state.co.us).



John Martin Reservoir

## **BASIN IMPLEMENTATION PLANS**

*By Jacob Bornstein*

**H**.B.05 1177 asked for each Basin Roundtable to “develop a basin-wide consumptive and nonconsumptive water supply needs assessment... and propose projects or methods, both structural and nonstructural, for meeting those needs.... Basin Roundtables shall actively seek the input and advice of affected local governments, water providers, and other interested stakeholders and persons in establishing its needs assessment, and shall propose projects or methods for meeting those needs.”

In 2010, the Basin Roundtables completed their needs assessments. The planned projects and methods have already been identified and each basin still has consumptive and nonconsumptive needs that are not met. The

Basin Implementation Plans (BIPs) provide an opportunity for each basin to explore additional projects to meet the gaps in each basin, thus fulfilling the legislative requirement to identify projects and methods.

The BIPs will be a foundation of Colorado's Water Plan and will help chart the course forward.

CWCB has developed a guidance document, which is available on the [CWCB Basin Roundtable](#) page. Each of the roundtables have submitted WSRA applications to the CWCB. In order for the BIPs to be incorporated into the draft of Colorado's Water Plan, they will need to be complete by July 2014.





## SCENARIO PLANNING & ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

By Jacob Bornstein

States across the country, including Colorado, and most water providers have utilized traditional predictive water planning. These processes have relied on the past as the key to extrapolate the most likely water future or even sometimes focus on a preferred water future. Due to the very long timeframe that it takes to build water supply projects, the planning horizon for the Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI) is 2050. These last few years have demonstrated the volatility of our water supplies and economic trends. These and other uncertainties are unpredictable and largely outside the control of Colorado. Furthermore, different stakeholders believe that very different futures will present themselves. For these reasons, the Basin Roundtables and the IBCC decided that scenario planning was the best choice for addressing Colorado's water supply future.

Past issues of the annual report charted the progress made by the Basin Roundtables in developing portfolios of solutions to meet a range of possible futures. Last year, the annual report described how the IBCC summarized this work into five potential future scenarios and ten portfolios. This 2013 issue briefly describes how this work has been compiled into an adaptive management framework. The work is detailed in the draft Chapter 7 of the next SWSI update and will be further incorporated into Colorado's Water Plan and the Basin Implementation Plans. The draft Chapter 7 is available [here](#).

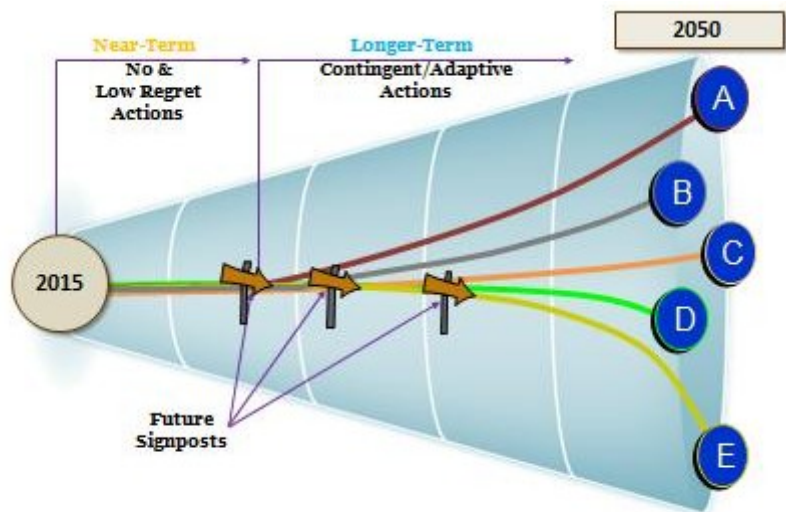
The adaptive management framework can be used to determine what actions should be implemented over time, depending on several "signposts." This adaptive framework will allow for Colorado to:

- ◆ Be flexible so that it can address critical planning issues in a strategic manner;
- ◆ Identify and prioritize key planning uncertainties; and
- ◆ Develop a consensus vision for how Colorado can meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

The scenario planning approach is summarized in **Figure 1**, which depicts the "cone of uncertainty." From today's vantage point, the future is unknown, and increasingly so as planners try to look further and further into the future. Scenario planning and adaptive management is the process in which these scenarios are developed (such as A-E in figure 1), near-term actions are defined as no and low regrets that need to be implemented no matter what future Colorado faces. In addition, it includes longer term contingent actions that may be necessary in order to adapt to one or more futures.

As discussed in past issues, the basin roundtables identified 34 future portfolios as part of their portfolio development exercise.

There were many commonalities among the portfolios, and 10 representative portfolios were developed by the IBCC and reviewed by the basin roundtables.



Source: Modified from Denver Water/Tucson Water

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Figure 1. Scenario Planning Schematic





### Scenario Planning continued from page 7

Based on a qualitative assessment of these 10 representative portfolios, five portfolios were matched to the five future scenarios.

The qualitative assessment incorporated the trade-offs and metrics discussions by the IBCC and Basin Roundtables. The considerations include:

- ◆ Cost
- ◆ Reliability
- ◆ Environmental and recreational health
- ◆ Agricultural health
- ◆ The feasibility of permitting and building the portfolio for the given scenario

For each scenario, a representative portfolio was identified based on the five factors above. These are shown in the table below.

Table: Matched Scenarios and Portfolios	
Scenario	Portfolio
Weak Economy	Conservation Based Low Demands Portfolio
Cooperative Growth	Conservation Based Mid Demands Portfolio
Business as Usual	Mixed/Balanced Mid Demands Portfolio
Adaptive Innovation	Conservation Based High Demands Portfolio
Hot Growth	Mixed/Balanced High Demands Portfolio

These portfolios are dependent upon successful implementation of the no and low regret actions, which are immediate actions needed for Colorado's water future, as described below.

Taking the minimum elements from each of the five selected portfolios, the following ***no and low regret actions*** emerged:

- ◆ **Identified Projects and Processes:** Implement Identified Projects and Processes (IPPs) to yield eighty percent, equivalent to 70,000 acre-feet/year (AFY) for the West Slope and 280,000 AFY for the East Slope.  
*Adaptive Capacity:* Track the yield of the IPPs in meeting the gap. If IPPs are not implemented to planned levels, additional emphasis on other portfolio elements will be necessary.
- ◆ **Conservation:** Implement strategies to meet medium levels of conservation and apply half of that to meet the Municipal and Industrial (M&I) Gap.  
*Adaptive Capacity:* Track the reliability of these conservation savings in meeting the gap. If conservation does not prove to be reliable, additional emphasis on other portfolio elements will be necessary.
- ◆ **Agricultural Transfers:** Limit traditional "buy and dry" to the IPPs and urbanization. Initiate alternative agricultural transfer project or projects on the East Slope to yield 50,000 AFY plus an additional 25,000 AFY from the reuse of that water.

*Scenario Planning continued from page 8*

**Adaptive Capacity:** Preserve and plan for additional alternative agricultural transfers, should a future scenario call for it. If the 50,000 AFY alternative agricultural transfer project or projects is not implemented to planned levels, additional "buy and dry" will result.

- ♦ **New Supply:** Develop 35,000 AFY of new supplies in the Colorado River system for the West Slope.

**Adaptive Capacity:** Preserve and plan for transbasin new supply options, should a future scenario necessitate it.

- ♦ **Nonconsumptive:** Implement nonconsumptive projects.
- ♦ **Infrastructure:** Implement storage and other infrastructure to maximize flexibility and reliability.

As depicted in **Figure 2**, if demands remain low, then no additional actions will be needed. If demands increase or supplies decrease, additional conservation, new supply, alternative transfers, and redundancies in Colorado's water infrastructure will be needed and should be phased in as appropriate, which is described in the adaptive management section of Chapter 7. The no and low regrets portfolio helps protect Colorado's water values, as described in the Governor's executive order with regard to sustaining agriculture and the environment while meeting Colorado's growing municipal needs. If we continue on our current course, the status quo portfolio will be much worse for both agriculture and the environment.

The scenario planning process underscores the critical importance of implementing the no and low regret actions in the near term; without the full implementation of these foundational actions, the gap between demands and water supplies will be greater than originally projected. Meaning that even under a weak economy scenario, additional transbasin diversion(s) would be needed beyond what is already planned. Under the scenarios in which demands for water are greater and/or supplies lower, even more new supplies and agricultural dry-up would be necessary beyond what was initially envisioned by the roundtables. These impacts have been determined to be unacceptable.

For additional detail, including the detailed adaptive management framework, please read the initial draft of [Chapter 7 here](#).

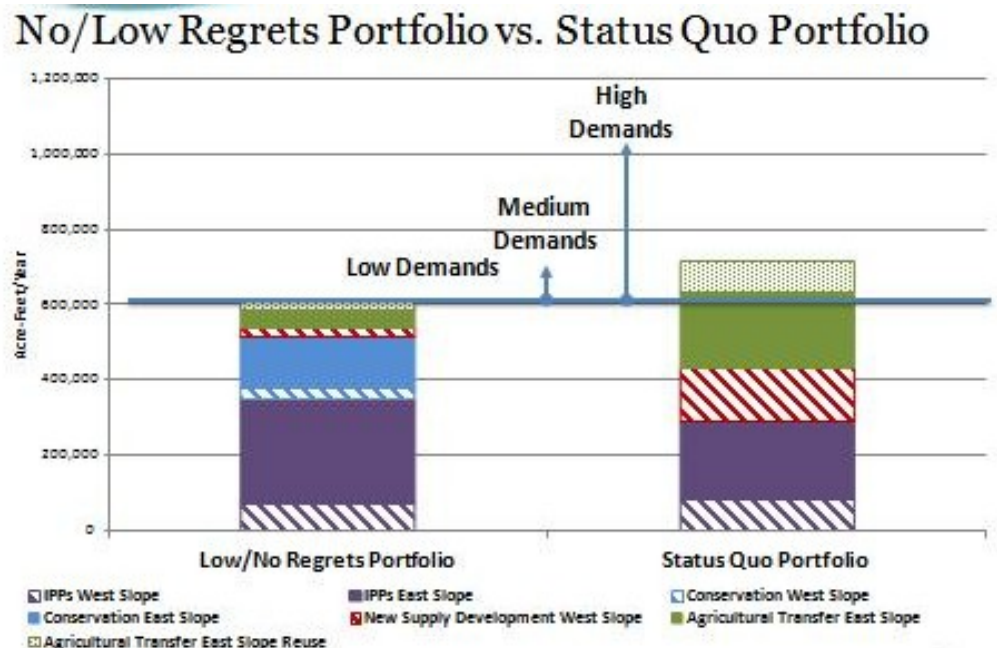


Figure 2. No & Low Regrets Portfolio compared to the Status Quo Portfolio



## NO AND LOW REGRETS ACTION PLAN

By Jacob Bornstein

Based off the technical foundation described in the scenario planning and adaptive management article, the IBCC set out to develop an action plan that described in detail how the no and low regret actions could be implemented. Already, the IBCC reached one hundred percent consensus that the potential future actions described under six out of seven goals should be reviewed and incorporated by the Basin Roundtables as part of the Basin Implementation Plans and by CWCB as a component of Colorado's Water Plan and the Statewide Water Supply Initiative. During its September board meeting, CWCB supported the work of the IBCC and discussed how to receive additional input from various stakeholders. The document does not seek to modify or undermine Colorado water law.

As a reminder, the IBCC concluded that the no/low regrets actions should meet the following criteria:

- ◆ Actions that are needed to meet future water needs, regardless of which 2050 scenario Colorado faces.
- ◆ Actions that are needed to preserve the water supply options described in the portfolios, which may be needed for one or more scenarios.
- ◆ Actions that should move forward in the near-term, and can serve as the initial implementation components of adaptive management, as well as the first phase of implementing Colorado's Water Plan and SWSI.
- ◆ Actions that have few or no disadvantages in terms of costs and benefits, regardless of the future.

The IBCC identified the following no and low regret goals:

1. *Minimize Statewide Agricultural Acres Transferred (per Basin Goals) and Implement Agricultural Sharing Projects*
2. *Plan and Preserve Options for Existing and New Supply*
3. *Establish Low/Medium Conservation Strategies*
4. *Implement Nonconsumptive Projects*
5. *Have a High Success Rate for Identified Projects and Processes*
6. *Implement Storage and Other Infrastructure*
7. *Implement Reuse Strategies*

This work is a critical input document for the work of the Basin Roundtables, SWSI, and Colorado's water plan, exploring several policy and practical actions. The detail on the potential future actions needed to accomplish each of these goals is found in the Draft No and Low Regrets Action Plan. To read more, [CWCB website](#) Water Supply Planning Section.



## ADDITIONAL IBCC WORK ON “NEW SUPPLY”

By Jacob Bornstein

During the August IBCC meeting, there was not sufficient time to resolve the no and low regret to “*Plan and Preserve Options for Existing and New Supply*.” New supply is the development of unappropriated waters and has come to focus on the development of West Slope water supplies, and includes transbasin diversions above and beyond the planned projects and methods.

Many in Colorado would like to implement an additional transbasin diversion in the near term and many others would like for no additional projects to ever be implemented. However, it is too early to determine whether or not a project will be needed. The technical work, as discussed above, shows that there are some scenarios that will require an additional transbasin diversion and some that do not. This is dependent upon hydrological conditions, future water demands, and social values. Some scenarios require an additional transbasin diversion lower down in the system just to provide reliability of existing diversions in the face of climate change.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon Colorado to not foreclose this option and instead to preserve it. This would be a low regret action that would provide adaptive capacity into the future so that such a project could be developed if it was needed.

There has already been a significant amount of discussion over the last several years concerning “new supply.” Recent work includes a previous draft of the no and low regrets document, the East Slope Basin Roundtable paper, the West Slope Caucus statement, and the letter from the IBCC’s new supply subcommittee chairs. The no and low regrets document incorporates many discussions and past work, including that of the IBCC 2010 Letter to the Governors and some of the findings of the Basin Roundtable Project Exploration Committee, also known as the Flaming Gorge Task Force. **Figure 3** is a Venn diagram, which displays that there is a lot of overlap between these four efforts and each one suggests that a conceptual agreement be developed to preserve the new supply option.

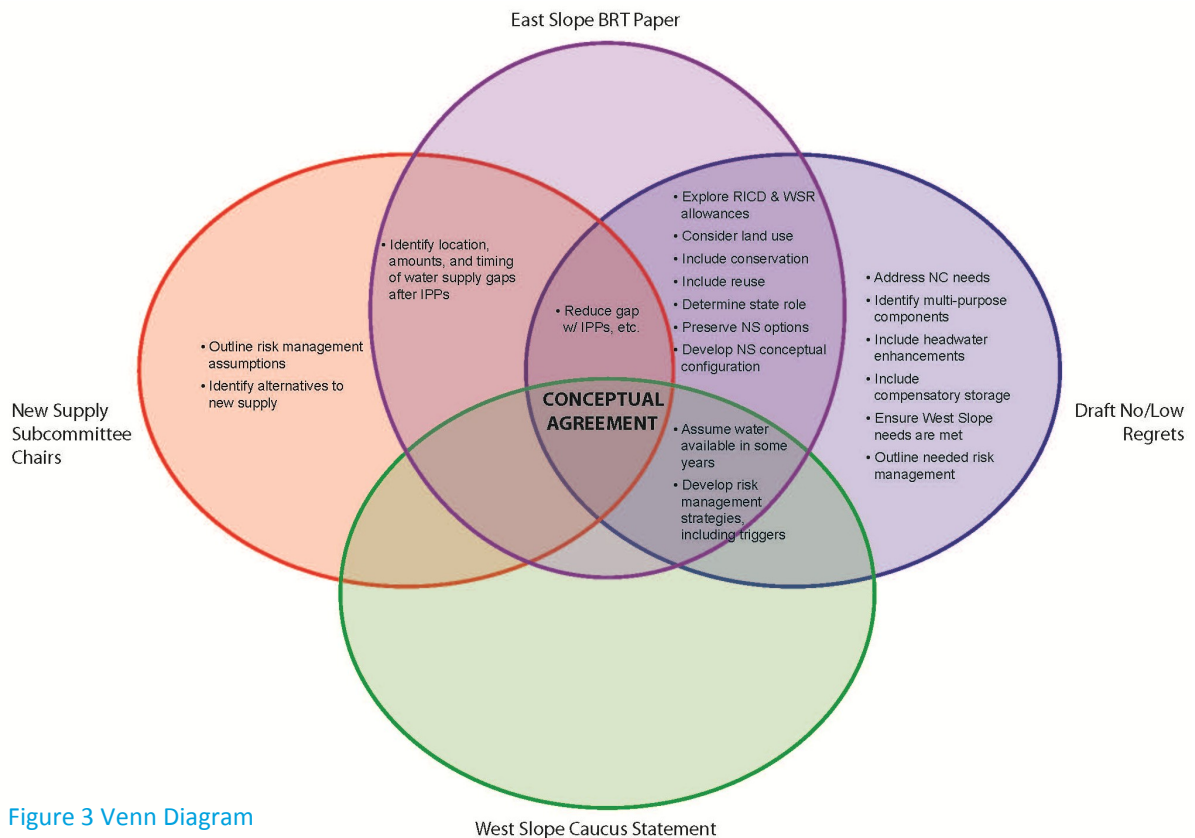


Figure 3 Venn Diagram





*Add'l IBCC work on "new supply" continued from page 11*

On the eleventh of September the IBCC's new supply subcommittee met with basin roundtable members from the Arkansas, Colorado, Gunnison, Metro, South Platte, and Southwest to discuss how to move forward. The group concluded that the following two concurrent conversations should occur:

### 1. New Supply Conceptual Agreement

- ◆ **Topics:** Items on the *Venn diagram* will serve as discussion topics. Additionally, the following components will be explored and included as needed:
  - Colorado River Cooperative Agreement, Flaming Gorge Task Force, and Windy Gap Firing as starting points
  - Feasibility discussion as appropriate
  - Project sponsorship discussion
  - Cooperative agreements
- ◆ **Process:** IBCC conversation with CWCB members participating and concerted outreach to the roundtables and other stakeholder groups (agriculture, environment, etc.) at the beginning, middle, and end
- ◆ **Outcome and Timing:** Deliver best agreement to Board in one year, including any remaining areas of disagreement and reasons for disagreement

### 2. Further Explore/Understand the Gap

- ◆ Regional assessment of needs
- ◆ Also further examine needs at a sub-county level
- ◆ Update/overlap gap data with scenario planning
- ◆ Identify potential customers for new supply
- ◆ Dig down into West Slope data

The CWCB endorsed this approach at the September 24-25 board meeting, and the IBCC as a whole also agreed to move forward with the approach during its October 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

To start the process of developing a conceptual agreement for new supply, an electronic polling session was conducted to gauge the opinion of IBCC members about new supply concepts. Covered topics included specific concepts within the following broad categories that were drawn from the Venn diagram and September 11<sup>th</sup> discussion:

- ◆ Conceptual Foundations
- ◆ Potential Multi-Purpose Components
- ◆ Project Structure Components
- ◆ Demand Management Components
- ◆ Risk Management Components
- ◆ Preserving and Planning for New Supply

For each new supply concept, polling slides listed statements that have emerged from previous discussions and documents relating to new supply. For each statement, group members were asked if: a) substantive agreement had been reached on the concept already, and little to no further discussion was needed, b) the IBCC should continue to discuss the concept, or c) the IBCC should not discuss the concept during the next year.

Highlights from the polling results are presented below.

- ◆ For nearly every covered topic, a majority of participants believed that substantive agreement had been reached and little to no further discussion was needed.
- ◆ However, at least four participants for each topic believed that more discussion was needed during the next year.
- ◆ For each covered topic, at least one participant believed that the IBCC should not discuss that topic during the next year.
- ◆ The following topics received the highest level of support for further discussion during the next year:
  - "Volatility of interstate water dynamics requires adaptive management approaches to be developed prior to implementation." (63%)



*Add'l IBCC work on "new supply" continued from page 12*

- "Some of the five IBCC scenarios indicate that additional new supply development is needed beyond the IPPs, and some do not. Therefore, the low regret action is to preserve the option to build a new supply project in the future, not to build a project now or foreclose the opportunity to build it later." (57%)
- "Determine how one or more new supply options could be preserved and identify some substantive action(s) that can be taken to preserve the new supply option in the near term." (50%)
- "The CWCB should work with basin roundtables to determine how and where a new supply project could be built, including research on potential nonconsumptive impacts, downstream economic impacts, fiscal and partnership structures, and other items needed to develop a strategy and further detail for potential projects. This work may narrow the locations of the potentially viable locations of a future water supply project." (48%)
- "The partnership structure, participants, financing, and operational and structural rules under

which a new supply project would operate, including the role of the State, will need to be determined prior to implementation." (46%)

- "Conservation, reuse, and land use actions defined in the No/Low Regrets Action Plan should be substantively completed prior to implementation of a new supply project." (46%)
- "Both West and East Slope agriculture should be preserved. Development of new supply should not be made more difficult than the transfer of agricultural water to municipal uses." (43%)

Prior to the next IBCC meeting, staff will cluster and prioritize the concepts laid out in the New Supply Conceptual Agreement polling exercise. The next IBCC meeting will be structured as follows:

- ♦ At least part of the day will be spent on an information exchange session about risk management. This session will be considered a starting point for the risk management conversation.
- ♦ Further discussion about the concepts laid out in the polling exercise will take place after staff has clustered and prioritized these concepts.

## JOINT BASIN ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS

*By Craig Godbout*

### Roundtable Conservation Mini-Summit

**O**n December 3, 2012, the statewide conservation meeting was attended by approximately 60 roundtable members from across the state and interested individuals from every basin, was initiated by West Slope and Front Range basin roundtables to continue the cross-roundtable dialogue about conservation and continuing the trend of strong roundtable-based conservation discussions. The meeting was divided into two parts: 1) a morning session characterized by brief presentations on the importance of

conservation to different interests and parts of the state; and 2) an afternoon session that focused on small-group dialogue and discussion consisting of three topics: Conservation and New Supply, Statewide Conservation, Current Status Statewide and Statewide Goal for Conservation. Discussions were framed by questions and managed by moderators. The notes provided indicate topics that reflect "areas of convergence" and "unresolved issues" that could serve as a basis for further discussion, and the themes below reflect common views, but not consensus



### *Joint basin roundtable meetings continued from page 13*

views. A concluding session discussing "Suggested Potential Next Steps" closed out the mini-summit.

"Areas of convergence" regarding Conservation and New Supply consisted of: transbasin diversions should achieve higher conservation levels, conservation is not the only issue, and collaboration between the Front Range and the West Slope is important.

"Areas of convergence" regarding Statewide Conservation consisted of: requiring a base level of conservation for all water providers, "covered entities" could be held to higher conservation levels which should also apply to communities not currently reaching the "covered entity" threshold but expect to in the future, any legislation should allow lead time for implementation and should be built on dialogue and consensus.

"Areas of convergence" regarding Current Status Statewide and Statewide Goal for Conservation consisted of: while providers appear to be on the path to achieving medium SWSI 2010 conservation levels, without statewide support medium levels will not be achieved, current levels of conservation may not be maintained unless support is provided, local and statewide ordinances and legislation is not being widely adopted to meet medium or high conservation levels.

The work engaged in by this group was a significant input into the IBCC's development of the Draft No Low Regrets Action Plan. For further information, [please follow this link](#):

#### **West Slope Caucus**

On February 28, 2013 a West Slope Caucus was convened, consisting of West Slope Basin Roundtable members, IBCC members, and a CWCB Board member to address their mutual concerns, such as: Colorado River hydrology; risk management; and rotational fallowing. The following New Supply Statement was issued subsequent to the caucus:

#### *West Slope New Water Supply Development Statement*

"Future water supplies on the Colorado River will be highly variable and uncertain. There will be times when Colorado has additional Colorado River water to develop and there may be times when Colorado will have to take actions to avoid a potential curtailment or possibly curtail uses to meet its share of the Upper Division States' compact obligations. Various activities are underway to help analyze and develop strategies to address this uncertainty, such as the Water Bank Study, the Aspinall Water Bank Study and Colorado's discussions with other Upper Division states.

"In order to make additional progress on a new supply project from the Colorado River, the Roundtables, IBCC and CWCB must have substantive discussions, and develop additional tools to address the potential development of additional Colorado River basin water, when available, without impairing existing uses. Moving forward with the recommendations made by the Flaming Gorge task force would be a mechanism to begin this dialogue."

The West Slope caucus statement will continue to influence the IBCC dialogue on new supply.

#### **East Slope Roundtables Joint Meeting**

On July 24, 2013 the Metro, South Platte, and Arkansas roundtables met in a combined effort to further develop a *Draft East Slope Roundtables Joint Statement*. Sixty six east slope roundtable members attended and there were also additional spectators and support staff. The purpose of the meeting was to: indicate that the work of the West Slope basin roundtables in generating their joint statement on new supply was constructive and to achieve buy-in for a similar statement that conveys East Slope perspectives; the importance that the CWCB hears the input of the joint roundtables as Colorado's Water Plan progresses.



### *Joint basin roundtable meetings continued from page 14*

Following an overview of the Joint Statement vision, the group participated in an electronic polling session to gauge support for the Joint Statement. Polling results revealed 80% support for the recommendations in the East Slope Roundtables Joint Statement. The polling session was followed by dividing roundtable members into small groups to discuss individual topics highlighted in the Joint Statement. The vision for meeting the East Slope Municipal Supply Gap is statewide support for:

- Reaching enhanced levels of municipal conservation and reuse
- Successful permitting and development of planned municipal supply projects
- Continued research, testing, and use of agricultural and municipal water-sharing partnerships

- New water storage on the East Slope using environmentally beneficial methods
- Preserving the ability to develop Colorado's allocation of Colorado River water
- When it is needed, development of a state water project(s) using Colorado River Water for municipal uses on the east and west slope

This work will be a critical input into the East Slope Basin Implementation Plans as well as the No Low Regrets Action Plans developed by the IBCC. This work will continue to influence the dialogue on New Supply at the IBCC.

### **PATH FORWARD**

**T**he next thirteen and one half months will be extremely busy. There are major efforts that will be underway simultaneously:

1. Completing the draft of Colorado's Water Plan
2. Developing the Basin Implementation Plans
3. Crafting of the conceptual new supply agreement
4. Updating the Statewide Water Supply Initiative

The success of these four efforts hinge on ensuring that Colorado's Water Plan is appropriately framed and that there is ample coordination with the IBCC, Basin Roundtables, state and federal agencies, and other critical stakeholders. This will be assisted by the communications and outreach plan.

Please visit [www.ColoradoWaterPlan.com](http://www.ColoradoWaterPlan.com) or email us at [CoWaterPlan@state.co.us](mailto:CoWaterPlan@state.co.us) to learn more and share your feedback.

#### **March 2014 Statewide Roundtable Summit**

The third Statewide Roundtable Summit will be held in early March 2014. Topics will include discussions on the IBCC's new supply work, initial work on Colorado's Water Plan, and sharing and coordinating between Basin Roundtables regarding the Basin Implementation Plans.



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